

**TEXT** Exodus 28:1-3; Hebrews 5:1-10

**SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE** Numbers 17:1-11

**OBJECTIVE** The students will understand that God appointed Aaron as the first high priest to offer sacrifices in atonement for sins. They will further be able to parallel Aaron's office to that of our High Priest, whose offering for the sins of the whole world was Himself.

**KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER** We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. — Hebrews 4:14

**KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH** Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. — Hebrews 2:17

**RESOURCE MATERIAL** A Series of Lessons on the Book of Hebrews, Volumes 1 and 2

**ANSWER  
TITLE:** **Service to God**

**SEARCH  
TITLE:** **Israel's First Priest**

**REFERENCE INFORMATION**

The history of the formal priesthood in Israel begins with the time of the Exodus. In patriarchal times the heads of families offered sacrifices and intercessory prayers, and performed general religious functions, but there seems to have been no specialization and no separate priestly office, as there was among the Egyptians. It is in Exodus

28 and 29 and Leviticus 8 that we have the record of the founding of the Aaronic order of the priests.

The priesthood of Christ is the principal theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

**YOUR OPENER**

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# Israel's First Priest

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## RESPONSES

1. The priests were appointed to represent the Children of Israel before God. Their main duty was to offer sacrifices for sins. Why did the Children of Israel need a representative? Why did they need sacrifices? Because of God's holiness and man's sinfulness, there has always been the need for one to stand between God and man, to plead for man. The blood of the sacrifice was needful to satisfy God's demand for atonement. See Hebrews 9:22.

2. He needed to make an offering for himself first because he also had sinned, and thus had to be purged. This answer should lead students to conclude that there was a need for a better priesthood. Refer to Hebrews 7:26-28.

3. God appointed him. What happened when one took the priesthood honors unto himself, without being appointed by God? Ask students for examples. See Leviticus 10:1,2; 2 Chronicles 26:16-20. The students should realize that Aaron was "called of God" (Hebrews 5:4).

4. The first covenant was not faultless, so the Lord made a new covenant. The students should understand that God intended the Old Testament priesthood to serve as an "example and shadow of heavenly things." "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). When the Law was fulfilled in Christ, the priesthood, which was established for the administration of the Law, gave way to Him who came to fulfill it.

Included in the establishing of God's written Law was the process to be followed in administering the Law. The tribe of Levi was charged with the care of the sanctuary and the serving. Aaron and his sons, being of the tribe of Levi, were set apart for the priesthood; and this office was passed down from father to son.

1. What was the purpose of the Old Testament priesthood?

2. Why was it necessary for an Old Testament priest to make an offering for his own sins?

3. How was Aaron chosen to be the first high priest?

4. Why was the Old Testament priesthood not intended to be permanent? See Hebrews 8:4-11.

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

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5. Read Hebrews 7:11-16. Was Jesus a descendant of Aaron? After what order was He a priest?

6. What were some of the things Christ went through to obtain this better priesthood? See Hebrews 5:7-9.

7. How is it that Christ can so readily relate to our disappointments, frustrations, and trials? See Hebrews 2:16-18.

8. Why would you rather be under Christ's priesthood than the Levitical priesthood?

9. What is God's promise to one in the time of need? See Hebrews 4:16.

10. Read Numbers 16:41-48. In what way was Aaron a mediator for the Children of Israel? In what way is Christ our mediator today?

5. Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi but, rather, of the lineage of David, who was of the tribe of Judah. Discuss the significance of Hebrews 7:14. The significance is that Christ's priesthood was not established by the Law which dictates that a priest be of the tribe of Levi. The priesthood of Christ was of a higher order than "the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16).

6. Though Jesus prayed with "strong crying and tears" He was, nevertheless, obedient to God the Father. Refer to times when He prayed in agony (Matthew 26:36-39; 27:46). Another time, Christ prayed through the night (Luke 6:12). Why was it necessary that He suffer so? Without His suffering, and ultimately His death, this better priesthood wouldn't be available to us. Do you think He knows how one feels who prays with strong crying and tears?

7. Christ took upon Himself the nature of man rather than angels, and was made like mankind so that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.

8. Let the students discuss the advantages of being under the dispensation of Christ. Was the Levitical priest always sympathetic and understanding (Hebrews 4:14-15)? Did he always meet the conditions described in Hebrews 7:26?

9. If one comes boldly to the Throne of Grace he will obtain mercy and grace. Point out that individuals in the Old Testament needed to bring their offerings to the priest to find help in time of need. It was up to the individual to take the initiative, and when he did so in faith, he found mercy. We, too, must take the initiative in coming to our High Priest.

10. The students should realize that a priest stands between the living and the dead. This was true of Aaron in the tabernacle worship. This is true of Jesus who stands between God and man, interceding as our great High Priest.

## YOUR WRAP-UP

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

In your own words, define *high priest*. What might a priest be expected to do?

According to the key verse, who is our High Priest? What did He do for us?

In what ways might the high priests in the Old Testament be compared to Christ?

Who was Israel's first high priest? Who chose or appointed him?

Who chose Jesus to be our High Priest? Why?

In the ANSWER story, what question about his father's work did Phinehas ask his mother?

What comparisons and contrasts might be made between Old Testament priests and God's ministers today?

## THINGS TO DO

Have each student in your class make a High-Priest mobile for himself, or have everyone work together to make one for the whole class. Illustrate or write on each side of the cards you use. One side should represent the Old Testament high priests. The other side should point toward our High Priest. For example:

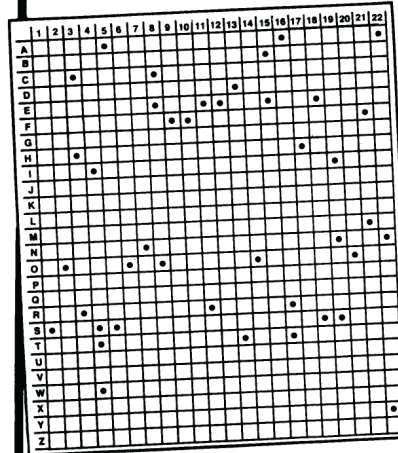
Aaron	—	Jesus
Lamb	—	Jesus
Altar	—	Cross
Temple	—	Church

Bring a chart or pictures of the Temple and explain what the high priest's duties were. Compare this to our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is our perfect High Priest.

## Answers for ANSWER

### Perfect Sacrifice

There are twenty-two columns on the graph below. To find the answer to the puzzle, start with column one. Follow the column from top to bottom. When you come to a dot, check to see which letter is on that line and then write that letter on the first blank line at the bottom of the page. Continue down the column. Do the same with each row. See if you can find the verse in your Bible. If you don't already know how, have your teacher show you how to use a concordance.



S C H R I S T W A S O N C E  
O F F E R E D T O B E A R E  
S I N S O F M A N Y

(Where is this verse found?) \_\_\_\_\_ H E B R E W S 9 :28