

Our Great High Priest

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

Hebrews 8:1

Introduction:

1. The cross of our Lord Jesus is the central theme of this church, as directed by Paul (I Cor 2:2; Gal 6:14).
2. Of the many aspects and angles of our Saviour and salvation to consider, let us study His priesthood.
3. Tonight we keep the feast of our Lord Jesus, in which He as High Priest gave us a memorial ordinance.
4. Our enemies recently decided N.T. bishops are comparable to O.T. priests in order to exalt their office.
 - a. We categorically reject and deny this presumptive arrogance against Jesus Christ and His saints.
 - b. Bishops are not responsible for opening the way to God, as Jesus Christ did it fully by Himself.
 - c. If we had to pick an office for comparison, it would be one of Moses' lesser judges or a scribe.
 - d. When it comes to priesthood, Jesus is our great High Priest with no peer in heaven or earth.
 - e. And every man, woman, and child is a priest (Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; I Peter 2:5-9; Gal 3:28).
 - f. Paul never used the words “priest” or “priests” a single time outside the book of Hebrews.
5. Without a High Priest to intercede for you with Jehovah, you have no chance for eternal salvation at all.
6. As Baptists we have a slight disadvantage, for we must know Scripture to appreciate the office of priest.
7. Any supporting reference without a book indicated is from Hebrews, where priesthood is fully covered.

I. The NEED

- A. The LORD threatened immediate death in Eden, if our first parents sinned (Gen 2:17).
- B. As soon as they sinned, Adam and Eve had guilt and fear before God (Genesis 3:7-10).
 1. They died instantly in their spiritual relationship to God. Now there was enmity.
 2. They had shame for the first time, so they tried to make clothes of fig leaves.
 3. They had fear for the first time, so they tried to hide from God in the Garden.
- C. All men, except modern educators, know there is a God with eternal power and we die.
 1. God has revealed enough of Himself so they are without excuse (Rom 1:18-23).
 2. Imagine Adam or Eve explaining death to their children, who told their children.
 3. No one explains the fact of death; it is known only by revelation; and so we die.
 4. All life is overshadowed by the fact of death surely coming and maybe early.
 5. So there has been and still is within men the desire to make peace before death.
 6. The combination of knowing there is a God and death is certain requires a priest.
- D. Job expressed it well when he sought a daysman between him and God (Job 9:32-35).

II. The NATURE

- A. Priests are chosen from a people and ordained by them for all religious work with God.
- B. Priests offer sacrifices to pay for sins, appease God, and honor God (Acts 14:13).
- C. Priests teach the people how to please their God (II Kings 17:24-41; II Chron 17:8-9).
- D. Priests pray and intercede for their people to God (Numbers 14:5; I Samuel 7:9).
- E. Priests bless their people from God, which Moses details for us (Numbers 6:22-27).

III. The HISTORY

- A. All peoples and nations have had priests, temples, altars, and sacrifices to appease gods.
 1. Egypt had their priests in 1500 BC, whom Joseph knew (Gen 41:45; 47:22).
 2. Religious invention shows Micah ordaining his private priest (Judges 17:1-13).
 3. The tribe of Dan took Micah's priests and set up a priesthood (Judges 18:13-31).
 4. The Philistines had priests to serve their pagan god Dagon (I Samuel 5:5; 6:2).
 5. Jereboam ordained his own priests to worship calves (I Kings 12:26-33; 13:33).

6. Ahab had his order of priests for his pagan worship of Baal (I Kings 10:11,19).
 7. The King of Moab tried to make peace with god by burning a son (II Kgs 3:27).
 8. Assyria's king sent a priest to protect the people from lions (II Kings 17:24-41).
 9. The pagan worshippers in Israel had priests for their false gods (II Kings 23:20).
 10. The Moabites had priests for the worship of their pagan god Chemosh (Jer 48:7).
- B. God established His priests and all the details of their office and work by Moses' law.
1. God chose Aaron and his sons out of all Israel to be his priests (Exodus 28).
 2. We have a glorious ordination and dedication service of the tabernacle (Ex 40).
 3. Much of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are rules governing priestly functions.

IV. The TYPE

- A. Let us consider this great man and the brief history Moses gives in Genesis 14:18-20.
1. Abraham is returning from defeating four kings in battle to rescue Lot and five.
 2. The five kings, who had been defeated, came out to meet their great deliverer.
 3. Melchizedek's name means King of righteousness, so he was a righteous king.
 4. He was the king of Salem, which is a shortened name of Jerusalem (Ps 76:1-2).
 5. He brought bread and wine as refreshment for the weary men, as a great king.
 6. He was a patriarchal, king-priest and had preserved Elohim's worship in Salem.
 7. We see from this introductory verse that he was a king-priest of the true God.
 8. This great man blessed Abraham by God, Who is the owner of heaven and earth.
 9. He worshipped the true God by blessing Him for the great victory of Abraham.
 10. Observe that Melchizedek led the worship service and did both godly blessings.
 11. Then Abraham paid him a tithe, before Moses' law, as a gift to God for victory.
 12. We do not know Melchizedek's father, mother, family, birth, or death by wise design, leaving us a mysterious type of a perpetual king-priest outside Levi.
 13. He was a Canaanitish king, whom God blessed and preserved as a mystery man.
- B. Melchisedec was a type, figure, sign, representation, or similitude of Jesus (Heb 7:15).
1. Melchizedek was king and priest, just as our Lord Jesus (I Tim 6:15; Heb 4:14).
 2. Jesus is King of righteousness (Jer 23:5-6) and also King of peace (Isaiah 9:6).

V. The PROMISE

- A. The Lord Jesus was assigned to be High Priest by God's eternal counsel and covenant.
1. Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18).
 2. Jesus was foreordained to His death on the cross for our sins (I Peter 1:17-21).
 3. God wrote in the Book of Life the persons He would save (Rev 13:8; 17:8).
 4. From the very beginning a Seed of the woman was promised (Genesis 3:15).
- B. The LORD promised a new Priest and order 500 years after ordaining Aaron (Ps 110:4).
- C. The prophecy of Isaiah speaks to the fact of Messiah making intercession (Is 53:12).
- D. There is a prophecy given of The BRANCH as being a king and priest (Zech 6:12-13).

VI. The ORDER

- A. There was a patriarchal order of priests before Moses, for we see examples of them.
1. Abel brought of the fat of his flock an acceptable offering to the Lord (Gen 4:4).
 2. Noah was a patriarch, who could build his own altar and worship (Gen 8:20).
 3. Abram was a patriarch, who could build his own altar and worship (Gen 12:7-8).
 4. Isaac was a patriarch, who could build his own altar and worship (Ge 26:24-25).
 5. Jacob was a patriarch, who could build his own altar and worship (Gen 35:1).
- B. There was Aaron's order of priests taken from Levi, for the old covenant rested on it.
- C. There was Melchisedec's order promised by David and fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth.

VII. The ORDINATION

- A. Men don't just decide to be high priests without an ordination process and appointment.
 - 1. Men ordain high priests to be dedicated to making peace with God (Heb 5:1).
 - 2. No man takes this office himself, but men chosen by God, like Aaron (Heb 5:4).
 - 3. Uzziah thought he could take it upon himself, but died a leper (II Chr 26:16-23).
- B. Jesus Christ did not take the office Himself, for He was ordained by God to it (Heb 5:5).
 - 1. The God Who glorified Him at His resurrection also ordained Him (Heb 5:5).
 - 2. The ordination, or appointment, to the office was stated clearly in Psalm 110:4.

VIII. The CHARACTER

- A. Priests must be able to be compassionate for the ignorant and rebellious by sin.
- B. Priests must be able to pray and be heard by God, Whom they beg for the people.
- C. When in the flesh upon earth, He displayed intercessory ability with God (Heb 5:7-10).
 - 1. He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto God.
 - 2. Due to His holy and acceptable fear of God, He was heard in His praying (though greatly troubled by His coming passion, fear alone is insufficient to secure God's ear i.e. Prov 1:26-31; Ps 18:41; Is 1:15; Jer 11:11; Ezek 8:18).

IX. The LINEAGE

- A. The proper descent from Aaron was considered crucial to proper service before God.
- B. The proper descent from Judah and David was considered crucial to Messiah's identity.
- C. The Jews had lineage issues after returning from Babylon (Ezra 2:62-63; Neh 7:64-65).

X. The GLORY

- A. When Moses ordained Aaron and dedicated the tabernacle, there was great glory!
- B. The office of high priest must have glory, for it is dealing with God Himself (Heb 5:1).
- C. Jesus did not glorify Himself by presuming upon this office of high priest (Heb 5:5).

XI. The TENURE

- A. Most priests only live long enough to serve their constituents a few years (Heb 7:23).
- B. God told Moses how the Levites serving in the tabernacle were only 30-50 (Num 4).

XII. The SUCCESS

- A. His sacrificial work is finished, so He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
- B. He is the Way, Truth, and Life; and no man comes to God without Him (John 14:6).
- C. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name but His (Acts 4:12).
- D. There is only one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Tim 2:5).

XIII. The SACRIFICE

- A. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the world's sins (John 1:29; I Pet 1:19; Rev 5:6).
- B. He, as Priest, offered Himself without spot to God for our redemption (Hebrews 9:14).
- C. As a Priest, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree by substitution (I Peter 2:24).
- D. Jesus Christ bore our sins vicariously and made the offering Himself (Isaiah 53:4-11).

XIV. The TEMPLE

- A. God does have a heavenly place where He is worshipped, called the Temple of God.
 - 1. Israel's tabernacle was a representation of approaching God's Presence (9:1-10).
 - 2. There is a true sanctuary and true tabernacle in heaven that God built (8:2).
 - 3. There is a sanctuary and tabernacle in heaven made without man's hands (9:11).
 - 4. John saw the ark in this heavenly temple by the grace of God (Rev 11:19).
- B. Jesus is presently entered into a heavenly sanctuary where is God's Presence (9:24).

XV. The DUTY

- A. Paul charged Hebrews to hold fast their profession of faith because of their High Priest.
- B. Considering their High Priest, they were to hold firm unto the end (3:1,6,14).
- C. The conclusion of their High Priest's character requires faithfulness (4:12-14).
- D. Boldness, holding fast, assembling, and serving was due to the Priest (10:19-25).

XVI. The PRIVILEGE

- A. Because we have a High Priest who knows our lives well, we can go boldly to Him.
- B. He took our nature, so He can relate perfectly to our temptations (Heb 2:17-18).
 - 1. He is a merciful High Priest, for He understands our human weaknesses.
 - 2. He is a faithful High Priest, for He understands our need for deliverance.
 - 3. He suffered being tempted in His flesh, so He can help us when tempted.
- C. He is touched with all the feelings of our infirmities and temptations (Heb 4:15).
 - 1. He is not so high and lofty (though truly so) that He cannot relate to us.
 - 2. But He is actually touched – has empathy for – the difficulties of life.
 - 3. He feels the loneliness, weakness, tiredness, and other feelings we have.
 - 4. He was tempted in all ways; you have no temptation He cannot feel.

XVII. HEBREWS 2:

- 17 Jesus was made of our nature in all ways, so He could be a proper Substitute for us.
- 17 Jesus was made of our nature in all ways, so He could be merciful and faithful for us; for as High Priest He is able to intercede for us with real knowledge of our condition.
- 18 Because He suffered being tempted, He is able to help us when we are tempted.

XVIII. HEBREWS 3:

- 1 Paul calls the Hebrew brethren to consider Christ Jesus as the High Priest of their faith.
- 1 Jesus was faithful in all God appointed, just as Moses had been, though much greater.
- 6 They manifestly proved themselves part of Christ's house by holding fast unto the end.

XIX. HEBREWS 4:

- 12 The character of the Word of God is the foundation for our Great High Priest in heaven.
- 13 Nothing is hid from the eyes of this Divine High Priest, so the foundation is one of fear.
- 14 This great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is in heaven and should cause faithfulness.
- 15 He is touched – empathy – by our feelings and infirmities through His own temptations.
- 16 As a result, we can boldly seek help when in need; for He will be merciful and gracious.

XX. HEBREWS 5:

- 1 Priests are men ordained to appease God by gifts and sacrifices for sins of their people.
- 2 Ordinary priests have compassion toward ignorance and sinners, for they also have sins.
- 3 Because of this sinfulness in himself and his people, priests must offer sacrifices for all.
- 4 God does not allow just any man to approach Him; He chose special men, like Aaron.

5 Jesus didn't choose the office of High Priest for Himself; God chose Him for the office.
6 Our Lord Christ's ordination to the priesthood is stated rather clearly in Psalm 110:4.
7 He displayed His intercessory ability with God by having His strong prayers heard.
8 He learned about obedience and suffering by His willingness to die on Calvary's cross.
9 Completing His mediatorial preparation, Jesus became the full Saviour of the obedient.
10 Again, Paul points out that Jesus is the great High Priest of God, like Melchisedec.
11 Some of the intricate points of comparing Jesus and Melchisedec take careful teaching.

XXI. HEBREWS 6:

20 Paul, finishing a digression about the promises of God, brings up Melchisedec again.

XXII. HEBREWS 7:

1 Paul takes up the subject of Melchisedec in detail, as he had intended to do beforehand.
1 He reminds his knowledgeable Hebrew readers of the facts recorded in Gen 14:18-20.
2 He reminds his knowledgeable Hebrew readers that Abraham paid Melchisedec tithes.
2 He explains that his name meant King of righteousness, which is certainly true of Jesus.
2 He further explains that King of Salem, or Jerusalem, meant King of peace (shalom).
3 Melchisedec had no *official* father, mother, pedigree, birth, or death recorded anywhere, as there were official such records for every priest of Israel under the Levitical order.
3 Because of these missing facts, he is an Old Testament *type* of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3 Because of these missing facts, he is a High Priest with a *typical* perpetual priesthood.
4 Melchisedec was a very great man, for the great father of the Hebrews paid him tithes.
5 The Levitical priests had the God-given right to tithes, though they also came from Abram, which shows superiority to the rest of the tribes in matters pertaining to God.
5 Paul is building an argument that Abraham, the payer of tithes, had Levi, a collector.
6 This great Melchisedec does not have any connection by descent to Levitical priests.
6 This great Melchisedec received tithes from the father of the entire Levitical priesthood.
6 This great Melchisedec blessed the man to whom God had given all the great promises.
7 There is clearly no doubt that Melchisedec by these two facts is greater than Abraham.
8 Levitical priests who do receive tithes go on and die; but Melchisedec received tithes and lives forever *typically*, since there is no official record of his death or a successor.
9 Connecting the argument so far, the father of the Levites paid tithes to Melchisedec; which by the legal principle of representation means that Levi paid tithes to him as well.
10 For by genealogical representation, Levi was in Abraham's loins in Genesis 14:18-20.
11 Hebrews, if Levitical priests are enough, why call another priest after a different order?
12 If the Levitical priesthood has been replaced, then the law has been replaced as well.
13 Paul assumes that Jesus the Son of God is the obvious fulfillment of all these things.
13 And it confirms the passing of the law, for Jesus did not descend from the tribe of Levi.
14 For it is evident, by two genealogies, Matthew and Luke, that Jesus came out of Judah.
15 There is another weighty fact of superiority of the Priest after the order of Melchisedec.
16 Please note the similitude of Melchisedec, which refers to his typical figuring of Christ.
16 Christ's priesthood does not rest on a mortal law, but on the power of an endless life.
17 And we may recognize this perpetual priesthood by the words "for ever" in the promise.
18 The mortal order of Levi and Aaron has been superseded by an eternal order of priest.
19 We can draw nigh to God now with boldness, for we have hope in our great High Priest.
20 And don't forget Jesus was made a priest after the order of Melchisedec with an oath.
21 Much greater than the ordination service of the Levites, God swore Jesus into office.
22 By this powerful confirmation from God, we can be confident this High Priest is better.
23 We used to have many priests, even in a single life, because they would die in office.

- 24 But this man, Melchisedec and Jesus, because they do not die, are perpetual priests.
25 He is the most perfect Saviour possible and cannot fail, seeing His ministry is eternal.
26 We needed such a High Priest, which has traits and marks glorious in consideration.
27 Our priest is not daily involved in offerings, for He only had to offer one gift forever.
28 Rather than dying sinners as priests by the law, now we have the glorified Son of God.

XXIII. HEBREWS 8:

- 1 The conclusion of what Paul has proven is that we have a High Priest as described.
1 And this High Priest is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.
2 He is a minister of the true sanctuary and tabernacle of God in heaven, not that of man.
3 Since high priests offer gifts and sacrifices, Jesus has a sacrifice that He made to God.
4 All the gifts prescribed by the law are offered by the priests ordained by the law.
5 But the things of Moses law are only an example and shadow of the heavenly realities.
6 But our High Priest has a much more glorious ministry based on much better promises.

XXIV. HEBREWS 9:

- 1 The law of Moses provided for a worldly sanctuary and religious ordinances.
2 The tabernacle had three sections, the first interior one was the sanctuary with furniture.
3 The second interior section was the Holiest of all, where God apparently dwelt.
4 The Holiest of all had the ark of the covenant with the various items in it.
5 Cherubim were over the ark, and this special room and features are beyond this writing.
6 God ordained this worship, and the priests went daily into the sanctuary, or first room.
7 But the High Priest only went once into the Holiest of all with blood for all their sins.
8 This inner room and its limited access typified that the way to God was not yet opened.
9 This sanctuary and its ordinances were temporary and could not purge the conscience.
10 The law was only outward rituals of no real benefit required until Jesus reformed things.
11 Jesus Christ is a High Priest of better things related to the eternal and true sanctuary.
12 By His own blood He entered once into God's presence in heaven for us with salvation.

Conclusion:

1. Let us rejoice in our glorious High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, and come to His love feast with joy.
2. We have the most wonderful High Priest by every measure Who has made peace with God forever.