

- A. Adam failed in his priestly calling – Jesus came to fulfill it
1. To review, a priest in OT had 2 primary roles/jobs:
    - a. To ensure, guard and maintain the true and proper worship of God
      - 1) (Num 18:5-7 ESV) *And you shall keep guard over the sanctuary and over the altar, that there may never again be wrath on the people of Israel. <sup>6</sup> And behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the service of the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup> And you and your sons with you shall guard your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death."* (emphasis added)
    - b. To represent people to God by offering prayers, gifts and sacrifices for sins
      - 1) (Heb 5:1 NIV) *Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.*
  2. Neither Adam nor the priests that followed him were able to do that which needed to be done
    - a. (Heb 7:11 ESV) *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?*
    - b. Levites were chosen as priestly tribe because of their willingness to guard true worship of God
      - 1) (Exo 32:26-29 ESV) *then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.'" <sup>28</sup> And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. <sup>29</sup> And Moses said, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day."*
- B. Levitical priesthood proved insufficient and so God appointed another Priest, not of the tribe of Levi
1. (Heb 7:13-17 ESV) *For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. <sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. <sup>15</sup> This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup> who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup> For it is witnessed of him, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."*

2. Jesus is said to be “after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb.5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11,15,17)
  - a. (Heb 5:10-11 ESV) *...being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.* <sup>11</sup> *About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain....*
  - b. (Gen 14:17-20 ESV) *After [Abram’s] return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).* <sup>18</sup> *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)* <sup>19</sup> *And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;* <sup>20</sup> *and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*
  - c. (Heb 7:1-8 ESV) *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him,* <sup>2</sup> *and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.* <sup>3</sup> *He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.* <sup>4</sup> *See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils!* <sup>5</sup> *And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham.* <sup>6</sup> *But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.* <sup>7</sup> *It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior.* <sup>8</sup> *In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives.*
    - 1) v.2} In OT, meaning of a name often indicated one’s relationship to God
      - a) Melchizedek = “king of righteousness”
      - b) “king of Salem” – from the same root as “shalom,” peace
    - 2) v.3} Not literally without parents or without birth or death, but portrayed as such
      - a) Genealogy of Levitical priests was very mandatory – Melchizedek has no known genealogy
      - b) OT shows no end to his priesthood, and in that sense was a priest “forever”
      - c) “resembling the Son of God” – Jesus’ resurrection indicates His eternal priesthood
        - (i) (Heb 7:23-24 ESV) *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* <sup>24</sup> *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.*
    - 3) v.4-7} In OT, people presented tithes only to priests
  - d. When Levitical priesthood failed, there was already a type of other priest/priesthood that had been foreshadowed in Melchizedek
    - 1) Messianic psalm: (Psa 110:4 ESV) *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*
    - 2) Hebrews is only book that specifically refers to Jesus as a priest, but His priestly function is evident throughout

C. How did Jesus ensure, guard/maintain true worship?

1. Cleansing of the temple

a. (Mar 11:17 ESV) *And he was teaching them and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."*

2. Gave instructions for proper worship

a. (Joh 4:21-24 ESV) *Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. <sup>22</sup> You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

b. (Mat 6:1-4 ESV) *"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup> "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*

c. (Mat 6:5-7 ESV) *"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>7</sup> "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words."*

d. (Mat 6:16-18 ESV) *"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*

3. Criticized the Pharisees for leading the people astray in how they worshiped

a. (Luk 11:42 ESV) *But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.*

b. (Luk 18:9-14 ESV) *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' <sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*

D. How did Jesus represent people to God by offering prayers, gifts and sacrifices for sins?

1. Prayed for people

a. Jo.17 – high priestly prayer

b. (Luk 22:31-32 ESV) *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, <sup>32</sup> but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."*

c. Interceded on the cross: *"Father, forgive them...."*

2. Offered "sacrifices for sin" by becoming the sacrifice

a. Idea of substitutionary sacrifice was already established

1) Animals were sacrificed as a substitution for the person and their sin

a) (Lev 1:3-4 ESV) *If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. <sup>4</sup> He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.*

2) Day of Atonement

a) (Lev 16:15-16 ESV) <sup>15</sup> *"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. <sup>16</sup> Thus he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleannesses of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.*

b) (Lev 16:21-22 ESV) *And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. <sup>22</sup> The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.*

b. Jesus, "without blemish" of sin, took our sins upon Himself, "became sin for us" and then offered Himself as our substitute, as our sin-bearer

1) (1Pe 1:18-19 ESV) *knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

2) (2Co 5:21 ESV) *For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

3) (Heb 9:11-12 ESV) *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) <sup>12</sup> 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.*

c. He was both the sacrificer and the sacrifice

- 1) (Heb 7:26-27 ESV) *For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.* <sup>27</sup> *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.*

E. Jesus is still acting as priest in His exaltation

1. Still ministering/serving before God

- a. (Heb 8:1-2 ESV) *Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,* <sup>2</sup> *a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. (cf., Rom.15:16)*
- b. (Heb 6:19-20 ESV) *We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,* <sup>20</sup> *where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*
- c. (Heb 9:24 ESV) *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* <sup>b</sup> *on our behalf.*

2. What does He do “in the presence of God on our behalf” ?

a. Intercedes for us

- 1) (Heb 7:23-25 ESV) *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,* <sup>24</sup> *but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.* <sup>25</sup> *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.*
- 2) Jesus is not there asking a favor for us before God, but legally representing us, offering His death as evidence of our acquittal
  - a) (Rom 8:33-34 ESV) *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* <sup>34</sup> *Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*
  - b) (1Jo 2:1-2 ESV) *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* <sup>2</sup> *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*
  - c) Mark Jones: “There is no Christian alive who has not had Christ mention his or her name to the Father. Indeed, if you are a Christian, it is precisely because the Son presented your name to His, and now your, Father.” [Jonty Rhodes, *Man of Sorrows, King of Glory* (Crossway, 2021), p. 133, referenced to Mark Jones, *Knowing Christ* (Banner of Truth, 2015), p.179.]

b. Prays for us

1) (Joh 17:9-17 ESV) *I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup> And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. <sup>13</sup> But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup> I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

a) Protection from evil – v.11, 15

b) Our sanctification – v.17

c) Our unity – v.11, 20-23

d) That we would be kept to the end so that we can be with Him – v.11, 24

2) Those Jesus pays for, He prays for

c. Helps us

1) (Heb 2:17-18 ESV) *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. <sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

2) (Heb 4:15-16 ESV) *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

3) Just as Christ was merciful and gentle when He ministered on earth, so He is now with us – loving us, forgiving us, encouraging us

3. Jesus is continuing to guard and maintain true worship by being the One Who is worshiped

a. (Rev 5:11-14 ESV) *Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" <sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" <sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

b. (Rev 7:17 ESV) *For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

F. What Adam failed to do, and every human priest after him was unable to do, Jesus did – and is doing

1. Not just offering sacrifices for sin, but becoming the sacrifice, once and for all
2. Not just guarding true worship, but becoming the center and object of our worship

G. Are we to be priests/priestly?

1. (Rev 1:5b-6 ESV) *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

a. (Rev 5:9-10 ESV) *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*

2. (1Pe 2:9-10 ESV) *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

3. "the priesthood of all believers"

a. Direct access to God

b. Offer spiritual sacrifices

1) (1Pe 2:4-5 ESV) *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup> you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ*

2) (Rom 12:1 ESV) *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

3) (Heb 13:15-16 ESV) *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. <sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

c. Intercede for others to be reconciled to God

1) (1Ti 2:1-2 ESV) *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.*

2) (2Co 5:18-19 ESV) *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

d. Guard and maintain true worship – one of the "Great Ends of the Church" (PCUSA): The maintenance of divine worship – If we don't, who will?