

DOCTRINE OF THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST II

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I. Preliminary considerations.

A. A priest is one who is duly qualified to minister in sacred things, particularly to act as a mediator between man and God (Heb.5:1 *"For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices"*; cp. Heb.8:3).

B. Classifications of OT priesthood's.

1. Family priesthood is the most ancient, and had its start with the antediluvian patriarchs of Gen. 5 (Abraham was a family priest, as was Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, etc.).
2. Melchizedek's priesthood, king of Salem (Jerusalem), combines both royalty and priesthood in one individual (Gen.14:18 *"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High"*).
3. Aaron's or the Levitical priesthood was inaugurated at Sinai as a part of the Law of Moses, in which an entire tribe (Levi) was made priests to the tribes of Israel in memorial for their application at the golden calf incident (Deut.33:8-11; cp. Ex.32:27-29; cp. Deut.31:9,25; Lev.10:11).
4. National priesthood of Israel, in which the entire nation was regarded as priests to the Gentile nations (Ex.19:6; Deut.7:6; 10:15; Isa.61:6; Hos.4:6 *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest (Priest-Nation). Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children"*; cp. 1Pet.2:9,10).
5. Moses' priesthood is seen in his repeated intercession on behalf of Israel and in his unlimited access to the Tabernacle (Ex.32:31-35, et al.).

C. Christ's priesthood is a part of His present work in heaven on behalf of mankind (Heb.4:14; 7:26; 8:1 *"...we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens"*).

I. Christ's appointment as High Priest (Ps.110:4 *"The LORD [Father] has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'"*; Heb.4:14; 7:26; 8:1).

A. It was confirmed by a divine oath.

B. It is eternal, and therefore, not transmissible (Heb.7:16).

C. It was made official at His ascension (Ps.110:1).

I. Christ's High Priesthood and Aaron's.

A. Aaron's priesthood foreshadowed Christ's in that:

1. Both came by divine appointment (Heb.5:4-6).
2. Both involved sacrifice for sins (Heb.5:3; 7:27; 10:10).
3. Both take into account human weakness (Heb.2:18; 4:15; 5:2).

B. Christ's is superior to Aaron's, in that:

1. Abraham, ancestor of the Levitical priesthood, was blessed by, and paid tithes to, an order of priesthood (Melchizedek's) which most perfectly foreshadows Christ's, thus demonstrating the superiority of Christ's order (classification) of priesthood (Heb.7:4-10).
2. Aaron's priesthood could not produce "perfection" (adjustments to God) in those it ministered to (Heb.7:11,18,19).
3. Christ's combines royalty with priesthood (Heb.7:12-14; 8:4).

4. Christ's was confirmed with an oath (Heb.7:20,21).
5. Christ ministers in heaven (superior realm), while theirs was on earth (Heb.8:1,2).
6. Christ's ministers in the sphere of reality, while they served in shadows/ritual (Heb.8:5).
7. Christ's priesthood is, therefore, based on "a better covenant" (Heb.7:22; 8:6).
8. Thus, Christ offered a final and complete sacrifice for sin in contrast to the on going sacrifices of the Law (Heb.7:27).
9. Christ's priesthood is not passed on to a successor, since He possesses "an indestructible life" (Heb.7:16,23-25).

II. Christ's High Priesthood is patterned after Melchizedek's (Ps.110:4; Heb.5:6,10; 6:20; 7:15,17).

- A. Neither man has a recorded progenitor nor a recorded successor; therefore, both offices are not transmitted and not transmissible (Heb.7:3; cp. 8:4).
- B. Both men were kings and so both men became, by divine appointment, king-priests (Gen.14:8; Heb.7:1,15-17; 8:4).

III. Christ's sacrifice as High Priest.

- A. Christ is both the Sacrifice (Lamb) and the Priest.
- B. Christ offered Himself once for all (Heb.7:27; 8:3; 10:10-14).
- C. Christ entered the Holy of Holies of heaven *through* His blood and not *with* His blood (cf. Heb.9:12; 13:20, in contrast to 9:7,25; cp. also 10:19).
- D. Christ did not present literal blood in heaven, since it is not His literal blood which saves (see the Doctrine of the Blood of Christ), any more than His literal blood is directly applied to believers (cf. 1Jn.1:7).

I. Christ's intercession as High Priest.

- A. Christ, the glorified God-Man, actively intercedes on behalf of men (Rom.8:34 "*...Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us*").
- B. He saves and keeps saved all who believe (Heb.7:25 "*Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them*").
- C. He intercedes with the Father on behalf of all who approach "*the throne of grace in time of need*" (Heb.4:16).
- D. Heaven's High Priest sympathizes with "our weaknesses" (Heb.4:15).
- E. His presence in heaven should be reassurance in our struggles on earth (Heb.4:13).
- F. The terms "mediator" (1Tim.2:5) and "Advocate" (1Jn.2:1) are also used in connection with Christ's intercession in heaven.

I. Positional sanctification (union with Christ via BHS) guarantees the universal royal priesthood of Church Age believers (Rev.1:6 "*and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father*"; 5:10 "*And You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth*"; 20:6 "*...but they will be priests... and will reign with Him for a thousand years*").

- A. All believers, without regard to gender or any other factor, are royal priests (1Pet.2:9 "**But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession...**").
- B. As such, we have, like all priests before us, sacrifices to offer to God (1Pet.2:5 "**you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ**"), which include:

1. Our bodies, in contrast to the sacrifices of ritual (Rom.12:1).
2. Praise (Heb.13:15).
3. Divine good production (Heb.13:16).
4. Intercessory prayer for self and others (Heb.4:16).

