

Hebrews 7.23

Prevented by Death

The need for a priestly intervention is absolutely critical for our souls. We stand alienated from God by the sin nature we inherited from our father Adam, and what is more, we add to its curse with our constant rebellions. It requires someone who has the power to stand between us and God and intercede on our behalf... but the problem with this reality is that we cannot rely on a man to accomplish this for us. For every man dies, every priest dies, every man fails to live up to the standards of God. No human being is pure, no human being is powerful enough to overcome the grave and certainly no human being is able to make the grave give up anyone already claimed... unless that person is also God in the flesh... the need is just too great for any man to provide. For every single one of us is subject to death, and not any of us will be able to avoid that hour when it comes.

I. MULTITUDE OF PRIESTS

A. There were many priests before

B. There were 83 high priests from Aaron to Phineas who died with the Temple.

1. 13 before the first temple

2. 18 in the first temple

3. The rest were in the second temple... but this fact is seen as punishment to the Jews. For they remember that because of the sins of a nation are many, so too are her rulers...

“Because of the transgression of a land, many are its princes; But by a man of understanding and knowledge Right will be prolonged.” (Proverbs 28:2, NKJV)

4. There was a steady stream of these priests because of this weakness, there were so many ... this is an incontrovertible reality, a known truth... think also by way of illustration; According to the claims of the catholic church there have been 266 popes since the time of Christ ... where is the peace in that? And every one of them is subject to death and must himself be prayed "out of purgatory" by the

church... ? Truly every religion that exalts man is a hopeless cult...

- C. They are weak and ineffectual
 - 1. They too are dead in sin and trespass and must have their sin atoned for

““Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.” (Leviticus 16:6, NKJV)

Ephesians 2:1–3

- 2. They also are subject to the lusts of the flesh and engage in sin

Leviticus 10:1–3

- a.Or consider the sons of Eli - Hophni and Phineas

1Samuel 2.12-17

1Samuel 2.22-25

1Samuel 2.30-35

- D. They are unable to fulfill what is needed from them.
 - 1. Partly because of sin
 - 2. Partly because of weakness
 - 3. Partly because the whole system was based on the promise of something

greater and was thus a **forward looking** system

E. No man is able to be a reliable intercession between you and God. You must never think that any man is great enough to stand in the place of your soul and offer absolution, forgiveness, offerings and intercessions and hope based upon his own power, position or person.

II. WEAKNESS OF THE PRIESTHOOD

A. They were subject to death

1. Both a punishment
2. And a hinderance

B. This prevented them from fulfilling their calling

““But God draws the mighty away with His power; He rises up, but no man is sure of life. He gives them security, and they rely on it; Yet His eyes are on their ways. They are exalted for a little while, Then they are gone. They are brought low; They are taken out of the way like all others; They dry out like the heads of grain.” (Job 24:22–24, NKJV)

- C. It also showed them as under the law of God and subject also to God's wrath for sin
 - 1. This is the human condition
 - 2. It is the total and complete number of humanity who are under the curse of sin

“Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” (Galatians 3:21–22, NKJV)

- 3. There is NONE who is able to free himself, let alone another
- D. They were just as much in need of a savior as we are.

III. DEATH MIGHTIER

- A. Aaron was prevented from remaining priest by his own death...

Numbers 20.25-29

“(Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his stead.” (Deuteronomy 10:6, NKJV)

- B. They were forbidden from continuing by death itself.
1. God took them out of their office
 2. The office itself was imperfect, since it had to be replaced so frequently
 3. They died whether they were ready or not. It didn't matter whether they wanted to continue or leave... God took them when HE was ready
 4. Death HELD its victims. None escaped, and none of us ever can... those who would keep another from death must themselves be free from it, mightier than it and have far greater reach and power...

“What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? Selah” (Psalm 89:48, NKJV)

IV. OUR GREAT NEED

- A. We need a priest who is greater
- B. There is such a need for the work of the priest to intercede on our behalf that we cannot hope to reach heaven without it. We are ruined in every way and broken

beyond all possible help from man. No human is able to do what is needed no matter what office he holds, no matter what power he wields, no matter what clothing he wears.

C. The priesthood's main work is this intercession and mediation. He represents us to God, offering up the sacrifice and covering our sin in the blood of the offering. All covenant transactions **MUST** go through the priest. He represents our prayers before God, He atones for our sin, he is the one source of peace and hope we have... and then he dies?

D. What ruin for our soul to be in need of his intervention in just that moment! What a terror to live with, always in fear not only for your own life but HIS!?

E. But the priest provided by God IS the greater

V. GOD'S GREAT PROVISION

A. HE alone has conquered death and the grave

1Corinthians 15.20-28

B. HE alone has emerged from the grave with the power of endless life.

“who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.” (Hebrews 7:16, NKJV)

C. HE alone has given life and all who trust in Him

John 10:27–30

D. HE alone is worthy to reign forever

Revelation 5:11–14

E. HE alone will return and redeem this earth and all in who belong to Him. His word and His powerful promise guarantee it.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–18