

## BFF349 Priests Stand with God

**Scott Moore:** Welcome to the "Building Faith Families" podcast with Steve Demme. I'm your host, Scott Moore. Thanks for joining us today. Good morning, Steve. How are you today?

**Steve:** Good morning, Scott. Happy New Year. The whole family was together for Christmas. Then, a week later, New Year's weekend. Sandi and I had the four newly adopted children and John for Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

It is a busy time, but the best part of the day is the quiet hour and a half when the kids go to different parts of the house and color or do something low key. I go into my room and put on my CPAP and sleep like a log for an hour and a half. It's transformative. They go to bed at 7:30 so I can go to bed early, too.

Every time we do one of these I just feel so much more connected to my grandkids whether it's the girls or whether it's the four. We pay a price, but it's a great investment.

I keep thinking that we're going to have our last podcast on the priests, and as I was out waiting on God the other day, He gave me something else, and I've been feeding on it and studying it ever since.

**Steve:** Father, help us during this new year, help all those who are listening, probably in February when they hear this. Even though the dates change and the seasons change and things in our world change, You remain the same.

We draw near to You this morning, and we pray for Your blood to cleanse us afresh, Your spirit to fill us afresh and give us ears to hear what You have for us today so that we can connect with You and find light and encouragement for each of us on our own journeys, in Jesus' name, amen.

**Scott:** Amen.

**Steve:** Since it's the beginning of the year, it's also just post-Christmas. If I start singing this hymn, you will recognize it as "O come, O come Immanuel." What does Immanuel mean?

**Scott:** God with us.

**Steve:** Yes. I knew you would know that. It's what we focus on at Christmas. God came to Earth in the form of a baby. God is now with us, Emmanuel. It's an amazing word. If you want to flip it, and turn it around 180 degrees. We, as priests, are also with God in a special way.

Priests stand with God. We have the privilege of being His children and His people, but we are also the ones that the world looks to and says, "Hey, you belong to Him." It's true, and it's good.

We are identified with God. We are with God. I think before we're done, we're going to see that God likes being with us. As much as, if not more, than we like being with Him.

The holidays are all about family. The first thing you said to me is, "How was your Christmas?" I said, "Great because I was with my children." By the way, how was your Christmas?

**Scott:** Good. We all stayed healthy for the most part. That's always a triumph.

**Steve:** You see, the first thing you said was we because it's all about being with those that we love. God loves us, and God enjoys our companionship.

We're going to do a little overview of scripture of people that stood with God. Everybody in scripture could be mentioned. We can't do the complete study, but I want to just give us enough to get a flavor. In my Bible reading and I have read up through Genesis 9. I read seven, eight, nine this morning, which is the flood. Noah and his family stood alone with God.

That was it. Those eight people were the only ones standing on God's team. They stood for righteousness. Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and the rest of the world was anti-God.

Even though I don't believe that is going to happen again on that scale. It seems like many times we feel like we're Noah and his family. We feel like we're alone.

Elijah also said, "Lord, I'm the only one standing with You." God replied, "No, I've got 7,000 other people that haven't bowed the knee to Baal."

As we come full circle to when we began this series on being a priest consider Deuteronomy 7:6, "You are a holy," which means set-apart "people to Jehovah, your God. Jehovah your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth."

We are a set-apart people. We've been chosen. We belong to God. Even within the people of Israel, there was the tribe of Levi, who you might say who were closer still. When the Levites set up their tents in the wilderness, their tents were the ones closest to the courtyard, which housed the Holy of Holies.

Deuteronomy 10:8-9, "Jehovah set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, to stand before Jehovah, to minister to Him, to bless in His name to this day. Therefore, Levi has no portion or inheritance with his brothers. Jehovah is his inheritance. As Jehovah, your God, said to him."

I'm thinking of the song that says, "Loved with everlasting love." There's a phrase that says, "I am His, and He is mine." God has chosen us to be close to Him. We have responded and said, "Yes, we want You to be our master, and Lord. We want to be close to You."

This is what Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden, which I read a couple of days ago. This is what we're going to have in the Book of Revelation when God dwells with His people.

This is what you have to have all through scripture when you're reading it is the heart of God that wants to be near His people. He's going to do whatever it takes to eliminate sin, to eliminate all of our enemies, all of our false thinking, all of our

burdens you might say. Anything that keeps us from Him, He's going to take care of it.

He's going to bring us back to Him. We're going to be able to look at God just like Adam and Eve looked at God. No sin, no shame and be together.

There's another time, though, when the Levites paid a price for this. This is when Moses had just come down from the mountain. The people had broken loose. It says in Exodus 32, "Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, 'Who is on Jehovah's side? Come to me.' All the sons of Levi gathered around him."

I think we're going to see that in our days. This is almost as if Jesus is going to stand right there and say, "OK, who is on my side? Come on." That's what we want to do. We want to be the first ones to respond. We want to be first responders.

Several places in Jeremiah, it's mentioned that God had sent His prophets. Chapter 7:25–26, "From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt, to this day, I have persistently sent all My servants, the prophets, to them day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or inclined their ear, but stiffened their neck."

God has never stopped reaching out to His people. He reached out through Moses, He did it through Elijah and Elisha. He did it through David. Now we're up into Jeremiah, and He's reminding them, "I have continued to send my prophets," but as we know, most of those prophets were killed. Jesus said that.

All right, I'm going to shift gears a little bit now, and I want to look at the relationship between the Father and the Son. For me, this is hard to comprehend and yet beautiful. It takes a little bit of faith to see it.

We get a little glimpse of it in John 5:19. Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever this Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He Himself is doing."

There is something beautiful about sharing an experience. Now, I've got these little grandkids that come along. "What are you doing, Papa?" I get to show them stuff and teach them stuff. It's more fun doing stuff together than by ourselves.

This next passage is from Proverbs 8. I believe in my heart of hearts it's a picture of creation, but it's really talking about wisdom, etc. We know that Jesus is wisdom. He is the Word made flesh. Just read it as if Jesus is speaking.

"Jehovah possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From everlasting, I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were no depths, I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth.

"While He had not yet made the earth and the fields nor the first dust of the world when He established the heavens, I was there. When He inscribed the circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, when He set the sea for its boundary so that the water could not

transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth," and here it is, these last two verses, "then I was beside Him as a master workman. And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the world, His earth, and having my delight in the sons of men."

There's a picture to me of John 5 found in Proverbs 8. "I was daily His delight. I was with Him as a master workman," just enjoying being with His Dad and working with Him. He also says, My delight was with the sons of men. That is us!

All right. Now, let's look at Jesus. Jesus says in John 14:1-3, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe in also in me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself that where I am you may be also."

This is how much He loves us. The only reason Jesus left is to prepare a place for us, and He's coming back, and He's going to take us to Himself. We're not going to be separated again."

John 17, Jesus is praying for us. He says, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world." That's what His prayer was, that we may be with Him where He is.

We can make all kinds of definitions of heaven. I like the definition that heaven is where Jesus is, with Him. I don't care if I play golf. I don't care if I sail around the universe. I don't care. I just want to be, like David said, "I'd give everything just to be in Your presence, gazing at Your face." That is heaven.

Luke 22, interesting words here. It's the upper room. It's the last supper, the first last supper. "He will show you a large upper room furnished. Prepare it there." They went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

When the hour came, He reclined at table, and the apostles with Him. He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." He knew what was coming. The last thing he wanted to do, "I wanted to share this meal with you."

After the Passover meal, they went out. He was about to be crucified. It says, "He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John. He became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

He went on a little further, bowed with His face to the ground, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken from Me, yet I want Your will to be done, not Mine." Then He returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with Me even one hour?"

He didn't want to be alone. He wanted their presence. He took Peter, and James, and John, the three of them, the same three that He had with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Revelation 1:9, John identifies himself. He said, "I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus." Now that's a phrase that I've been thinking about a lot lately. He was a prisoner because he stood for the word of God, and he agreed with and he embraced the testimony of Jesus. That was it.

You and I know what this word is. John was a witness. The word for witness is martyr, marturia. John was a martyr, you might say. We don't know how he died. He was on the isle of Patmos because he stood with God. He identified with His scriptures. He identified with the Son of God. He identified with everything that Jesus had said, His testimony.

Jump back to Matthew, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in heaven."

Sobering, John did not deny Jesus. He stood with the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. He acknowledged Him before men, and so God has acknowledged John before His Father in heaven. When everything else is done, you and I want to stand before God, and we want Jesus to say, "He stood with me. Keep him. Take him. Bring him in."

Zechariah 4 talks about two men who are the two anointed ones, standing by the Lord of the whole earth. Now, I'm not going to go into it in detail, but these two anointed ones stand by the Lord of the whole earth, just like all the prophets that have come before them, just like John did, just like those who acknowledge Jesus.

We learn a lot more about them in Revelation 11, beginning in the third verse, "I will grant authority to My two witnesses," the witnesses, marturia, "and they will prophesy for 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth."

This is almost the exact phrase that He uses in Zechariah, except they don't stand by the Lord of earth. They stand before Him. Somehow they're on earth, but they're standing in His presence.

These two witnesses have power, and they're the ones that represent God in the last days. These are the ones that are standing with Jesus and opposed to them are the beasts, the false prophets, and all the devil's minions and all of his plans in the last days to deceive people. These two witnesses stand up, and they stand before God, and they stand by God.

I believe that we're going to be able to support these people. Sometimes I find myself praying for them. I think that they might be alive to this day. God bless them, God encourage them, God help them to be just saturated in scripture so they can stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Revelation 17:14, "They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and those with Him are called and chosen and faithful."

It's not that we want to be called chosen and faithful. We just want to be with Him. We want to hang in there. He has called us, and He has chosen us. May God help us to be faithful and stand with Him. We have tests on a regular basis to see whether we're going to stand with God. Sometimes the tests are small, sometimes they're large. We really don't know much about laying our lives down for our faith like other people in different parts of the world, but let's trust God to help us when that hour comes to stand with Him.

Revelation 22:17, one of the great events, still to come on the earth is not only the coming of the Lord, but the Lord coming back as the bridegroom coming to marry His bride at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

All creation will be rejoicing, when God the Father sees His Son marry us, the body of Christ, the bride of Christ. Then in the 17th verse of Revelation 22, "The spirit and the bride say, 'Come.'" This is the prevalent theme throughout scripture that God loves His people, God wants to be with His people.

We love Him, and we want to be with Him. We want to stand by Him, but we're going to pay a price. It's OK. I'm sure that Levites paid a price. I'm sure that the prophets and the apostles paid a price. I'm sure that now they're in heaven, they've forgotten the price because they're with Him. May God help us to be faithful priests who stand by the Lord of the whole earth just like these anointed ones.

We stand by God praying to Him, and we stand in front of the world representing Him. Now, it's time for the wisdom of Scott.

**Scott:** Well, it's quite a different scene when you choose not to be with Him, too if He's called you. If you look at Jonah, it's not like things went well for him because he chose not to be with God. Jonah has been on my mind lately. I was stunned when I read that this past year.

Just the idea of God wanting to pour out His mercy on people that hated Him, and Jonah was mad at God for wanting to do that. So, he ran away from God. Talk about being with God or not with God. He wanted to be as far away as he could get.

**Steve:** Yes, Jonah said he ran away from His presence, His face.

**Scott:** It's not like things went well for him by doing that, so if you're worried about what we might have to endure as being with Him, take heart, running away from Him is worse.

**Steve:** I'm taken with the Hebrew word panim/paneh, which means "His face." It is translated so many different ways. It's translated "Come before His presence," "Come before Him," sometimes even the simple word "before."

**Steve:** I want to stand before His face. We believe in the gospel. We know that He really has made it possible for us to have our sins forgiven, our robes replaced with

white robes, washed, and we'll be able to look at Him. When we see Him, it says in 1 John, we shall be like Him or we shall see Him as He is.

This is the great joy for each of us, to stand before the throne and see Him face-to-face. I really think when we see Him, we won't want to do anything else except just to stay there. It also says that in the last days -- when the Lamb is revealed -- people are going to say, "Hide us from His face."

They're going to be asking the mountains to fall on them. That's going to be an awful scene, because they haven't learned to love Him, they haven't learned to appreciate Him. Even Jonah, who knew what he was talking about, says, "I knew you were going to do this because I know that you're slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and mercy."

He knew that God could do that. That's what he was afraid of. Jonah had issues. He needed to go see a therapist, but the rest of us need to pray, "Father help us."

Let's pray.

Father help us to love Your face, help us to love Your presence, help us to love being with You, and help us to be faithful in doing so. When we are tempted to be Jonahs and run away from Your presence and run away from Your calling, turn us, gentle, good, faithful Holy Spirit. Turn us back to God. Give us an appetite so that we love you with all our hearts, soul, mind and strength and everything else on this Earth pales in comparison. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Scott:** Amen. That's our show for this week, folks. Thanks for joining us for the Building Faith Families podcast with Steve Demme. If you have a question for the show, email Steve at [spdemme@gmail.com](mailto:spdemme@gmail.com). If you have a question for me, you can reach me at [scott@unsocializedmedia.com](mailto:scott@unsocializedmedia.com). Thanks for joining us. Have a great week.