

WEEK 5 — OUTLINE

The Revelation, Experience, and Enjoyment of the Ascended Christ as a Merciful, Faithful, and Great High Priest

Scripture Reading: Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 2:17; 4:14-15; 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 27; 8:1-2

« DAY 1 »

- I. The basic significance of a priest in the Bible is not that a priest serves God but that a priest ministers God to man:
 - A. The first mention of a priest in the Scriptures establishes the principle of a priest.
 - B. The first time the word priest is used in the Bible is with Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18-20):
 1. The foundational story of the priesthood in the Bible is that of a priest coming from God and ministering something of God to God's people:
 - a. After Abraham gained the victory, Melchizedek, a type of Christ as the kingly High Priest, appeared; it must have been through his intercession that Abraham was able to slaughter the four kings, recover Lot, and gain the victory (vv. 1-3, 12-20; Heb. 7:1-3).
 - b. Today Christ, our High Priest, is interceding for us in a hidden way (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25) that we may be His overcomers to defeat God's enemies so that through our victory Christ can be manifested openly in His second coming.
 - c. Melchizedek came from God and ministered something of God to Abraham; the bread and wine signify God being ministered to us to nourish, refresh, sustain, comfort, and strengthen us (Gen. 14:18).
 2. In His heavenly ministry Christ was designated a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6, 10), not to offer sacrifices for sin as Aaron did but to minister to us the very God who was processed through incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, signified by the bread and wine (Matt. 26:26-28).
 3. The main point with respect to Christ as the High Priest is that He ministers God into us (Heb. 8:2).

« DAY 2 »

- II. Hebrews is a book on the priesthood in its three aspects (2:17; 5:6; 7:16, 25):
 - A. The first aspect—the aspect of the Aaronic priesthood—is for offering sacrifices to God for our sins (10:12):

- 1.The Aaronic priesthood solves the problem of sin (7:27; 9:12, 28).
 - 2.Christ put away sin by offering Himself to God as the one sacrifice for sins (v. 26; 10:10-12).
 - 3.The Aaronic priesthood was not part of God’s initial intention but was added later because of the problem of sin (1:3; John 1:29; Rom. 8:3).
- B.The second aspect—the aspect of the kingly priesthood—is for ministering God into us (Heb. 5:10; 7:1-2):
- 1.As a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, Christ is the King of righteousness and the King of peace (Isa. 32:17; 9:6).
 - 2.Christ’s purifying of sins is typified by the work of Aaron, whereas His sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high is according to the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:1, 4; Heb. 1:3; 8:1).
 - 3.As the kingly High Priest, Christ ministers to us whatever we need, dispensing the processed and consummated Triune God into us as our supply to fulfill God’s eternal purpose.

« DAY 3 »

- C.The third aspect—the aspect of the divine priesthood—is for saving us to the uttermost (7:25):
- 1.For Christ to be kingly is a matter of status, but for Christ to be divine is a matter of constituent, that is, of having the necessary element that constitutes Him a divine High Priest.
 - 2.Christ’s divinity constitutes Him a High Priest who is living, full of life, and able to continue His priesthood perpetually (vv. 17, 24).
 - 3.The divine priesthood is the saving power of the indestructible life; thus, the divine priesthood is the presence of life and the absence of death (v. 16).

« DAY 4 »

III. Christ is a merciful and faithful High Priest (2:17):

A.Hebrews 1 and 2 reveal that Christ is fully qualified to be our High Priest:

- 1.He is the Son of God with the divine nature (1:8).
- 2.He is the Son of Man with the human nature (2:6, 9).
- 3.He was incarnated to be like us (vv. 14, 17).
- 4.He was tempted, tried (v. 18).
- 5.He suffered death (v. 9).
- 6.He made propitiation for our sins (v. 17).
- 7.He destroyed the devil (v. 14).
- 8.He released us from the slavery of death (v. 15).

9. He brought forth many brothers in resurrection to form the church (vv. 11-12).

10. He was crowned with glory and honor in His exaltation (v. 9).

11. He is the Author, Captain, of our salvation (v. 10).

12. He helps us (v. 16).

B. Christ is able to be a merciful and faithful High Priest because He is both the Son of God with divinity and the Son of Man with humanity:

1. His being merciful corresponds to His being a man.

2. His being faithful corresponds to His being God.

3. Christ's divinity and humanity are typified by the gold and the linen in the ephod worn by the high priest (Exo. 28:6-14; 39:2-7):

a. The weaving together of the gold and the linen in the ephod typifies the mingling of divinity and humanity in Christ.

b. "There is a fabric in this universe woven with golden and linen thread and containing the five colors of golden yellow, pure white, blue, purple, and scarlet. This is the ephod that the Lord Jesus is wearing today. He is still clad in a garment made of gold and linen and with five beautiful colors expressing His divinity, humanity, heavenliness, kingliness, and redemption." (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1372).

« DAY 5 »

IV. Christ is a great High Priest (Heb. 4:14-15):

A. As our High Priest, Christ is great in His person, in His work, and in His attainment (1:5, 8; 2:6; 1:3; 2:9-10, 14-15, 17; 6:20; 9:24).

B. As our great High Priest, Christ was tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin; He has passed through the heavens, and He is touched with the feeling of our weaknesses (4:14-15).

C. As our great High Priest, Christ bears us before God in the Holy of Holies (9:24; Exo. 28:9-12, 15-30):

1. In the Old Testament the high priest typifies Christ as our High Priest.

2. Whenever the high priest went into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, he bore upon his shoulders and upon his breast the names of the children of Israel before God (vv. 9-12, 15-30).

3. Christ is our merciful, faithful, and great High Priest, and we are on His shoulders (His bearing strength) and on His heart (His love).

4. As Christ bears us before God in the Holy of Holies, He ministers the processed and consummated Triune God into our being (Heb. 8:2).

D. We should respond to Christ's priesthood by coming forward with boldness

to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace for timely help (4:16):

1. Since today our spirit is the place of God's habitation (Eph. 2:22), it is now the gate of heaven (Gen. 28:12-17) where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven, and brings heaven to us (John 1:51).
2. Hence, whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter through the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder.

« DAY 6 »

V. Although Christ as the High Priest is taking care of us, we all have our own thought and feeling as to how He should care for us; many times we do not know what is best for us or what the reason is for certain things; only the Lord as the High Priest knows the reason, and His care for us is always positive (Rom. 8:28-29):

- A. When the apostle Paul prayed to the Lord, asking Him to remove the thorn (2 Cor. 12:7-8), the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness" (v. 9).
- B. Instead of removing the thorn, the Lord imparted Himself into Paul as grace, enabling the apostle to know how precious and sufficient He is.
- C. This experience of Christ as our High Priest, who bears us on His shoulders and breast and ministers God into us, is an experience in the Holy of Holies, where we enjoy God Himself and all His riches; this experience of Christ as our High Priest is the highest experience and enjoyment.

VI. Ultimately, Christ as the High Priest is caring for God's need and interests:

- A. God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God's economy (1 Kings 8:48; Dan. 6:10).
- B. No matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God's interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God's economy (Eph. 5:32; 6:17-18).

VII. Christ's heavenly ministry as the High Priest in ascension consummates in the New Jerusalem, which will be the mingling of divinity with humanity to be the very expansion, enlargement, increase, and expression of the Triune God in humanity forever as the ultimate goal of God's economy (Rev. 21:2, 9-11).

« WEEK 5 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Gen. 14:18-20 And Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine. Now he was priest of God the Most High. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of God the Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God the Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand...

A priest is not only one who serves God but also one who ministers God into man....In a sense, serving God is secondary, while ministering God to man is primary. The basic significance of the priesthood is not to serve God but to minister God to man. If, as priests, we only know how to render service to God without knowing how to minister God to man, we shall be quite poor.

The first mention of the word priest in the Bible is with Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18-20). Melchizedek was the first priest in the Bible. As we have pointed out on other occasions, the first mention of a thing in the Bible establishes the principle for that category of things. Therefore, the first mention of the priest, that of Melchizedek, establishes the principle of a priest. If you examine the case of Melchizedek as the priest of the most high God, you will see that he did not go from man to God but came from God to man. He did not go to God and serve God; he came from God and ministered something of God to Abraham, God's seeker. After the case of Melchizedek, there is much development of this matter of the priesthood in the Bible. But we must not forget that the foundational story of the priesthood is that of a priest coming from God ministering something of God to God's people. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 145-146)

Today's Reading

Melchizedek is a type of Christ as the kingly High Priest (Heb. 7:1-3...). After Abraham gained the victory, Melchizedek appeared. Before his appearing, Melchizedek, a priest of God, must have been interceding for Abraham. It must have been through his intercession that Abraham was able to slaughter the four kings and gain the victory (cf. Exo. 17:8-13). Today Christ, our High Priest, is interceding for us in a hidden way (Rom. 8:34b; Heb. 7:25b) that we may be His overcomers to defeat God's enemies, so that through our victory Christ can be manifested openly in His second coming. (Gen. 14:18, footnote 1)

The main point with respect to Christ as the High Priest is not that He serves God but that He ministers God to us. We must go deeper than the superficial concept that a priest is one who serves God. Everyone, including the unbelievers on the street, knows that a Catholic priest is one who serves God, burns incense, and fulfills his "holy" duty. Even the heathen religions have priests. We need to cross the river out of this low concept into a higher one. God does not need your service, but He does want you to minister Him to people. As the High Priest, Christ's major job is to minister God to us. Mainly what Christ does within you is to minister God into you. This is our High Priest. He is continually doing one thing—ministering God into us. Some may say that Melchizedek did not minister God. But what about the bread and the wine—what do they signify? The bread and the wine signify God as our enjoyment, God being ministered to us to refresh, sustain, support, strengthen, and nourish us that we may grow with all the riches of God. This is the primary task of a priest. In principle, we who serve God today are His priests. As priests, our main responsibility is to minister Him to people.

This is proved by the coming of Melchizedek to Abraham (Gen. 14:18-22)....Melchizedek was the priest of the Most High God. As the priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek did not offer sacrifices to God for Abraham's sin; he ministered bread and wine to him. As indicated by the symbols of the Lord's table in the Bible, bread and wine signify the processed God as our supply. Our High Priest, Christ, is not according to the order of Aaron offering sacrifices to God; He is according to the order of Melchizedek ministering the processed God to us. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 146-147, 360)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msg. 43

« WEEK 5 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 2:17 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

5:6 Even as also in another place He says, “You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

According to the Scriptures, there are three aspects of the priesthood: the aspect of the Aaronic priesthood, the aspect of the kingly priesthood, and the aspect of the divine priesthood. The Aaronic aspect of the priesthood is for offering sacrifices to God for our sins. Hence, the Aaronic priesthood is mainly concerned with the sin offering. The kingly aspect of the priesthood is for ministering the processed God to us as our life supply. The aspect of the divine priesthood is for saving us to the uttermost. Therefore, we have three words to describe the three aspects of the priesthood: offering for the Aaronic aspect, ministering for the kingly aspect, and saving for the divine aspect. Offering solves the problem of sin, ministering imparts the processed God to us as our daily supply, and saving rescues us to the uttermost. The saving of the divine priesthood rescues us especially from death and all of the environment of death. (Life-study of Hebrews, p. 381)

Today's Reading

While the Aaronic priesthood solves the problem of sin, the kingly priesthood ministers God to us, not as the object of our worship but as our enjoyment for our daily supply...Eating and drinking of God is the best worship. The worship that satisfies God's heart's desire to the uttermost is that we enjoy Him as our supply.

That man should eat and drink of God was the original and initial intention of God in His eternal plan (Gen. 2:9-10). In God's eternal plan, God intended to dispense Himself into man to be man's everything that man might become His complete expression. This intention can only be accomplished by Christ's kingly priesthood, which ministers the processed God to us as our daily supply. However, before this was accomplished, sin came in. Therefore, the problem of sin had to be solved. But solving the problem of sin was not intended by God to fulfill His eternal purpose; it was added later due to the entrance of sin caused by the fall of man. Because of man's fall, sin came in to frustrate and damage God's purpose of ministering Himself into man as man's daily supply. Since Satan had brought in sin to frustrate God's purpose, the problem of sin had to be solved. Hence, there was the need of the Aaronic priesthood, which was brought in to solve the problem of sin. By this we can see that the Aaronic priesthood was not a part of God's initial intention but was added later. Many Christians, forgetting the initial things and concentrating on what was added later, neglect the kingly priesthood and concentrate on the Aaronic priesthood. The Aaronic priesthood solves the problem of sin, whereas the kingly priesthood fulfills God's eternal purpose. The Aaronic priesthood took away sin, and the kingly priesthood brought in God as our grace. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 381-382)

According to the work and ministry of Christ, this book has a turn at Hebrews 7:1, a turn from earth to heaven. To the end of chapter 6, what is revealed is mainly Christ's work on earth, typified by the priesthood of Aaron. That section is the word of foundation. From this verse, Christ's ministry in heaven according to the order of Melchizedek is unveiled. This section is the word of perfection, which shows us how the heavenly Christ ministers in the heavenly tabernacle. His purifying of sins is typified by the work of Aaron, while His sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (1:3) is according to the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:1, 4). His work on the cross on earth, typified by the work of Aaron, affords us forgiveness of sins. His ministry on the throne in heaven ministers to us the overcoming of sin. His cross delivered us out of Egypt; His throne brings us into Canaan. The Hebrew believers participated in His work on the cross. Now they had to press on to enter into the enjoyment of His ministry on the throne. (Heb. 7:1, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msgs. 28, 31-32

« WEEK 5 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 7:15-16 ...It is according to the likeness of Melchizedek that a different Priest arises, who has been appointed not according to the law of a fleshy commandment but according to the power of an indestructible life.

25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Hebrews 7, a chapter on the priesthood of Christ, reveals two aspects of Christ's priesthood [according to the order of Melchizedek]. The first aspect is the kingly priesthood, and the second aspect is the divine priesthood....Christ is a kingly priest. His status is kingly, royal. Although He is a High Priest, He did not come out of the tribe of the priests but out of the tribe of the kings—Judah. Kingship is His status and makes Him a kingly priest.

Kingship is related to both righteousness and peace because kingship is a kind of rule and authority. In order to maintain righteousness and peace, we need authority. If Christ is to minister the processed God to us as our bread and wine, there must be an environment that is full of righteousness and peace....Righteousness and peace come out of His kingship, for when the King is here, no one will fight. Everything will be peaceful. (Life-study of Hebrews, p. 367)

Today's Reading

The second aspect of Christ's priesthood in Hebrews 7 is the divine priesthood. For Christ to be kingly is a matter of status, but for Him to be divine is a matter of constituent, a matter of His having the necessary, basic element that constitutes Him to be such a High Priest. Christ's being divine refers to His nature. Christ is kingly according to His royal status and divine according to His divine nature. He is kingly because He is a King and He is divine because He is the Son of God. Christ, the Son of God, not only has kingship but also divinity....His divinity constitutes Him as a High Priest who is living and full of life so that He may be able to continue His priesthood perpetually.

With Christ as the divine High Priest there is no death [because He is life]. He has conquered, subdued, and swallowed death....Christ is divine. Divinity is His very essence, nature, element, and makeup....Since Christ is divine, wherever He is, there is no death. Wherever He is, there is resurrection and death is swallowed....Christ's priesthood is the absence of death.

His priesthood is constituted, composed, with His divinity. As wood is the element of a table, so divinity is the element of Christ's being the High Priest....On the one hand, the priesthood of Christ is the absence of death; on the other hand, it is the presence of life. Thus, the priesthood of Christ is the absence of death and the presence of life. As the kingly High Priest, Christ ministers the processed God to us, and as the divine High Priest, wherever He is, life is present. His priesthood is the presence of life....Our High Priest has not been constituted with the law but with the power of an indestructible life [v. 16].

The Greek word translated "uttermost" in 7:25 has the same root as the Greek word for perfection....To be saved to the uttermost is to be brought into Christ's perfection. The divine Son of God was incarnated, lived on earth, passed through death, was resurrected, and has been fully perfected forever....In Christ, the perfected Son of God, the One who has been resurrected and uplifted, there is no...vanity, groaning, decay, bondage, and corruption, [which] are all by-products of death. Christ, the perfected One, is able to save us from all of these by-products of death and to bring us into His perfection....This is the saving to the uttermost, the saving to perfection. This is the saving of the divine priesthood of Christ.

The life that we have received is an indestructible life, and nothing on earth, in heaven, or in hell can deal with it. This is the life that constitutes the divine priesthood...[which] is able to save us to the uttermost, saving us from all the by-products of death into Christ's complete perfection—glorification. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 368-369, 384, 392)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msgs. 33-34

« WEEK 5 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 2:17-18 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For being tempted in that which He Himself has suffered, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

Christ is the Son of God, God Himself, and the Son of Man, man Himself. [In Hebrews 2:17] merciful corresponds with His being a man, and faithful corresponds with His being God. In order to be faithful we not only need virtue but also ability...This High Priest is not merely an honest man; He is the faithful God. God is faithful (10:23). He is able to fulfill whatever He says. God never lies (6:18). Whatever He has spoken He is able to fulfill. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 141-142)

Today's Reading

Being merciful corresponds to the point of Christ's being a man. He became a man and lived on earth as a man passing through all the human sufferings...He knows how to be merciful to man. He is a man with the experiences of human life, with the experiences of human suffering.

Christ [is] able to be a merciful and faithful High Priest...because He is the Son of Man with the human nature and the Son of God with the divine nature. He is fully qualified.

He was incarnated to be like us (Heb. 2:14, 17). We may even say that He is more than like us, for He suffered in His human life some things we have not suffered. In order to be qualified to be a merciful High Priest, He became like us, sympathizing with all of our weaknesses.

The Lord Jesus is qualified to be the High Priest because He was tried (2:18). If you read the Gospels again, you will see that no other person has been subject to so many troubles, attacks, misunderstandings, and rumors as the Lord Jesus...Sometimes the Lord Jesus spoke a word and the religionists picked on it and twisted it, trying to make a case out of it against the Lord.

Christ is also qualified to be our High Priest because He suffered death (2:9). The death that the Lord Jesus passed through was truly a baptism. Once the Lord Jesus asked His disciples, "Are you able...to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (Mark 10:38)...His death was the real Jordan River. In suffering death, He crossed the river and entered into the region that is full of God's expression, full of God's glory.

By suffering death on the cross, Christ made propitiation for our sins (Heb. 2:17). This means that He appeased God for us. He has appeased God's righteousness and all of God's requirements on us. He has settled every problem between us and God.

By His death on the cross Christ has not only tasted death for us and made propitiation for our sins but also has destroyed the devil who has the might of death (2:14). He has abolished death. He has solved the problem of our sins. He has also spoiled the devil. So He is qualified to be a merciful High Priest.

Christ has also released us from the slavery of death (2:15). We have been released by Him from the slavery of sin, from the slavery of the fear of death, and even from the slavery of death itself. No longer are we enslaved by anything.

A further qualification of Christ's being the High Priest is that in resurrection He has brought forth many brothers in order to form the church (2:10-12). He is the firstborn Son of God in resurrection, and we are His many brothers in resurrection to form the church. He and we are the same in life and in nature...He is the Head of the church, and we are the members of the church. This affords Him so much ground to be our High Priest.

Christ's being crowned with glory and honor in His exaltation is also a qualification of His priesthood. His exaltation, glory, and honor all afford Him the possibility of ministering to us as the High Priest. With such a position and possibility, He can be merciful and faithful as much as He likes. (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 142-145)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msg. 13; CWWN, vol. 18, "The Sympathy of the High Priest," pp. 295-299

« WEEK 5 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 4:14-16 Having therefore a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all respects like us, yet without sin. Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

According to Hebrews 4:14, Jesus, the Son of God, is a “great High Priest.” The word great in this verse means “excellent, wonderful, glorious, and most honorable.” Christ is great in His person (1:5, 8; 2:6), work (1:3; 2:17, 9, 14-15, 10; 3:5-6; 4:8-9; Acts 2:24, 27), and attainment (Heb. 6:20; 9:24; 2:9).

First, our High Priest, Christ, is great in His person. He is the Son of God, God Himself (1:5, 8). He is also the Son of Man, man himself (2:6). He, being both God and man, has the divine nature and the human nature. He not only knows the things of God and the things of man; He also is in the things of God and the things of man. No other high priest has ever been like Him.

Our High Priest, Christ, is also great in His work. He has made purification of and propitiation for our sins (1:3; 2:17). He has taken away sin and has solved the problem of sin. He tasted death not only on behalf of every man but also on behalf of everything (v. 9).

Moreover, our High Priest, Christ, is great in His attainment. His attainment is so high that He entered into the Holy of Holies in the heavens and was crowned with glory and honor (6:20; 9:24; 2:9). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 3750-3751)

Today's Reading

According to the Old Testament, whenever the high priest went into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, he bore upon his shoulders two onyx stones on which were engraved the names of the children of Israel (Exo. 28:9-12). He also wore the breastplate in which were set twelve precious stones engraved with the names of the children of Israel (vv. 15-30). This signifies that the people of Israel were on the shoulder and breast of the high priest. Since the shoulder signifies strength and the breast signifies love, the people of God were on the strength and in the love of the high priest. When the high priest was in the Holy of Holies, he brought all the people of God along with him. In the eyes of God, when he was there, all the people of God were there with him. Likewise, when God looks at Christ, our High Priest in the Holy of Holies, He sees us upon His shoulder and breast. Our High Priest in the Holy of Holies in the heavens bears us and wears us before God. Even now we are upon His shoulder and upon His breast in the Holy of Holies. We are there with Him in the shekinah glory of God.

As Christ bears us before God in the Holy of Holies, He ministers God into our being. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p.3748)

Coming forward to the throne of grace is absolutely a matter in our spirit. If we are in the mind, it will be difficult for us to enter into the Holy of Holies. If we are a soulish person staggering in the wilderness of our soul, we shall be far away from the Holy of Holies. Since our spirit is the place of God's habitation today, it is the gate of heaven where Christ is the ladder that joins us, the people on earth, to heaven, and brings heaven to us. Whenever we turn to our spirit, we enter into the gate of heaven and touch the throne of grace in heaven through Christ as the heavenly ladder. For this, we need the living word of God to pierce into the depths of our being and separate our spirit from our wandering mind. As long as we are in our spirit, we have the gate of heaven. Within the gate is the throne of grace. It takes no time whatever to enter into the Holy of Holies, because there is no distance between it and our spirit. Whenever we say from the depths of our being, “O Lord Jesus,” we are immediately in the Holy of Holies, touching the throne of grace. How we need to touch the throne of grace! (Life-study of Hebrews, pp. 299-300)

Further Reading: Life-study of Hebrews, msgs. 27, 35

« WEEK 5 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 8:28-29 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers.

Although Christ as the High Priest is taking care of us, we all have our own thought and feeling as to how He should care for us....However, often the Lord's way of caring for us is different from what we desire....The Lord may not answer a prayer for healing. In His care for a certain one, He may allow that one to die of his illness. We do not know what is good for us, but the Lord knows. He knows what is needed for our life on earth.

Nevertheless, I can say this: the Lord's care for us is always positive. One day we shall see Him and worship Him. Some of us may say to Him, "Lord Jesus, forgive me for complaining to You about my situation. Now I know that God's will for me is good." Our High Priest is taking good care of us all. (Life-study of Luke, pp. 670-671)

Today's Reading

When the apostle Paul prayed to the Lord, asking Him to remove the thorn (2 Cor. 12:7-8), the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness" (v. 9). Instead of removing that thorn, the Lord imparted Himself into Paul as grace, enabling the apostle to know how precious and sufficient He is. This experience of Christ as our High Priest who bears us on His shoulder and breast and ministers God into us is an experience in the Holy of Holies, where we enjoy God Himself and all His riches. When we enter into this experience, it is difficult to say where we are or what is happening. We can only say that we are upon the shoulders and breast of our High Priest and that He is ministering something comforting and strengthening into us. This experience of Christ as our High Priest is the highest experience and enjoyment. We all must learn to stay here on His shoulders and on His breast in the Holy of Holies. We should not be content to remain as outer-court Christians; neither should we be Christians staggering in the Holy Place. We must press on into the Holy of Holies, where God's presence and shekinah glory are. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 3748-3749)

First Kings 8:31-48 mentions seven conditions concerning God's listening to the prayers of His elect. In...the last condition three things are stressed (v. 48): the Holy Land, typifying Christ as the portion allotted by God to the believers (see footnote 1 on Deut. 8:7); the holy city, signifying the kingdom of God in Christ (Psa. 48:1-2); and the holy temple, signifying God's house, the church, on the earth (Eph. 2:21; 1 Tim. 3:15). These are the three crucial things regarding God's economy. During the Babylonian captivity Daniel prayed toward the Holy Land, the holy city, and the holy temple three times a day by opening his window toward Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10). This indicates that God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God's eternal economy. This means that no matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God's interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God's economy. (1 Kings 8:48, footnote 1)

The ascended Christ cares not only for us and our welfare: He cares for God's desires. This High Priest cares more for God's need than for our need. God wants lampstands. Therefore, the Lord establishes lampstands and trims the lamps for the expression of God (Rev. 1:13; 2:1). This work includes His edifying of the saints and His building up of the church.

Christ's ministry as the High Priest in the heavens has a destination—the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem will be the consummation of Christ's work in His ascension. Whatever Christ is now working in His ascension will consummate in the coming New Jerusalem. (Life-study of Luke, pp. 671-673)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msgs. 372, 374-375; Life-study of Luke, msg. 79

« WEEK 5 — HYMN

Hymns, #193

1

Dear Lord, Thou art so much to us
Thou art our all in all;
What Thou art fully meets our needs,
Though they be great or small.
Our hearts appreciate what Thou art,
Our spirits worship Thee;
Our grateful praise to Thee we give
As we Thy riches see.

2

Thou art the Prophet raised by God,
With pow'r for God to speak;
Like Moses, Thou God's plan hast shown,
That we God's will may seek.
Thou art like Jonah sent by God,
To enter death and live,
That by this sign of death and life,
We may in Thee believe.

4

Thou art the Priest from us to God,
The holy Priest for us,
Like Aaron called of God from men,
For us Thou servest thus.
In love Thou bearest us to God,
The great High Priest to serve;
With love Thou intercedest there
And dost with strength preserve.

5

Thou art the Priest from God to us,
The royal Priest of God;
Like Salem's King, Melchizedek,
The minister of God.
With bread and wine Thou cam'st from God
To us in time of need;
Thou cam'st with God that we in Him
Might fully share indeed.

6

Thou art the King as David was,
And God's desire dost seek;
The battle fought, the foe subdued,
God's heart Thou dost bespeak.
Thou art empowered on the throne,
Not with a human rod,
But with authority divine
To reign for us and God.

7

Thou art the King like Solomon,
Whose rule with peace was filled;
With wisdom Thou dost reign in pow'r
And Thou God's house dost build.
As King unseen Thou reignest now
Among Thy saints with love;
One day, when Thou shalt reign with us,
Thou wilt Thy kingship prove.

8

As King and Priest and Prophet too,
How precious, Lord, art Thou;
Thy worth to God, Thy worth to us,
We all with love avow.
O how we treasure what Thou art,
Our hearts are drawn by Thee;
To Thee we'll give our thanks and praise
Throughout eternity.