



SEEING then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. ¹⁵ For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. ¹ For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins ² Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. ³ And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. ⁴ And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. ⁵ 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 4:14-16, 5:1-10)

The High Priest of which we speak today is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. His sacrifice at Golgotha replaced the Hebrew high priest once and for all. Only the High Priest was permitted in the Holy of Holies to offer intercessory prayers for the people; but that role changed when Christ became our High Priest and only Intercessor with the Father. He became the Altar of Burnt Offerings at the entry of the Tabernacle,

the Bronze Laver of Purity and Reflection, and the Veil which was torn (top to bottom) at His surrendering His Spirit.

The Levitical High Priest alone was allowed to pass through the curtain veil of the Temple into the Holy of Holies (and presence of God). No other priest was allowed, but served in worship at the Temple. *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."* Our High Priest is not only 'another' High Priest, but the Great High Priest who has passed through the veil of the heaven of heavens and into the presence of God the Father. He has thus secured for us a rest, or Sabbatical, which no other priest or high priest could secure. It is a rest in the best sense of the Sabbath – for the rest we have in Christ is an eternal Sabbath and not merely one day in seven.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He felt greater physical and spiritual pain than we can ever experience. He was tempted in every manner and measure as we are tempted and, yet, He was sinless in every particular. The amazing truth is that the ONLY One who was sinless and worthy of heaven died in the stead of ALL those who were not worthy and who were, indeed, full of sin. This High Priest was not of the same order as the Levitical and legalistic priesthood, but a *"priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The Throne of God is a Throne of Judgment, but has become, through the Atoning Death of Christ, a Throne of Grace whereby our Lord and High Priest intercedes for us in obtaining Grace where none was merited. We obtain it through His Merits in claiming the Promise.

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." Every High Priest of the Hebrews was taken from among the men of the family of Aaron. He was a man as we are men. And the High Priest offered sacrifices for sins on our behalf. The Hebrew High Priest offered the blood of lambs, goats and bullocks on the altar as a foreshadowing of the more perfect sacrifice to come. He could not offer himself as a sacrifice. But our Great High Priest did just that! *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"* (Heb 9:12-14). Who else was worthy but Christ? NONE! *"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins."*

"And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." This verse lends credibility to the principle of Apostolic Succession (Doctrinal as well as formal) that we practice in the Anglican tradition. But yet, even if the Hebrew Canon had called for the continued succession of High Priest, there remains no High Priest to us but Christ. There is no Archbishop (even if the Bible had given the order), no Bishop, no Priest – no man – who can fulfill the high calling of Christ as High Priest.

“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.” Christ never presumed the calling as High Priest, but awaited the calling of God the Father. Would our churches not be greater citadels of truth if every man in Holy Orders had first examined diligently his calling long before he sought it? Let God do the Calling and man the acknowledgement thereof. There is much ado in modern Bible versions concerning the phrase: “Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.” There should not be. This has no application for the begetting of the Son of God on a certain time, for He has been the Son of God from before the Creation of the Worlds and all eternity past. He is the only One who has the substance and issue of the Father, and therefore the full nature of God the Father. He was incarnated on a given day in Bethlehem in human form, but this was only the beginning of His earthly walk of thirty-three years. His Heavenly walk HAS encompassed, and IS encompassing, and WILL encompass, all of Eternity across the full spectrum of it.

“As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever 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.” In the biblical record, there was only one priestly Melchizedek! So the title here is Priest, for Christ is one of a kind in His workings and ministry, His High Calling, and Purpose; whereas, the Aaronic priesthood was comprised of many. Melchizedek was at once, man, priest, and king. So was our Lord whose ministry was prefigured by that of Melchizedek. (Genesis 14:18 & Hebrews 7:1).

“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” As a Son, He was obedient in all things; however, His sufferings were a dimensional experience which He had never before endured. He thereby served as our example of cross-bearing in service but, more importantly, as our Redeeming High Priest.

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Our Lord Jesus Christ was ever perfect from Eternity Past. But He was completed in that perfection in the actual performance of that to which He had agreed in purchasing our salvation. He alone, of all the host of Heaven, suffered the terrible rejection, humiliation, and sufferings of the cross. It was a previously unfelt experience - for heaven! Please note this phrase: “He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” He did not become the author of eternal salvation unto any who ‘disobey’ Him! He came bringing gifts to men; however, a gift may be offered, but it does not become a gift until it is received by the beneficiary. “Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.” – an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek! Melchizedek was one of a kind in the order of his priesthood; however, Melchizedek is not made reference to directly as a High Priest, but priest only! Christ is the only High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek! Like Melchizedek, He offers wine and bread to us – but it is the Wine of His own Blood and the Bread of His own Body. This Melchizedek did not do. The Redeeming Wine (Blood) of our Great High Priest makes possible the next blessing of the Sacrament – the Bread of His Body and of Heaven. Please understand the high reverence we should observe in our sacramental memorial and partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ at time of Communion that our eyes may be made continually open to Christ!