

# The Royal Priesthood and the Bible

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## Introduction

*“He has made us to be ... priests to His God and Father”* (Rev 1:6). *“You all are ... a royal priesthood”* (1Pet 2:9). When a person receives Jesus Christ, many things occur in that instant. Here are two. Each Christian is made a priest to God and is simultaneously placed into the royal priesthood. That is worth repeating. Each Christian ... is made a priest to God and is simultaneously placed into the royal priesthood.

If practiced, the teaching presented in the following paragraphs will revolutionize the local fellowship. That will, in turn, impact the world around each of those Christians in phenomenal ways. I am not sure I have ever made such a claim in any of my previous materials, but I do not think I am overstating this. Here are two reasons for this claim.

First, every Christian will quickly realize this role is foundational to one's relationship with God Almighty. As the Christian increasingly understands this office into which he/she was placed at conversion, any outside interference to a continual functioning in this role will simply fade into background noise. This honor was purchased by the blood of the King, so no downgrading of this calling will even be entertained - no going back to some previous station in life. The Christian will come to know by experience the privileges, duties and responsibilities involved in this gift from God - and thus have greater understanding of who he/she is in Jesus Christ. This builds what I call a *life confidence*. This life becomes exceedingly meaningful, and the Christian, by the merits of this office, occupies a post of unparalleled importance and power – impacting both believers and unbelievers in his/her realm of influence. A person can not be stationed to a more important post. This is the pinnacle position for anyone in this age.

Second, if practiced in the local fellowship, every Christian will be afforded a continual, genuine respect. Actually, this bestowed office demands respect be granted each saint - and only sin creates a short-circuit to this end. As each Christian functions in this office, designations of *“layman,”* or being employed in *“secular work,”* will disappear. Also, the belief that theological degrees and letters confer spirituality, will also rightly vanish.

These are a couple of reasons why I contend that understanding and applying the material in this article will end with eternally massive results. But, rather than worrying about the local church, and what it might (or might not) do in this regard, let's just start with you. That ... you can control.

## Institution of This New Order

When *“the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom”* (Mt 27:51), God was finished with the Levitical priesthood. Jesus is now the High Priest *“according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Heb 7:17). He *“was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests”* (Heb 7:14). Chapters 7 through 10 of Hebrews are extremely clear on this entire priesthood of Christ matter. His is an eternal post - and He is now the only High Priest in existence - and the only One who will ever be. Each Christian is appointed as a priest - probably of the Melchizedek order - a royal priesthood, under Jesus, the High Priest. This is the only priesthood God now recognizes (Heb 7:17,21,24 and 28). If you have been born again, as His son or daughter, you are of this number. This is incredible favor – an astounding privilege - an amazing bestowal. Truly phenomenal. Read on!

## **Priests Have Access Into the Holy Place and To the Throne**

In Jesus Christ, one's sin barrier is eternally removed. Full access into the Holy Place before God the Father is now granted each Christian. One enters through the flesh of Jesus Christ - the true veil (Heb 10:20). Inquiries, requests, and offerings of thanks are to be presented there on matters great or small. The earthly tabernacle, over which the Levites presided, was simply *"a copy and shadow of the heavenly things"* (Heb 8:5 and 9:23-24). But, for those who are given this phenomenal opportunity, and avail themselves of it, another discovery awaits. This secure link ... is a two-way pipeline.

### **From The Throne**

We not only bring things forward into the Holy Place ... but also soon learn that the Father's hands are *free to work* in, and through the Christian (His priest) in unique, powerful and constructive ways. As priests, God regularly imparts theological insight to them. After all, they are priests of the living Creator. And sometimes the imparted material is quite timely for the need of the moment. *"When they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to speak. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you"* (Mt 10:19-20). What a God.

Other times, in less intense settings, He simply imparts insight to His own so they discern His will and priorities. Information imparted from the Throne not only works *in* the Christian for personal benefit, but also regularly moves *through* that priest to the benefit of the world he/she touches. This is oftentimes manifested by words spoken in right circumstances. *"Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in its circumstances"* (Pr 25:11). But other actions often flow from the One who sits on the Throne in response to petitions from His priests. Specific prayer requests can move Him ... and those affected may not know the divine assistance was the result of a royal priest's labor on their behalf. *"A petition of a righteous man is very strong, being made effectual"* (Ja 5:16. This is a more literal rendering of that verse. It is God Himself who makes the request *"effectual"*).

In light of this, please explain to me how any Christian ... is a layman.

### **The Nature of This World**

A common theme of this age, indeed its defining characteristic, is its natural bent to dismiss God - His will, ways, priorities and communiques. He even came in person into the nation to whom He chose to reveal Himself for a couple of thousand years, and those who should have known better *"did not receive Him"* (Jn 1: 11). He was Israel's Rock (Deut 32:31) ... and became - The Rejected Stone. So, what might be a possible reaction toward His priests?

Rejection of His priests, His angels, or God Himself, is not the end of the matter. God *"has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead"* (Ac 17:31). Fortunately, some **do** respond positively. But, either way, any message from that High Priest (sent through His priests - us) will be accounted for at the Judgment. A recounting of actions following that message (whether the recipient responded good or bad) will then be recompensed with the appropriate eternal weight.

### **Tests**

I am certain God regularly tests us ... by bringing messages to us through vessels our pride and ego want to dismiss. When I was a young Christian, on staff at a Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center, a recovering client came to me with a challenge to our imposed, ministry-wide, Sabbath keeping policy. He put this passage in front of me: *"Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon **or a Sabbath day** - things which are a mere shadow of*

*what is to come; the body of Christ*" (Col 2:16,17). He then asserted it wasn't right for us to place all kinds of rules on him, or the others, so as to "*keep the Sabbath as a day of rest*" - only allowing Bible pursuits. The preacher who was doctrinally behind this rehabilitation ministry ... was a "*giant*" in the faith, Dr. D. James Kennedy. He had thousands at his church every week, often spoke memorized Koine Greek from the pulpit, founded the worldwide Evangelism Explosion program, had a radio and television ministry ... and a recovering drunk was challenging this scholar - as well as the leadership and board of our rehabilitation ministry? Was I to believe - this drunk - or all the spiritual authority over me? The answer is ... neither. The challenge before me was the same as always - and always will be ... "*search the Scriptures*" and "*examine everything carefully holding fast to the good*" (Jn 5:39 and 1Thess 5:21). In this instance, the recovering drunk was handling the Scriptures accurately. God used that passage like a two-by-four between my eyes, and I began a search about the Law and soon learned that entire denomination was in grave error on the Mosaic Law and its place and purpose post-cross. God bless you, Kenny.

### **Another Unattractive Vessel**

*"Rabbi, who sinned? This man or his parents that he should be born blind?"* This was asked by the disciples about a man they passed who was blind from birth. This was a stupid question on several fronts. But Jesus, being patient as always, responded, "*Neither ...*" (Jn 9:2,3). He then spat on the ground, made some mud and put it on the blind man's eyes and instructed him to wash it off in the pool of Siloam. He did, and was healed. When word of this exploded, the Pharisees gained an audience and quizzed this man's parents and the man himself. The making of mud, plus the act of healing, constituted work on the Sabbath, so Jesus must be a sinner. After an extended exchange, the healed man said, "*Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.*" Their response? "*You were born entirely in sins, and you are teaching us?*" Then they ousted him. He was indeed ... teaching them. Obviously, his students were not teachable. This wrong turn by the Pharisees will be revisited at the Judgment. Pride, bigotry, errant theologies ... indeed "*there is nothing new under the sun*" (Eccl 1:9). The Pharisees were not going to receive God's message through this unattractive vessel.

This incident was a physical example of what was coming. Jesus said this man was born blind for God's glory. Jesus physically healed him in order to demonstrate a spiritual truth. When the healed man found Jesus and worshiped Him, Jesus pronounced this over him. "*For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and those who see may become blind*" (Jn 9:39). Read the whole of John chapter 9 to see the Pharisees response to that. But to our point, every single priest in this new order was at one time totally blind. Blinded by his/her own sin and also by "*the god of this world*" (2Cor 4:4). At the moment of rebirth in Christ Jesus, *eyes* were granted so we might now *see*. And just like that physically blind man we now announce the things of God as we receive them. What a calling. What a calling.

### **Denying One's Priesthood**

If a Christian has truth to share, yet it is dismissed out of hand with no inquiry as to its validity – that is denying one's priesthood. For example, I was invited into a [Tithe Study group](#) a few years ago. It has been a treasure trove of information on the tithe of the Bible and this current new teaching called, "*the tithe.*" Several in the group are academically educated theologians (PhD, M-Div, etc.). That, in itself, does not confer accuracy in thinking or belief, but if such credentials are necessary for one to confer weight to the materials, that is present. All the contributing members have been under this false teaching somewhere along the way - and in this platform exchange the "*proofs*" for, and stories about,

this cash extraction by varied sects. Many had themselves participated in this - but then some declaration about this “*tithe*” hit them wrong. For example, one who was an audio technician for his church, was stunned when the preacher warned all the widows on Social Security that God demanded 10% of that monthly check to immediately come to the local church. He knew the salary and benefits of that pastor (and staff) and suddenly felt nauseated. The journey then began of an actual Bible study on the tithe. One way God uses the internet is that people can enter a search query and immediately begin high quality private study to heart's content.

Once the royal priest discovers that God has never required a tithe from a Christian (and the tithe was never money anyway - even under the Law) ... then the fun begins. Can you imagine the shock at learning that, as a carpenter ... Jesus *never* tithed? And there is no indication He ever had any animal or grain gains *to tithe either*. So now, equipped with correct Bible knowledge ... these priests go forward to teach others. And who do you suspect might be the first people with whom they want to share their discoveries? That's right! The pastor, elders, deacons and Sunday School teachers at their local church! After all, God says, “*Let the one who is taught **the Word** share all good things with him who teaches*” (Gal 6:6) - and learning Biblical truth is indeed a good thing, right? Those “*leading*” surely want all the details of these Biblical discoveries from those they have been “*leading,*” right? Surely they are like John who said, “*I have no greater joy than this - to hear of my children walking **in the truth***” (3Jn 4).

I know of no one who has done a solid study on the Bible tithe and then returned to teaching this new cash “*tithe*” (which has hijacked and pasted the word “*tithe*” on it) as God's will. If you are interested in another classic case of one's priesthood being denied, the Appendix is an exchange between several of us with one of the contributors of the tithe study group referenced above.

## **The Handling of Scripture by a Royal Priest: Exegesis versus Eisegesis**

The Word of God is the primary tool God uses in communicating with His priests. But, He is bigger than just His word. Any time He wants to communicate by dreams or visions, He can. The New Testament has many accounts of this. And, if He might choose to speak audibly to someone – can you stop Him? He will never violate His written word, but He is bigger than that compilation of letters. Having said that, I do want to discuss the handling of that written word by His priests. There are two competing theological positions that need address – exegesis versus eisegesis.

What a difference a little preposition makes. Both of these words are compound Greek words. “*Ex*” is a preposition meaning motion *out of something having been in it*. The “*egesis*” part means, “*to guide.*” Exegesis is the work of *guiding out* of Scripture *what is actually there* - what God is saying. On the other hand, the preposition, “*eis*” is motion *toward something having never been in what it is moving toward*. So, eisegesis, is motion *from outside* - working to *guide toward* something. In this instance, eisegesis is an attempt to *use* the Bible to shore up an outside-of-the-Bible point. The intent is to give authority to the outside point. This may surprise you, but there is both “*legal eisegesis*” and “*illegal eisegesis.*” But before that, let's first examine exegesis.

### **Exegesis**

There are five traditional principles (hermeneutic principles) that are commonly used in the effort to “*guide out*” of a passage what is being said. They are *lexical-syntactical* (word and grammar studies), *historical-cultural* (traditions and politics at the time of writing), *context of a verse* (avoid taking a statement out of context), *theological analysis* (comparing all verses on the topic from all the places in the Bible), and *special literature determination* (is the passage clearly poetic and filled with

symbolism, or is a simple historic account, etc.). Such work (exegesis) should be applied toward every passage. There is always a proper context and meaning to everything God has communicated - in its historical time and place. There is always benefit in such an exercise. But, there is more to this story.

### **Legal Eisegesis**

The New Testament writers regularly referenced Old Testament passages in order to shore up some point they were making. Oftentimes, that passage was taken completely out of its context and meaning ... yet, we believe these writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit. That means ... the Holy Spirit engaged in eisegesis. So, there is ... "**legal eisegesis**." Check out Paul's use of Psalm 116:10 in 2Corinthians 4:13. "*I believed, therefore I spoke.*" I have always wanted to do an exhaustive study of each New Testament use of an Old Testament passage. My goal would be to see what "*hermeneutic violations*" the Holy Spirit authored. It would then be obvious that while our five traditionally accepted hermeneutic principles should be consulted when seeking to understand any given passage, they are still man-made "*rules*" and should always be treated as "*rules of thumb*." The bigger question then becomes ... if God has chosen to eisegete His work **legally** through Paul, can He do the same to, and through, us if He so chooses? You already know I believe He has such liberty. For example, ...

Very early in my Christian life, I desperately wanted to know the fate of the USA. Was it the Babylon of Revelation? (Rev 18 - read it). Historical Babylon "*will never again be inhabited, or dwelt in from generation to generation. As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah with its neighbors ... no man will live there, nor will any man reside in it*" (Jer 50:39-40). Also look at Jeremiah 51, especially verses 25-26 and 60-64. So, Babylon of The Revelation is clearly symbolic for some great, dominant, prosperous - and immoral - society. Could that be the USA?

It is not abnormal to be drawn into end time studies. Most of us want to know the future - at least to some degree. When I asked God the following question, I had already been exposed to both Amillennialism and Premillennial Dispensationalism. Rather than ask for a full understanding of the whole end time scenario, I decided to narrow the request to just one little chunk. "*Father, if You would just let me know about America!*" That's all - just America. Soon afterward, I read this passage. "*It is not for you to know times and epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority*" (Acts 1:7). This was spoken by the risen Christ - near Jerusalem - to His eleven disciples/apostles. It is a historical account - not some directive to a 20th century, Gentile Christian in America ... me. Yet, to this day (30+ years later), that passage still lifts off the page and drowns out all surrounding clatter ... fully dominating all my senses. He's the Teacher and I am the student. Maybe I was asking to learn calculus when He knew I needed to learn how to add. To yank this passage out of its context and apply it to myself is *clear-cut eisegesis*. However, I fully expect God will confirm at The Judgment He was behind this ... **legal** eisegesis. So, He moved me on to other matters - like ... what you are reading :)

### **Another Personal Example**

Another time, as a young Christian in south Florida, I found myself longing to leave the single life behind. When around my sisters in the Lord, I found myself easily ... diverted, you might say. Anyway, as I was riding the bus home from work one day, I was reading Jeremiah, and came across this verse. "*You shall not take a wife for yourself nor have sons and daughters in this place*" (Jer 16:2). That passage shot straight through me. I immediately reacted with great resistance. Actually, I got really mad. I did not want to "*hear*" that. That is often an indicator to me that God is behind the communicate - when it rubs my flesh the wrong way. I am confident that God eisegeted that passage toward me that day - and that will be confirmed when I stand before Him. The result? By the time I had walked from the bus stop to home, I had yielded ... and that began a chapter of tremendous

freedom. I did not entertain any future marriage relationship with any of my sisters in south Florida and related to them as - and only as - my sisters. God proceeded to fill my life with intense responsibilities the rest of those Florida days. Five years passed and when certain my next chapter was a Bible College in Mississippi, I let Him know I was leaving that “*place.*” Within a year I married ... and had children elsewhere. It's all history now. Again, this is *clear-cut eisegesis*. I am not Jeremiah in Israel awaiting the invasion and devastation by Nebuchadnezzar.

You might think these personal examples are the ramblings of a self-deceived, muddleheaded, egocentric sap. There is no question I have eisegeted these texts. And just because these passages greatly influenced my life course, that doesn't prove anything. Ultimately, this matter will be settled between me and my Creator. The reason I am belaboring this point is because Christians engage in eisegesis regularly. They often feel God has spoken to them through His word – but even a cursory look at the cited passage shows it was obviously written to someone else in an entirely different historical setting. My point is that when such eisegesis produces results that do not conflict with some other part of the Bible, no one on the outside can know *for sure* if the eisegesis is legal or not. In the examples I shared above, I am content to wait until The Judgment to be vindicated - or reproved. My bet ... is the former.

As far as God being an eisegete ... this very thought might repulse you. But, your reaction will not stop Him if He is so inclined. His Old Testament uses in the New Testament have convinced me He has done this ... and can do this. He will never violate His words - but He can take His own words out of their context, and *legally* apply them to some outside situation any time He wants. While He does use His word exegetically, and we should always seek to gain that perspective ... He also uses it eisegetically. Consider, and work on this matter. Of course, there is ...

### **Illegal Eisegesis**

Here is the simplest way to recognize illegal eisegesis. If the point being presented uses the Bible in a way *that violates a more basic Bible declaration*, then you are witnessing *illegal* eisegesis. The goal is to make the particular point authoritative by God - yet the actor is using God's own words *illegally*. Satan did this when he quoted Psalm 91:11,12 to Jesus. After having led Jesus to the top of the Temple, he said, “*If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning You, to guard you,' and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'*” Jesus refuted this. “*On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'*” (Lk 4:9-11 and Mt 4:7). The verses Satan used were true, but Jesus came back with the more fundamental truth - thus exposing Satan's illegal eisegesis. He was using God's own words in the attempt to produce a sin action. Such activity is an extremely high crime.

People, and churches, do this when they start with a *decided* position (some doctrine/practice) and then point *toward* passages in an attempt to give it the air of God's authority. Again, what makes this “*illegal*” is when that pet doctrine or practice violates what God's word *actually does teach* on the particular matter. This new cash “tithe” teaching is a perfect example. Select parts of God's word are cited in the effort to present God as the One behind this, but this teaching violates 1 Timothy 5:8 (family provision mandate) and Romans 13:8 (no debt) - the bedrock passages of each royal priest's financial ministry. This teaching ... uses Him. That is not going to end well.

### **Conclusion**

I have one primary goal for this article. I want you functioning as the priest you are - as much as you possibly can. I want you bringing people and situations into the Holy Place with whatever requests

you deem appropriate ... placing all this before God the Father as you ask for His attention and action. *“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective”* (Ja 5:16).

As a Christian, you are already in this Royal Priesthood ... this very second. There are no hoops you must jump through and no validation needed from any man. The only question is if you realize this and if you are operating in this now. May He rebuke every “voice” that seeks to strip this privilege and responsibility from you in even the most subtle of ways. To this end, I leave you this assignment.

When you lie down tonight, repeat this before the Lord one hundred times: *“I am a priest in You, part of Your Royal Priesthood. I am a priest, I am a priest, I am a priest.”* That's one. Only ninety-nine more to go. Along the way, ask Him to teach you what that means. Ask for understanding as to *who you are in Him*. You want accuracy and depth. Ask Him to rebuke Satan from interfering in this request - and all sin, internal and external, held at bay. You want illumination from the King of all the kings, and Lord of all the lords ... indeed, from your eternal High Priest. If you do this, I am certain of one thing ... He will answer. Why would He buy this for you on a Roman cross, and then deny your requests for understanding about this gift?

In fact, you don't have to wait until tonight to start this assignment. You can start right now. Go! *“I am a priest in You, part of Your Royal Priesthood. I am a priest, I am a priest, I am a priest.”* .... *“I am a priest in You, part of Your Royal Priesthood. I am a priest, I am a priest, I am a priest.”* ...

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## **Appendix: Case Study of One's Priesthood Denied**

Below is an email exchange from the Tithes Study group referenced earlier. A fellow named Wes received an email from his church asking for extra cash - even beyond their errant “tithe” call. He submitted the church's letter to the group, along with his potential response (in the parentheses after each of the church letter points), for review and advice. Chris and I responded. This incident is a classic example of one's priesthood being denied.

### **From Wes**

“Today I received a mailing from my local Church, asking each member to give '\$750 (above tithes) this year'. This is what they sent and what I'm thinking of sending back instead of a financial pledge. I'm now asking for your thoughts, opinions, and input.

### **The Church Letter** (with Wes' potential responses in parentheses)

The Church asks everyone to embrace the following **Biblical Living Giving Components:**

1) PRAYER Jeremiah 29:10-14 (NIV) This is what the Lord says: *'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the Lord, 'and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,' declares the Lord, 'and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.'*

(I consider that manipulation: “Our request for money is for your benefit.”)

2) FAITH Matthew 17:19-21 (NIV) Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, *'Why couldn't we drive it out?'* He replied, *'Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.'* (I

consider this more manipulation: “Pledge more than you think you can afford, and God will make it appear.”)

3) SACRIFICE Romans 12:1-2 (NIV) *'Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your reasonable act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.'* (More manipulation: “Do what we want, and then you will know God wants you to comply with our wishes.”)

4) BLESSING Malachi 3:8-12 (NIV) *'Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' 'In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,' says the Lord Almighty. 'Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,' says the Lord Almighty.'* (Additional manipulation: “You are suffering financially because you don't give enough. Give us more, and God will bless your finances.”)

5) OBEDIENCE 1 Peter 1:1-2 (NIV) *'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.'* (Reinforcing the message: “Obey and you will have an abundance.”)

6) LOVE John 21:15-17 (NIV) *'When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.' Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you truly love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.' The third time He said to him, Simon son of John, do you love me? Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, Do you love me? He said, Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you. (The final, most painful shot: “If you love God, you will do what we want.”)*

My initial response is: Matthew 6:2 (NIV) *'So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.'* 2Corinthians 9:7 (NIV) *'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'* Then I conclude with: *'As long as you teach falsely, I will give nothing.'*  
Wes”

### **Chris' First Reply:**

“Hi Wes

What a devious manipulation their letter is. Your comments accurately expose their misrepresentations ... It might also help if you show them what the scriptures they use actually say (vs what they have been used for). For example,

1) Seeking the Lord is with all our HEARTS ... and not our wallets (internal transformation vs external obligation ... John 4:23-24).

2) Faith is in the completed work of Christ for us ... rather than us trying to earn our blessings by doing *'works of the Law'*...or *'works of the religious flesh'* (Gal 3:1-5).



3) Sacrifice refers to each of us personally living for God ... rather than paying professional ministers to do *'the work of God'* for us (Eph 2:10, Eph 4:11&12).

4) Blessings in the New Testament come from when we in faith see that God *'has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus'* (also Rom 8:32).....and not when we try to earn them by *'works of the Law'* such as tithing.

5) Obedience in the New Testament refers to *'obedience to the FAITH'*...ie when we stop trying by our works of the flesh and Law to impress God...and rely instead on what Jesus has done for us (Eph 2:8-9).

6) Love is when we look after the POOR and NEEDY (Gal 2:10)....rather than the greedy who will not work . *'Feed my sheep'* does not suggest that church leaders should FLEECE the sheep. Chris”

### **Wes Replied:**

“This is what I finally sent:

*'Dear Pastor X, I have received requests from church asking for more money. Since you will soon become Senior Pastor, I thought I would take my concerns about these requests to you. Feel free to pass this along if someone else should handle this. My first problem is that I believe Tithing to be an old, outdated concept from God to Old Covenant Israel. I believe Tithing is chaining New Covenant Christians to the law, and that Tithing violates of Matthew 6:2 and 2Corinthians 9:7. Besides this, I believe that all the verses offered to support the church's request for money amounts to legal manipulation.'* (Wes then addressed each of the points in the initial letter).  
Sincerely, Wes”

### **Wes' First Update**

“I have not heard back from them. The only thing that might be a response is the week they put *'Perfect people not allowed'* on their reader board.”

### **Chris' Second Reply:**

“Hi Wes.

The most common strategy churches take to respond to problems like you have presented to them is to simply ignore the person presenting it completely. The pastor at the former church where I fellowshiped responded the following week with a teaching on tithing. The gist of it was that while tithing may not be taught in the New Testament per se ...it was a revelation that all *'spiritual'* believers would receive.....and they would want to give even if it was not required ...ie by a New Testament chapter and verse. This was a way of excluding all those who do not *'tithe'*....and give offerings beyond that....as being *'unspiritual'*.....and therefore not suitable for ANY role or ministry in the body ...until they *'see the light'*....and repent! (ie, start paying up).

The other key is that if you were to discuss the matter with any other person in the church (and they find out) you would be asked to desist....and only talk to one designated elder about the issue. His role would be to *'douse the fire'* of truth which burns in you.....and make sure there is not contagion. If you were not prepared to agree to their terms you will almost certainly be asked to leave....Truth however is something that we have to stand for...it is *'non-negotiable'*....it is only in knowing the truth that any person will find freedom....

God bless you with all the wisdom you will require in the times ahead.

Chris”

## **My First Response:**

“Chris,

Your analysis is extremely accurate. I think what you said should be encapsulated and put in a one page article on this site: *'Common Procedure on how Pro-Tithe Churches Respond to Questions or Challenges from Pew-Sitters'*. This could help brace our brothers and sisters so any coming injury might be lessened.

I actually add another layer to this. There is a doctrine that was rediscovered in the Reformation that has never been appreciated in practical terms in the post reformation Church. It is the doctrine of the priesthood of each believer. Simply stated, each Christian has been granted a direct line to God the Father. Each Christian has the privilege to enter the Holy Place before His Throne with thanksgivings and requests - and also be taught directly by Him. This incredible favor is a gift secured for each Christian by One - who went to the cross to make it possible. This gift of being placed in the holy priesthood, the royal priesthood (1Pet 2:5 and 9) - this position, this title, this role - is blood-bought treasure that is *'fall-out'* from pardon. The organized Church denies this blood-bought crown granted to each saint by its errant structure of titles and *'letters.'* Most churches are in total deception about the authority God has granted leadership in the local body. I will write on this more thoroughly in my next article.

But for us here - when churches engage in the practice you so aptly have described, they are denying the priesthood of that saint who has brought this *'tithe'* error to their attention. They will answer for this. I am absolutely convinced that one way God tests us is by bringing truth to us through *'unattractive'* vessels. When our pride dismisses them - we fail and God allows us to stumble forward in our darkness. At Judgment, the resultant bad fruit will be exposed as the wood, hay and stubble that it is - and we will see our garbage we thought was 'ministry' burn up before our eyes. God will reveal the errant fork we took was when He sent a saint to us and we denied their priesthood. That is what is going on here - a priesthood denied. More later.  
Robin.”

## **Wes' Second Update**

“I went back to that Church yesterday. The Pastor was walking around outside and talked with me before entering. He said he got my e-mail and wanted to know what brought me back. I replied, *'If I need the Church to agree with me on everything, maybe something's wrong with me.'* He replied that he thinks on the Tithe issue, I'm making a little issue into a big one. After attending the Saturday Evening Service, I feel more than ever that this Church's focus is on garnering obedience and loyalty to get more money. They asked for the Tithe, and said that Christians need to stand up for Christian values. I didn't see or hear anything about forming and maintaining a loving relationship with God. What I heard sounded more like something one would hear from a coach before a football game. Not sure what to do, but do know that this Church's regular services are bad for me spiritually.  
Wes”

## **Chris' Third Reply**

“Hi Wes

I would ask you a few rhetorical questions.....

What price would you pay for truth? Would you compromise the TRUTH of what Jesus taught ...so that you could be accepted by men?

Do you believe that the God who is TRUTH would require you to compromise in order to be able to love people? Jesus didn't.

Walk in Truth...with the God who himself is Truth.

Have no motive other than love .....(I am sure you don't)....and then keep speaking what you know to be TRUTH.

Pay the price that this costs ....it is the only way to know the peace that really counts. Peace with God is worth far more than peace with men.  
Chris”

### **My Response To Wes and this Development**

“Hey Wes

All I can think of is - pray. Ask God to communicate with you - if the problem is yourself - or not. This will either lead to some sort of repentance - or an internal strengthening that you are on the right path. I believe it is our responsibility to protect our own spiritual growth. When God commands we *'examine all things carefully and adhere to that which is good'* 1Thess 5:21- we are to do just that. God does not live in error and truth does not grow in error. So, while all churches have some misfiring going on - how much can we ignore (if our points are dismissed) and still prosper there - and prosper others? ... This is all very testing at times.

All the matters above I have had to use on myself. Still do.  
Robin”

### **Bottom Line:**

If this incident *“concluded”* on this note, Wes' priesthood was denied by that pastor and any other *“leaders”* involved in this event. I hope God strengthened Wes in this knowledge. By the way, this is the article I said I would write in my email exchange above. I have not addressed the authority issue in the local church here as I already have two different articles that discuss this in some detail. *“The Necessity of Spiritual Independence and the Bible”* and *“The Local Church, Voluntary Association and the Bible”* are yours for the taking under *“Articles”* tab at [freelygive-n.com](http://freelygive-n.com).

I wonder why this church ignored 1Timothy 5:8? *“If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”* This is obviously priority one for the Christian and his/her cash! Violation places one ... *“worse than an unbeliever”*? That is a third category for humanity before the Creator - believer, unbeliever and now ... worse than an unbeliever? Do you know of any church that actually teaches this Timothy passage - and all the elements required so that the Christian is found by God ... in compliance? And compliance varies as one's personal life situation changes. And each culture in which a Christian might reside has a different definition before God of what constitutes compliance. How can this passage be ignored or minimized by the leadership of any local fellowship? This cash directive from God has been active from the cross forward. All cash activity by the Christian begins with the Timothy passage. All of it. This is the bedrock for each Christian's ministry with his/her cash.

### **“Using” the Bible**

No one fully appreciates the dire consequence awaiting the person who uses the Bible in a manipulative way. To use its authority to justify some false declaration is an offense of the highest order. This church letter is a classic example of misusing Bible passages to shore up a false declaration. God's word is holy, eternal and even an extension of the living Creator. Using those words to falsely declare His will on some matter will incur wrath we have no appreciation for ... yet. God tells us *“the untaught and unstable distort ... the Scriptures to their own destruction”* (2Pet 3:16).

But almost as grievous (maybe as grievous) is the denial of this man's priesthood. It is God who opens the mind *“to understand the Scriptures”* (Lk 24:45). It is the responsibility of all of us - but

particularly those who are leading the local fellowship, to honestly take up any *Scriptural* challenge brought forward. That does not mean the challenge, or challenger, is correct, but one qualification of an elder is to be able to “*refute those who contradict*” (Tit 1:9). Refute what? The person - and their materials - by the elder soundly handling the Scriptures. This church letter is an example of **errant exegesis** of Scripture - as well as **illegal eisegesis** use of Scripture. Compounded errors.

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