

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2022: *In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews*

Lesson 6 “Jesus, The Faithful Priest”

Read for this week’s study

Hebrews 5:1–10; Genesis 14:18–20; 1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 7:1–3; Hebrews 7:11–16, 22, 26.

Memory Text

“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens” (Hebrews 7:26, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Priest on Behalf of Human Beings
- III. According to the Order of Melchizedek
- IV. An Effective Priest
- V. An Eternal Priest
- VI. A Sinless Priest
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In lessons 1-5 we covered material in the first four chapters of Hebrews. This week’s lesson focuses on chapter 5-7, where the author of Hebrews seeks to show how Jesus’ priesthood bridges the chasm between us and God on account of human sin. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Hebrews 5:1-10. In the first four verses the author uses the earthly priesthood as a model. In verses 5-10 he applies that model to Jesus Christ. Based on these texts, what was the role of the earthly priesthood and how does Jesus fulfill a similar role today? What are some differences between the role of Jesus and that of the earthly priests? What does it mean when the text says that Jesus “learned obedience through what he suffered”? What does it mean when it says He was “made perfect”? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Hebrews 7:1-3 and Genesis 14:18-20. Who was Melchizedek and how did he come to prefigure Jesus? In what ways was Jesus similar to and different from Melchizedek. How would you understand “the Most High God” as applied to

Melchizedek and what does that imply for how God works with people who have never had human missionaries preach to them? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Hebrews 7:11-16. Why was there a need to change the law and exactly what did that mean? Think about the endless number of animal sacrifices offered throughout Israel's history, yet none of them were effective in dealing with sin. What was the point of God doing this? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Hebrews 7:16 again. On what basis did Jesus become a priest? Read Hebrews 7:17-22. What is Jesus' relationship with the new covenant? If intercession is not essential to God's plan for the human race (John 16:25-27), what was God doing when He established the earthly priesthood? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Hebrews 7:23-26. What are the five characteristics of Jesus listed in this passage and what implications do they have for our understanding of God and also what God desires from us? Though Jesus was a human being, He never sinned. How do you explain that? What implications does that have for us as fellow human beings? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. In Letter 90, 1906 (SDABC, vol. 7, page 931) Ellen White made the following interesting comment about the intercession of Jesus: "(Christ) knows all about our burdens, our dangers, and our difficulties; and He fills His mouth with arguments in our behalf." To whom do you think those "arguments" are directed, to God or to us, and why do you think so? In either case, why do you think "arguments" might be necessary? Should that idea be encouraging or discouraging to us? (Friday's Lesson)
8. In *Desire of Ages* page 25, Ellen White wrote: "In Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen." What do you understand that sentence to mean? How do we experience that closeness? What role might the "arguments" play in achieving that closeness? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The people thought, "If we offer these sacrifices, it will somehow appease the anger of God, and he'll be pleased." And that's been even carried down to the sacrifice of Christ, that if we point God to the fact that Jesus died in our stead, maybe his anger will be appeased. That's the heathen view. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. These sacrifices were not to appease God. They were to say something to us that might lead us to be contrite, to be humble, to realize how serious sin is, and to say, "God, I really need not just to be forgiven, I need to be completely changed. A new heart and a right spirit, and all those things." If the sacrifice of Jesus doesn't lead us to that understanding, it does no good. And David was beginning to understand that. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – 2 Samuel*, recorded November 1983, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/15MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That's a very good point, very much so.

Lou: The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either he dies or we die. However that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of his warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead."

But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing his Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had he not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not his death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy.

Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of

Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

As he experienced this separation from his Father, so great was this agony, that his physical pain was hardly felt. With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour's despairing agony. Note the words, agony, fear, consternation. He was really tempted to doubt all that he'd been teaching. He even wondered if he'd rise again."

Maybe he was tempted to believe this legal explanation that the second death is, you die and stay dead forever. And if he was going to pay the price for sin, he would have to die, and stay dead forever. He would never rise again. But he didn't come to pay that penalty. He came to answer the questions, and as soon as he had answered them (he did wait over Sabbath, to add more meanings to the Sabbath, so that every Sabbath we'd remember the questions he'd answered on Friday) he arose a great while before it was day, and he hastened to heaven. And he said to Mary, "Don't detain me! I have to hasten to heaven." And he appeared before his Father, and the angels, and he said, "Was it enough?" To pay the price of sin? "No," they could have said, "You're supposed to stay dead for eternity. You hurry back! We'll not let anybody know you were out." They never said such a thing! They said, "It is more than enough. You've cleared up all our questions. You've confirmed our trust without fear for eternity." And he came back down to see if the twelve had got the message, and they were all in a deep depression. It took him a long time to revive them.

And to this present day, do we really accept what he came to reveal at such infinite cost, that he does not wish to be served from fear. The Father will no more kill us at the end of the millennium than he killed his Son—which leads some to believe that he did kill his Son as he will kill the wicked at the end. How have you worked this out yourself? How did Jesus resolve these questions on the cross? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

So John's point is surely crystal clear. That if we really know the truth about God and if we like what we know, then there is no need to be afraid even of the final judgment. Or is this only speaking of gentle Jesus, the Son? Some derive comfort from the thought and the fact, as the

Bible says, that God has given all judgment to the Son. Look at John 5:22: “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.” (RSV) And many find that much more comforting, because you are much more likely to receive merciful treatment at the hand of the Son than of the Father? Is that true? I’ve heard some say with real gratitude, “I have no fear of the judgment because I know I have a friend in court.”

And I ask, “Who is that friend?”

Then comes the warm response, “Why, Jesus, of course.”

“You mean the Father is no friend of yours?”

“Oh, I didn’t mean that.”

“Then what did you mean when you said that you were happy to have a friend in court and Jesus is your friend? Is the Father no friend? What of the Holy Spirit?”

You remember Jesus’ words to Philip in John 14:7, 9: “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. . . . He who has seen me has seen the Father.” (RSV) If you knew this to be true, you would never say, “I am grateful that I have a friend in court and I mean Jesus and not the Father.” You couldn’t say that, could you?

Some derive comfort from the thought—as they face the final judgment at the hands of one who knows us in such detail—that when their cases come up for consideration, Jesus will be there interceding with the Father in our behalf. Does that mean that because gentle Jesus is pleading with the Father, we are more likely to receive merciful treatment? Think what that implies about the Father! Is the Father less loving and less forgiving than the Son? Who says that he is exacting, unforgiving, and severe? Are we even going to, in expressing our doctrines, seem to support Satan’s charges against our God? Remember Jesus’ words in John 16:26, next on the list: “I need make no promise to plead to the Father for you [or, as we had in an earlier Bible Reference Sheet, Goodspeed’s translation; there is no need for me to intercede with the Father for you. Why not?]. For the Father himself loves you.” (*Phillips*)

The Son does not love us more than the Father, or understand us better than the Father, or is more sympathetic than the Father. If we have seen the Son we have seen the Father. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #9, “There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God” recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>*

Lou: Now, there are questions that arise in regard to the second part of your presentation on intercession. You’ve talked about intercession, a mediator, as part of an emergency measure. Does that mean that we don’t need an advocate? First John, second chapter talks about, “If any

man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Are you saying that we don’t need an advocate?

Graham: As I mentioned, if one is still afraid of God, the Bible says we have an advocate with the Father. However, knowing that we really don’t need someone to intercede with the Father, do we still need an advocate? Well, if we only determined who it is that’s really against us, then we would see why we need an advocate standing beside the Father, the paraclete, called to his side to help. Satan is against us, the accuser of the brethren who accuses us day and night before God. Look in Zechariah 3. Who is accusing Joshua the High Priest? Who is defending? In Job, who is accusing? Who is defending? So since we have an enemy, God’s enemy is our enemy too. We need an advocate. We need someone to represent us. To God? No. He’s our friend as much as the Son and the Holy Spirit.

But our future neighbors and friends, the inhabitants of the universe, might not be too sure about us. And God doesn’t ask them to accept his list of candidates. He doesn’t run his universe that way. So he allows Satan to accuse, and has Jesus explain. If he can defend, he does. If he can’t, he won’t. And so it’s very real to me that Jesus is in this role of advocate and intercessor defending his loyal children who may even be just babes in the truth. If they trust him like the thief on the cross, Jesus can say, “Yes, he has a terrible record as the Devil has pointed out, but he has a new heart and a right spirit. I commend him as safe to save, even to live next door to.” And his guardian angel heaves a big sigh of relief.

Lou: Not from God’s wrath or anything like that, that he’s protecting us.

Graham: No. So often, we’ve got the wrong enemy.

Lou: He made God the enemy.

Graham: Yes.

Lou: Exactly what the devil would like to have us think.

Graham: Exactly. The Father’s not our foe. No. “If God can be for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8.

Lou: In Romans 8:26, speaking of Romans eight, it says that the Spirit makes intercession.

Graham: That’s right.

Lou: “For us—with groanings which cannot be uttered and sighs too deep for words.” What about this matter of intercession? Jesus is intercessor? The Spirit is intercessor?

Graham: Well, we know the Spirit isn’t interceding with the Father. Jesus said, “There is no need.” And he certainly isn’t interceding with the Son. So in the context it says, “We do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit helps us to pray,” and I believe his intercession is in teaching us the truth about ourselves, and about our God—that he is our friend. He helps us

approach him. So it's through prayer. By the way, Bible students for many, many years have taken that view, and Ellen White has taken it. I like it very much. His intercession with the Spirit is helping us see the truth and tell the truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11 with Lou Venden, "God's Emergency Measures" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/11MMCAG>*

Recommended reading:

"Why Did Jesus Have To Die?", Graham Maxwell Interview (*Graham Maxwell and Pine Knoll Publications*– 1990) [Why Did Jesus Have to Die \(PDF\)](#)

Further Study with Ellen White

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

Through all our trials we have a never-failing Helper. He does not leave us alone to struggle with temptation, to battle with evil, and be finally crushed with burdens and sorrow. Though now He is hidden from mortal sight, the ear of faith can hear His voice saying, Fear not; I am with you. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Revelation 1:18. I have endured your sorrows, experienced your struggles, encountered your temptations. I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touch no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Isaiah 54:10. {DA 483.1}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in "the beauty of the Lord our God." Psalm 90:17. Looking upon them with hope, He inspired hope. Meeting them with confidence, He inspired trust. Revealing in Himself man's true ideal, He awakened, for its attainment, both desire and faith. In His presence souls despised and fallen realized that they still were men, and they longed to prove themselves worthy of His regard. In many a heart that seemed dead to all things holy, were

awakened new impulses. To many a despairing one there opened the possibility of a new life. {Ed 80.1}

Christ bound them to His heart by the ties of love and devotion; and by the same ties He bound them to their fellow men. With Him love was life, and life was service. “Freely ye have received,” He said, “freely give.” Matthew 10:8. {Ed 80.2}

Instead of directing the people to study men’s theories about God, His word, or His works, He taught them to behold Him, as manifested in His works, in His word, and by His providences. He brought their minds in contact with the mind of the Infinite. {Ed 81.2}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {TMK 25.4}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light. It was seen that his professedly spotless character was deceptive. His deeply laid scheme to exalt himself to supremacy was fully discerned. His falsehoods were apparent to all. God’s authority was forever established. Truth triumphed over falsehood. {RC 60.3}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. {TA 205.2}

Christ, in His life and His death, has forever settled the deep and comprehensive question whether there is self-denial with God, and whether God is light and love. This was the question agitated in the heavens above, which was the beginning of Satan’s alienation from God. The change or abolition of the laws of His government in the heavenly courts was demanded as the evidence of the love of God.—RH Oct. 21, 1902. {TA 206.1}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto *us* a child is born, unto *us* a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

Looking upon man, God saw his desperate rebellion, and He devised a remedy. Christ was His gift to the world for man's reconciliation. The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man's behalf was to enable men to resist Satan's power. He came to mold character and to give mental power, to shed abroad the beams of true education, that the true aim of life might not be lost sight of. The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil; Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. {CT 33.3}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour,

the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us. Yet these but imperfectly represent His love. Though all these evidences have been given, the enemy of good blinded the minds of men, so that they looked upon God with fear; they thought of Him as severe and unforgiving. Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice,—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men, that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men. {SC 10.3}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. {RH, February 15, 1912 par. 4}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear, and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot, but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children. {18MR 112.4}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

Christ's atonement includes the whole human family. No one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.—Letter 106, 1900. {7ABC 464.7}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

We are not to think of God only as a judge, and to forget him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this; for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God's character. {RH, April 5, 1887 par. 10}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last one glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {DA 764.4}

Recommended reading: "God Made Manifest in Christ" *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890
<https://egwwritings.org>