

## A study of Jesus Christ

In our study of the glorification of Christ, his sitting at the right hand of the Father, we are currently studying the three offices of Christ. Previously, we looked at the prophetic office of Jesus Christ. This week we will look at the second and third of His three offices, namely, His priestly office, also called His Sacerdotal office and his regal office.

### 2. His priestly office:

A priest in general is a person appointed by God, for the purpose of offering oblations and sacrifices, for interceding and teaching others. We may distinguish between two types of priests, namely, typical priests and ordinary priests. Ordinary priests do not typify Christ and are inferior to typical priests.

A typical priest is a person ordained by God to offer typical sacrifices, to make intercessions for himself and others, and to teach the people concerning the will of God, and the Messiah to come. All the priests of the Old Testament were typical priests and among them one was designated to be superior to all the other priests called the High Priest.

This High Priest had specific duties particular to him alone, such as,

- a. He alone entered the sanctuary, also called the holiest of holies or the most holy place, once a year where he offered to God.
- b. The High Priest had a more splendid and gorgeous apparel than the other, ordinary priests.
- c. He was placed over the rest.
- d. He offered with blood according to a prescribed ritual first for himself and then for the people, burning incense and making intercession. It is this kind of repetitive, inefficient sacrificing that ended when Christ made a totally sufficient sacrifice once for all.
- e. The High Priest was consulted in difficult and unclear matters and questions. The High Priest gave answers that God directed him to give. The other priests were inferior and offered sacrifices and taught the doctrine of the law and the promises pertaining to the Messiah and to intercede for themselves and others.

All the priests of the Old Testament were types of Christ in some manner or form, but the High Priest was the most notable of them all because in

## A study of Jesus Christ

him there were many things that represented Christ the true and great High Priest of the Church.

Objection: If prophets and priests both teach, they do not differ from each other.

Answer: Prophets and priests both teach the people, but they were very different in their offices. Prophets were raised up immediately by God, from any tribe, while the priests were ordained from the single tribe of Levi according to God's standing decree, which makes their appointments mediately or foreordained.

Prophets taught extraordinarily, while priests had only the ordinary ministry.

Prophets received their doctrine immediately from God while priests learned it from the law.

Prophets had divine testimonies so that they could not err, while priests could err in doctrine and often did err in their instructions earning the prophets' reprove.

Our true priest is Christ, the Son of God, who was immediately ordained by the Father (and not mediately through God's decree as in the case of the tribe of Levi) and anointed by the Holy Spirit. After having assumed human nature, Christ revealed the secret will and counsel of God to us, offered himself as a sacrifice for us, interceded on our behalf, and applied his sacrifice to us.

As a result of his being the Son of God, He is always assured of being heard by the Father on behalf of all those for whom He intercedes and obtains for them, without exception, the remission of sins. And finally, through the ministers of the Word, and the Holy Spirit, He collects, illuminates and sanctifies his church.

Christ priestly office has these five principal functions:

- a. To teach men in a different manner from all others who are called to act as priests, for He does not merely speak to the ear by his word, but effectually inclines the heart by his Holy Spirit.
- b. To offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

## A study of Jesus Christ

- c. To make continual intercession and prayer for us to the Father that He may receive us into his favor on account of his intercession and will, because of the perpetual efficacy of his sacrifice. He alone has the assurance that He will always, without exception, be heard in reference to those things which He asks.
- d. To apply his sacrifice unto those for whom He intercedes, which is to receive into favor those that believe and to bring it to pass that the Father may receive them.
- e. To instill faith in the hearts of the elect by which the merits of Christ may be made over to them so that they are regenerated by the Holy Spirit unto everlasting life.

From the foregoing it is easy to see the difference between Christ and other priests. The basic differences are as follows:

- a. Ordinary priests teach only with an external voice. Christ teaches by the inward and efficacious working of the Holy Spirit.
- b. Ordinary priests do not make continual intercession, nor do they always obtain those things for which they pray. Christ makes continual intercession and receives what He asks from the Father, without exception and without failing.
- c. Ordinary priests do not apply their own benefits to others, nor can they. Christ is a fountain of living water for the benefit of his Church.
- d. Ordinary priests do not offer themselves as a sacrifice for others. Christ offered himself as a complete and effective sacrifice.

But Christ is not only our heavenly Priest; He is our High Priest, not according to the priesthood given to Israel, but according to the priesthood of Melchizedek.

It might be worthwhile to briefly look at the priesthood of Melchizedek, which is a study that is dealt with in more detail in the study of the Law.

The underlying motive for a new priesthood is that the priesthood has changed from one that is temporary to one that is eternal because the Old Testament priesthood is not persistent. The priests of the Old Testament were mortal and were prevented by death from serving

## A study of Jesus Christ

forever, while Christ is immortal and can only serve in an eternal capacity, requiring an eternal priesthood.

As the Head of the Church stepped visibly forward from being only prefigured in the types of Him to mightily leading his Church, it became him also to be the High Priest according to an eternal priesthood.

Furthermore, the Levitical priesthood was imperfect while the eternal High Priest should be in the priesthood of perfection, which is that of Melchizedek. And, once Christ appeared in the flesh, all the types, foretelling, and prefiguring have been fulfilled having no longer any purpose, requiring a change in the priesthood and, as a consequence, a change of the law.

Many believe that Christ could not have abrogated the ceremonial law because there are many passages in Scripture that testifies that the law and other covenants are eternal. There are two things that one needs to consider when reading about the eternal nature of the Old Testament covenants, which are:

- a. They were eternal in the sense that they would exist until the Messiah comes, which is called limited perpetuity as opposed to absolute perpetuity.
- b. The covenants of absolute perpetuity were made to the spiritual descendents of Abraham, Christ's Church, and not his physical descendents.

The eternal priesthood of Christ is not an invention of the New Testament, but was properly foretold in the Old Testament.

Dan 9:27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'<sup>1</sup> In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.

Ps 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

In Heb 7 and 8 we find a wonderful explanation of this doctrine:

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<sup>1</sup> 'Week' in KJV

## A study of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 7:1-28 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup>to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.

<sup>3</sup>Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

<sup>4</sup>Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. <sup>5</sup>And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. <sup>6</sup>But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.

<sup>7</sup>But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. <sup>8</sup>In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. <sup>9</sup>And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, <sup>10</sup>for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. <sup>11</sup>Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup>For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.

<sup>13</sup>For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. <sup>14</sup>For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. <sup>15</sup>And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, <sup>16</sup>who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup>For it is attested of Him, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

## A study of Jesus Christ

<sup>18</sup>For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup>(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. <sup>20</sup>And inasmuch as it was not without an oath <sup>21</sup>(for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'"); <sup>22</sup>so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

<sup>23</sup>The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, <sup>24</sup>but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. <sup>25</sup>Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup>For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; <sup>27</sup>who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. <sup>28</sup>For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

Hebrews 8:1-13 Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, <sup>2</sup>a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

<sup>3</sup>For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. <sup>4</sup>Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; <sup>5</sup>who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN."

## A study of Jesus Christ

<sup>6</sup>But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. <sup>7</sup>For if that first covenant had been faultless there would have been no occasion sought for a second. <sup>8</sup>For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; <sup>9</sup>NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

<sup>10</sup>"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. <sup>11</sup>"AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, 'KNOW THE LORD,' FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. <sup>12</sup>"FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE."

<sup>13</sup>When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

As we can see, it was absolutely necessary that the temporary priesthood of the Old Testament, which characterized the nature of the earthly priests, was replaced with an eternal priesthood, which characterizes the nature of Christ. The change of the law is a consequence of Christ's ordination as High Priest forever.

### 3. His Regal Office.

A king is a person ordained by God that he may rule over a certain people according to just laws; that he may have power to reward the good and punish the evil; and that he may defend his subjects, not having anyone superior or above him.

The King of all kings is Christ who was immediately ordained by God that He might govern, by His Word and Spirit, the church which He purchased

## A study of Jesus Christ

with his own blood; and defend her against all her enemies whom He will cast into everlasting punishment while He will reward his people with eternal life.

The kingly office of Christ is therefore:

- a. To rule the church by his Word and Spirit, which he does in such a manner that He does not only show us what He have accomplished in us, but also so inclines and affects our hearts by his Spirit that we are led to do the same.
- b. He preserves and defends us against our enemies, both external and internal, which He does by protecting us by his almighty power, arming us against our foes, that we may, by his Spirit, be furnished with every weapon necessary for resisting and overcoming them.
- c. To bestow upon his church gifts and glory, and finally,
- d. To liberate her from all evils; to control and overcome all his enemies by his power, and at length, having fully subdued them, to cast them into inconceivable misery and wretchedness.