

## Sabbath School Lesson #6 – Jesus, the faithful Priest – 29 Jan-4 February 2022

**C**hrist is our high Priest. “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26). We are in the world, yet we are not to be of the world (John 15:19), just as Jesus associated with sinners in order to save them and yet He was “separate from sinners.”

**Sunday: A Priest on behalf of human beings** – “For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Hebrews 5:1). The high priest must be taken from among men, since his work is for them. He must be one “who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way” (verse 2). God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, “not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Harshness repels, love draws. That is how God draws men to Himself. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee” (Jeremiah 31:3). But “the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared” (Titus 3:4) in Christ; for “God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:5). Therefore, Christ said: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” (John 12:32). It is the goodness of God, that leads men to repentance (Romans 2:1). The word “goodness” as applied to God, means all that anybody means by goodness. It means more than what is ordinarily thought of as strict conformity to the law of right; it means kindness, benevolence, pity, sympathy, forbearance. These are the qualities by which God draws men to Himself. No others can attract. All these are manifested in Christ. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them” (2 Corinthians 5:19). “Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). “This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them” (Luke 15:2). “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 13:34). Peter denied his Lord with cursing in the hour of His sorest need; “and the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter” (Luke 22:61). That look melted Peter, and made a new man of him. Oh, what gentleness and tenderness toward frail sinners was manifested in Christ!

**Monday: According to the order of Melchizedek** – We find the story of Melchizedek in Genesis 14. Hebrews 7 repeats the story of Genesis 14, and makes some comments upon it. Besides this we find reference to Melchizedek in Hebrews 5, 6 and Psalms 110:4. Who was Melchizedek? He was “king of Salem” (Genesis 14:18) and “priest of the most high God” (Hebrews 7:1-2). That he was a type of Christ is stated in Psalms and in Hebrews: Christ is a high priest “after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalms 110:4; Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17). Melchizedek was both king and priest. Christ combines the kingly and the priestly office in one person. Melchizedek was a type of Christ and was like Him: “made like unto the Son of God” (Hebrews 7:3). His name signifies “king of righteousness,” and Salem, of which he was king of, means “peace,” so that he was not only priest, but king of righteousness and king of peace. So of Christ it is said, “The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.” And the name whereby He shall be called is “The Lord our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6). And when Abraham saw Melchizedek, he saw a type of Christ. “If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed.” And Christ tells us, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day; and he saw it, and was glad.” Where in Hebrews 7:3 it says Melchizedek had not mother or father, people take that to mean he was not of a father. But when you read various Bible versions, the picture becomes clear that it simply means that his genealogy is not revealed to us. Some have built a wrong application on misunderstanding the verse, and they infer that Christ also had no origin. Even if we accept that Melchizedek had no father, it cannot apply to Christ, for Christ says God was His Father. In Matthew, we find the genealogy of Jesus. It shows how important genealogies were. But we are simply not give the genealogy of Melchizedek. In Abraham, God revealed much about Christ. First, in Isaac, when Abraham was asked to take Isaac and sacrifice him, God showed to Abraham that just like he would offer Isaac his own literal son, so would God love the world to offer His literal Son. As Isaac was not metaphorical son to Abraham, so is Christ not metaphorical Son to God. Second, in

Melchizedek, Abraham was shown the real literal priesthood of Christ. Without the priesthood of Christ, we have no atonement, and this was shown to Abraham. The order of priesthood of Melchizedek was not like that of Aaron, replaced every generation, and so the priesthood of Christ is of the same order. As Isaac was not Christ, but a type. Melchizedek was not Christ, but a type; and Melchizedek was not Christ incarnate but a type of Christ.

**Tuesday: An effective Priest** – Levitical priests were required to prove that their genealogy traced back to Levi, yet Melchisedec was exempt from this requirement. “He of whom these things are spoken pertains to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there arises another Priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life” (Hebrews 7:13-16). Jesus was made a priest by an oath of God, for the Scripture says, “Not without an oath He was made priest” (Hebrews 7:20). It was this change that made necessary a change of the law which designated that the Levites should be the priests; “for the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law”; “for the law makes men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Hebrews 7:12, 28). While Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, the types of Christ’s ministry as High Priest are found only in Levitical service.

**Wednesday: An eternal Priest** – “But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:24-25). What we read here is emphasised elsewhere in the scripture which tells us the power by which Christ is priest; it is “the power of an endless life” (Hebrews 7:16). It is the power of eternity in all its breadth, as well as in its length. By Himself Christ has purged sins. He is a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, in that He ministers His sinless, eternal life to sinners condemned to death. Now from His first “goings forth,” “from the days of eternity” (Micah 5:2), Christ has been ministering life. It was “through the eternal Spirit that He offered Himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14). His priesthood extends from His origin in “the days of eternity” to eternity – “an unchangeable priesthood” because “He ever liveth.” Because He was priest by virtue of the endless life that He had (John 5:26), He would offer Himself to God for our sins. But in doing this, no new power was brought into existence. When sin entered, the power to cope with it were already there by virtue of Christ’s endless life. Here was a dam by which Satan thought to stop the flow of the river of life; but that mighty stream rolls on in its majestic course, sweeping away every obstacle. No new fountain had to be opened, to increase its volume; for the fountain of living waters is He who fills the universe and is “from the days of eternity”, inhabiting eternity.

**Thursday: A sinless Priest** – Read Hebrews 7:26. How was Christ “separate from sinners”? When the leper came to Jesus, saying, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,” “Jesus put forth His hand and touched him” (Matthew 8:2-3). The leper was unclean, and great was the fear of contagion; yet Jesus suffered no injury from the touch. This is a likeness of Christ connection with sin. He “bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). Yet although He was made “to be sin for us”, He “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He “did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). He could come into the closest contact with sin and not be defiled by it. He received sinners, and was their friend, associating freely with the worst of them, yet He was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” So may it be with us, if Christ dwells in us. We may work for the degraded, meeting them, giving them the sympathetic touch, as He did, and not be defiled. We may be “unspotted from the world” (James 1:27), while coming close to it as Christ did. It is possible that we may not be in high repute with the world for so doing; but that matters nothing if we have the mind that was in Christ, who “made Himself of no reputation” (Phil. 2:7). “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).