

A Kingdom of Priests



Identification (Part 14)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing precious truths and insights that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same in yours.

Our theme at this Easter season is: Identification, as it expresses the two-way relationship between Jesus and those who believe in Him. We've seen this as the two opposite sides of a coin: on the one side, the identification of Jesus with us; and on the other side, our identification with Jesus. As Jesus hung on the cross as the last Adam, God made to meet together upon Him the iniquity, the rebellion of us all, and all its evil consequences. Jesus bore them all in that one great atoning sacrifice. He was identified with all the evil that was due to us that we, in return, might be able to enter in through His death into all the good that was His by eternal right.

On the second side, that's our identification with Jesus, we've seen that through His death the way is open for us to follow Him in each successive experience that came after His death: His burial, His resurrection and His ascension. In Ephesians chapter 2, Paul says, "God made us alive with Christ, raised us up or resurrected us with Christ [and then it says] made us sit together with Christ." I pointed out to you that Christ is sitting on the throne with His Father. The New English Bible beautifully translates that last phrase, "God enthroned us together with Christ."

So when by faith we identify ourselves with Jesus in His death for our sins, and we publicly identify ourselves with Him in His burial through our baptism, then the way is open for us to follow into everything that succeeds. We're made alive, we're resurrected and we are enthroned together with Jesus.

In my talk yesterday I explained how this works out practically in our daily living. I quoted the words of Jesus on the resurrection Sunday evening spoken to His disciples there when He said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Just as Jesus was the personal representative of the Father on earth, so before He went back to the Father in heaven, He appointed His disciples to be His personal representatives on earth. They were related to Jesus in the same way that Jesus was related to the Father. And I pointed out three things about the relationship of Jesus to the Father. That Jesus did not speak His own

words; He spoke words given by the Father. It was the Father in Jesus who did the works and that those who had seen Jesus had seen the Father. I pointed out, these should all apply to us. We should not speak our own words, but the words of Jesus. It should not be we who do it but Jesus dwelling in us. And that anyone who has seen us should in that have seen Jesus.

Today I want to take this one step further, to show you how we are identified not only with the resurrection life and ministry of Jesus, but also with His ascension life and ministry in heaven. You see when Jesus ascended to heaven and took His place on the throne with the Father, He entered into His two supreme unique and final ministries. He became King and Priest. And in this also, we are invited to identify ourselves with Jesus.

I'll read a couple of passages from the book of Revelation which expressed this truth. Revelation 1, verses 5 and 6:

> "To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen." (NIV)

Notice that when Jesus has freed us from our sin by His own blood, by that very act He has made us to be a kingdom and priests to God and the Father, or kings and priests, or a kingdom of priests.

The same is brought out again in Revelation 5:9-10:

> "And they sang a new song: 'you are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, [of course these words are addressed to Jesus] because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, [Notice when we are purchased or redeemed by the blood of Jesus, through that we are made to be a kingdom and priests or a kingdom of priests to God].'" (NIV)

And then in 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9: Peter states it very clearly and briefly writing to believers:

> "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood... [A kingly priesthood. You are kings and priests, a kingdom of priests.]"

As I've said already, these are the two ministries of Jesus in eternity at the throne. He rules as King, He intercedes as Priest. What are the special particular responsibilities of kings and priests. I think it's pretty clear with regard to kings. The responsibility, the task of a king is to rule. Many people don't, so clearly, see the task of a priest but it's made clear in Scripture. The responsibility of priests is to offer sacrifices. Only priests could offer sacrifices to God in God's order. So we are made kings to rule and priests to offer sacrifices.

With regard to our offering sacrifices as priests, I just quote another passage from 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 5, just a few verses above the one already quoted which said, "We are a chosen people, a royal priesthood..." In 1 Peter 2:5, he says this:

> "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (NIV)

Notice that the moment that we are called a holy priesthood, the next truth that comes out is that as priests we must have sacrifices to offer to God. Because that is the special ministry confined to priests: to be able to offer sacrifices to God. And Peter says, "They are spiritual sacrifices..." In other words, they are not like the sacrifices of the Mosaic law, they are not animals. But we offer spiritual sacrifices. Particularly we follow the example of Jesus who in heaven offers to God the spiritual sacrifice of His intercession and prayer on our behalf. For it says, "He ever liveth that He may make intercession for those who come to God through Him."

You see, Jesus' earthly ministry only lasted three and a half years. But His ministry as a King and a Priest has already lasted nearly two thousand years and is going to go on throughout eternity. And we're invited not only to share with Jesus His earthly ministry, but through our identification with Him to enter the eternal heavenly ministry as kings and priests. Spiritually, our identification with Jesus makes us already citizens of the heavenly Zion. This is not something that is going to happen, it's something that has already taken place through our identification with Jesus.

Wherever you're listening right now, you may in your kitchen, you may be in your living room, you may be in your automobile, you may be in a factory, that's your earthly location. That's the location of your body. You may not realize it but your spirit has another location. Your spirit is with Jesus. Your spirit is on the throne in Him. You are already come to the Mount Zion, the heavenly Zion. This is so beautifully stated in Hebrews chapter 12, verses 22-24. I

want you to notice the tense.

> "But you have come to Mount Zion [this is written to believers on earth but it doesn't say you're going to come, it says] you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. [There's a great assembly of angels and there is also the church of the firstborn, all of those who have been born again out of death into a new creation through faith in Jesus Christ, the true church is there in spirit.] You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."

So that's our spiritual location. We're already there in that glorious assembly with the angels and all the firstborn in the heavenly Zion. And out of the heavenly Zion through our identification with Jesus, we rule on God's behalf through our prayers. We are a kingdom of priests. We rule through prayer. This is vividly stated in Psalm 110, verses 1 and 2:

> "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' [That's perhaps one of the most quoted passages of the Old Testament in the New and it's always applied to Jesus. God the Father invited Jesus Christ, the Son, our Lord to sit at His right hand until His dominion is established over all His enemies. The next verse says:] The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; rule in the midst of your enemies."

You see, Jesus is already ruling, although the enemies are still there. And the scepter of His authority is extended out of Zion. That's a spiritual scepter. And as we take our place in Zion through identification with Jesus on the throne, then through our prayers in the power of the Holy Spirit, we extend that scepter of His kingdom over the earth. We become identified with Jesus in His authority over the nations. Through our prayers we exercise that authority. The rod of authority is placed in the hands of God's people as they take their place in Zion. And out of Zion the rod of authority goes forth over the nations of the earth. We are thus identified with Jesus, even now, in His two great final ministries as King and Priest.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be sharing about God's secret hidden wisdom, through which alone we can comprehend all that has been made ours through our identification with Jesus.

Radio Program

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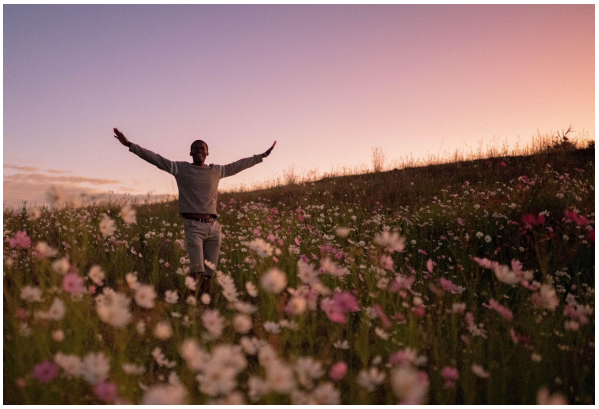

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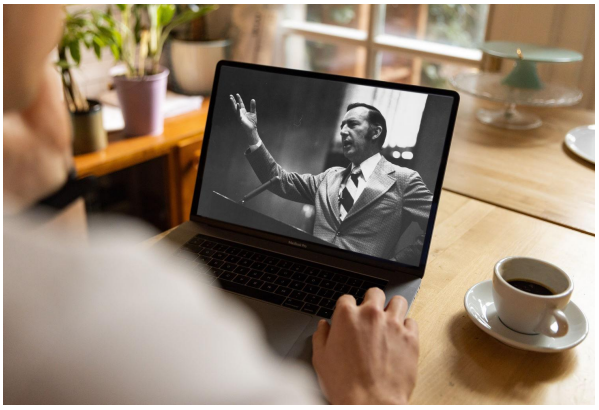

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