

The Offices of Christ: Priest

Function of the priest in the OT: act as a mediator between the people and God. A priest acts as a representative of sinners before God.

The OT Looking Forward to a Better Priest

"The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Psalm 110:4)

"It is he who shall build the temple of the LORD and shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." (Zechariah 6:13)

Why is a priest necessary in the New Testament?

The priesthood in the Levitical order was limited in the scope of what it could do.

"Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? For when there is a change in the priesthood, **there is necessarily a change in the law** as well." (Heb 7:11-12)

Qualifications of a Priest

Have to feel and share in the weaknesses of his people

"**He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward**, since he himself is beset with weakness." (Heb 5:1-2)

Appointed to the service by God

"And no one takes this honor for himself, but **only when called by God**, just as Aaron was. (Heb 5:4)

Must offer gifts and sacrifices for sins

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to **offer gifts and sacrifices** for sins. (Heb 5:1)

Must carry the names and needs of God's people

"You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the **names** of the sons of Israel, six of their **names on the one stone**, and the **names** of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the **names of the sons of Israel.**" (Exodus 28:9-11)

"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word... For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. **I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me**, for they are yours (John 17:6-9)

Christ as our High Priest

He is the true High Priest who sympathizes with us

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. **For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**" (Heb 2:14-18)

The Great High Priest who is our sacrifice

"how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit **offered himself without blemish to God**, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God... Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to **put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**" (Heb 9:14, 25-26)

Superior High Priest whose work is completely done

"After making purification for sins, **he sat down** at the right hand of the Majesty on high"(Heb 1:3)

"And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For **by a single offering he has perfected** for all time those who are being sanctified." (Heb 10:11-14)

His priesthood is eternal and able to save us completely

²⁵ Consequently, **he is able to save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. ²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. (Heb 7:25-28)

What does Christ do for us as priest?

He always makes intercession for the people (Heb 2:18, 7:25, 1 John 2:1-2)

He prays for our sanctification (Jn 17:17).

He allows us to approach the throne of grace (Heb 4:14-16).

He is building us into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood (1 Pt 2:5).

He protects us (John 10:28-29, Romans 8:37-39)

The Gospel in the Paradigm of the New Priesthood

Old Priesthood: Mosaic Covenant > Levitical Priesthood (temporary, imperfect)

New Priesthood: Abrahamic Covenant > Melchizedek Priesthood (eternal, perfect)

Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? ¹² **For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.** ¹³ For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵ This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

¹⁷ For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸ For on the one hand, a **former commandment is set aside** because of its weakness and uselessness ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, **a better hope** is introduced, through which we draw near to God. ²⁰ And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹ but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" ²² **This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.** (Heb 7:11-22)

Jesus moves through the heavenly tabernacle, Earthly rituals are a "copy and shadow."

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² **he entered once for all into the holy places**, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption (Heb 9:11-12)

²³ Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴ For **Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.** ²⁵ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, (Heb 9:23-25)

For since the **law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities**, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. (Heb 10:1)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb 10:19-22)