



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.* 6 *As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* 7 *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;* 8 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;* 9 *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;* 10 *Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.* (Heb 5:5-10)

THOU art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (Psalm 110:4)

We have the perfect example of the High Priest given in Genesis 14 of a mysterious figure named Melchizedek to whom even Abraham paid tithes and offerings, and who blessed Abraham. We are told in Hebrews Seven Melchizedek was greater even than Abraham: 1 *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;* 2 *To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;* 3 *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.* 4 *Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.* 5 *And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:* 6 *But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.* 7 *And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.* (Heb 7:1-7) This High Priest was compared to the Son of God – he had neither beginning nor end. He was a High Priest that abideth forever.

The central theme of this devotion is not about Melchizedek, but about the Personage whom Melchizedek represented as a forerunner thereof – our Lord Jesus Christ. He has become our High Priest forever. In the days of the Temple, the High Priest interceded for the people before the Most Holy in the Temple. He offered, first intercession for his own sins; and then the sins of the people. But our Lord as High Priest intercedes directly with the Father on our behalf and is guiltless Himself of any sin.

You will recall the then-High Priest of Israel, Caiaphas, spoke unwittingly and yet prophetically (because he WAS High Priest) of our Lord before the Passion of Christ. After the raising of Lazarus at Bethany, the Jewish rulers were distraught to find an answer to their dilemma. It was obvious to them that only the Messiah could have done the miracles that Jesus did; however, they did not wish for a Messiah who would take their power and place: *47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.* (John 11:47-52)

It is also noteworthy our Lord was accused of vile sins and blasphemy before the High Priest, Caiaphas. One who was blameless stood before one who sinned overtly before His very face: *65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.* (Matt 26:64-65) Why was the renting of his garment a sin for the high priest? Read, *10 And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;* (Lev 21:10) Of course, Caiaphas was guilty of far greater sins than simply renting his garment. He was complicit in the pitched lies of a trial before which even Pilate pronounced Jesus innocent. He would have better rent his heart rather than his garment.

Many misconstrue the duties and function of a priest in our day. They think back to the duties of the priest in Old Testament times. Worship underwent a change, not of purpose, but in means, at the coming of Christ. We still have priests and a High Priest, but the roles have changed owing to the fulfillment of prophecies. No longer does the priests offer up living sacrifices for the redemption of sin – they were never sufficient but merely a foreshadow of the perfect sacrifice to come in Christ. Instead of offering daily and annual sacrifices, the priest now offers only the Lord Jesus Christ as the Perfect and Complete sacrifice through both Word and Sacrament. *24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.* (Heb 7:24-28)

Here is an explanation of George Herbert on the duties of the priest: *A PASTOR is the deputy of Christ for the reducing of man to the obedience of God. This definition is evident. And contains the direct steps of pastoral duty and authority. For first, man fell from God by disobedience. Secondly, Christ is the glorious instrument of God for the redemption of man. Thirdly, Christ being not to continue on earth, but, after he had fulfilled the work of reconciliation, to be received up into heaven, he constituted deputies in his place, and these are priests. And therefore St. Paul, in the beginning of his Epistles, professeth this ; and, in the first to the Colossians, plainly avoucheth that he fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body s sake, which is the church : wherein is contained the complete definition of a minister. Out of this charter of the priesthood may be plainly gathered both the dignity thereof and the duty; the dignity, in that a priest may do that which Christ did, and by his authority, and as his vicegerent. The duty, in that a priest is to do that which Christ did, and after his manner, both for doctrine and life. A Priest to the Temple; . George Herbert (1908)*

Every professing and believing Christian has some duty deriving from the priesthood: *2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* (1 Peter 2:2-5) The priest in the church is the figure that directs worship according to biblical standards and not the free-license lack of standards of the modern church.

The Lord Jesus Christ, as our High Priest, commissions and appoints subordinate duties to his priests and ministers. If a man is not called of God to preach, he can in no wise do the work of the Lord. An officer in the military is not a self-made officer – he must be commissioned by Presidential authority. The same is true of the priest or minister in the church.

The Lord Jesus Christ, being our High Priest, must find a Bride that is virtuous and without spot or blemish. Where shall He find such a Bride. The Church is to be the Bride of Christ, but how shall she appear spotless and virtuous when she presently condones the most vilest of sins and abominations? The Book of Leviticus clearly tells us of the High Priest: *13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.* (Lev 21:13-14 Today's church scarcely fits that demand. Our High Priest is worthy of much better than we offer in both worship and faith today. A drastic and epic change is necessary either through an awakening conscience, or through harsh tribulation. The Marriage Supper is being prepared as I write. Should the Bride not be preparing herself as well? *1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* (Rev 21:1-2)

The adornment of the modern church is as filthy rags. Best assume the White Robe of Christ to cover our sins – and very SOON!