

Section: Doctrine of Christ (Christology)

Wednesday, September 23, 2020

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Q75. How is Christ our Priest?**

Christ is our Priest because He gave Himself as a sacrifice in our place to satisfy the wrath of God, and He is in continual intercession to God the Father on our behalf.

In the OT, the mediator, the high priest entered the holy place and offered a sacrifice to God on behalf of the people once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:34). He sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat “because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins” (Lev. 16:16).

This he did year after year after year.

In contrast, Christ, as our Mediator and High Priest, not only *offered* the sacrifice (once and for all), but He *is* the sacrifice. Like the high priest of old, Christ entered the holy place, but unlike the high priest, He entered to offer Himself. He had to enter only one time for He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat. As the writer of Hebrews reminds us:

***Heb. 9:11–14*** *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*

Our study tonight is such a blessing to our souls as we look to see the amazing and critical attributes of Christ as our Priest. I pray you lean in and grow with me and well up with worship with me as we study together.

Church, the truth is, we are so absolutely desperate for Christ to be our Priest.

WHY? Because we needed a representative before the Holy God to represent us, to intercede for us and to mediate for us!!

Do you realize that the mediation of Christ as Priest is the very promise of God in the **protoevangelium.**

That’s a big word. The word is derived from the Greek prefix *proto* meaning "first" and *euangelion* meaning "gospel" or "good news." It’s the first gospel pronouncement in human history.

In holy scripture, we find this in Genesis 3:15.

**Genesis 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel

Where does mankind learn of our absolute need for a Mediator? In this Gospel promise!!!!

Local Gospel partner, Pastor Richard Barcellos says it this way:

The gospel is the good news of a Mediator ordained by God who takes care of our sin problem, which includes our guilt (i.e., liability to punishment) and lack of righteousness (i.e., lack of obedience to the law of God) unto eternal life.

It was shadowed or typified by the sacrificial system and other ceremonies in the Old Testament. And finally, it was accomplished by our Lord. The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith says something similar to this. In 7.3, it says, “This covenant is revealed in the gospel; first of all to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and afterwards by farther steps, until the full discovery thereof was completed in the New Testament.”

Beloved, the fact that Christ alone is our all sufficient Priest is a game changing reality for those who are saved by Christ. My prayer is that it is truly good news to your soul as we dig into our study and conversation tonight and beyond as we grow in Christ and serve Christ all of our days.

Turn with me to the book of Hebrews and let’s climb into a special part of scriptures teaching us about priests and the truer and better priest, Jesus Christ!

**1. The Order of Melchizedek Points to the Truer & Better Priest/King**

**Hebrews 7:1**For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **2**and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. **3**He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

Let me set it up for us:

Abraham had killed these kings and on his way back, he runs into this guy called Melchizedek.

And it's really, really interesting because when the Old Testament introduces a

character, often **it will tell you their ancestry, the time in which they lived, and when they died.**

**--But when Mel shows up on the scene, it doesn't tell us anything.** I mean, he just literally appears out of nowhere. There's just a few verses on him and he disappears. And he was a very mysterious character in the Old Testament and to the Jews in the 1st century until the Psalms & Hebrews were written to unveil more.

Hebrews 7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God

Melchizedek was a king but also a priest. This is also odd because someone who was a priest and a king was not heard of. **We’ll come back to this later, but know it makes him very unique.**

Now skip down to Verse 13.

HERE IS WHERE THIS GETS **SO** GOOD! LISTEN …SOAK IT UP WITH ME!

**Hebrews 7:13-18**For the one of whom these things are spoken (MEL) belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. **14**For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

**15**This becomes even more evident when another priest (Jesus) arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, **16**who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. **17**For it is witnessed of him, **“You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”**  (quoting Psalm 110:4)

**18**For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness **19**(**for the law made nothing perfect**) Look at me… **the law makes nothing perfect**. The law makes **nothing** perfect. **The law makes nothing perfect.**

The late English Baptist Pastor, John Gill says, *no man; neither any of the priests that offered sacrifices, nor any of the people for whom they were offered: it could not perfectly make atonement for sin; nor make men perfectly holy or righteous; it could neither justify nor sanctify; neither bring in a perfect righteousness, nor bring men to perfect holiness, and so to eternal life and salvation*

Now read on…**but** on the other hand, **a better hope** is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

In other words, there is GOOD NEWS! **A NEW HOPE**.

**The law (for fallen man or in the Old Covenant system) does not truly set free.**

The inadequacy with the law and the reason that Jesus has to come is because the law enables us to understand the behavior that is wrong and tells us how to live out right behavior but **does nothing to free the fallen soul to actually live it out.**

**Hebrews 7:22 This makes Jesus the guaran-tor of a better covenant.**

This is going to be another reason why Jesus is the truer and better Priest.

**Hebrews 7:23**The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, **24**but [Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

The old priestly system was lacking:

The old system required a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor. An appointed Priest to bring on behalf of the people a pure and spotless sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people. But these priests didn’t live forever. Not only can the law not change your heart, but all of the appointed priests eventually died.

And, the old system had scapegoats, but these animal scapegoats couldn’t fully atone for human sin or truly take away the eternal punishment due our guilt.

Again, the old priestly system was lacking.

**2. Why Do We Need A Truer and Better Priest?**

**Hebrews 7:25 Consequently**, [Jesus] is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make **intercession** for them.

**Intercede = to appear on behalf of someone who is on trial.**

**I’ll explain with this: I was randomly audited once by the IRS**.

It was a random audit. Nothing illegal involved. They just pulled my number.

All we had to do was prove that what we said were right offs were valid right offs… by showing proof.

🡪So if I prove these things I owe nothing. If I don’t, I owe thousands.

But some of those things my tax guy filed for me because he knows how to measure the depreciation of my car and the percentage usage on my house, etc.

So, I‘m not adequately able to rightly represent myself… so, **what do I do?**

**I get an intercessor**… **my tax accountant**. Someone to represent me who is able to. He knows the technical jargon. The ins and outs. He can get me through this.

Now, here is the key we must understand if this makes sense… **what do I look like in court?**

* I look like my intercessor. I didn’t even have to be there. He went before the judge and represented my case. The judge hears him while he thinks of ME! I AM IN HIM!

So what it comes down to is if he is brilliant… then I am brilliant. And if he fails…. then I fail.

Your intercessor represents you in the courtroom. **You are in your intercessor.**

**Now, think of our greatest need—we have sin guilt that puts us in need of an intercessor before the holy and just God. We are doomed to eternal wrath without the intersession of the One who is qualified to do so, and does so ongoingly. *Christ Jesus alone can do that—and He does that for all who have saving faith in Him*! Look!..**

**Romans 8:34** says, Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

**Jesus is the perfect intercessor for believers because of He perfectly completed the work required of Him in the Covenant of Redemption and because of His role within the trinity.**

**Take comfort in this church! The sufficiency and diligence of Christ *in this* is GOOD NEWS! We are desperate for this! Look!...**

**1 John 2:1**, “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. ***But*** if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

We should be repenting and fighting sin diligently, but when we sin, Jesus stands as one worthy to justify us because of His work and person. He intercedes for us. We won’t be found guilty since He paid our debt in full and imputed to us His righteousness. **Take comfort in this believer,** Jesus is assuring you safety with God rather than you getting the wrath you deserve. Have comfort and joy in this. The mercy of Christ should blow our minds.

Now, look at this verse in Hebrews 7:26. Here we hear the bigness of this, put very simply in God’s word:

**Hebrews 7:26**For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

**How amazing—** **that we should have such an intercessor!**

It is fitting because our fallen condition is so helpless. A high, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners and exalted priest is what our condition demands. It is a role that only Jesus can fulfill if we are to have any hope at glory!

Look at how what Jesus is doing is different in verse 27…

**Hebrews 7:27**He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this **once for all when he offered up himself.**

This is not one time for all people. But instead one time and sufficient for all the elect.

John Gill said: *“…[Jesus] being offered to God freely and voluntarily, in the room and stead of his people, was acceptable to God: hereby justice was satisfied; the law fulfilled; sin taken away, and complete salvation obtained; so that there never was since any need of his offering again, nor never will be; which shows the perfection and fullness of his priesthood, and the preference of it to the Levitical one.”*

**3. Why We don’t Need Other Priests to Mediate**

**Jesus alone can reconcile sinful people** **to a holy God** because he, as God, became a man and took upon himself our sin. That’s why Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:5, “there is only mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.”

**Hebrews 2:17** summarizing the teaching of the Old Testament on atonement, says this.

“For this reason, he – Jesus – had to be made like his brothers in every way.” God the Son took on a human nature to identify with us—to be the *right kind* of sacrifice.. “In order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of his people.”

🡪 This is where the Roman Catholic church and others went wrong later in saying that Christ is good but we also need the pope and other priests to intercede as our mediators.

**But this Roman Catholic idea is *Christ PLUS*.** The Bible teaches us CHRIST ALONE saying since the cross of Christ, there is only one sufficient and lasting Mediator.

The Roman Catholic view and practice is heretical and damning. There is no saving truth outside of Christ, there is no spiritual authority over us outside of Christ, and there is no mediation with the holy God outside of Christ’s.

Jesus was clear in pointing His followers to God alone and calling His followers away from giving the triune God’s authority or Jesus’ intercession to a fallen human person. For example:

**Matthew 23:9 NIV** ...do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven.

This is not saying that children cannot or should not call their natural fathers, "father"; but rather it teaches us that we should reject all such names and titles given to fallen man *as are used to signify extra-biblical spiritual authority or some kind of mediation found in anyone other than in Christ*.

Do you see how the Roman Catholic’s do this?....they are so bold in their wickedness in this that they defy this command from Jesus, *openly calling Catholic priests “fathers” while seeing them as a mediator.*

Know this church:

**1 Timothy 2:5** … there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus…

Throughout the book of Hebrews, Jesus is referred to as “the Mediator”. Look at chapter 9 for example….

**Hebrews 9:15** For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Also….

**Hebrews 7:27** “Christ has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.”

Turn with me to Hebrews 5 and look with me at verse 9.

**Hebrews 5:9** He (Christ) became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him…

**This is the good news!** 🡪 **Jesus alone** is the source, or the cause, of our salvation.
It is not on or up to you or me. It’s not dependent on our political or social or economic status. No pope (or any other false teacher) can help.

**We are dependent on Christ ALONE!** Even better…

"he became the source of ***eternal*** salvation." It’s ETERNAL. It lasts forever.

It starts in this life and it lasts through bodily death, through judgment, and goes on forever and ever. In Jesus alone is eternal life for all who are in Him.

**4. Christ Is Our All-Sufficient Eternal Mediator**

**This is because of three things: His…**

1. ***dignity* as the Son of God, and because of his**
2. ***eternity* in the priestly order of Melchizedek, and because of his**
3. ***purity* in the crucible of suffering.**

**Christ is our all-sufficient eternal Mediator because of his…**

**A. Dignity:**

***Dignity*** means worthiness of honor.

Commonly held to: dog has more dignity than an ant; that is, most believe it's worthy of more honor.

That's why nobody gets upset when you poison ants,

but would get angry at you if you poisoned all the dogs in the neighborhood.

And certainly children have more dignity than dogs,

because humans are worthy of more honor than dogs are. Humans are made in the image of God, dogs are not. Nothing else in creation is.

The humane society gathers up stray dogs and puts some of them to sleep.

But Christians know that should not happen with human children—even those in the womb. All humans are made in the image of God, we are much more valuable then dogs.

And God has more dignity than mankind because he created us and owns us and is infinitely superior to us in every way.

So dignity **means worthiness of honor**.

**Christ has infinite dignity as the Son of God.**

**Hebrews 5:4**And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

In other words, the office of high priest is an office of immense dignity and you can't just decide to have it. God has to call you to it like he called Aaron in the Old Testament.

**Hebrews 5:5**So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

“You are my Son, today I have begotten you”;

In other words, **Christ did not glorify Himself with the dignity of the office of high priest;**

**God the Father did. God the Father appointed the God-man, Jesus Christ, to the role and work of High Priest.**

What is interesting is the author quotes Psalm 2:7 about God begetting Christ as his Son.

This is saying: Christ is qualified to be our High Priest and to become the source of eternal salvation because **he is the Son of God, and it was God himself who qualified Christ in this way**.

So Christ has the ***dignity*** to be our High Priest and to become the source of eternal salvation.

No one but the Son of God could do it.

**No other being in the universe has the dignity that was required to obtain an eternal salvation.**

It took an **infinite dignity**. No priest of Aaron's line and no angel in heaven could do it.

Only one could do it—the Son of God. So we see how important it is to know the *dignity* of Christ.

**Why this is good NEWS:**

**All hell will rage at you one day with this lie:** “*your salvation is not sufficient; your guilt remains; condemnation hangs over your head; and the wrath of God is not removed*.”

**At that moment you will need truth about the foundation of your eternal salvation.**

And one truth that will strengthen your confidence in that hour is the truth that **you have no ordinary High Priest,** but one who has the **infinite dignity** of the Son of God, and he has *therefore* become **the source of eternal salvation.**

**Christ is our all-sufficient eternal Mediator because of his…**

**B. ETERNITY:**

*In this sense,* ***Eternity*** means forever. Something that is eternal means either it has no beginning and no ending, or it has been made to now have no ending.

If something lasts for a while and stops, it does not have eternity.

Jesus has become the source of eternal salvation because he is the **eternal Priest.**

**Hebrews 5:6** “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.”

**John 1:1a** In the beginning was the Word,

The phrase *"In the beginning"* precedes the making of the "all things" that we read about in John 1:3.

It is therefore a reference to the beginning of creation, the beginning of time.

It says, in the beginning *“WAS the word."*

There are two separate words in the Greek which, in this passage, are both rendered "was".

One use means “to exist”. The other means “to come into being”.

The latter word (egeneto) is used in ***John 1:3*** *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. Have you ever wondered why this sentence is spoken so weirdly?*

*Why not say, “without him was not anything made”…period? Why add “that was made”?*

*Because the point being made is critical. John is saying ALL THINGS THAT “ARE MADE”… were made by him. In other words, it is John’s way of saying that* ***Jesus is not made****. He is eternal in the sense that He* has no beginning and no ending*.*

We see this use of the word “was” again in John 1:6. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. *"there was (or came to exist) a man sent from God, whose name was John;"*

But here in John 1:1 and John 1:2 it is "the word (was - ito) with God."

Means “he exists”! He did not come into being, or begin to be, but He was "with God" from all eternity.

Another way of looking at this is, if He was "in the beginning," then He was Himself without beginning which is only the negative way of saying He was eternal. Jesus speaks clearly of this essential truth in His prayer recorded in John 17, He said, "Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (John 17:5)

If Jesus is in the beginning, that is, before all creation, then He Himself is not created.

Instead, this is confirming the absolute deity and eternality of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

He is the eternal Son of God. When everything that has a beginning BEGAN… he was there.

Speaking of Jesus, Paul confirms this truth when he says to the church in Colossae,

 “And he is before all things**”. (Colossians 1:17a)**

**This is the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of Jesus.**

This affirms that the second person of the triune Godhead has eternally existed as the Son.

In other words, there was never a time when Jesus was not the Son of God and there has always been a Father/Son relationship within the Godhead.

This doctrine recognizes that Sonship is not merely a title or role that Christ took on at some specific point in history to serve a specific purpose, but that it is the essential identity of the second Person of the Godhead. **Christ is and always has been the Son of God.**

**Hebrews 13:8** Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

**Finally, Christ is our all-sufficient Mediator** **because of his…**

**C. PURITY:**

***Purity*** means unsoiled, not dirty.

Christ became the source of eternal salvation, not only because of his *dignity* and *eternity,* but also because of his *purity*. And not just the purity that he brought to his ministry as the Son of God, but also purity that he had to forge in the furnace of suffering.

Jesus has divine purity eternally, but, He entered into time to also prove pure in His human nature by obeying through a real human life capped by unspeakable suffering.

**It means that the gold of his natural purity was put in the furnace and melted down with white-hot pain, so that he could learn from experience what suffering is and prove that his purity would persevere. (\*\*In this you and I are now able to persevere in HIM.)**

**Was this “easy” because he was God, the God-man?** No.

Verse 7 says that **it was prayed for and begged for and cried out for and wept for with tears.**

This was no fake test of Christ's purity. Everything in the universe hung on this test.

**Was it brief?** Notice the word "days" in **Hebrews 5:7***—"In the days of His flesh."*

Not just a night or a day, but during all the *"days of his humanity"* he was wrestling and praying and begging and crying out and weeping. **It was not brief. It was a lifetime of warfare against the evil around him and the wrath He eventually took on.**

**Jesus prayed for obedience—for persevering purity.**

HE prayed all his life and he was heard by his Father and, instead of caving in to sin, he walked in *obedience* even in what he suffered.

Jesus is our sole source of **eternal salvation** because of his ***dignity*** as the Son of God and his ***eternity*** in the priesthood of Melchizedek and his ***purity*** in the crucible of incredible suffering.

**5. The Sympathy of the High Priest Jesus Christ.**

**Hebrews 4:15**For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

**I want to stop right here and acknowledge that some of the things you have been through have been or are incredibly painful.**

**Hear me today: You have a God who gets this! JESUS sympathizes with you.**

Jesus is the perfect intercessor and priest because he understands. “In every respect [Christ] has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

He has been there. “In every respect [Christ] has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

He is able to sympathize with us and our weaknesses and the hardship we face because he went through it as well. “In every respect [Christ] has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Hunger, betrayal, rejection, homelessness, persecution, abandonment of friends and family, physical abuse and more. “In every respect [Christ] has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

🡪My deep prayer for you today is that you allow this news to you draw near to a Savior that has been there. One who can relate to us better than anyone because not only has he been there but because he knows us inside and out….and therefore is our greatest support and help!

The good news is that he doesn’t just relate, but he conquered it in victory.

He experienced our trying life on the road and all the struggle that comes with it and he prevailed**. He won the race so we could join him at the finish line victorious in Him.**

Finally, in Verse 16- this is the good mews that I pray you will draw near to today and every day.

**Hebrews 4:16**Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,

that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**Hebrews 4:14-16**  Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God-

Jesus took on flesh. He came here to be our great High Priest. His coming alone is amazing! But he didn’t just come. LOOK…

**6. What Difference Will It Make If Jesus Is Your High Priest?**

Realize: **High priests were absolutely covered in gold and jewels. The net worth of a community was put into the robes of the high priest**.

The other picture that is important to see is this: **when you are in Christ- when the Father looks up on you and sees Jesus- the HIGH PRIEST, He sees you as utterly beautiful.** Completely accepted. Not because of ANY worth or work in/by you. Don’t get this mixed up. God doesn’t love you because you’re worthy in yourself, He loves you despite your own unworthiness BECAUSE of Jesus’ worthiness- because of grace made possible by Jesus. You were marvelously brought into God’s family.

**In Exodus 28, we are introduced to the use of priest in God’s economy.**

**It says in Exodus 28:1-4,**

**“Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests…” Then it goes on to describe in detail the ornament and beautiful way the priestly garments were to be.**

In a rather unique way, God is trying to show the Israelites how magnificent the true high priest is in his economy.

What we see in these earliest descriptions are definitions of a holiness and a beauty that are not truly fitting for man. But they are for Jesus. This is because all of this points toward Jesus’ holiness, glory and beauty.

What I want you to take with you as you walk from here today and live in Christ is:

Do not listen any longer to the old you or the world’s damning standards that the world brings or that the law brings that cut and tear at you.

BUT, **stand, made new, humbly confident in Christ, who is your advocate, your Priest**, who effectively makes possible the Holy God to look upon you as utterly beautiful and wonderfully accepted because you are in Jesus.

**Now, I mentioned that** **Melchizedek was unique.**

**Here is why!**

Never did you have a priest who was also a king or a king who was also a priest. **WHY?**

<>The king represented the law. HE told the law and was to enforce the law while ruling over the people.

<>The priest represented the people to God. He was the caregiver alongside the people.

-Good Kings are like loving stern fathers demanding you to obey.

-Good Priests were like loving caring mothers who nourished you even in your worst state.

So, it was a complete conflict to ever see the two offices filled by the same person.

But **what if you and I needed someone who was both at the same time?**

**We do!** Jesus has to be absolutely committed to truth while also being absolutely committed to love since He was willing to stand in our place to take our deserved wrath upon him.

<>He has to believe that our sin WILL condemn us is truth.

<>He has to be flowing with love to be willing to stand in our place so that we can live forever with Him.

🡪On the cross, Jesus took upon him the eternal cup of justice due the elect because someone had to pay the debt of our rebellion- our sin.

**<>Jesus is our Priest-KING. <> Jesus is our Advocate and Mediator.**

**Q75. How is Christ our Priest?**

Christ is our Priest because He gave Himself as a sacrifice in our place to satisfy the wrath of God, and He is in continual intercession to God the Father on our behalf.

**I pray you see why this is good news.**

**\* Set up next week- Rob- Christ is our King.**

- PRAY