The Bible speaks of priests, high priests, and at least 3 priesthoods. Therefore, we need to get these things differentiated in our minds.

### The Priesthoods of God

1. There are a number of priesthoods spoken of in the Bible, and they are certainly interrelated.

2. A priest is a man who represents man to God. We have similar representative relationships throughout our society: an attorney represents us in a court of law; a real estate agent represents us in a real estate transaction; etc. It is someone who acts in our behalf in an arena in which we are not fully qualified to represent ourselves. Num. 15:15, 28

3. The first priesthood is named here In Gen. 14, and it refers to a priesthood which existed after the Flood and before the Mosaic Law was established.
   1) We know precious little about this priesthood. We know only one man who acts in this capacity, which man is Melchizedek. We might argue that Noah acted in this capacity as well. However, we have precious little information delineated here as to how this priesthood was organized, how a person became a priest, what the duties of the priest were, etc. There appears to be two rituals connected with this priesthood: the offering of animal sacrifices (an assumption we make, based upon Noah bringing clean animals on the ark and sacrificing some of them when exiting the ark); and what appears to be a pre-communion ritual with bread and wine (although, this could simply represent a meal shared by Melchizedek and Abram). Gen. 8:20 14:18–20
   2) Abram will pay a tithe (a tenth of his possessions) to Melchizedek. Gen. 14:20
   3) Our Lord’s priesthood is said to have its origins in this priesthood. Psalm 110:4  Heb. 6:20
   4) Even though this post-diluvian priesthood could be very well-defined, God the Holy Spirit intentionally does not define it for us, but presents this priesthood as being one man, without mother or father, and without genealogy. The idea is, Melchizedek is the best one, in this way, to be a
The Priesthoods of God

type of Christ.

4. The next priesthood is known by most as the Levitical priesthood. However, the Levitical priesthood is a misnomer, but this is how it has come to be known throughout the ages. It is properly the Aaronic priesthood, as all priests are descendants of Aaron. Ex. 28:1 Num. 3:10

1) Throughout most of Israel’s history, there was one high priest with clearly defined duties. Ex. 27:21 28:41–43 Lev. 1:5–8

2) The priests were all descended from Aaron, and one man, in each generation, would act as high priest. Ex. 28:1 29:44 30:30

3) Aaron was from the tribe of Levi, and the Levites were not a part of the land ownership of the other tribes of Israel. All families of Israel receive a plot of earth which was theirs, but not the Levites, who were involved in the spiritual growth of Israel. They were to inherit a spiritual kingdom and therefore, they did not participate in ownership of land on earth. Deut. 18:1 Joshua 18:7 21:3–4

4) The priests officiated in all of the religious holidays and they offered up animal sacrifices on behalf of the people of Israel. Num. 18:1–8

5) The priests were to encourage the people in war. Deut. 20:1–4

6) The high priest, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, entered into the Holy of Holies (a room of the Tabernacle that no one went into apart from the high priest), and sprinkled blood on the Ark of God, a piece of furniture which represented Jesus Christ; a piece of furniture which every Israelite knew about, but was almost never seen. Ex. 26:34 Heb. 9:25 13:11

5. We are told in the New Testament that the offerings of the Aaronic priesthood could never take away sins (Heb. 10:11). However, this is a point we ought to be able to reach with logic, because those is the Aaronic priesthood are mortals, as are we, and first had to offer up sacrifices for their own sins.

6. In the time of Jesus, the priesthood had become corrupted and the high priests had become evil in their thinking, leading the Lord of Glory before the courts to be crucified. John 19:6 Acts 4:1–10

7. These same priests persecuted Paul. Acts 23:1–2, 12–15

8. Jesus, our High Priest:

1) These various priesthoods look forward to Jesus Christ; each ancient priest is a type of Jesus Christ. Heb. 8:1–5

2) The priests of old—even the high priest of Jehovah worship—were imperfect and had to offer up sacrifices even for themselves. Heb. 5:1–3 7:27–28

3) Jesus, on earth, became our High Priest, the true High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. Heb. 7:1–5, 17, 21 9:11

4) Jesus is not a Levitical priest, as He is from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi (from which is the family of Aaron); and there is nothing spoken about Judah and the priesthood. Heb. 7:11–14

5) Jesus is able to intercede on our behalf before God, as would a priest. Heb. 7:21–26
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<td><strong>6)</strong></td>
<td>He offered up Himself one time for our sins, taking them away, as the sacrifice of animals could not do. Heb. 2:7 9:12 10:19–22</td>
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<td><strong>7)</strong></td>
<td>It is by His blood (His spiritual death on the cross) that we may boldly enter into the Holy of Holies (which is representative of coming directly before God). Heb. 9:24 10:19</td>
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<td><strong>9)</strong></td>
<td>In the Church Age, we are all priests before God; we are able to represent ourselves directly to God because we are in Christ Jesus. Being in Christ Jesus, we share all that He is. Therefore, we can go to God directly in prayer and we can go to Him to restore our fellowship (by naming our sins to Him). These are priestly functions. 1Peter 2:5, 9 1John 1:9</td>
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<td><strong>10)</strong></td>
<td>The priesthoods of the Old Testament always looked forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Melchizedek priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood and the office of the high priest, all spoke of Jesus Christ. When the reality came (the fulfillment of these types), then there is no need to continue on with the types. Just as we no longer sacrifice animals to ceremonially take away our sins, we no longer have a specialized priesthood.</td>
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<td><strong>11)</strong></td>
<td>There will be another priesthood in the Millennium of those who survive the Tribulation. This will be in memory of the great plan of God, a plan which spanned the ages. Rev. 5:9–10 20:6</td>
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We depend upon the intercession of Jesus Christ on our behalf because He is the perfect priest before God.