

Christ

The Perfecting of Christ To Be a High Priest - Part 1

Introduction

It is wonderful to consider the wealth of truths revealed in the consideration of our Lord as High priest after the order of Melchizedec. Yet, it seems to me that we often curtail our thoughts of it to His priestly aspect and His present work in Heaven. That is only a part of the shadow Melchizedec brings, for neither Aaron or any priests of the Aaronic order was ever a king. The Melchizedec priesthood of our Lord is superior to Aaron specifically in His calling (Heb. 5:10); His inauguration (Heb. 7:15-17); His covenant (Heb. 8:6, 10-11); His sacrifice (Heb. 9:11-28); and His work as represented on the Day of Atonement (Heb. 10:1-9). However, the prophetic manifestation of the Lord in Genesis 14 is also that of administration, a matter Hebrews scarcely touches. At the present time the Lord is a priest after the order of Melchizedec, however, the full manifestation of Him after the order Melchizedec will only be manifested in the millennium. The perfecting of Christ as a King Priest presents two avenues of perfection and officiating:

- a) The perfecting to be a High Priest
- b) The perfecting to be the King appointed by God

What are the qualifications of Christ to be a High Priest?

For the Lord to be a High Priest, there were two avenues of qualifications:

(a) Human qualifications relative to His humanity

- i) He had to be a real man, not one in the likeness of humanity, not as a theophany but an historical, physical literal human being, therefore:
 1. He had to have a body (Matt. 26:12; 27:59; Heb. 10:5); soul (Matt. 26:38; Jn. 12:27) and spirit (Mk. 2:8; 8:12).
 2. He had to have a body of flesh (Lk. 24:39; Jn. 1:14; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3); bone (Lk. 24:39; Jn. 19:36) and blood (Matt. 26:28; 27:25; Jn. 19:34).
 3. He must have a human ancestry (Ruth 4:17-22; Matt. 1:1-16; Lk. 3:23-38).
 4. He must grow from infancy to manhood He was conceived (Matt. 1:20; Lk. 2:21); a baby (Lk. 2:12, 16); a child (Matt. 2:8, 9, 11, 14); was about twelve year old (Lk. 2:42); about thirty (Lk. 3:23).
 5. He must have human natural non-sinful needs such as hunger etc. (Matt. 4:2).
 6. He must be able to die (Jn. 11:51; 12:33).
 7. He must be able to live after death (Mk. 16:9; Jn. 20:19; 26).
 8. He must have distinct emotional qualifications (Heb. 5:2).
 9. Human qualifications of human experiences (Heb. 5:2).

b) Divine qualifications

- i) He had to have permanency of life, never wearying or sleeping but always on full alert.
- ii) It is not sufficient for Christ just to be High Priest, He must know completely every attitude, deed and behaviour of every saint every moment of every day. He must be before the Throne of God in the perfection of His own qualifications which must never wane (Heb. 7:26). He must:
 1. Have the abilities through the personal experiences of resistance to maintained temptation in the most dire situations, even to suffering under the temptations (Matt. 4:1-10; Heb. 2:18; 5:7, 8).
 2. He must always be available for every saint irrespective of earthly time zone for we all need His constant unwavering intercession (Heb. 7:24, 25).
 3. He must know what lies before me on this pilgrim pathway to strengthen me for the trial or testing. (Understood from the coming of Melchizedec before the king of Sodom) (Gen. 14:17-24).
 4. He must know how to have compassion on every child of God as they seek to live for the glory of God in this ungodly world (Heb. 2:17-18; 5:2).

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5. He must know how to present the perfections of Himself and His work on my behalf knowing my deficiencies. This is a combination of the Lord's advocacy and High Priestly ministry (Heb. 7:26-27; 8:1; 1 Jn. 2:1-2).

The qualifications for the Lord to be a High Priest were universal, therefore no matter what experience we can have He has known it before us and more severe than us.

- a) He must know what it is to be tempted. There can be no mistaking it, the scriptures declare it clearly, "God cannot be tempted with evil" (Jam. 1:13), and yet, just as distinctly, they declare that Jesus, who is "God over all" (Rom. 9:5) was tempted (Matt. 4:1; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:2; 1 Cor. 10:9; Heb. 2:18; 4:15). Let there be no minimizing or misunderstanding that the temptations of the Lord were genuine.
 - i) How complete and total was His condescension and incarnation seen when we learn that the Lord of glory was tempted. Satan knew the Lord could never comply but it was the beginning of a campaign of temptations right up until, and when the Lord was on the cross. For centuries Satan had sought to prevent the Lord from coming into this world by seeking to break the Davidic line. When our Lord was here Satan sought by every possible means to have the Lord dead before His time, or nullifying God's prophesied method (Psa. 22:16). When on the cross Satan was using fallen humanity, urging Him to come down from the cross (Matt. 27:40).
- b) The Lord knew the experience of being misunderstood. I think of two times in particular, when the Lord was in the temple and had thrown out the money changers etc., He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn. 2:19). They didn't ask for clarification but made the assumption the Lord was speaking of the structural temple, when in fact He was speaking of His body (Jn. 2:20-21). Then three years later at His trials they said, "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands" (Mk. 14:58). They added to that which he said and distorted what had been said, yet he remained silent. Having anyone distort ones words is very frustrating. When on the cross the Lord gave that dreadful cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matt. 27:46). They said he was calling for Elias (Matt. 27:47). Little did they understand the deep waters He had been enduring under the rod of divine justice as He hung on that cross, suffering for the very people who were deriding Him. No tongue can plumb the depths of those words, no thought can comprehend the full intensity of that cry. In that cry the fulness of divine love for the unloveable, the sympathy for the cold hearted, the mercy for the most undeserving was fully manifested. In that hour there was no sympathizers but only a mocking of His words.
- c) What it was to suffer.
 - i) In the consideration of the Lord as the Sufferer, our first observation is the truth of Christ as Sufferer is broader than the cross alone due to the scourging buffeting and crowning with thorns. The life of our Lord was one of suffering for suffering comes in many ways. Not only is there physical suffering, there is also mental, emotional, and soul suffering, and the Lord knew them all.
 1. More profound is the fact that being perfect in body it meant that His senses were more acute than fallen mans are. Therefore, He felt pain and hurt more deeply in every aspect of life. His sorrows were intensified knowing the severity and fury of God on those who reject Him. To the Lord the gospel was not just a message to be preached intellectually, it was a message of dire warnings and sincerest longings. He felt the grief of seeing and experiencing the vicious cruelty of Satan in humanity, humanity which He had made beautiful, and now had lost their freedom and were the servants of sin.
 2. How many saints have suffered for their faith in Jesus Christ and loyalty to God? Our blessed Lord suffered as no other. Today across the world the saints of God are persecuted, cast into jail, made to suffer and at times executed by sword or the most dreadful of all, being burnt and scorched to death by the fire. How real those sufferings are, and so were the Lord's.

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3. In reading the New Testament the subject of His sufferings are spoken of some fourteen times, the lash whither by whip or rod coming on His back was flesh stripping agony, the pain of His beard being ripped from his face was severe. It is time well spent to ponder deeply the words of Scripture:
- (a) “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21)
 - (b) “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:23)
 - (c) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18)
 - (d) “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9).
- ii) Why did he need to know a life of suffering, humiliation, belittlement death etc.? It was so that when the people of God en route to glory are suffering, they can not only know, but feel His sympathizing strengthening comforting breast, for He has gone that way before them and more severity than them.

To be continued . . .

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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