



## Zionophobia: Post-Reformation Distortions of Newly Rediscovered Doctrines; the Biblical System for Spiritual Growth: Local Church; Pastor; Priesthood, Holy Spirit

19. With the Catholic Church's heresies exposed, the Protestors moved to establish a Bible-based church that defined the believer's relationship with God on *sola Scriptura*: Scripture alone, and each individual's responsibility toward God was determined through the priesthood of the believer.
20. However, it is through a misinterpretation of the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer that caused Protestant theology to come unwound.
21. Jesus Christ is our High Priest and we are members of His royal priesthood. A priest is one who represents man before God. The Levites did this in the specialized priesthood of the Mosaic Law.
22. But in the Church Age each believer is his own private priest which carries with it responsibilities. He must examine himself to determine if he is in fellowship and if not to confess his sins directly to God alone for forgiveness.
23. As a priest you are free to determine the status quo of your own spiritual life and no one else may assume this prerogative for you, parents of minor children excluded.
24. But in order to efficiently examine his spiritual life, the believer must have an inventory of ideas that informs him of his compliance or noncompliance with divine standards.
25. If he does not have doctrine in his soul then he cannot effectively evaluate his spiritual life.
26. Therefore the privacy of the priesthood must take the responsibility for spiritual growth. The believer positive to truth will be led to truth and will reject the lie.
27. It is from the Holy Spirit's mentorship through his filling and teaching ministries that the believer learns doctrine and grows in grace. The progress of that growth is a matter between the believer, the Holy Spirit, and the Lord.
28. However, the Bible clearly reveals that in the Church Age this instruction is accomplished within a system: attendance at a local church where the body of Christ functions as a unit in a common geographic location to coordinate their spiritual lives in service to Christ.
29. These believers serve Christ under two commissions. First is their royal priesthood through which they advance spiritually under the ministry of a pastor-teacher. The second, a result of their spiritual growth, is their royal ambassadorship through which they serve mankind under the function of their spiritual gift and application of doctrine to life and circumstances.
30. The priesthood of the believer is private but it must coordinate with the system God has provided for spiritual growth.
31. The privacy of the priesthood does not grant the believer the authority to teach himself the Bible and to develop doctrines and principles independently of a system of hermeneutics which maintains the integrity of the biblical message.
32. Failure to remain loyal to the literal-grammatical-historical system—proscribed in Scripture, practiced by the apostles, utilized by the Early Church Fathers and promoted by Luther and other reformers—led to a hodgepodge of confusion among the incipient denominations that came out of the Reformation.

