

# Understanding the Congregation's Authority

## by Jonathan Leeman

**Chapters 3 & 4:** Focus on the congregationalism half: your job.

**Chapter 5:** Focuses on the elder-led half: the elders' job training.

**The Conclusion:** Lists of your job responsibilities.

## Chapter 3 – Adam Had a Job (Part 2)

*Introduction* (on an elevator)

**The Story of the Priest-King: Adam** (p. 21)

**Abraham, Moses, David, and a New Covenant** (p. 23)

*A New Covenant*

“So God promised a new covenant, one by which God would make provision for the forgiveness of sins and enable the people to obey by placing his law on their hearts (Isa. 53-54; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:24-27). The dwelling place of God's people would again become ‘like the garden of Eden’ (Ezek. 36:35).

**Jeremiah 31:31–34**

<sup>31</sup> “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make *a new covenant* with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: *I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts*. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

What is the key promise in this new covenant that is different from the old?

**Jesus and the Church**

*Jesus*

(p. 24) “The Bible has lots of names for Jesus based on the work he came to do. Among them he is characterized as the new Adam, the seed of Abraham, the new Israel, and David's greater son. Why? Because he, finally, did the job they were

supposed to do but failed to do. He was the perfect priest and perfect king in his life, death, and resurrection.”

How is Jesus like and unlike Adam?

In what way is Jesus the promised seed of Abraham?

In what way is Jesus the New Israel?

Why is Jesus called David's greater son?

Describe the priestly & kingly role Jesus played...

*Through our union with Jesus we inherit his offices...*

“This is the glory of the gospel. We rise because he is risen. We are declared righteous because he was declared righteous. And—here's the kicker—we reign because he reigns!

Do you see? When you become united to Christ by faith, the same office which he holds falls also to you. You become, because of your union with him, a priest-king once again.”

### **1 Peter 2:5, 9**

<sup>5</sup> 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. ...

<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a ***royal priesthood***, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

What does it mean for us to be God's “holy priesthood”?

How is a “royal priesthood” different from a “holy priesthood”?

How are we to fulfill these royal and priestly duties?

(p. 24-25) “The church occupies this office corporately, like Israel did. But also, every member of the church occupies this office individually, like Adam. ...Every member of your church is both: Jim, Sue, Fred, Barney, Farhat, Enoch, Isabella, Zoe... all priest-kings, by virtue of their union with Christ.”

How do you supposed we could fulfill these duties individually/ corporately?

### **The Responsibility of a Priest-King (p. 25)**

“How was Adam supposed to fulfill his *kingly* duties?”

“How was he to fulfill his *priestly* duties?”

“Christians, the priest-kings of the New Testament, must work and watch over something, too. What?”

## 1 Corinthians 3:16 (Cf. 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Pet. 2:4-8)

Do you not know that you (pl.) are *God's temple* and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

“Encouraging the Corinthian's in their priestly protective work, Paul...”

## 2 Corinthians 6:14–17

<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup> What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup> *What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God*; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>17</sup> Therefore go out from their midst, and *be separate from them*, says the Lord, and *touch no unclean thing*; then I will welcome you,

(p. 26) “And this priestly work of watching over the church goes hand-in-hand with the kingly work of expanding in multiplying. Paul, just a few verses earlier, affirmed that he and the Corinthians were ‘ambassadors for Christ’ Who possessed a “ministry of reconciliation” (5:18, 20). ...like Adam in the garden—subduing the territory of human hearts on behalf of the great king.”

## 2 Corinthians 5:18–20

<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself *and gave us the ministry of reconciliation*; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *entrusting to us the message of reconciliation*. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, *we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us*. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Review:

Where is God's temple/tabernacle right now in the New Covenant?

How do we fulfil our priestly duty to *watch over/guard* the temple?

How do we fulfil our priest-kingly duty both to *mediate* and *expand God's rule*?

## The Ability of a Priest-King

“Yet the New Testament treats believers as not only responsible for doing the work of a priest-king, but *able* to do it.”

## 1 Corinthians 2:10–13

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us *through the Spirit*. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's

thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now ***we have received*** not the spirit of the world, but ***the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.*** <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but ***taught by the Spirit***, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

(p. 27) “In short, the New Testament affirms that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer, enabling him or her to separate the true gospel from a false gospel, or a true knowledge of God from of false knowledge. They are responsible to be Christ priest–kings, and they are able.”

The ***what***:

### **Galatians 1:6–9**

<sup>6</sup> I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— <sup>7</sup> not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> ***But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you***, let him be accursed.

<sup>9</sup> As we have said before, so now I say again: ***If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received***, let him be accursed.

“...Christians are both responsible and able to affirm ***who*** belongs to the gospel into God.” (Cf. ***Matt. 18; 1 Cor. 5***)

***Why are we certain that we are able to be priest-kings?***

### **Conclusion**

(p. 28) “God deputized Adam as a priest–king. Yet Adam rebelled and was exiled. The royal scepter and priestly miter then passed on to Abraham, Israel, David, and finally the beloved Son, the last Everyman. Jesus, this head of God’s new covenant people, fulfilled the office of priest–king perfectly, both for his own sake and on behalf of his people.

But then even more amazing, these people—you and me, if we’re Christians!—have now been hired and deputized through Christ to fulfill Adam’s original office. ...which means watching over both the ***what*** of the knowledge of God and the ***who*** of God’s people. Every Christian has this job assignment.”

### **Prayer:**

- ❖ Help us to see our role at God-appointed priest-kings
- ❖ Help to be diligent students of your word
- ❖ Help us to give ourselves to people inside & outside the church