

The Holy and Royal Priesthood of First Peter 2:5,9

Daniel F. Cates

The Passage(s) at Hand*

1 Peter 2:4-10, "To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a **spiritual** house, an **holy priesthood**, to offer up **spiritual sacrifices**, **acceptable** to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye *are* a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, an **holy** nation, a peculiar people; that ye should **shew forth** the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Exodus 19:5-6, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And ye shall be unto me a **kingdom** of **priests**, and an **holy** nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

*In case any be interested, diagrams of the passages are included in the PowerPoint after the Bibliography

Definitions

Priesthood/priests

ἱεράτευμα (*hierateuma*)

“to officiate as a priest. A priesthood as a fraternity, a body of priests. Referring to all Christians, who are said to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pe. 2:5) and are called a royal priesthood (1 Pe. 2:9; Sept.: Exo. 19:6 [cf. Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6]; Isa. 61:6)” (Zodhiates)

כֹּהֵן (*kohen*)

“A masculine noun meaning priest. The word is used to designate the various classes of priests in Israel. These people performed the function of mediators between God and His people. God called the nation of Israel to be a kingdom of priests (Exo. 19:6), but God also appointed a priesthood to function within the nation. All the priests were to come from the tribe of Levi (Deu. 17:9,18). The Lord set up a high priest who was over all the priestly services” (Zodhiates)

"Two important points result from the common idea of priesthood in antiquity. First, it underscores the prevalent belief throughout humanity of a superior power (or powers—and monotheism predates polytheism) over mankind. Second, it suggests the conviction that humans are inferior to deity, hence are in need of a mediating intercessor. Reflect on Job’s anguish: “There is no arbiter between us, who might lay his hand on us both” (9:33, ESV)" (Jackson "Christian")

Definitions

Holy

ἅγιος (*hagios*)

"any matter of religious awe, expiation, sacrifice. Holy, set apart, sanctified, consecrated, saint. ... Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement" (Zodhiates)

קדוש (*qadosh*)

"An adjective meaning sacred, holy. It is used to denote someone or something that is inherently sacred or has been designated as sacred by divine rite or cultic ceremony. It designates that which is the opposite of common or profane. It could be said the qāḏôš is a positive term regarding the character of its referent, where common is a neutral term and profane a very negative term" (Zodhiates)

"sacred(ceremonially or morally); (as noun) God (by eminence), an angel, a saint, a sanctuary: - holy (One), saint" (Strong)

Definitions

Sacrifices & Spiritual & Acceptable

θυσία (*thusia*)

“to sacrifice. The act of sacrificing or offering

“(III) Metaphorically, of service, obedience, praise offered to God, an offering, oblation (Php. 2:17; 4:18)” (Zodhiates)

πνευματικός (*pneumatikos*)

“non-carnal, that is, (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or (daemoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious: - spiritual” (Strong)

εὐπρόσδεκτος (*euprosdektos*)

“to receive, accept” (Zodhiates)

“well received, that is, approved, favorable: - acceptable (-ted)” (Strong)

Definitions

Royal/Kingdom & Shew Forth

βασίλειος (*basileos*)

“kingly (in nature): - royal” (Zodhiates)

מַמְלָכָה (mamlakah)

“kingdom. Often the term refers to the royal power an individual in sovereign authority possesses” (Zodhiates)

“dominion, that is, (abstractly) the estate (rule) or (concretely) the country (realm): - kingdom, king’s, reign, royal” (Strong)

ἐξαγγέλλω (*exangelo*)

“To declare abroad, make widely known (1 Pe. 2:9; Sept.: Psa. 9:14; 79:13)” (Zodhiates)

“to publish, that is, celebrate: - shew forth” (Strong)

History of the Priesthood

The Pre-Mosaic Priesthood

Who he was and what he did

Melchizedek* (Gen. 14:18-20)

Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:10; 6:10; 7:17

Heb. 7:1-11

*In general, the patriarchs performed priestly roles, (e.g. Job 1:5 {cf Jackson "Exploring"}; Melchizedek is singled out due to his special status as type of Christ; however, regarding the patriarchs in general, Christopher wrote, "These were divinely appointed priests, and so regarded and treated both by the people and by the Lord himself. We have no account, however, of any special ordination and consecration of the person to the office" (119)

History of the Priesthood

The Pre-Mosaic Priesthood

Whom he represented

Christ as a priest after his order (Heb. 7:12-28)

“In a letter addressed to Hebrew Christians we might have expected that some space would be devoted to demonstrating the Messianic claims of Jesus. Instead we find an exposition of the high-priest theme and the frequent occurrence of the absolute use of 'Christ' as a title for Jesus. This usage links the messianic function with the mediatorial work. This epistle is therefore in line with the other NT evidence in its Messianic teaching. The one peculiarity [what "we might [not] have expected"-DFC] is the Melchizedek theme, which gives some support to the idea of a priestly Messiah" (Guthrie 249,250)

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

Who they were

Aaron (the first high priest) and his sons Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar (the second high priest), and Ithamar were set apart by God to serve as priests (Exo. 28:1; 29:44; 40:13-15; cf Num. 20:25-28)

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

What they did

They cleansed and clothed themselves (Exo. 29:1-9)

They made offerings on behalf of themselves and the people for whom they were mediators (Exo. 29:10-28; 38-42; cf Lev. 16:16,17; Heb. 7:27)

These consisted of a variety of offerings (Exo. 29:10-42)

Each offering was according to a pattern (Exo. 30:9)

The offerings were a “sweet savour” to God (Exo. 29:18,25; cf 42)

Faithful priests received rewards (Lev. 27:21; Num. 18:8-18,26-32; Deu. 13:3-5)

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

What became of them

They had begun as ordained by God

There were ups and downs

They received a book, Leviticus

They entered the Promised Land in good stead

They received 48 cities as an inheritance

There were ups and downs

They saw Israel crumble

There were ups and downs

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

What became of them

In the Intertestament Period everything changed

There was a change in the priesthood forced by Antiochus IV Epiphanes

There was the bright spot of Mattathias and his sons, but that was temporary

The priesthood became concerned with military and political matters

They began to associate with sects

They even saw Rome intervene in their affairs

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

What became of them

This is presented to show, first, that the priesthood was an increasingly corrupt institution; and, second, to show the corruption generally increased the further away time-wise that one moved from the initial setting up or the occasional restorations

The imperfection of the system demonstrates that it was never intended to be the permanent system

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

Whom they represented

These represented the members of the church, the Lord's disciples

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

The role of High Priest is occupied

He is Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:17; 3:1-2; 4:14-15; 5:5; 7:26; 8:1-3; 9:11; 10:21)

He is after the order of Melchizedek as prophecy had declared (Heb. 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11-12,15,17,21)

Notably, "The permanence of this priesthood is brought out by taking seriously what Psalm 110:4 says: 'The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever'" (Morris 305)

Moreover, "The payment of tithes to Melchizedek and the blessing given by him are arguments for the superiority of Christ to the Levitical priests" (ibid.)

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

The role of High Priest is occupied

He only had to make one sacrifice (Heb. 10:11)

"A major emphasis in Hebrews is that Christ made one offering, an offering of himself, and that offering is perfectly and permanently efficacious" (Morris 306)

Jesus has entered the Most Holy Place (Heb. 9:12)—and has made access available for the other priests (Heb. 10:19)

"It is important to realize that the sacrifice of Christ is not simply *a way to God*, but *the way*" (Morris 306)

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

The Common Priests (i.e., where 1 Peter comes in)

Peter was writing to men; men with common problems, who ...

... Were scattered (1 Pe. 1:1)

... Were tried and tempted (1 Pe. 1:6-7)

... Had to be strong (1 Pe. 1:13)

... Needed to grow (1 Pe. 2:2)

... Needed to be united (1 Pe. 3:8)

... Would suffer (1 Pe. 4:16-17)

History of the Priesthood

The Levitical Priesthood

But Peter was also writing to special men; they were the church, protected people who ...

- ... Had hope (1 Pe. 1:3)

- ... Had an inheritance (1 Pe. 1:4)

- ... Were guarded by God (1 Pe. 1:5)

- ... Possessed saved souls (1 Pe. 1:9)

- ... Were purified (1 Pe. 1:22)

- ... Were born again (1 Pe. 1:23)

- ... Could rejoice in suffering (1 Pe. 3:14)

- ... Had One suffer for them (1 Pe. 4:1)

- ... Could cast their cares on a Savior (1 Pe. 5:7)

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

As a side note, we often hear people make a distinction between "clergy" and "laity"

That is a human idea, for every Christian is a priest!

"Like the sons of Aaron who had the privilege of approaching God to offer the gifts of Israel, Christians can come with confidence into the presence of the Lord, offering their own gifts. God is no respecter of persons. Each of His children can approach Him because each is a priest in his own right" (Warden 103)

Early on, Christians understood this, but over time church hierarchies confused the simple

In the late second century, Irenaeus wrote, "I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are priests" (Bercot 162)

In the early third century, Tertullian simply asked, "Are not even we laymen priests?" (Bercot 163)

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

What the common priests do

They were made and so remain holy (1 Pe. 1:15-16)

"One of the prime features of the priestly system was to emphasize--and quite graphically--the absolutely holy nature of Almighty God. This is a concept repeatedly affirmed in the Scriptures (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). This fundamental truth must be grasped, as much as is humanly possible, if one is to be motivated to serve the Ruler of Heaven and Earth" (Jackson "Exporing")

This is the role of baptism which washes away sins (Acts 22:16), not because of the water, but because of the cleansing Agent (Rev. 1:5b; Acts 20:28) and "walking in the light" which provides continued cleansing by the blood (1 Jn. 1:7)

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

They offer up spiritual, acceptable sacrifices

"Christian service can be described as offering spiritual sacrifice to God" (Morris 317)

Christopher described the sacrificial service as "both intercessory and devotional; intercessory, in that Christians are authorized and directed to intercede for all men [1 Tim. 2:1,2; cf Job 42:8-DFC] ... and devotional, in that christians [sic] worship God in the service of the church" (121)

Warden made an interesting point: "It is unfortunate that in popular usage the meaning of 'sacrifice' has moved. Its meaning was 'to give a gift to God,' but for most modern people to sacrifice means to 'deny oneself of something.' Sacrifice ought not to focus attention on what the worshiper denies himself, but on his desire to express his love by giving" (104)

Rom. 12:1-2

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

They evince royalty

This is reminiscent of Rev_1:6, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (cf Rev_5:10)

"Royal, because the priests of the spiritual temple serve the King of kings; they are his attendants; they belong to 'the household of God,'--the royal household of the great invisible King. And they reign upon the earth; for they have given their hearts to be his kingdom" (Spence 80,81)

History of the Priesthood

The Spiritual Priesthood

They shew forth praise

Why?

Because their God is worthy (Rev_4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.")

Because their High Priest is worthy (Rev_5:9-10, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.")

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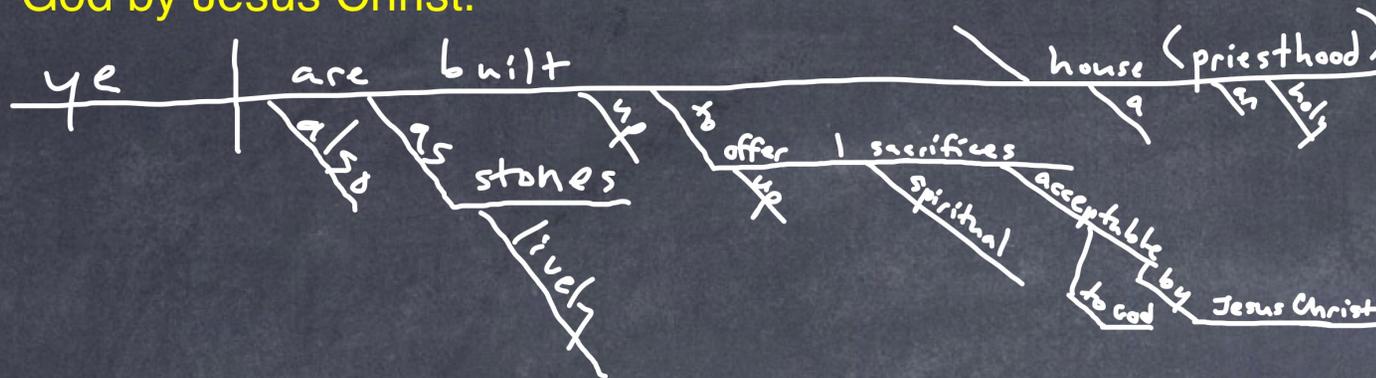
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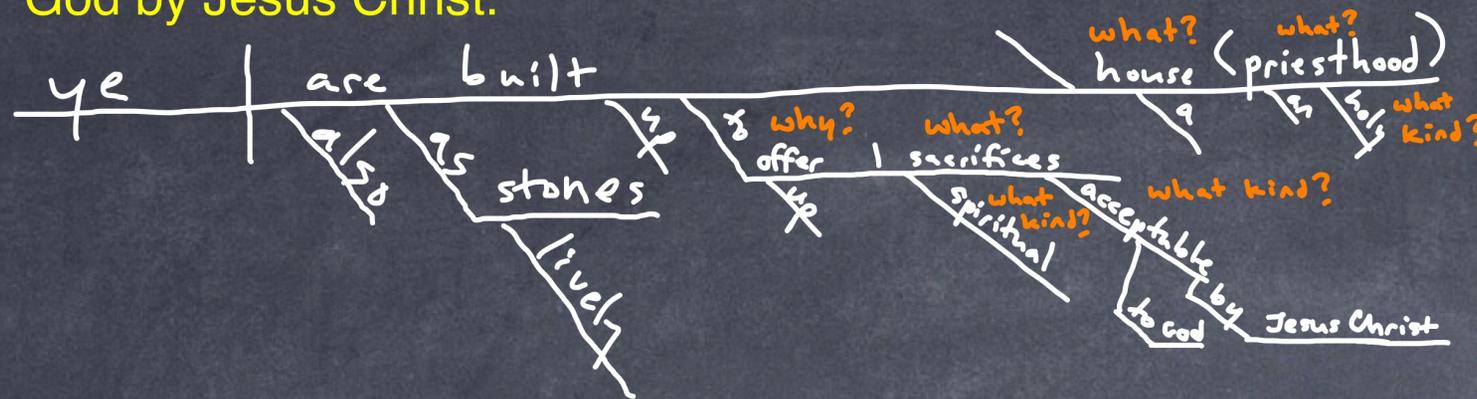
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Diagrams

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.



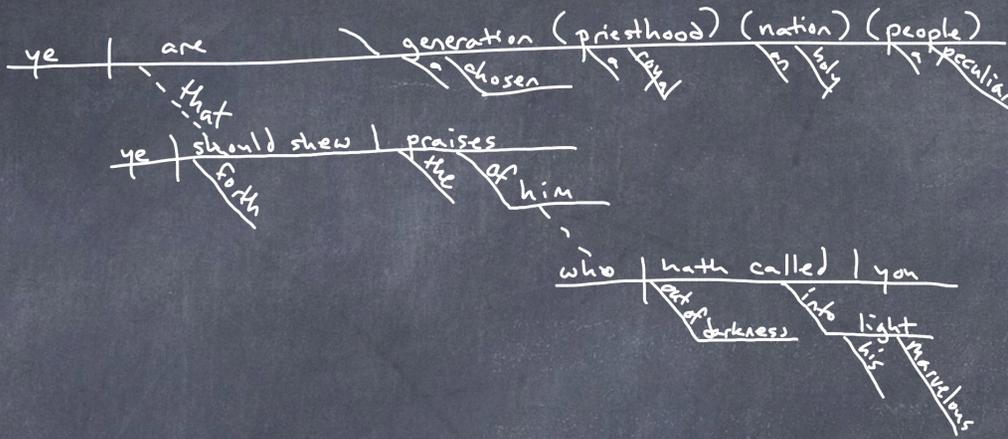
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Diagrams

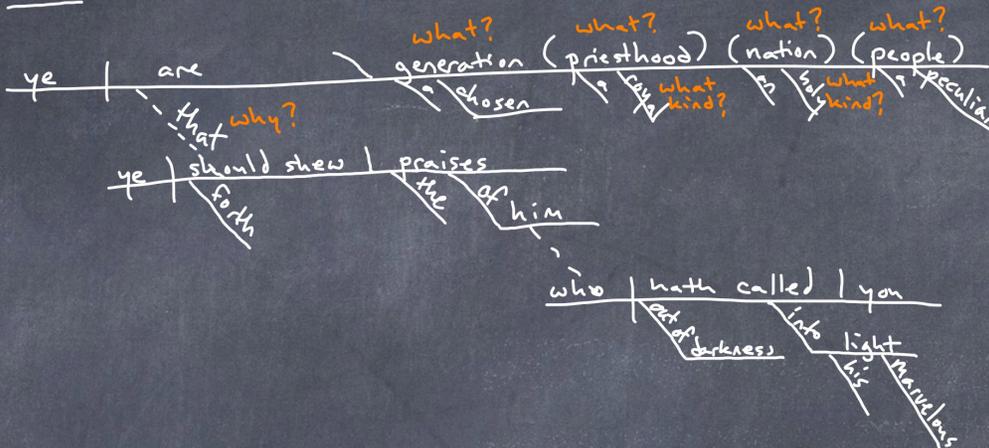
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But



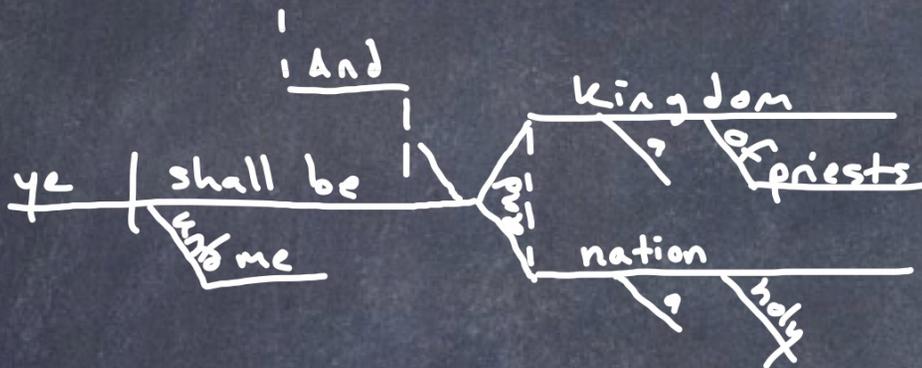
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Diagrams

Exo 19:6a And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.



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