

PRIESTHOOD IN EZEKIEL 44:23-24 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN CHRISTIAN MINISTERS

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on “Exegetical Study of Ezekiel 44:23-24 on Priesthood and its implication for the Contemporary Ministers.” This study attempts to explore priesthood in the Old Testament as practiced by Israel as a nation. The basic duties of a priest were highlighted in the passage. One of the greatest challenges of the church today has to do with the attitude of the ministers of the Gospel to the pastoral ministry; this has led to deterioration of the Gospel ministry and has weakened the impact of the church as salt and light in the decaying world. The negligence of the ministers in pastoral ministry has led to an increase of half-baked Christians who are driven about by every wave of false doctrine because they were not exposed to sound teaching of the Word of God that will enable them to discern the will of God. Dispute and disagreement also characterize the life of the contemporary church because the ministers have failed in discharging their divinely ordained duties of judging controversies based on the word of God. The writer did thorough research to address this challenge that poses a serious threat to wreck the ministry of the church so as to bring out a scholastic work in an attempt to address this problem. The findings of this research is to enlighten the ministers on the subject of Priesthood in the worldview of Israel and the seriousness Yahweh demands from his priests for he is ready to punish anyone who handles the office with levity. The result of this finding will help the ministers to fasten their belts and awake to their responsibilities; this in-turn will help grow mature Christians who can discern the will of God and are ready to do every good works. In an attempt to achieve the purpose of this study, the writer made use of information from written materials that are related to the subject. Relevant sources from J.C Pool Memorial Library of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, and other resources from the internet were sought. Thus a critical study of Priesthood was done exegetically using historical-grammatical method. The writer then recommends that the theologians, the ministers of the Gospel and the church members should be well acquainted with the content of this essay in order to build a glorious church, restore the sanctity of pastoral ministry and re-energize the church to make impact in the world.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused its attention on unraveling the concept of priesthood in Israel as revealed by the Old Testament of the Bible and helpful implications have been drawn for theological studies, the church and the minister.

In the course of this research, it has been shown that priesthood was an important institution in Israel. In fact at a time in the life of the nation, the priest served as the sole ruler of the nation (Eli and Samuel were examples of such leaders). Therefore, any country that will thrive must not disregard the place of the church and ministers of the gospel in ensuring successful administration.

The ministers were also expected to perform their priestly duties; this will help grow mature Christians and increase their influence as the salt and light of the world in their respective spheres of life. It will also result to the growth of the church, and empowers her in fulfilling her mandate in the world.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of this study, the following recommendations could be drawn:

- i. Ministers should be faithful to the Lord who has called them into the gospel ministry and refuse to join the multitude to do evil, in order to avoid the danger of disqualification.
- ii. Every believer should be aware of the concept of 'priesthood of all believers'. This will boost their sense of worth before God and grant them confidence to approach 'the throne of grace' and meet with God without fear or guilt.

- iii. The believers (as priests) should take up the challenge of the leadership of their nation and involve in politics in order to salten and lighten the world.
- iv. Ministers should teach the church the undiluted word of God with great zeal and passion for their learning and practice.