

Baptist Distinctives Part 2: Priesthood of Believers

Every believer is a priest at the moment of his or her salvation. As priests each believer can go to God personally through Christ, our great High Priest as the one and only mediator. Only four NT passages, **highlighted below**, use the term “priesthood of believers.” These passages teach us two lessons about the priesthood of believers.

1. Priesthood of Believers Describes Our Present Relationship

- Herschel Hobbs said, “The priesthood of believers means that every believer in Christ is a priest (**1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev 1:5-6**; Ex. 19:1-8) with direct access to God through prayer (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 4:15-16; 7:25-28; Hobbs, *What Baptists Believe*, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964, p. 71).
- As a priest every believer is capable of reading and understanding the word of God with the aid of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13; 1 Cor 2:11-15) but not free to a personal interpretation of Scripture (2 Pet 1:19-21).
- As priests we are to witness of God’s saving work in Christ, 2 Cor 5:17-21 and seek to bring the lost to Him (1 Pet 2:5-10).

2. Priesthood of Believers Describes our Future Blessed Hope

- All believers will be priests in the coming Kingdom of God and will reign on earth with Christ, the great High Priest, as kings and priests (**Rev 5:10**).
- The Second Death has no power on those who are part of the first resurrection. They will be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with him a thousand years (**Rev. 20:6**).

This doctrine reveals the fact that God has given us great privileges by making us priests. We have access to God, freedom to understand the Bible, no need for sacrifices, and the privilege to serve God under Christ our great High Priest. It is required that we be faithful in our service for Him (1 Cor 4:1-2). We are to remember that this great privilege requires great responsibility on our part (Lk 12:48). As priests we must be living sacrifices (Rom 12:1-2), committed (Phi 2:17), obedient (2 Cor 9:12; Heb 13:16), thankful (1 Thess 5:18; Heb 13:15-16); pure (1 Tim 5:22); and God-fearing (2 Cor 7:1).

Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.