

## Jesus is...Priest

Getting through to God seems like the hardest thing to do sometimes. But for those who have placed their faith in the Lord Jesus we have direct access to God. He has opened the way for once rebellious men and woman to enter into the presence of the most pure and holy reality, the presence of God, through his perfect sacrifice.

When our first parents, Adam and Eve, rebelled against the rule of God in the garden our access to God was denied. Sin separated us from the presence of God and cut off our perfect union with him. The impact of sin was so devastating that it would take an act of God to restore our brokenness.

Through the ages God had to reveal to man the depth of the offense by providing the law, a sacrificial system that demanded more than a mere prayer of sorrow, but an offering to be placed on the altar to atone for each individual offense (sin). But not just anyone could perform the rites and rituals involved in making atonement for ones sin. God had appointed men who would be a mediator (go-between) between God and man. These men were set apart by God himself to perform the sacrifice that would purify and forgive the rebel.

Consider the appointing of Aaron, Moses brother, in the book of Exodus. God instructed Moses to commission Aaron for the office of Priest. He and his family were set apart to offer sacrifices and offerings before God on behalf of men. From the Old Testament we know that these were broken men working on behalf of broken men (Examples: Aaron, the idol maker Exodus 32. Eli and his sons 1 Samuel 2:27ff).

Priests alone were allowed to bring the confessions of sinful man before the presence of God. To call on the name of the Lord alone without sacrifice or offering or the assistance of a priest was another offense to be paid for by sacrifice. God was serious about the sins of man, exposing the depth of our rebellion.

But when the fullness of time had come, God appointed a great High Priest who would offer once and for all the ultimate sacrifice for sinful man. In Christ, the sinless and perfect man, God opened the way for all men everywhere to call upon the name of the Lord. Through faith Christ, we can enter the presence of God through his body with confidence. Jesus our great Priest has become our mediator opening a way for us not only to call on God but also to have complete access to our father. Jesus is our great Priest!

### Group Discussion Questions:

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word priest?
2. Read Exodus 28:1-5. What does this passage tell you about priests?
3. Read Leviticus 16:1-2. Who was the priest directed by? What does this tell you about a priest's power?
4. Read Leviticus 16:20-22. What is the symbolism in this passage?
5. Read Leviticus 17:1-5. What do you read in this passage about the role of a priest?
6. Read Leviticus 22:17-25. What was acceptable and what was unacceptable as offerings? What insight to forgiveness of our sin do you gain from this?
7. After reading the passages of scripture above, how would you now describe the word or title of priest?
8. Read 1 Samuel 2:27-36. What does this tell you about the character of priests?
9. Read John 14:6. What does this verse say about the necessity of priests today?
10. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Describe Jesus as the High Priest.
11. Why do we need to go through anyone to get to God? What did sin do to our relationship with God?
12. Put in your own words what Jesus did for you.