

November 9, 2019

Adult Sunday School Class

Objective: Broaden our understanding of Jesus our great high priest.

Opening Prayer: Thank you Father, we pause now to acknowledge your presence..... I thank you that you always hear me. That you never leave me or forsake me and that you are an ever present help. I ask for a special anointing on this lesson plan and the time we will spend together today. Bless both speaker and listener. Open our hearts to receive a fresh revelation from your Spirit. I bind forces that would hinder and welcome the Holy Spirit as our teacher today. In Jesus name!

Read: Hebrews 4:14- 5:16, 7:1-28 and Genesis 14:17-24

Q – Who is the author referring to when he uses the terms “our great high priest”? - Jesus Christ our savior.

Q – Why does he use that term? Why not call him Jesus the Christ or the son of God?

- He is writing to a Jewish congregation using terms, referencing concepts and making comparisons that are particularly meaningful to them.
- Some have suggested his audience contained a large number of priests that had converted to Christianity and were feeling pressure to revert or merge their new found faith with Judaism.

Q – Why is it important to mention that He was tempted and tested in the same way and to an even greater extent than we are and yet without sin?

- To reassure those who will read this letter that He really does understand our circumstance.
- He knows exactly how we feel, what we need and how to help us in our time of testing.

Q – In preparation for this lesson I encountered a couple of spellings for the name Melchizedek/Melchisedec. How is it spelled in your translation? - The NIV spells it Melchizedek.

Q – What do we know about Melchizedek ?

- He was the king of Salem.
- Q – Where was Salem located? - Salem is present day Jerusalem.
- Q – In what time period was he king of Salem or Jerusalem?
 - 1913 BC (Thompson Chain Bible reference date)
 - Approximately 1900 years before Christ.
 - More than 400 years before Moses was to be born in 1571 (TC reference date)
- He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings who had captured Lot, his family and all his possessions, including his livestock and servants and/or hired hands.
- The scripture says that Melchizedek blessed Abraham.
- Q – How did he bless Abraham? - In two ways,
 - 1.) By providing food, the provision of bread & wine for he and his men returning from battle.
 - 2.) With a prayer or statement of blessing from God Most High.
- Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder.
- In addition, Melchizedek's name also means
 - King of peace &
 - King of righteousness,
- He is referred to as a priest of God Most High.
- Hebrews 7: 3 states he was:
 - Without father or mother or without genealogy.

- Without beginning of days or end of life.
 - Resembling the Son of God.
 - He remains a priest forever.
- Flavius Josephus (1st century historian, 37-100 AD) describes Melchizedek this way.
 - Note the different spelling of his name and that Abraham is referred to as Abram.
 - Antiquities of the Jews - Book 1 chapter 10:2
 - So Abram, when he had saved the captive Sodomites, who had been taken by the Assyrians, and Lot also, his kinsman, returned home in peace. Now the king of Sodom met him at a certain place, which they called The King's Dale, where Melchisedec, king of the city Salem, received him. That name signifies, the righteous king: and such he was, without dispute, insomuch that, on this account, he was made the priest of God: however, they afterward called Salem, Jerusalem. Now this Melchisedec supplied Abram's army in an hospitable manner, and gave them provisions in abundance; and as they were feasting, he began to praise him, and to bless God for subduing his enemies under him. And when Abram gave him the tenth part of his prey, he accepted of the gift: but the king of Sodom desired Abram to take the prey, but entreated that he might have those men restored to him whom Abram had saved from the Assyrians, because they belonged to him. But Abram would not do so (keep the spoils of war) ; nor would make any other advantage of that prey than what his servants had eaten; (and his partners in the effort, the 3 other leaders who joined with him in the battle, deserved.)
 - In addition, one web article I read said the Jews believed that Melchizedek was actually Shem, one of Noah's sons, who was still alive at that point in time.

Q – Do you believe Melchizedek was a historic figure, an angel or perhaps some other kind of heavenly being?

- I believe he was a historic figure.

Q – If you believe, as I do, that he lived on this earth, how can it be said of him that he is without parents and without a beginning or end of life?

- These phrases are symbolic, representative or allegorical in nature.
- The phrase without a beginning is a figure of speech for birth.
- The phrase “without father and mother” is being used to indicate that his heritage had nothing to do with his position as both a king & priest or the other accomplishments of his life.
- Rather, his life and accomplishments are completely attributed to the calling and blessings of God.
- The phrase of without beginning or end of life is being used to indicate that his calling and appointment is divine, without revocation and eternal in nature.

Q – What is meant by the phrase “ a priest after the order of Melchizedek”?

- One of Divine appointment that is without revocation.
- A priesthood that will never end.

Q – Other than the Genesis 14 statements are there other references to Melchizedek in Genesis? - No.

Q – Are there other OT references to Melchizedek? - Yes, One in a psalm of David.

- Psalm 110:1) The LORD says to my lord: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”2) The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of your enemies!” 3) Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor, your young men will come to you like dew from the morning’s womb 4) The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Q – Who is David referring to in this psalm?

- He is prophetically speaking of Jesus, the son of God,
- Jesus the Christ, our savior and Lord.

Q – If there are no other scriptural references to Melchizedek how did the author of Hebrews come up with the level of detail recorded in his letter?

- Most likely from other available documentation, at times referred to as, extra biblical.
- Materials documenting the traditions and scholarly pursuits of the Rabbi's.
- The kind of supplemental materials a historian, like Josephus, would have used.

Q – When was the law introduced to God's chosen people and to whom was it given?

- The law was given by God to Moses.
- About 400 years after God's covenant with Abraham.

Q – How much of the plunder did Abraham give to Melchizedek? - A tenth or 10%.

Q – What does the author compare this gift to? - A tithe.

Q – If the law and the principal of tithing does not get introduced until 400 years later, why does Abraham give 10% to Melchizedek?

- Tradition indicates that 10% was considered the appropriate “tax” or portion to be paid to a king.
- Since tithing was an accepted Jewish principle the analogy would have been immediately understood, accepted and applied by this audience.

Q – What points is the author making about Jesus with his repeated references to Melchizedek?

- Eternal attributes. (No beginning or end of days).
- Divine selection and appointment.
- King of Salem also later called Jerusalem or King of the Jews.
- God's chosen one.

Q – How does the author describe the attributes of Jesus Christ our Savior?

- 4:15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.
- 5:5) In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” 6) And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek
- 5:9) and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him 10) and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.
- 7:17) For it is declared: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. 18) The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19) (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope was introduced, by which we draw near to God. 20) And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, 21) but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’” 22) Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. 23) Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24) but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25) Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. 26) Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 7:27b) He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28) For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Q – What is significant about His being selected by God and not self appointed?

- A selection of the Divine is a perfect choice.
- Unaffected by the flawed judgments of mankind.

Q – What is significant about the holy, pure and blameless life of Christ?

- It qualified Him to be the “sacrificial Lamb of God”.
- Who could and would take away the sins of the world.

Q – What else is significant about the sinless life of Christ?

- It became substitutionary.
- That is, God sees us through His shed blood.
- The filter of Christ's sinlessness covers us completely.
- This reminds me of one of my favorite scriptures,
 - II Corinthians 5:21) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Q – What attribute of our salvation is the most significant to you?

- To me it's right standing with God.
- He lives with and in me, an ever-present help.
- Being able to enjoy His presence without fear of sin or weakness.
- The eternal aspects of it are also very significant to me.
- I long to spend eternity with God and the loved ones that have gone home before us.

Q – What does the word intercessor mean? - Someone who speaks on the behalf of another.

Q – What group of people are most inclined to intercede for others? - Parents and grandparents, to some the grandchildren can do no wrong.

Q – Can you give me an example of what a parent might say in intercession for one of their children?

- He's a good boy.
- The only mistake he made was his choice of company.
- He was just with the wrong crowd.

Q – In order to be effective, is it best for the intercessor to know a little or a lot about the defendant?

- The more knowledgeable the intercessor is, the more effective they can be.

Q - How does the author describe the ability of a high priest to deal with those who are ignorant and wayward?

- 5:2) He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.

Q – What analogy is often used to describe the way Jesus deals with those who go astray?

- The good shepherd who will leave the “99” and go after one lost sheep.