

## CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 5:5–10 — *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. As he saith in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. 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; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 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 Melchisedec.*

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The priesthood of Jesus Christ is an act of God. John’s gospel record opens up with Jesus Christ the Word, as being ever existent and ever existent in the beginning with and as God. If we take this at what it says, rather than trying to wrap our faulty and weak human logic around it, we will spare ourselves greatly.

In the same chapter we see that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”, John 1:14.

While the chapter begins with the days of eternity, or as it says in Micah 5:2, speaking of the Christ who would be ruler in Israel, from of old, from everlasting, it goes to a point in finite time when the Word became flesh, or as the theologians say, the incarnation.

We also see in this that while the Son, called “my Lord” in the Psalm that introduces His priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, is from everlasting, and His priesthood extends to everlasting. Not just “thou art a priest”, but “thou art a priest *forever*”.

We made the point last lesson that it was not the Son that made Himself priest, but it was God — we can understand this as it was the Father — that glorified the Son to make Him high priest, and that He made Him high priest forever. It is in the same Psalm that we read “sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool”, that we read “thou art a priest forever”.

This was at a moment in time.

Jesus Christ was from everlasting. As it says in this text, there is a time called “the days of His flesh”. This began at a moment in time. As it is a certain day spoken of where we read “to day have I begotten thee”, there was a day in time where he was made priest.

In Hebrews 1:3, we read:

*“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”*

He sat down when the work of purging sins was finished. In Ephesians 1:20-23, we see this regarding Christ at the right hand of God:

*“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet,*

*and gave him to be head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*

It is at this moment in time that Christ took up the office of high priest, and from this time forward, He is priest forever.

In Romans 8:34, the apostle Paul speaks of Christ in this way:

*"It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."*

He says again in Hebrews 7:25 that He *"ever liveth to make intercession for us."*

This is our Great High Priest. He is only being introduced now as this great high priest, and we are seeing how Christ's ever living priesthood is so much better than the also called by God priesthood of the Aaronic priests.

It is through the days of eternity ahead of us that Christ will always be making intercession for us. And it is not that He must keep standing between God and us making pleas again and again so that God will allow us to continue, it is that His very presence at the right hand of the Majesty on high having completed the work of redemption satisfies God toward us forever. That is how it can be said that He is the "author of eternal salvation" in this very passage that is under consideration.

## THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH

When we speak of the days of His flesh, we are speaking of a period of time. These were the first days of Emmanuel — God with us. They were a period like none other. God was in the flesh walking among people on the earth. These days began in the time prophesied by Isaiah:

*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given..."* Isaiah 9:6.

We read about them in the Gospels. All four gospel records reveal Him as the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. The designations as Son of David and Son of Abraham are important as relating to covenants made with David and Abraham. Matthew begins with this genealogy to establish the right of Jesus as Christ. He was of the seed of David according to the flesh. That is Paul's statement in Romans 1:3, where in the following verse he says "declared to be the Son of God with power...by the resurrection from the dead". The resurrection from the dead made a statement. This day, or to day have I begotten thee. He is the Son of God. If you believe that He is raised from the dead there is no problem in believing who He always said He was. Those that saw Him risen, or heard about Him risen from so many eyewitnesses could only deny to protect their rebellion.

Christ is now seated on high at the right hand of God as the Man Christ Jesus. He did not cut Himself off from His humanity when He ascended, but it was the Man that ascended.

But it is now interesting to note that the same apostle Paul says this in 2 Corinthians 5:16:

*"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."*

Many want to go back to following "Jesus" as He was on earth. We will get to some of that later, but we should remember that Jesus as the "great example" that liberal so-called Christianity pretends to follow

does not bring us righteousness with God. Put into more common parlance, we're not saved by His example. We're saved by His life. This is His resurrection life. Romans 5:6-11 speaks in this order. It is first His death. Christ died for the ungodly. Christ died for us as sinners. We are justified by His blood. We shall be saved from wrath through Him. We were reconciled to God by His death. We shall be saved by His life. We have received the atonement through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was in His flesh that He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. It was in His flesh, being put on trial, that He was tempted like as we, yet without sin. This should be understood as a test or a trial, where, as we said in a previous study, the trial showed positively no sin.

Pilate could find no fault in Jesus in the days of His flesh. Neither could anyone else, so we read about them calling known false witnesses to falsely testify against Him. He was hated without a cause, that is, a cause within Himself. Many of us find ourselves hated, but would be hard pressed to say consistently that it is without a cause. The only way thing the "Example Jesus" does for our sinful flesh is condemns us.

The rest of verse 7 speaks of His prayers in the garden before He was delivered up to be crucified. It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand what the Son of God was going through at this time. Or to understand how He could live from birth on knowing full well where all this was leading. Yet He lived fully faithful to the Father's will. It is even more difficult to comprehend how He knew this from before the foundation of the world.

In Luke 22 we read about those tears, and the sweat "as it were great drops of blood". What was coming had a horror that is truly beyond our comprehension.

"In that He feared" has the thrust that He was always faithful to say "not my will, but thine be done." Notice it says that He was heard. Yet He was not delivered from death.

Psalm 22, the psalm of the crucifixion, has this, and this is what the apostle here in Hebrews is speaking to:

*"For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. (22:24)*

Note that He was heard. Yet He was not delivered. He was not saved from death, except that the death was not the end. It says here that He learned obedience. This has to refer to learning experientially the full weight of obedience. He always did the will of the Father. John 4:34 and 8:29 make that clear, as does the entire revelation of Scripture. We could say "all the counsel of God", also makes that abundantly clear.

But Jesus, in the days of His flesh, learned obedience, in that He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, (Philippians 2:8). He went all the way obedient, to where it is said that He was made perfect. His obedience was finished, or perfected, at the cross when He said, "It is finished".

## THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION

Verse 9 says that Christ became the author of eternal salvation. This happened at a moment in time as well. The work had to be completed. This eternal salvation is eternal. It is eternal like eternal life. Notice that this eternal salvation is referred to like this in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the one that many will reference to prove the unshakableness of salvation.

In other places in this epistle, we read that He is able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him. This is again in reference to His place as high priest, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. This author of eternal salvation is in His place as the high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

He was before called the captain of their salvation. He is now called the author of it, and later we will read that He is the author and finisher of our faith. This again refers to His accomplishments at the cross.

The obedience is the same obedience that is opposed to the disobedience of unbelief. It is the obedience of faith. In Romans 6:17 it is said that *“ye obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”* How did one obey the doctrine? He believed it. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation for all that believe.

The Gospel says believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a command to be obeyed. To all those that obey it, Christ becomes the author of eternal salvation to them. As long as He remains high priest, those who come to God by Him are saved. Now, we come to God by Him by believing the Gospel, but do take note that it is not coming to God on the basis of a legal technicality, but coming to God **by Him**.