

## Hebrews 7.1-3

### Priest of the Most High God

As evangelicals we often state clearly that we need no priest to intercede on our behalf with the Father. We have been drawn unto Him, He has made a way for us to know Him and He has changed our hearts so that we WANT to know Him. But the fact of the matter is that in our concern to eradicate all false human power, we miss out on the truth that we HAVE a priest. Jesus Christ still functions as a priest on our behalf. He is still our advocate with the Father, He is still pleading the blood of His once for all sacrifice on our behalf. We do indeed need a priest, but the priest we need is not a man in robes or cassocks, we need the priest that God has set forth for us, the High Priest Jesus Christ.

#### I. PRIESTS SET APART

##### A. Priest Unto God

1. Priest of the Most High God - the service of the priesthood is all about the God that they serve. It is in no way any sort of private

office, it is a sacred duty and a blessed privilege. The priest is set apart by God and are His own special people. –

### **Numbers 3.11-13**

2. The priesthood was required to be particularly holy and carefully observant of the mandates required by God.
3. The people needed them to be performing their duties faithfully, for to approach God recklessly means death.

*Numbers 3:10 (NKJV) <sup>10</sup> So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall attend to their priesthood; but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.”*

#### **B. God Initiates**

1. The priesthood was established by God.
2. He set the duties, the limits the scope and the focus of their work -
3. They were chosen by God to do the work, and the work of each family, each person was carefully proscribed by God for their duties and the time for which they would serve.
4. This also means that He was always the one who initiated our path to Himself. He

created that which is required for us to come into worship.

5. Melchizedek came to Abram, Abram did not seek him out. He showed up and blessed him...

6. The start of all our worship is the draw of the Father –

*John 4:22–24 (NKJV) <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. <sup>24</sup> God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

## II. ACTS OF BLESSING

### A. Priests Bless

1. Priest of God - blessed Abram. This is the role of the priesthood –

**Numbers 6.22-27**

2. Parents bless their children –

**Genesis 9.26-27**

**Genesis 27.27-29**

**Genesis 28.20**

3. But only God has the power to bless in His own authority... Melchizedek did not invoke God according to the patterns of normal usage, He simply blessed Abram
4. And note that in Christ, we are all descendants of Abram - so we were being blessed in him even as our father Abram was being blessed, every blessing offered is ours because of Christ...

B. Worshippers give

1. Melchizedek blessing Abram was the exercise of his priesthood, Abram giving tithe was a recognition of it.
2. The priesthood lived from the tithe, the one who worked for God has a share in what God is given.

### **III. ACTS OF SACRIFICE**

A. Priests Sacrifice

1. The priest was also specifically the person responsible for the sacrifice -
2. He would offer the gift to God sprinkling the blood on the altar
3. He would do all of the preparation, the fire, the washing, the actual burning etc.

4. He would make sure that the sacrifice was acceptable
5. Jesus offered the one sacrifice that ended all sacrifice

### **Hebrews 10.11-14**

#### B. Worshippers Offer

1. The sacrifice was to come from the herds of the worshipper and they were to be the best
2. They were offered with an understanding that they replaced the blood of the giver.

*Leviticus 1:2–5 (NKJV) <sup>2</sup> “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. <sup>3</sup> ‘If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord. <sup>4</sup> Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. <sup>5</sup> He shall kill the bull before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the*

*blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.*

3. Their hand placed on its head to transfer the guilt, their hand holding the knife to slaughter the innocent for his sin... it is a powerful statement of our guilt, there is no innocence in the redemption... there is a visceral reality to the act...
4. They were offered for atonement, this is my sin, this is my guilt, please count them as belonging to this one who stands in my place...

### **Rom 3.21-26**

5. Christ was offered in our place, the hand of God slaughtering the beloved to atone for our sin, and this should stun us to silence and drive us to our knees in worship every time we consider it... and we should consider it always!
6. This act of God's on our behalf is a forever reality, God has made a way!

## **IV. ACTS OF SANCTIFICATION**

- A. Priests Cleanse

1. The priest was the one who would pronounce someone clean from leprosy, a house cleansed from fungus etc. –  
**Leviticus 14.34-36; 52-53**
2. He was responsible for the holiness of the people.
3. We need the word of God to make us clean.
  - i. Our sins, our struggles, our failings our messes all need the touch of God to cleanse them.
  - ii. No self-help guru, no self-improvement regimen will ever be able to repair what is truly wrong with us.
4. We need God to cleanse us, but more than that, we need Him to make us KNOW that we have been cleansed. We carry our failures with us, and like a fungus in a home, they grow in secret until they pour out and overwhelm us... God alone is the one who can do this work, and our great High Priest is the originator and performer of that task...

**Hebrews 9.13-15**

B. Worshippers confess

1. The priest did not go around inspecting houses. He did go look when someone brought the problem to him
2. The act of confessing begins with our recognition of the problem...
3. God Himself will show us, God Himself will make us aware of the need for confession and God Himself will lead us to Himself in repentance –

*Romans 2:4 (NKJV) <sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*

## **V. ACTS OF FAITHFUL LOVE**

### **A. Priests Focus**

1. The priesthood kept God before the people.
2. They prepared the tabernacle for worship
3. They made sure that the things of worship were properly displayed and made ready, both for the use of the worshipper and to honor the worshipped.



4. When worship is the center of your life, the things of God are always in mind. They inform and shape the rest.

5. But when other things grow in importance, it becomes harder for us to be faithful in keeping God in our minds and hearts as He alone deserves to be kept.

B. Worshippers surrender

1. At its heart, worship is an act of love. It is confessing our love and affection to God and an outward display of His absolute centrality to our hearts and lives.

2. The work of relinquishing our agendas and our affections is an ongoing thing

3. The power of God is required, else we would never surrender the things we love wrongly.

4. He alone can make our hearts live to Him, and when He does this work, our response is to release our sinful act, our idolatry, our wasted passions... God alone is worth being the focus of our lives. He alone deserves our worship.

