

- Q25. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?
A25. **Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.**

Scripture References: Hebrews 7: 2:17, 24-25, 9:14, 18; Romans 3:26, 10:4; Hebrews 2:17

- DQ1: As a priest, how many sacrifices did Christ offer up?
- DQ2: As a priest, did Christ execute His office perfectly?
- DQ3: As a priest, what did Christ offer up as a sacrifice?
- DQ4: As a priest, why did Christ offer up himself as a sacrifice?
- DQ5: What did Christ's atoning sacrifice accomplish that the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament periods could not accomplish?
- DQ6: As a priest, what did Christ satisfy?
- DQ7: How did Christ satisfy God's divine justice?
- DQ8: What is the result of having satisfied God's divine justice?
- DQ9: What function does Christ continue to perform as a priest even today?
- DQ10: When Christ perfectly executed the office as a priest, what special benefits are bestowed upon those who are in Christ?
- DQ11: For what does Christ intercede for us?

Notes:

We have already learned that, unlike all the previous prophets, Christ came as the final and perfect prophet. In the same way, unlike all the previous priests, Christ came as the final and perfect priest.

We also learned in the past that Christ is not a priest in the order of Levites but a priest in the order of Melchizedek. We need to remind ourselves of this very special teaching of the Bible. Levitical priests were sinners just like the rest of us and could not solve or deal with their own sin problems on their own. Christ, the priest in the order of Melchizedek, is without sin. This very prominent distinction between the Levitical priests and the Melchizedek priest is being addressed by QA24.

The Levitical priests had to give sacrifice repeatedly for their sacrifices were not perfect. The Levitical priests were themselves merely foreshadowed the coming of Christ. Once Christ came to the world, such foreshadowing no longer became necessary. The fact that Christ at once and by one time sacrifice satisfied divine justice conclusively states that no additional atoning sacrifice is necessary and no other priests are necessary for this purpose.

For this reason, the fact that Christ at once and by one time sacrifice satisfied divine justice is both amazing and precious to all of us. God's infinite justice could be satisfied only by an infinite priest offering an infinite sacrifice. The one time sacrifice of Christ denotes that the sacrifice is indeed infinite and that the priest offering the sacrifice is also infinite. Besides Christ, there is no one who could have executed the office of a priest to satisfy the infinite justice of God.

Christ offered himself as the sacrifice. To offer up a righteous and perfect sacrifice, a perfect offering had to be given. Even if Christ was perfect, He could not have satisfied God's divine justice by offering up an animal. The sacrifice would have been far short of the requirement. For this reason, Christ offered himself. Christ came to the world because there was no perfect priest or sacrifice in the world. Christ came to give himself as an atoning sacrifice. Indeed, Christ came as the Lamb of God.

Christ then satisfied God's divine justice by being a perfect priest and a perfect sacrifice. God's justice flows out of God's righteousness and holiness. In God, there is no impurity, blemish or sin. God's character cannot and does not tolerate or compromise with any impurity, blemish or sin. All who violate God's character must be put to death. Yet, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to us so that, by His perfect execution of the office of a priest, He could fully and perfectly satisfy God's divine justice.

Those who violate God's character experience a separation from God and death. But, as a consequence of Christ's complete and perfect execution of the office of a priest, they experience restoration and reconciliation of their relationship with God. Even though they were once enemies of God, they became God's children and are able to approach the throne of grace with boldness. (Hebrews 4:16)

Christ, who completed His office as a reconciler, has required of His followers to become reconcilers in the world and gave them a ministry of reconciliation. (1 Corinthians 5:17-21) The ministry of reconciliation requires taking on the faults of others instead of turning one's faults to others. For this reason, the ministry of reconciliation or the ministry of gospel is, at times, very painful and difficult. Christ gave to us this ministry. We, as the followers of Christ the priest, were installed as the priest of God and the primary function is to bring the ministry of reconciliation in the world.

The Old Testament priests petitioned God by burnt offering. Christ petitioned God by sacrificing Himself. Christ is continually interceding for us even today. Christ's intercession is perfect. The primary function of a priest is to intercede on behalf of sinners. And, there is no petition of Christ which is not satisfied.

Are there true prayers for being offered for those who are in the wrong in the church today? If we are true followers of Christ, then we must, like our Lord, offer prayers for those who have trespassed against us. What did Christ pray?

Luke 23:34

John 1&:6-12

If we are true priests, then our prayer should resemble those of Christ. Isn't it amazing to hear prayers like this? Let's then offer true Christian prayer to God.

Even though we can easily come to know that Christ perfectly executed the office of a priest, there can be some confusion about the impact of His perfect execution of the office. It is the issue of Limited Atonement, which we briefly mentioned in the past. Let us look into it a bit more here.

Let us first summarize the Five Points of Calvinism to refresh our recollection.

- Total Depravity
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints

There is a clear connection between the teaching of Limited Atonement and Christ's priesthood. Some people might question, how is it that if Christ was the perfect priest and sacrifice, could only save only some, not everyone?

The Biblical teaching of Limited Atonement is very popular with the world. Let us consider just two of the reasons why that may be the case. The world reasons: First, God is love and the loving God would not allow so many people to die and go to hell and, Second, if not everyone is saved, then Christ's death would be in vain to the extent that He could not save many. The truth of the matter is that these arguments are not Biblically-based.

Limited Atonement follows God's Unconditional Election. Christ the priest did not come to be the priest for or save everyone but only to save His people.

Matthew 1:21

John 6:38-39; 10:15, 17:2, 6, 9-10

Limited Atonement does not suggest that there is a limit as to Christ's priesthood. It does tell us that God has put a limit as to who might benefit from Christ's priesthood. Only the elect will be saved.

In conclusion, Christ carries out a ministry that no one else could carry out. This is one distinct ministry of the Messiah. And, the priesthood is required of all the followers of Christ. (1 Peter 2:9)