

Sacred Calling

Exodus 28:1-4, 29-30 & Leviticus 16:30, 32-34

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Many things that seem normal to the world are sacred callings in Christianity (e.g. marriage, singleness, parenting). While we are more familiar with Biblical kings and prophets, we don't know much about high priests. Who are the high priests? What do they do? What are the implications for our priesthood?

3 Aspects of the High Priest

1. The High Priestly Status: Royalty

Ex. 28:2-3 - Anyone could tell the importance of the high priest, based on his appearance & what he wore. The turban (one of six articles of the high priest's attire) communicated the High Priest's royal status (Ex. 29:6). He was also dressed in royal colours and played kingly roles. The high priest was the designated king in the house of God.

2. The High Priestly Calling: Holiness

The main qualification of a high priest was his bloodline. Only the descendants of Aaron, the first high priest, could qualify for high priesthood. At the same time, there was a list of things that would disqualify someone from high priesthood (Lev. 21:17-20). For the high priest to oversee the most sacred space in the world and to serve the most sacred God almost face to face, he had to have the most sacred calling. The high priest was called to holiness; he was set apart *by* God, *for* God.

3. The High Priestly Mission: Mediation

3 duties the high priest was called to:

#1 Bear the people (the 12 tribes) in his heart and bring them to regular

remembrance before God (Ex. 28:29) - the high priest wore a breastplate that had 12 precious stones, each with the names of the tribes of Israel engraved on them; he was to regularly remember them. wherever he went. Here, he represented the people before God.

#2 Bear the responsibility for the decisions of the people (Ex. 28:30) - the high priest was to discern the will of God by using the Urim and the Thummim. Here, he represented God before the people.

#3 Offer the sacrifices on the day of atonement (Lev. 16:30) - this was the one day in the year the high priest was to enter the Most High Place. Every time the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, he went in representing the people, their sin and desire for cleansing with him. Every time he emerged alive and well from the Most Holy Place, he represented the Lord and His acceptance of the sacrifice; their sins have been atoned for. The high priest represented the people before God, and God before the people. His mission was to mediate.

Our priestly roles (application):

I. RELY upon your Great High Priest

Jesus is the High Priest who offered Himself as our sacrifice and atoned for our sins. In His resurrection, He confirms the gracious forgiveness of the Father and fulfilled His role as the Great High Priest and Mediator. Rely upon Christ, by rooting yourself in His word!

II. RECOGNISE His uniqueness

No matter the area of our lives (faith and work, relationships, etc.), we are all

equally priests, with Jesus uniquely as the Great High Priest over us. Our pastor & leaders are not our high priests. So as priests, we must take ownership of our faith and expressions of faith in our lives.

III. RECONCILE: Join in His work of mediation

The main role of the priest is to support the High Priest in His mission of mediation and reconciling sinners to the Father. We do this by sharing the gospel to those around us and interceding for them.

Christ has succeeded as the Great High Priest, so press on in our calling! Find strength, by relying and drawing near through your sympathetic Great High Priest, to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16).