

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 7



PRIESTS MUST BE HOLY

Scripture Texts: Leviticus 20:7; Leviticus 20:26; Leviticus 21:6; 1 Peter 2:5-9; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Revelation 5:9-10

God required cleanness or holiness in priests. The people of God are all priests, so required to be holy. Israel's priests were to be **holy unto their God**. They were to be separated from the unclean. The priests were given symbols and forms and ceremonies for the cleansing of all things used in the worship of their God. The symbols or types were outward and material. The antitype or reality is inward and spiritual. God will not be satisfied now with so-called holy things and places. God now seeks holy people.

MEMORY VERSE: *Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.*

—*Isaiah 52:11c*

Priests Are to Be Holy and Separate

Leviticus 20:7, 26 God sent His orders to the priesthood through Moses. He said, **Ye shall be holy unto me.** They were to be **severed from other people, that ye should be mine.**

Leviticus 21:6 When God set up the arrangements of the old covenant, He told Israel how each thing must be to please Him. Not only were they to be separated **unto their God**, but they were to be holy. The purpose of the priest's separation and holiness is that he might be joined in God. He was to handle the things of God, to serve God. He must hallow the name of God. An unholy priest attempting to carry on the worship of God would **profane the name of their God**. God would not allow sin in His presence in the tabernacle or temple.

The priests' garments were a symbol of spiritual things. (See **Exodus, Chapter 28**). They represented the necessity of purity in every part of the divine worship and absolute necessity of that holiness, without which none can see the Lord as in **Hebrews 12:14**.

The Church a Holy Priesthood

1 Peter 2:5-9 **Ye also ... are ... an holy priesthood.** This is spoken of the Church of God under the new covenant, people who are made **lively stones** through a new and spiritual birth. Not only were they to be separate from contamination of any low or evil thing, but they were to be separated **unto their God**. **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.** They are lively stones, made alive by the Living Stone, Jesus Christ. As priests, these offer up **spiritual sacrifices** – their redeemed lives, fruit of the Spirit, **the sacrifice of praise to God**. (Read **Romans 12:1; John 15:8; Hebrews 13:15**). They come freely to God with their petitions, and He hears.

When God made Israel a nation, He made them a **kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6)**, men allowed to come before God with their offerings and petitions of the people. That was the type representing the greater thing to come later. When Christ came, He set up the Kingdom of God, the church, **an holy priesthood**, which is the antitype, or fulfillment of the type.

A Separate People

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 **For the temple of God is holy.** It has always been God's desire to walk and commune with man. The closest He could get to man under the Old Testament was the holy of holies in temples made by hands. He used a priest, made holy by ceremonial cleansings, as a connection between God and man.

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 7

Not every person who claims to be a Christian is accepted by God. For God to permit sin in the lives of His people, the church, His nature and outlook toward sin would have to change. God does not change!

Separation is essential in holiness – separation from sin, from self, from the world. This makes God’s people a peculiar people, His special and peculiar possession. It is a privilege. Now when the world’s fast multiplying temptations are crowding upon us daily, we need to desire that communication with God that He desires with us. We will want to be separate if we love Him.

What does this mean to us when surrounded by immodest dress? Evil moral standards? Invitation to harmful habits? False doctrines? Wicked practices? When told, “Everybody does it”? It takes godly teaching and training for young people and children to be able to meet these victoriously.

Made Kings and Priests

Priests in Israel were set apart for their work by several steps. (1) Special garments signifying the holiness of the position and the work. (2) The anointing oil poured on them was a type of the Holy Spirit Who comes upon God’s people now. (3) Sacrifices were offered by the priests. Jesus Christ is our sacrifice. (4) The priests laid their hands on the sacrifices to show acceptance of them for themselves. Thus we must accept Christ as our sacrifice if He is to avail for us. (5) The altar where the priests served was cleansed. **It shall be an altar most holy; whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy (Exodus 29:37).** Christ is our holy Altar. All who come before Him or attempt His work must be holy. Read **Exodus 29** for more about temple procedures.

The holiness of priests was to be carefully guarded. Nothing was allowed to contaminate it. Any and all articles set aside for worship of God must be handled with obedience, reverence, concern, and adoration.

Revelation 5:9-10 John in a God-given vision saw saints praising Christ. They sang, **Thou ... hast redeemed us to God by thy blood ... made us unto our God kings and priests.** The saving power of Jesus makes people **kings** to reign victoriously over sin, and **priests** to approach God with offerings and petitions. As redeemed ones, they are holy, so qualified to be priests. In **Revelation, Chapter 5**, we read of the high praise given Christ for the redemption He bought with His blood. Are our voices in that praise? Have you received that redemption? Repent and believe and follow, and it will be yours.

JUST A THOUGHT

**If the name of Christ sounds out of place,
you are in the wrong company.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
It is revised and posted here with written permission from
(c) Bible Paths Publications, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047