

REVEALED Special Study– A Kingdom of Priests

Revelation calls the church “A Kingdom of Priests”

This is rooted in **Revelation 1:6**, **Revelation 5:9-10**, and **Revelation 20:6**, where believers are described as **a kingdom and priests**. This phrase connects to the broader biblical theme of God’s people being **His representatives on earth, mediating His presence and reflecting His reign**.

1. The Biblical Foundation: A Kingdom of Priests in Revelation

A. Revelation 1:5-6 – Our Identity in Christ

John begins Revelation by declaring that Jesus has:

"Made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:6, ESV)

This echoes **Exodus 19:6**, where God told Israel:

"You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6, ESV)

This **priestly calling** is now applied **not just to Israel but to all who follow Jesus**. This means the Church is:

- **A Kingdom** → Called to reflect **God’s reign on earth**.
- **Priests** → Called to **worship God and mediate His presence to the world**.

B. Revelation 5:9-10 – The Purpose of the Kingdom of Priests

In **Revelation 5**, the Lamb is worshiped because He has redeemed people from every nation:

"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.'" (Revelation 5:9-10, ESV)

This shows that:

1. **Our identity as a kingdom of priests comes through Christ’s sacrifice.**
2. **This calling is global—meant for people from every nation.**
3. **The Church will reign on the earth—our priestly role isn’t just future, but now.**

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C. Revelation 20:6 – The Priestly Reign of the Saints

Later in Revelation, those who remain faithful are described as reigning with Christ:

"Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6, ESV)

This confirms that **our priestly role involves ruling under Christ's authority.**

2. What Does It Mean to Be a Kingdom of Priests?

A. We Mediate God's Presence on Earth

In the Old Testament, **priests stood between God and the people**, offering sacrifices and maintaining worship in the temple.

- Now, **Jesus is our High Priest** (Hebrews 4:14-16), and **we are called to reflect His presence to the world.**
- **We bring heaven's worship to earth by living lives of devotion, prayer, and holiness** (Romans 12:1).

Michael Gorman on the Church as Priests:

Michael Gorman, in *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, writes:

"The Church's priestly role is not about hierarchy or ritual—it is about mission. To be priests is to bring God's presence into the world through worship, witness, and sacrificial love." (*Reading Revelation Responsibly*, p. 94)

B. We Declare God's Kingship Over the Earth

As a **kingdom**, we do not rule in the way the world does—we **reign by serving, loving, and testifying to the truth of Christ.**

- Our "priestly reign" means we **demonstrate what it looks like when God is truly King.**
- **Worship is central to this**—when we worship, we declare **who really sits on the throne.**

N.T. Wright on Kingdom and Worship:

N.T. Wright, in *Revelation for Everyone*, explains:

"To be a kingdom of priests means God's people are already participating in His rule, not through force, but through worship and witness. Worship is not an

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escape from the world—it is how **heaven’s reign comes to earth.**” (*Revelation for Everyone*, p. 52)

C. We Offer Spiritual Sacrifices

In the New Testament, **believers no longer offer animal sacrifices, but spiritual ones:**

- **Romans 12:1** – “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”
- **1 Peter 2:5** – “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

This means:

1. **Our daily lives are an act of worship.**
2. **Every act of faithfulness, service, and love is a sacrifice of praise.**

G.K. Beale on Priestly Worship:

G.K. Beale, in *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, says:

“The Church’s role as priests is to extend God’s presence into all the world. **As we worship and proclaim Christ, we are fulfilling the very purpose for which humanity was created—to reflect the image of God.**” (*The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, p. 358)

3. Bringing Heaven’s Worship to Earth

Since **Revelation gives us a glimpse of worship in heaven**, our role is to **bring that worship into the world now.**

How Do We Bring Heaven’s Worship to Earth?

1. **Through Corporate Worship**
 - When we gather as the Church, we reflect **the heavenly worship of Revelation 4-5.**
 - Worship **isn’t just personal—it’s a witness to the world.**
2. **Through Living in Holiness**
 - Priests were called to be **set apart**, and as a kingdom of priests, our lives should **reflect God’s character.**
 - The Church **models what life under God’s reign looks like.**
3. **Through Proclaiming the Gospel**
 - Revelation shows that **worship and witness go hand in hand.**

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- **Revelation 12:11** – *"They have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."*
 - Every time we **proclaim Christ**, we extend heaven's worship into the world.
4. **Through Acts of Justice and Mercy**
- As priests, we do not just **worship in song**—we **worship through action**.
 - **Micah 6:8** – *"To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."*

Scot McKnight on Worship as Kingdom Work:

Scot McKnight, in *Revelation: A Kingdom Vision*, says:

"Worship in Revelation is not just something that happens in heaven. **It is the engine of the Church's mission on earth.** Every time we gather, pray, and declare God's truth, we are taking part in the very thing that will define eternity—praising the Lamb." (*Revelation: A Kingdom Vision*, p. 127)

Conclusion: Our Priestly Mission Today

1. **We are called to worship, not just for ourselves, but to transform the world.**
2. **We bring God's reign to earth through faithful living, evangelism, and justice.**
3. **Worship is not just singing—it is the mission of the Church.**

This means that every time we **pray, sing, serve, and proclaim the Gospel, we are participating in heaven's reality now.** We are **not waiting for the kingdom to come—it is already breaking in** through the Church's worship and witness.

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!" (Revelation 5:12, ESV)