

A Priest?

1. The New Testament “Priest” and “Elder” different.

The Greek New Testament word for priest is “*hiereus*” and it appears over 30 times (see Matthew 8:4; Acts 4:1; Hebrews 7:1). This is the word used for a man who acts as an intermediary between God and man. An elder in the church was *never* called a priest.

In the New Testament, we find the word “*presbyteros*” or “*presbyter*” over 60 times (see Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Timothy 5:17). This word means “elder” or an older man. The “elders” or “*presbyters*” of the first-century church were mature Christian men appointed to “oversee” and “*shepherd*” the congregation (see Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3). There were a plurality of them (*never just one*) in every congregation, and in addition, they *never* acted as intermediaries between God and the church. In other words, these two words are neither related nor used synonymously in the New Testament.

2. Who are Called “Priests” in the New Testament?

Here are people to whom “priest” is applied: Levitical Priests – Levites descended from Aaron (brother of Moses) who were appointed to serve in the temple under the Old Testament Law (see Matthew 12:4-5; Luke 5:14; Acts 4:1). Pagan Priests – Idol worshippers who acted as intermediaries between Gentile people and their false deities (see Acts 14:13). Melchizedek Priest – In the Old Testament, a “foreshadow” of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 5-7). Jesus as Priest – Jesus is called our “High Priest” (see Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:1-10; 5:20). He is the only one who serves as our intermediary to God. And All Christians as Priests – Peter wrote that, collectively, Christians are a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). The apostle John wrote that all Christians have been freed from sin and made to be “priests” (see Revelation 1:4-7). This description is not in the sense that Christians are intermediaries between God and others, but that Christians have access to God through Jesus Christ alone. In the New Testament, there is *never* a time when the word “priest” is applied to any person holding an office or position of authority in the church.

3. Why is it Important?

While some might be offended, this traditional observation of “priest” must be challenged. People need to know and understand the truth. The idea of “ordaining” select people as “priests” comes from the Old Testament and paganism, but NOT from Christianity.

When any man (or woman) stands as a “priest” between God and man, he or she usurps the seat of Christ and that is the height of pride and arrogance. Jesus Christ is the only one who comes between God and man. He is our only mediator. “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5).

And for a select group to claim the exclusive right of “priesthood” is to deny clear instruction within the New Testament that all Christians make up the Christian priesthood. “To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” (Revelation 1:5-6).

Everyone who has obeyed the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a priest, and as priests, we are expected to “continually offer up a sacrifice of praise” and service to God through Him (Hebrews 13:15-16). Let us respect the High Priesthood of Christ and obey His Gospel, so we can “with confidence draw near to the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16) as a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9).

Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ?

To all our visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few “family” announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord’s Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and Gospel preaching from the Bible.

Any response is up to you and will be kindly received.

We are glad you decided to worship God with us!



Who was the high priest when Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem?



Smile for the camera! Please see Matt Richardson for details

Bday/Anniv Lunch: 2nd Sunday
Friday Bible Study: 7—8PM. God bless your Bible study (**2 Timothy 2:15**)
Gospel Meeting: hosted by Sherman Church of Christ (**2/6** thru **2/8**), see flyer for times and location.
29th Texomaland Lectures: at Howe, (**2/9** thru **2/12**), see flyer for times & various speakers.
3rd Thursday Night Singing: here from 7—8PM (**2/20**). God bless our joyful praise to the Lord!