

Isaiah 66:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD.

Analysis

An astonishing promise: "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD." The Hebrew megam mehem eqach lakohanim lalviyyim means God will select from these Gentile converts to serve as priests and Levites—previously exclusive Jewish roles. This demolishes ethnic privilege in God's kingdom. Under the old covenant, only Aaronic descendants could be priests, only Levites could serve in the temple. God promises to select Gentiles for these roles. From a Reformed perspective, this prophesies the new covenant's universal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9, Revelation 1:6, 5:10). All believers—Jew and Gentile—become priests unto God through Christ. The Levitical priesthood is abolished (Hebrews 7:11-19), replaced by Christ the High Priest and all believers as royal priests offering spiritual sacrifices (1 Peter 2:5, Hebrews 13:15-16). This verse emphasizes the radical equality of Jews and Gentiles in the new covenant—no ethnic or hereditary advantage, only grace through faith in Christ.

Historical Context

Under the old covenant, priestly service was strictly hereditary and ethnic. Gentiles were excluded from priesthood and most temple areas. This prophecy was revolutionary—promising Gentile priests! The early church grappled with its implications (Acts 15, Galatians, Ephesians). The New Testament reveals fulfillment: all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9), there is neither Jew nor Greek in Christ (Galatians 3:28), and Gentile believers serve in gospel ministry alongside Jewish believers. Throughout church history, leadership has increasingly included

converts from all ethnicities. Complete fulfillment comes in the New Jerusalem where all the redeemed, from every nation, serve as priests before God forever (Revelation 5:10, 20:6, 22:3).

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Gentile inclusion in priesthood demonstrate the radical nature of new covenant grace?
2. What does universal priesthood mean for all believers' worship and service?
3. How should the elimination of ethnic privilege in God's kingdom shape the church's practice?

Interlinear Text

וְגַם	מִמֶּנִּי	אֶקַּח	לְכֹהֲנֵי יְיָ	לְלֵוִי	אֲמַר
H1571	H1992	H3947	H3548	H3881	H559
		And I will also take	of them for priests	and for Levites	saith
יְהוָה:					
the LORD					
H3068					

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:9 (Parallel theme): But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Exodus 19:6 (Parallel theme): And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Revelation 1:6 (Parallel theme): And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Isaiah 61:6 (References Lord): But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

1 Peter 2:5 (Parallel theme): Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Revelation 20:6 (Parallel theme): Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 5:10 (Parallel theme): And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.