

Lesson 3

A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS

THE WORK OF CHRIST ON BEHALF OF HIS PEOPLE

Rev. 1:5-6

A. He has loved us

Love is one of the strongest and greatest feelings of all human emotions. It speaks of compassion, of kindness, of sacrifice and of comfort. It has been said that if there was no love, the world would be a tomb. Christ's love towards us is the source of all His gracious benefits towards His people. We need to be reminded about the nature of Christ's love.

1. The love of Christ is a sovereign love

Some believe that God loves everyone the same. Not only is that unscriptural, but it is a frightful thought. What if God did love everyone the same? What comfort, or what joy would there be in believing that God loves us. But the scriptures teach that the love of God is sovereign. He loves only His elect people. In John 13:1 we read, "*Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.*" "*Having loved His own*" -that speaks of a selective, sovereign love. Christ loves those who have chosen by the Father before the foundation of the world and given to the Him as His people. They are the objects of Christ's love. Paul says "*God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" (**Rom.5:8**) It is those who are the objects of God's love, those that Christ died for. If God loves everyone the same, then no one goes to Hell, because Christ died for their sins.

The sovereign love of God is clearly set forth in Romans, the ninth chapter. We read, "*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*" (v 13) And in case we miss the meaning of that statement, Paul explains it to us again in verse 15, "*For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*"

In Hebrews **12:6** we read, "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*" Also in Revelation 3:19, Christ says, "*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*" I ask the reader a question, "Is everyone chastened by the Lord"? Of course not, only those whom He loves. It is one of the proofs we have that we are His. The Apostle John writes to us "*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*" (**I Jhn.3:1**)

2. The love of Christ is omnipotent

Romans 8:31-32, 37; "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*" God is the all-powerful God. He works and none can hinder (**Dan.4:35**). Everyone who He has purposed to save shall be saved. (**Isa.24:14; Matt.1:21**). Even the most hardened heart will be crushed by the Holy Spirit and the dead sinner quickened by the Holy Spirit. He is also victorious over all the enemies of His people and He will successfully deliver everyone of His elect safely to Heaven's shores.

3. The love of Christ is Redemptive

1 John 4:9-10 *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”* All of God’s elect people who are the objects of His eternal love, have already been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Not a one of them shall experience Hell. God who is just, has already justified His elect by the death of Christ, therefore He can not justly send them to Hell. *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”* (**Rom.3:24**)

Eph. 2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us.”*

4. The love of Christ is eternal The love of God towards His people is eternal. He has loved them from eternity past. *“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.”* (**Jeremiah 31:3**) In **John 13:1**, we are told that Christ, *“having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.”* His love is immutable and eternal. He never will stop loving His people.

B. He has washed in His own blood from our sins *“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”* (**Rom.3:23**) There was nothing that could satisfy the justice of God for our sins except the death of Jesus Christ and the shedding of His sinless blood. From the very first, when sin first entered the human race, God demonstrated that the only way sinners can be reconciled to Him is by the death of a substitute. *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”* (**Gen. 3:21**) The blood of Jesus Christ is the only means by which sinners are justified before God. **Romans 5:9** *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood.”* It is the means whereby His elect are redeemed. *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”* (**Eph.1:7**) The blood of Christ is the means whereby we have peace with God. *“having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.”* (Col. 1:20) It is the means whereby our conscience is purged from dead works. **Hebrews 9:14** *“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”* It is the only means whereby we can have peace with God. *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.”* (**Heb.13:20**) Christ’s blood is precious because it is the only means of salvation (**1 Pet.1:19**). It alone can cleanse us from our sins (**1 John 1:7**). The saints in Heaven are praising Jesus Christ because He has shed His precious blood for their salvation. *“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”* (**Rev.5:9**).

C. He has made us to be kings and priests**Rev. 1:6**

And hath--or as in the Greek, "And (He) hath made us kings-- "He made us (to be) a kingdom." So Exodus 19:6, "a kingdom of priests". In I Peter 2:9, Peter calls the saints, "a royal priesthood." The saints constitute the kingdom of God (Rev 5:10). They share with Christ as He sits on His King-Priest throne in the Heavens. They are kings in relation to man, priests in relation to God, serving Him in His temple-church. Saints now are "priests". They enjoy the privilege of access to the Father through their High Priest, Jesus Christ. Our ministry as kings and priests is here on earth and it is now! Revelation 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN, A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS?

A kingdom is an order. A "priest" is a mediator who is appointed to represent man to God. The first priest where the fathers of the household who were responsible to guide and instruct the family in the worship of God. The first priest mentioned in the Bible is Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and priest of the most High God.(Gen.22:7) Fathers were for themselves and their families.(Gen.4:4; 8:20;12:7;35:1; Ex.12:3;17:15)

When Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai, God established them as "a kingdom of priests and an holy nation." (Ex. 19:6) The Word of God teaches that a priest must be called of God (Heb.5:4) and sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Ex. 29:4,44). A New Testament church is composed of individuals who have been called of God and sanctified by the blood of Christ and the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:4) to be God's priests on earth today. As such, they constitute "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Pet.2:5). They 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" (1 Peter 2:9).

This high calling and glorious ministry that the saints have, should cause us to live godly and be very careful in our Christian conduct and worship.

1 Cor.3:17 "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

Eph. 2:21 "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

Acts 6:3 "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Romans 12:1 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

1 Peter 1:15-16 "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

2 Peter 3:11 "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness."