

#316 The Kingdom: Universal Priesthood

The Universal Priesthood indicates the ministry affecting the whole church and is done by all the people in the body or in a particular group and is applicable to all areas of service.

This is a big statement that we cannot prove by following a practical example in the present church systems. In other words this is NOT how the church functions today. We are not saying that is wrong. What we are saying is this is NOT according to God's pattern for the priesthood ministry. The pattern is the High Priest and His sons ministering to God and THEN to His people.

ALL who have found their position in His body are designed to minister as universal members and not as a hierarchy of headship ministries. There is no problem with "headship ministries" in the Outer Court preparing the believers to become priests. However, when the "headship ministries" become a wall or barrier or a cork in the bottle to prevent the believers from becoming functioning priests, they are preventing the Kingdom of Priests from becoming a reality. This "barrier to universal priesthood" is assuming a dangerous position that cannot survive in the next restoration.

Rev 1: 6] and He has made us **to be a kingdom, priests** to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Rev 5:10 "And Thou hast made them to be **a kingdom and priests to our God**; and they will reign upon the earth."

Rev 20: 6] Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, **but they will be priests of God and of Christ** and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

1Pet 2:8 for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. [9] But you are **A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

ISA 61:4 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations, And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. [5] And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vine-dressers. [6] **But you will be called the priests of the LORD; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God.** You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast. [7] Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, And instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs.

Isa 66: 21] "**I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites,**" says the LORD. [22] "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure.

Rom 15: 16] **to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the**

gospel of God, that my offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

There is no doubt that God's eternal purpose requires a Kingdom of Priests to administrate His Kingdom upon earth.

`Dan 7: 21] "I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and

overpowering them [22] until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when **the saints took possession of the kingdom.**

Dan 7:27] `Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the **greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One;** His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

Dan 7: 18] `But the **saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.**'

It is not difficult to see the "universal priesthood of the church" in scripture. Identifying what this means in practical church life is not so easy. Still, we can see that this "universal priesthood of the saints" (true believers) is **NOT** what is happening in the visible church today. Some might conclude that this "universal priesthood" was being formed in the "underground church" and out of sight today. Even if that is true, it does not seem to be God's plan to have a invisible church.

Of course in the pattern that was shown Moses on the mountain, the Lampstand was hidden within the Holy Place and every time it was taken out to move the Tabernacle it had to be covered over so it could not be seen. Nevertheless, it was not invisible! However, the priests that ministered in the Holy Place moved back and forth from the Outer Court to the Holy Place and were seen by the nation when they participated in the sacrifices.

Therefore, there are two different dimensions of the Lampstand / church / priesthood / ministries. One is the Lampstand holding the seven flames of fire, which are the seven eyes of the Lord and are the Seven Spirits of God that provide the illumination for the Holy Place. The other picture is of the "priesthood" that moved from that "spiritual light" of the Holy Place to the "natural light" of the Outer Court and back again. The Lampstand AND the priesthood are two views of the same aspect of God's purpose.

The "church" [Lampstand] that He is building is being constructed directly in the "glorious Light" of the seven Spirits of God. They not only provide the "illumination but also the correction and development" of the Lampstand Church. The "names" of the seven Spirits of God provide the definition and identifies the work that they accomplish in the "church" in preparation and in training. Here we are making a distinction between the Outer Court believers and the Holy Place Lampstand Church. The believers progressing in the 7 Outer Court Experiences are in the process of "Outer Court maturity" while the Lampstand Church is being constructed with pure Gold which represents a further process and perfection. The functioning priesthood are also part of the

process of obtaining the pure Gold because they must find their place in the Lampstand / church / Kingdom of priests / Holy Place Life and Ministry. They must also be perfected under the “spiritual light” of the Seven Spirits of God.

We may falsely assume that all “ministries” are already mature since they are in position of authority and are called “ministers” but obviously that is not true. We are making a definite distinction between Outer Court ministries and the Priesthood ministries of the Holy Place. In the last restoration this was not an important distinction but now it seems to be very important to identify this difference. All Holy Place “priests” will have come to the full maturity of the Outer Court preparation and have made the transition to the 100% spiritual light of the seven Spirits of God in the Holy Place dimension of LIFE and MINISTRY.

Building in natural light may be valid as far as preparation is concerned but the light of the sun, moon, and stars is not sufficient to complete the pure gold Lampstand Church. Building by moonlight or twilight is not according to the pattern. If there is very little “divine light” the work of building will suffer. In the “twilight” the “spirit of the work” soon becomes secular.

secular >adjective 1 not religious, sacred, or spiritual. 2 (of clergy) not subject to or bound by religious rule.

More and more we see the hypocrisy of the Outer Court ministries because they lack the anointed inner life and the “natural ministry” and anointing can be faked. Just starting in the outward “natural light” ministry will emasculate the message and tone it down to be acceptable to the uncommitted and casual believer. In this restoration the strongest anointing will soon be upon the inner man so that he can boldly proclaim the Kingdom of God and its righteous demands. To present the Gospel of the Kingdom demands, without apology, requires a greater anointing than an Outer Court gift or the “down payment” level of the anointing.

Regularly we hear a message that contains foreign “seeds” of truth but nevertheless foreign seeds without the life of the Kingdom. The sower went forth to sow foreign seeds is not the Kingdom message. The devil went forth to sow tares is a part of the revelation of the Kingdom but this is still the wrong seed. Preaching “passing fads” to the believers produces a church that appears to be irrelevant to the secular community because there is no end to the changing fads. Sooner or later we must present the church as an “absolute” and the message of the Kingdom to be explicit and eternal. (**explicit** >adjective 1 clear and detailed, with no room for confusion or doubt.) Unless we see definite evidence of a scriptural church, the ministries will appear to be irrelevant.

Striving for “contemporary thought” in the pulpit identifies the “minister” as irrelevant and unconcerned about Bible Truth. He is so concerned about relating to the modern world with a modern word that presenting Bible truths or the demands of the Kingdom or our personal preparation for eternity is ignored. Whatever is truly Christian will have its roots firmly fixed in the Government of God. If our root has been removed from Adam it must be firmly grafted into Christ or we are without root or source of Life, Zoe. God’s goal is surely not to destroy the Outer Court life and ministries but to fulfill them experientially within the Lampstand Church. We must move into the next restoration IF we are going to be the generation that fulfills God’s purpose.

This includes a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she be holy and blameless.

Therefore, the very term “The Universal Priesthood” assumes that ALL believers are called to this universal priesthood which is the basis of the Kingdom of Priests that relate to God’s Eternal Purpose and is confirmed in Rev 1, Rev 5, Rev 20 and in 1 Peter 2. This can ONLY mean that the next restoration of God MUST include a “laymen’s movement” within the ministry of the church. Universal means including all peoples.

universal >adjective of, affecting, or done by all people or things in the world or in a particular group; applicable to all cases.

The original church actually began as a “laymen run church” because it was outside the Old Testament priesthood ministry. This we believe will be the emphasis of this next restoration. Not upon the “professional ministry” but upon a universal priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. In this “priesthood” the emphasis will be upon the oneness of the priesthood and NOT upon a divided priesthood where some are the ministers and the others are the believers.

layman (or layperson) >noun 1 a non-ordained member of a Church. 2 a person without professional or specialized training.

Historically we see that many of the restorations ordained by God were started by “lay persons.” Of course the restoration began in 1517 with Martin Luther who was a Catholic priest but he began outside the existing church structure and he was excommunicated from ministry. Most of the following four restorations began by “lay persons” who were functioning outside the existing church structure.

If we jumped forward to the Charismatic Restoration we can clearly see it was started among students and lay people. It spread quickly through the home / hotel meetings and then through the Full Gospel Business Mens’ Fellowship until there were very large public meetings outside the organized churches. Eventually “professional Pastors” were excommunicated from their churches because of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and little by little the “ministries” became more and more “professional.” It could have been the “professional ministries” that took over and controlled the meetings that caused the movement to decrease in scope. Even the Pentecostal Movement and the Latter Rain Movement and the Tent Meeting Movement were started by “lay persons” outside the established churches. Of course each of these “movements” or “restorations” soon began to be controlled by the “lay persons” who became the “professional ministers” of the new movements.

We certainly are NOT saying all this was wrong and we are not saying that full time ministers are wrong. What we are pointing out is the “two classes” that soon emerged. There was the “ministry class” and the “believer class” or a “divided priesthood” similar to what was established in Israel. There was Aaron and his sons who were the “ministry class” and all the rest of the Levites who were the lesser class of priests that would relate to what we call “believers” today.

It is abundantly evident that this was NOT God's original plan but a substitute plan for the time then present. God's revealed plan was to make ALL of Israel a Kingdom of Priests. This is what we are referring to as a "universal priesthood." God, Himself, would have been "head" of that priesthood revealed in Exodus 19. There may have been diverse responsibilities but every priest would have answered to God for their obedience. The requirement to become this kingdom of priests was to come up His mountain, hear His voice, keep His covenant and obey.

We are making a distinction between this "universal priesthood" that God desired and the "professional priesthood" after the order of Aaron that was substituted because the people could not come up Mt. Sinai and fulfill the requirements. We are certainly NOT against "ministry or diverse ministries" but we are exposing the problems with the "divided priesthood" in the next restoration which we are identifying as the "universal kingdom of priests." Of course this is the ultimate goal of the next restoration but we must begin some place. Even though we may not see the full experience of "universal priesthood" we should at least experience the entrance into this dimension.

We will begin by exposing SOME of the problems associated with this "universal priesthood" that were revealed at the very beginning of the New Covenant priesthood. We want to emphasize that we are using the term "lay persons" to indicate the beginning and not the fulfillment of the "Kingdom of Priests Movement." I am using this term "lay person" to indicate the pioneers of the new movement as opposed to the "professional ministry" that has too much at stake within the denominations to risk getting involved in anything new. Those who did that in the Charismatic Movement were quickly removed from the pulpits and excommunicated from their churches. Many lost their pension plans! Those who were excommunicated began as un-ordained "lay people" even though they had experience in ministry. These soon turned the "ministry" into a professional position over the new "assemblies."

We are not condemning that "system" because it seemed right at the time but it soon turned the "lay movement" into "standard churches" with a divided priesthood. The result was a "ministry class" and a very limited ministry for the "believer class."

class >noun 1 a set or category of things having a common characteristic and differentiated from others by kind or quality. 2 a system that divides members of a society into sets based on social or economic status.

Regardless of any "class system" there is an inherent hypocrisy of having an outward ministry without an inward life. Of course that is not so visible under Outer Court natural light but within the illumination of the Seven Spirits of God the lack of an inward life will be highly visible.

All these "foreign seeds" that have been sown by many of the Outer Court ministries have produced just passing fads and extraneous emphasis with very little eternal fruit.

(**extraneous** >adjective 1 irrelevant or unrelated to the subject. 2 of external origin.)

The Word of the Kingdom is the "true seed" that the sower went forth to sow. The devil sows

tares or weeds. However, we may more clearly identify the weeds in the light of the Seven Spirits of God. We could say that “weeds” are anything EXCEPT the Word of the Kingdom.

While the parable is emphasizing the four different kinds of soil, the seed is the same which is the Word of the Kingdom. Mat 13:19] “When anyone hears **the word of the kingdom**, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

Mat 13:24 He presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who **sowed good seed in his field**. [25] “But while men were sleeping, his **enemy came and sowed tares** also among the wheat, and went away.

Too much of what is sown as “gospel seed” is certainly NOT the Word of the Kingdom. It is just “feel good messages” and Christian philosophy that contains no Kingdom Seed at all. However, since every seed produces after its own kind and what we sow is what we reap, it is clear that to reap Sons of the Kingdom we must sow Kingdom seed. These “sons of natural light” are the result of sowing the “natural light seed.”

It is for this reason that ALL ministry begins in the Holy Place under the glorious light of the Seven Spirits of God and NOT under the natural light of the Outer Court. It appears now that whatever is truly Christian ministry is really Kingdom ministry and has its roots directly in the Active Government of God as personal experience! The Kingdom ministry will present the Kingdom as God’s absolute and from THERE we work down to and identify the relativism of natural light ministry.

(relativism >noun the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute.)

Conversion must ultimately transform (convert) the secular and the relative to the absolutes of the Kingdom. This is NOT just the conversion of the unsaved to Christ but now it involves the conversion of the church to the absolutes of the Kingdom.

(absolute >adjective 1 not qualified or diminished in any way; total. 2 having unlimited power: 3 A value or principle which is universally valid or able to be viewed without relation to other things. 4 without mixture.)

In these and in many other qualifications the Kingdom is the eternal absolute and will stand alone in its total government over all things. To preach less than this is relative and ultimately irrelevant.