

PREFACE

Let's review the job description of your typical, Levitical high priest.

- intercedes, mediates between man and God (Moses)
- speaks *to* God *for* man (Moses)
- advocates *for* man *before* God (Moses)
- after offering a sacrifice to atone for *his own* sins, he, representing *all the people*, offers the annual atoning sacrifice for *all* sins (Leviticus 9:6-7; Leviticus 16)

Sidebar: Technically, Moses was never a “priest.” But as the leader of Israel, and one with a uniquely intimate relationship with Yahweh, he—especially prior to the formal Levitical system set up under the Law—fulfilled many of the roles of priest between man and God.

If Jesus of Nazareth is really *the* Messiah—and thus, our high priest—he must fulfill this job description.

ZECHARIAH 3:8-10

Let's return to our third OT prophecy in Zechariah 3.

Read Zechariah 3:8-10.

Remember,

- The one speaking is “the angel of the Lord” (v6)—no doubt a pre-incarnate visitation of Christ;
- The one the angel is speaking to is named Joshua—or, in Greek, Jesus;
- The prophecy being spoken refers to Christ coming as high priest to, in one moment, remove [atone for] the sin of the world!

Although in individuals like Moses we see intercession and advocacy often taking place verbally, intimately—such as when Yahweh was about to destroy Israel in His anger over the golden calf [Exodus 32:9-10] and Moses intercedes on their behalf [Exodus 32: 11-14]—the *ultimate* act of intercession and advocacy took place once every year during the Day of Atonement.

HEBREWS 9**Read Hebrews 9:6-7.**

The emphasis here is on the repetitive nature of the old covenant sacrifice and worship. Every day, “continually,” the priests would go about their prescribed duties in the first chamber of the tent of meeting—the holy place. And even though v7 tells us the high priest entered the most holy place only once per year—or, more accurately, two or even three times on one day per year—he had to do this every year, without fail.

Daily the people of Israel would bring their personal sacrifices to atone for the sins of which they were aware, or felt guilty of, or had become known by others. Daily those known sins were atoned for. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would enter the most holy place to atone for the sins—of himself and all of Israel—that were not known, or that had been conveniently side-stepped out of “ignorance.”

Read Hebrews 9:11-12

I can see vs11-12 play out in my mind. Under the old covenant the high priest, arrayed in his priestly finery, would kill the bull, catching some of its blood in a basin. This he would carry into the holy of holies to atone for his own sin. Then he would return to the open courtyard where a goat would be sacrificed. This blood the high priest would also carry inside in a basin, where he would use it to atone for the sins of the people.

Now I see Jesus, the high priest of the new covenant, arrayed not in fine linen, but in filthy, blood-soaked homespun, carrying a basin of blood into the heavenly tabernacle. But this time the blood is not that of a goat; it is His own blood.

Read Matthew 26:26-28.

The imagery in Scripture of Christ's work on behalf of believers is multidimensional.

Shepherd/Lamb

In both His own words in the NT and in OT prophecy, Christ is both the shepherd of the sheep and the sacrificial lamb:

Read Isaiah 40:11.

Jesus Himself affirms this in John 10:11.

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

At the same time, however, Jesus is the sacrificial lamb.

Read Isaiah 53:7.

John the Baptist recognized this and identified Jesus of Nazareth as such to his disciples and the public in John 1.

The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

Repeatedly in The Revelation the risen Christ is referred to as "the Lamb." So who is it that can open the book with seven seals? No one but the Lamb who is also the Lion of Judah and the Root of David:

Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." (Revelation 5:4-9)

Lord/Brother

So the Messiah is both the shepherd who takes care of the sheep, and the lamb who is selected out for the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. Within the community of believers we see this dichotomy as well. Christ is our Lord, our head, but He is also our brother: He is both over us, and beside us. He is the “husband” of the Bride [the church], who gave His life that the wedding could take place!

High Priest/Atoning Sacrifice/Door

When we get to His role as high priest, we are not looking at a dichotomy [division into two] but a *trichotomy*—at least.

- He is first **the high priest**: *He* is the one carrying the blood of the atoning sacrifice into the holy of holies.
- But He is also **the atoning sacrifice**: *He* is the one that was slain; it is *His* blood being carried into the holy of holies to be smeared upon the mercy seat.
- Beyond these, He is also **the open door**: Once His blood has been shed, and the atonement for all sins accomplished, He is the one who tears down the veil that has so severely restricted the holy of holies; now it is open for all! **Read Matthew 27:50-51.**

The writer of Hebrews makes this connection in Hebrews 10:19-20:

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh...

And the writer of Hebrews emphasizes, as he closes Chapter Nine and moves into Chapter Ten, that in marked contrast to the high priest under the Mosaic Law, Christ’s sacrifice was performed once, and after that no more sacrifice was needed.

Read Hebrews 9:24-28.

HEBREWS 10

In vv11-14 of Chapter Ten the writer of Hebrews reminds us, again, of the difference between the priests of the old covenant and the High Priest of the new.

Read Hebrews 10:10-14.

The old priest “stands”	Christ sat down
The old priest made sacrifices “daily”	Christ, once.
The old priest offered sacrifices “time after time”	Christ, once.
The sacrifices of the old priest never “took away sins”	Christ’s sacrifice did “for all time”

And v14 reminds us that it was *His* offering—the offering of Himself—that purchased our “perfection”—our completeness—our *hagiazō* [sanctification], our once and final, yet also ongoing, sanctification. Nothing we did accomplished this. It was all of Him.

CONCLUSION

We began this session reviewing the job description for your typical high priest under the law.

- intercedes, mediates between man and God
- speaks *to* God *for* man
- advocates *for* man *before* God
- after offering a sacrifice to atone for *his own* sins, he, representing *all the people*, offers the annual atoning sacrifice for *all* sins

We have learned that the Messiah prophesied in the OT was to be

- a faithful priest (1 Samuel)
- a priest forever (Psalm 110)
- a high priest who would “remove the iniquity of that land in one day” (Zechariah 3)

So does Jesus of Nazareth meet the requirements for the job?

a faithful priest

Read Hebrews 2:9, 17-18. [propitiation = atonement, satisfaction]

a priest forever

Read John 8:56-59.

a high priest who will remove the iniquity of the land in one day

Read 1 John 2:1-2.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. (Romans 3:23-25a)

Is Jesus of Nazareth our faithful, eternal High Priest, our Messiah?

Indeed.

Zechariah 3:8-10

8 'Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in **My servant the Branch**.

9 'For behold, **the stone that I have set before Joshua**; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'and **I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day**.

10 'In that day,' declares the Lord of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'

Our High Priest (2)

What will this Priest Do?

- *will remove all iniquity in one day*

How will this Priest do This?

- *He will be both priest and sacrifice; that is, He will be the one making the atonement, as well as the atonement itself!*

Hebrews 9:11-12

11 But when Christ appeared as a **high priest of the good things to come**, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but **through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

Hebrews 9:25-28

25 nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.

26 Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now **once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,

28 so **Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.**

Hebrews 10:10-14

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 **but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,**

13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be **made a footstool for His feet.**

14 **For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

Psalm 110:1

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13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.
14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

THE TABERNACLE TENT

The entire tent was 45 feet (13.7 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high. It was a wooden skeletal structure, overlaid with gold, with no solid roof or front wall (Ex. 26:15–29). Five wooden bars (overlaid with gold) passed through rings attached to each frame (Ex. 26:26–30).

The Most Holy Place was a 15-foot (4.6-m) cube, containing only the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:10–22; 37:1–9). It was here that Yahweh would descend to meet with his people in a cloud theophany (divine appearance). The high priest could enter only once a year, on the Day of Atonement (see note on Heb. 9:7).

The table for the bread of the Presence (Ex. 25:23–30)

The Holy Place of the tabernacle tent was 30 feet (9.1 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high.

The framed structure was covered by four layers of cloth and skin (Ex. 26:1–14).

The veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was made from blue, purple, and scarlet dyed yarns woven with fine twined linen and embroidered with cherubim (Ex. 26:31–33). It hung on four golden pillars.

The altar of incense (Ex. 30:1–5; 37:25–29)

The golden lampstand (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24)

The veil that formed the entrance to the tabernacle was similar to the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, except that cherubim were not embroidered on it. It was suspended on five golden pillars (Ex. 26:36–37).

