

Hebrews 7:28

Comparative Priesthoods

The Bible speaks of Jesus as the High Priest who brings us to God. This description assumes the presence of a need. It assumes a break, a breach between man and God. And indeed, the scripture is replete with not only the assumption of such a breach, but the plain and simple assertion of it! Any pretense to the contrary is simply impotent humanism which will ultimately destroy all who follow it. We ARE out of fellowship with God in our natural condition, and God is pleased with NO PERSON in their natural state. He does NOT love us AS we are, but loves His own IN SPITE OF how they are. And further, loves them enough that He is fully committed to transforming them into the likeness of His Son Jesus, with whom He is well pleased!

I. WE NEED A PRIEST

A. Without his intervention there is no access to God

Isaiah 59:1–3

B. We are unclean in and of ourselves

*“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”
(Romans 3:23, NKJV)*

- C. We are contrary to God and opposed to His good will
- D. We are filled with the evil of our natures and are not even fit to enter into the presence of the Almighty to *ask* for forgiveness!

II. GOD GAVE PRIESTHOODS

- A. God gave two kinds
 - 1. Levitical
 - 2. Melchizedekian.
 - 3. The new priesthood in Melchizedek was really a return to the original preceding Levi, and outside of Abraham altogether; it ends the Levitical priesthood, for these two extreme different priesthoods cannot simultaneously exist and serve the same God.
- B. They were established on differing grounds.
 - 1. The law - the entire focus of the Levitical law was to show us how to appease God so that we might worship. It was all about worshipping and obedience.

2. The oath - the promise that God had made a way and that this High priest IS the path between man and God. He does not need to facilitate our effort to appease God, rather He is the evidence and the means by which God appeased His own wrath.

C. They were sealed by differing means

1. One by the appointment of God

““Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.” (Exodus 28:1–2, NKJV)

2. The other by His solemn oath.

“The Lord has sworn And will not relent, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”” (Psalm 110:4, NKJV)

3. We can now worship in spirit and truth for the Father has made us His own adopted sons and daughters by the High Priest that He confirmed with His own oath.

a. The oath is unchanging

b. It is unchangeable

c. It is solemn in the most profound way, for that oath is actually the expression of the eternal covenant which God made with Himself before the very foundations of eternity.

D. They were established in differing times

1. Levi

a. With the law

b. For the law

2. Jesus/Melchizedekian

a. After the law (supersede and replace)

b. Before the law - in purpose and authority

E. They were fulfilled by different types of people.

1. The line of Levi

a. Mere men

b. Subject to weakness

i. Moral

ii. Natural

iii. Vocational

- Could neither forgive, nor truly forget.

- The best that they could do on their own is pretend

- The best that they could do in the power of God is blindly trust that God would be

faithful - just as we do, and encourage people to believe.

- The law could find no one better, nor could it make them better whom it chose.

2. The Son of God

a. By eternal generation of the Father

b. Fully God in every manner

c. Without weakness

i. Not physical

ii. Not Moral

iii. Not vocational

d. He was perfect in every possible use of the word.

F. Right man for the job

1. Priesthood is at its heart about intercession. It is about going before God on behalf of another. This is why the selection of the priest is so important! An unrighteous priest is a burdensome and dangerous thing.

2. Levi was filled with weakness, impotence and sin

3. Jesus was and is perfect in every possible sense of the word.

a. He is the capstone and the foundation.

- b. The pinnacle and the root.
- c. He is the product of God's plan and the very purpose and presence of God from before eternity.
- d. There is nothing which can ever replace Christ for He fulfills everything that God ever planned!

III. OF PRIESTS, CONFESSIONS AND INTERCESSIONS.

A Tangential point must be addressed here.

- A. Since the role of the priest is about intercession, we have to consider the place of confession and intercessory prayer in the midst of this conversation. Our one high priest is the focus and provider of our relationship to God. This includes our confession of sin when we step outside of His will.

*“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
(1 John 1:9, NKJV)*

- B. Someone will ask, or at least be thinking, what about the Catholic priests and the act of

confession? Where does it fit into this discussion? The short answer is that it doesn't. There is no place in scripture where we are told to confess our sin to any man for his absolution on God's behalf. No man has that authority and any person or church who pretends he does usurps the rightful place of Christ which no one can take.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,” (1 Timothy 2:5, NKJV)

- C. This means that there is no place for prayer to saints, former virgins or angels. No one but Jesus Christ can stand between us and God, and no one but Jesus Christ can intercede with God on our behalf in this manner. Further, no one but Jesus Christ is worthy of worship.
- D. However - there IS place for intercessory prayer, lifting up one another in prayer and coming before God on behalf of the weak and helpless, the wounded and broken, and even those who have hurt us...
- 1. This is what is meant in Galatians when Paul says:

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2, NKJV)

E. Further, there IS place for confession of sin to one another when the sin or transgression is against the one to whom the confession is made... consider these verses

James 5:13–16

F. We see here the command for intercession, but we also see confession. But what we do NOT see is the elevation of the elders to priests... they do not receive confession for that type of confession belongs to Christ as mediator and High Priest. The confession shown is one to another for the trespasses which are against one another! These offenses DO have the power to interrupt our communion with God if they are not dealt with...

““For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matthew 6:14–15, NKJV)

G. Trespass and Fellowship

1. The Greek word here is the same - trespasses is - < **παράπτωμα** > paraptōma - it means offense, slip, missing the mark

2. The key issue here is the simple fact that God cares about our fellowship one with another, and if we do not keep short books and forgive from our hearts, it will absolutely interrupt our communion and fellowship with God. You cannot hate your brother and be in right fellowship with your mutual Father.
3. Beloved, you do not need another priest to help with the single largest barrier to a deeper relationship with God, you simply need to repent of your sin and forgive your brother his sin... and until that happens, your fellowship remains stunted AND the revival we so desperately need WILL NOT HAPPEN! This IS the sin that is destroying this nation, for it allows all manner of other evil to hold sway. If James is to be believed (and as scripture he absolutely MUST be) then even our physical illnesses can be traced back to this unforgiveness and lack of repentance... whatever trespass you may have committed, or may have had committed against you, let it go and close the door that you have propped open for demonic invasion.

IV. ONE PRIESTHOOD, ONE HOPE

- A. The whole of the conflict between the law and gospel can be demonstrated in differences between the priesthoods
- B. The whole of our faith then depends upon the simple truth that our High Priest is the Son of God
- C. The everlasting promise of God is the catalyst for the effective working of the priesthood.