



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 086: Jesus the Great High Priest

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Read Heb 9:11-15

Introduction: Under the Old Covenant of the Law, given to the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai, priests were appointed to take charge of the sacrifices and religious festivals. In fulfilling their duties, they represented the community and individuals to God. Above the priests in status was an individual known as the High Priest. Under the New Covenant, given by Christ at the Last Supper (Mark 14:24), the role of high priest is fulfilled by Jesus Christ. What does Hebrews 9:15 call Him? It might be said that the former high priests were fulfilling a temporary role until the true high priest came along.

Christ's Priestly Work:

1. Atonement 'Atonement' can loosely be defined as making things right with God. This is the most important - vital - role of the Great High Priest. Read Heb 9:11-15 again and Heb 7:26-8:2 and list the differences between the life and work of the former high priests and the true High Priest.

2. Prayer (*read* Romans 8:34). Priests attended to the Altar of Incense, ensuring that the smoke of the incense burned continuously, representing prayer ascending to God. Jesus is praying for us in Heaven itself. He is our representative in Heaven, rather like an ambassador represents his own people in a foreign land.

When Jesus lived on earth, He learned to live as men live, to think as we think and to feel as we feel; He experienced temptations, problems and even suffering, such as we experience. He even went through the ultimate experience that must come to us all one day (unless He returns before we encounter it): that of physical death. Those experiences made Him eminently suited to represent us as He intercedes for us, for He understands us so well (*read* Heb 4:15).

If you have time, read Hebrews 4:14-5:2. and look for answers to the following questions:

- (a) What should we do with our confession (our faith)?
- (b) What is Christ's feeling towards those who are weak?
- (c) How should we approach God in prayer?
- (d) Does Jesus understand us when we are tempted?
- (e) The manner of God's rule: is it harsh or kindly?
- (f) What can we receive when we do wrong?
- (g) What can we receive to help us in life's trials?
- (h) What is Christ's feeling towards us when we feel insecure in our faith?

3. Blessing (*read* Numbers 6:23-27). *Blessing* here is a wish or intention for a person's good. The Latin is *benedictio*, from which we get the word 'Benediction.' These words from Numbers 6 were given to Aaron to be said by him and succeeding High Priests. Using a concordance, see how many times Jesus spoke of blessing/blessed.

The Order of Melchizedek: (*read* Gen 14:18-20, Psalm 110:4 and Heb 5:10). This will need another Study. For now, note that it speaks of the permanence and unchanging nature of Jesus' high priesthood.

To think about: Whatever you are going through, remember that Jesus understands.

To dig deeper: Read what you can find about the Old Testament priesthood.