

HEBREWS 5: THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

1. After briefly introducing Jesus as High Priest in **Heb 2:17** and **Heb 4:14-15**, Paul, in **Hebrews 5**, begins to more systematically expound on the role of Jesus Christ as High Priest;
 - a. **Heb 2:17**—Jesus as High Priest, makes atonement for the sins of the people
 - b. **Heb 4:14-15**—Jesus, as High Priest is touched with the feelings of our weaknesses because He knows what it is like to be tempted

A Knowledge of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ Is Present Truth

2. This knowledge of His work as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, the Hebrew believers desperately needed to grasp fully and clearly, because
 - a. they needed to be weaned away from the meaningless work of human priests at the temple in Jerusalem;
 - b. they needed to be able to have faith in what Jesus is accomplishing for them in the heavenly sanctuary, and be able to follow Him there by faith;
3. **Dan 9:24**--That work Jesus was doing for them in the heavenly sanctuary was: finish transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness
4. Therefore, the knowledge of Christ's work in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary where Christ began His ministration after He ascended to heaven, was **present truth** for the Hebrew converts.
5. Seventh-day Adventists today also need to have a clear understanding of the work of Christ as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, especially His closing ministration in the second apartment of the sanctuary, for the same reasons:
 - a. Issues existing in the church today (division, worldliness, compromise, loose living, disillusionment, unfaithfulness, backsliding, lack of confidence in our doctrines, offshoot movements, etc.) are clearly the result of Ignorance of this work!
6. In **Heb 3:1**—the call to consider Christ as apostle and high priest of our profession applies not only to the Hebrew converts in the time of Paul, but also to Seventh-day Adventists today;
 - a. Heb 12:2-3--Consider him that we not be weary in our minds

Christ's High Priestly Resume

7. In **Hebrews 5**, Paul begins by listing the qualifications of a priest:
 - a. **Verse 1: He had to be taken from among men to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin**—Jesus satisfied this requirement by condescending to be made in all things like unto His brethren (**Heb 2:17**); He had to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh (**Rom 8:3**); made of the seed of Abraham (**Heb 2:16**),

- b. **Verse 4: He had to be called of God**—God Himself had to appoint him; no self-appointed priests were allowed; self-appointment to the priesthood as in the case of Korah, Dathan and Abiram proved fatal not only for them but also for their families (**Numbers 16**)
- 8. **Heb 5:6**—Jesus was appointed by God as Aaron also was, but not to the order of Aaron, but that of Melchisedek
 - a. Jesus could not be priest after the order of Aaron because He was not from the tribe of Levi
 - b. **Heb 7:11**—therefore a change in the law was necessary to accommodate Christ’s priesthood
- 9. **QUESTION:** Why was Jesus not called after the order of Aaron?
 - a. That priesthood had serious limitations—it was typical and was designed to pass away when arrives at the scene
 - b. More importantly, Christ’s priesthood provided greater and better benefits to the worshippers than Aaron’s priesthood
- 10. The Priesthood of Aaron and Christ compared and contrasted

Priesthood of Aaron	Priesthood of Jesus
taken from among men (Heb 5:1)	taken from among men
offered both gifts and sacrifices for sin	offered both gifts and sacrifices for sin
called of God	called of God
Aaron had moral or character infirmities; and because of this had to offer sacrifice first for himself and then for the people	Jesus was perfect in character
Aaron appointed by the law without an oath by God (Heb 7:21, 28)	Jesus appointed by the word of an oath of God
from the tribe of Levi	From the tribe of Judah
only provided purging of the flesh (ceremonial cleansing) (Heb 9:13)	Jesus purged the conscience of sin
served in an earthy tabernacle	served in the greater tabernacle in heaven
offered the blood of bull and goats	Jesus offered His own precious blood
Could not bring in perfection (Heb 7:11; Heb 9:9)	Brought perfection to the worshippers
was only symbolic; shadow of good things to come; a figure for the present time	the reality
Service done was not meritorious	meritorious; work provided true forgiveness for sin and cleansing
could not continue because of death	ever lives to make intercession
needed to offer gifts and sacrifices many times	only had to offer Himself once

An Effective and Powerful High Priestly Ministry

11. **Heb 5:7**—Jesus’ struggle in the garden of Gethsemane is introduced here to give the Hebrew Christians an insight into the effectiveness of Christ’s ministry as high priest:
- Jesus’ ministry as Intercessor and High Priest is powerful and effective for the believers because 1) He pleads with strong crying and tears, 2) He is heard and His petitions are granted; 3) He is touched with the feelings of our infirmities (**Heb 4:15**)
 - Rom 8:26**--We typically associate groaning with the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, but the same may be said about the work of Jesus as High Priest and Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary;

A Perfect Ministry

12. **Heb 5:8-10**—Jesus had to learn how to render perfect obedience in sinful flesh; also, a life of perfect obedience was not enough to make Him Author of eternal salvation; He also had to taste death for every man;
- Perfect through suffering is a reference to His suffering of death (**Heb 2:9; Luke 13:31-32**)
 - His death on the cross was His final act of obedience as the suffering Servant;
 - Jesus suffered in life; He suffered in death; He is suffering even now because of our constant commission of sin
13. Bear in mind that only by being perfected through a life of obedience and dying on the cross could Jesus truly function as high priest after the order of Melchisedek
14. A Perfect ministry means perfect service; this means perfection is a possibility for the worshippers; if Jesus’ ministry were not perfect, there might be an excuse for those who teach that believers will always remain defective and will sin until Jesus comes!
15. What Jesus is, we may become! Jesus went through the entire length of living a perfect life in sinful flesh so that He can offer it to us; He shares His perfection with believers through the sanctuary service! Through His work of Priestly ministrations;

A Suffering Ministry

16. **Rev 5:6**--Christ’s High Priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary presented in the context of His life of suffering and sacrificial dying;

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.” Isaiah 53:4; Hebrews 4:15; 2:18; 1 John 2:1. His intercession is that of a pierced and broken body, of a spotless life. The wounded hands, the pierced side, the marred feet, plead for fallen man, whose redemption was purchased at such infinite cost. **GC 416.**

- Heb 4:16** Therefore, anyone can come boldly to the throne of grace and have the assurance that help will be granted in time of need;

- b. This kind of help was what the Hebrew converts needed in the midst of persecution and trial of their faith;
- c. Seventh-day Adventists today also need to have a clear view of the compassionate and merciful and faithful High Priest

A Generation of Dull Hearers and Spiritual Babes

17. **Heb 5:11-14**—The Hebrew converts are described as slow in grasping the truth of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and feeding on milk instead of strong meat;
- a. Perhaps part of the reason is because of the difficulty of accepting a priesthood outside the tribe of Levi;
 - b. This new revelation from Paul about a priest coming from the tribe of Judah must have been tremendously difficult for the Hebrew converts to embrace, having been brought up all their lives with the idea that only those from the tribe of Levi could be priest; this theological barrier had first to be breached before the way is open for the Hebrew converts to begin looking to Jesus by faith as their High Priest; to the typical Jew, looking to someone not from the tribe of Levi as priest would have been taboo and offensive
 - c. Difficulty in accepting the fact that the Old Covenant rituals and ceremonies have been superseded by the New Covenant by the death of Christ;
 - d. Reluctance on the part of the Hebrew converts to give up preconceived ideas and opinions
 - e. Fear of reprisals from the unconverted Jews
18. What might explain why so many of us are dull of hearing when it comes to the knowledge of the atoning ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary?

Paul writes of Christ: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedek. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Paul could not speak to the Jewish converts as plainly as he desired regarding the mystery of godliness. Because of their spiritual weakness, their lack of perception, he could not utter the truth, which, could they have heard aright, with intelligent comprehension, would have been to them a savor of life unto life.

The fault was not with their instructors, but with themselves. They were dull of understanding. Abundant advantages had been given them. They could have increased in understanding regarding Christ, his work, his power to save to the uttermost all who come to him. But they had not pressed onward and upward, improving their opportunity to learn more and still more of the Saviour. Because they had not received in faith the truths imparted to them, their memory was weak. They could not retain in their minds the truths essential to success in character-building.

How exactly their condition represents the condition of many of the people of God today, who have had every advantage, every privilege, and who, feeling the burden of God's work, ought to be saying with the whole heart, Here I am, Lord; send me. But in the place of being teachers, as they might be, they themselves can not bear the plain application of the Word of God. They do not discern the value of Bible truth. They are not a strength to the church. Had they thoroughly consecrated themselves to the Lord from their first reception of the truth, surrendering themselves unreservedly to him, and obeying the call, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," they would have walked in the companionship of Christ, learning his lessons, receiving his divine impress. They would have recognized the claims of Christ, and would not have been half Christians and half worldlings, but whole-hearted Christians, believing and practicing the word, enlightened continually, not dwelling on vague generalities, but proclaiming Christ as the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. **RH June 16, 1903.**

19. More seriously, can those living in the time of the end afford to be slow in understanding regarding the truth about the ministration of Jesus in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary? Can those who are living in the very shadow of the final atonement afford to be feeding on milk until now?

It is too late in the day to feed with milk. If souls a month or two old in the truth, who are about to enter the time of trouble such as never was, cannot hear all the straight truth, or endure the strong meat of the straightness of the way, how will they stand in the day of battle? Truths that we have been years learning must be learned in a few months by those who now embrace the Third Angel's Message. We had to search and wait the opening of truth, receiving a ray of light here and a ray there, laboring and pleading for God to reveal truth to us. But now the truth is plain; its rays are brought together. The blazing light of truth when it is presented as it should be can be now seen and brought to bear upon the heart. There is no need of milk after souls are convinced of the truth. As soon as the conviction of truth is yielded to and the heart willing, the truth should have its effect, the truth will work like leaven, and purify and purge away the passions of the natural heart. It is a disgrace for those who have been in the truth for years to talk of feeding souls who have been months in the truth, upon milk. It shows they know little of the leadings of the Spirit of the Lord, and realize not the time we are living in. Those who embrace the truth now will have to step fast. There will have to be a breaking up of heart before the Lord, a rending of heart, and not the garment.—1MR 33-34.

20. How much do we now understand about the work of Jesus as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary? Are we also dull of hearing when it comes that work?
21. Why is there no excuse, no reason for any Seventh-day Adventist today, to be ignorant of the work of Jesus in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary?
- a. ANSWER: Because light on this work has been fully unsealed since 1844.
 - b. Ignorance of that work would be counted as willful