

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 3:1-6; 4:14-16; 5:1-10

LESSON 436 **Junior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). .

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Hebrews 3:1-6

- 1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;
- 2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.
- 3 For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.
- 4 For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.
- 5 And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;
- 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Hebrews 4:14-16

- 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.
- 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin.
- 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 5:1-10

- 1 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he

Bible References:

Notes:

Jesus had three offices to fill: those of prophet, priest and king. A prophet is one who represents God to man; he tells man the will of God. There were many prophets in Old Testament times who told the people the things God wanted them to know. Moses was one, but we usually think of the period of the prophets beginning with Samuel. There were Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Joel, Nahum, Amos, Daniel, and many others.

Boldness Before God

A priest represents man to God. Today Jesus is our Priest. He is in Heaven to plead our case before God the Father. Because He shed His Blood for us we belong to Him, and He wants us to find favour with God. He is a mediator, or go-between. Jesus said: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). A sinner cannot approach a holy God except through the atoning Blood of Jesus. If we have asked Jesus to forgive our sins, and the Blood has washed those sins away and made us holy, we are not afraid to approach God. We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). God appointed Jesus to be a High Priest, and Jesus was faithful -- even as Moses was faithful and obeyed the commandments of God. Moses lived many hundreds of years before Jesus came to earth, but he knew Jesus was coming, and he wanted the people to believe Him. Moses said: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15). While Jesus was on earth, He served as a prophet; but now that He is in Heaven He is our High Priest.

There is a difference between the Priesthood of Christ and that of all the Old Testament priests who were the descendants of Aaron. At the time the Law was given to Moses, God gave careful instructions that Aaron and his sons were to be the priests, and the office was very holy. One time two of Aaron's sons offered "strange fire," something that was not ordered by God, and they died right there in the Tabernacle. God wanted people to be careful to keep His house of worship and His service holy.

God gave instructions as to what the high priest should wear, and said they were holy garments "for glory and for beauty." The ephod he was told to wear was to be fastened on each shoulder with an onyx stone on which were engraved the names of the tribes of Israel: the names of six tribes on one shoulder, and the names of the other six tribes on the other shoulder. This was an illustration that the priest was bearing upon his shoulders the responsibility of the Children of Israel before God. He was also to wear a breastplate of twelve stones, one for each tribe, upon his breast -- or upon his heart. When he went in before the Lord he carried the Children of Israel in love upon his heart, to intercede for them before God. The Priest was a type of Jesus standing before God today making intercession for us.

"Jesus bears you on His heart

He will needed grace Impart.

Look to Him believing

may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Peace and Joy receiving.

Jesus bears you on His heart."

Jesus is our High Priest, and He will forgive everything we confess to Him. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). God's instructions on how to confess are given in Isaiah 55:7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Jesus loves us and died for us, shedding His Blood to wash away our sins. When we suffer, He suffers with us. When we are sad, He understands and wants to comfort us. He lived on earth long enough to know our problems, and He understands and cares. We can come boldly to Him, asking for His help, and He will have mercy on each one who wants to be a true child of God.

Jesus, a Priest Forever

The high priest under the Law could not continue in the priesthood for a long period, because he would grow old and die. A younger man would take his place until he, too, would die. But all these priests must be of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron.

But there was a change in the line of priests when Jesus became our High Priest. He was of the tribe of Judah "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Hebrews 7:14). He did not become a priest merely because of his family; he was especially appointed of God.

God loved Jesus very much. Several times God said: "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11; Matthew 17:5). He was God's only Son, and when Jesus was born into the world, God said; "Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee," and all the hosts of Heaven gathered near and rejoiced that Jesus had come to earth to save sinners. They sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). Later God said: "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:6), not the order of Aaron or the Levites. (We will hear more about Melchisedec in a later lesson.)

Prayers of Jesus

Jesus served as prophet; when He was on earth, yet sometimes He was already our Priest, too. Many nights He spent on the hillsides alone praying to God for the people, "with strong crying and tears," that they might be saved. Before He appointed His twelve Apostles, "he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). One time after He had fed the five thousand with five loaves and two small fish, the people wanted to make Him king. They thought it would give them an easy life if they had a king who could multiply food as He had done that day -- maybe they would not have to work any more. Jesus was grieved that they were only interested in things to eat, instead of the message He preached, so He left them and went into a mountain alone to pray (John 6:15). On the night before He was crucified He prayed a long prayer, which is recorded in John 17 and is called His Intercessory Prayer. He not only prayed for the people who were with Him that night, but for all who would believe their preaching and be saved. That can include each one of us, if we believe that Jesus died for our sins and will save us when we repent.

If you ever feel lonely and think that nobody wants you, remember that Jesus was praying for you, too, when He asked God: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou

hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," (John 17:24). Jesus wants His holy children with Him in Heaven where they, too, can enjoy all the glory that He has with the Father and all the holy angels. No one who is not holy would enjoy that, so we must be sure that we are made ready for Heaven here. We must have all sin purged out of our lives, including hatred, envyings, wrath, strife and revellings (Galatians 5:20, 21), if we are to be holy enough to enter Heaven.

Christ's Agony

After He had prayed that prayer He went into the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed His most earnest prayer. He sweat as it were great drops of blood in His agony. But He was willing to do the will of the Father. He said: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). All our prayers should have that phrase in them, Not my will, but Thine, be done." The true Christian wants the will of God done in his life, even though it might hurt his feelings, or force him to do things he would rather not do. The man, woman, boy or girl who wants to serve God with all his heart will have many trials to overcome in making himself pliable in the hands of God. Many times he may want to have his own way, and it will cut deep when he has to yield his will to the Lord; but that night in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus learned a deeper hurt than we will ever feel, so He understands all our sufferings and tears and will help us if we will let Him. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). He did it all for us. He could have stayed in Heaven and never suffered at all. He could have come to earth, and when He began to suffer at the hands of man He could have decided mankind was not worth it and gone back to Heaven without paying the price for our redemption. But He chose to suffer in order that we might be saved. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). "Wonder of wonders, can it be all for me?" How much He must have loved us in order to suffer so much that you and I might be saved! Each of us deserves to suffer for our sins. He committed no sin and had no reason to suffer except that He was willing to bear our punishment. How we should love Him! If we love Him we will keep His commandments.

Because Jesus obeyed God in all things He was worthy to redeem us and become the "author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

QUESTIONS

1. Name the three offices of Jesus.
2. What is the duty of a priest?
3. What happened to the priests who offered "strange fire"?
4. Name the important way that Jesus, Priesthood was different from that of the other priests.
5. Name some of the recorded prayers of Jesus.
6. For whom did Jesus pray just before He was crucified? What did He ask for them?
7. Why did Jesus choose to die on the cross?
8. After what order was Jesus a Priest?