

Luccas Rodor: Welcome, friends. Thank you so much for being with us today for our Sabbath School Study Hour. Today we have a very deep study. In my opinion, this is one of the most important lessons of this quarter's lesson because it's so central. It has to do with everything that we read about and learn about in the book of Hebrews. Jesus is at the very core of it, and that's why this week's lesson title is, "Jesus, the Faithful Priest." And so, today is going to be about that.

But before that, I would like to thank you for being here with us, for investing your time, for spending time in studying your lesson. Thank you so much for those here today in our local congregation that are going to be spending this time with us, learning more about Jesus as our high priest, studying the Sabbath School lesson. The lesson of Hebrews is deeply important and our understanding of Jesus is greatly enhanced by studying this very special book. So I encourage you to not only study or have studied, I hope you studied this week's lesson, but study the whole quarter's lesson. It will be very beneficial to you.

Before we get to it, I would like to ask you to take advantage of our special offer today. It's called, "Blood Behind the Veil." And it ties very well into today's Sabbath School lesson. So, "Blood Behind the Veil," if you'd like a copy of this, you can call 866-788-3966 or 866-Study-More. That's if you're on continental North America and you'll get it mailed out. And you can ask for the Offer number 130. Again, if you're on continental North America and you would like a digital download of this free offer, then you can text "SH154" to the number "40544" and we'd be more than happy to send it to you.

If you're outside of North America and you would still like to study this or to read this beautiful lesson, then you could go to study.aftv.org/SH154 and you could download a digital copy of this. Don't forget to take advantage. It is a beautiful sermon. Before we do begin, I'd like to invite you to say a word of prayer so let's pray.

Dear Lord God, thank You so much for Your love. Thank You for Your power and thank You for being the intercessory before us or between us and God. Thank You, Lord, because we only need Jesus. Jesus is everything that we need. Jesus is the High Priest that fulfills everything, all of our needs, all of our desires, all of the things that we would need in any other intermediary, any other--intermediary. I thank You because Jesus fulfills that. Please bless us now as we study this lesson, bless those that are watching at home, those who are here tonight, those that will be watching from the future. Please be with them also, Lord, I ask in Jesus's name, amen.

Friends, I learned a lot. I was richly benefited or I benefited richly from the study of this week's lesson. The reason for that is because without Jesus there is no everything else. There is no understanding everything else. Understanding Jesus in all His regards unlocks the keys of the Bible, the keys of Scripture. And so we learn so much from seeing Jesus from different perspectives. Jesus really is the catalyst by which we understand Scripture, we understand life, we understand existence. Once we understand Jesus, we understand everything else. That's why the memory verse of this week's lesson is so important, so vital.

The memory verse comes from Hebrews 7, verse 26, that says: "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens."

Now, before we actually get into Jesus as our high priest, I would like to give a little bit of context. Now, we've been studying the lesson so far and we've been learning about what the message of Hebrews is. I do hope that you have been reading this lesson, "The Message of Hebrews." And this quarter has been so deep, but for you to understand everything, it's important to understand what the book of Hebrews is. It's really not a book.

The book of Hebrews is a sermon. It's a word of exhortation. That's what chapter 13, verse 22 says: that this is a word of exhortation. Now, this sermon was preached to motivate the 1st century church that

was living during the difficult times of the 1st century. It was a sermon preached to motivate, to encourage, to provide comfort and relief to that 1st century church that was going through the depths of persecution. They suffered so many things. Most of them had been Christians for a very long time already. They remembered the preaching of the apostles, the miracles. They remembered the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And during those first years, they suffered insults, they suffered persecutions, they suffered the confiscation of their property. They had been banned from their communities, banned from the synagogues, and over time they grew tired. They grew discouraged, they grew dreary. Over time, they ran the risks of becoming victims of pessimism.

Now, the profile of these Christians, it's not all that different than our profile, than our story. To the modern Christians today, to us living today, in the world that we are in, in the situations that we are in, we can relate to these 1st century Christians, because we oftentimes grow discouraged. We oftentimes grow frustrated, pessimistic, about the results of our acceptance of Jesus Christ. And the problem with this is that this discouragement, this demotivation, it oftentimes becomes negligence in our faith.

We become so discouraged that then we become negligent in our relationship with Jesus Christ. Have you ever felt that? That because you've become so tired, so discouraged, so unmotivated, you then just become negligent with your relationship, in reading the Bible, in going to church, in relating with your fellow believers. And the problem with negligence or the negligence of faith is that it leads to disbelief, to chronic disbelief. It then becomes the hardening of your heart. Everything that has to do with God, with religion, with church, it becomes difficult to accept and you begin to resent these things. And then you easily fall into systematic and chronic doubt, and finally, the public renouncement of your faith in Jesus Christ. That's why if you give in to frustration, to unmotivation, to disbelief, it leads down this dangerous path. And that's why this sermon, this word of exhortation, the book of Hebrews to the 1st century church, makes so much sense to us today who so many times, see ourselves become tired, discouraged, unmotivated, in our Christian walk.

One thing that I really want you to understand is that the book of Hebrews has a central theme. It has a central point. The argument is that Jesus is better. That is the most important thing for you to understand in the book of Hebrews. That's what you have to understand, that Jesus is better than anything that you have ever known, anything that you could know. To those 1st century Jews, those 1st century people living at that time, going through what they were going, they needed to understand that Jesus was better. He covered any cost. He was a better revelation than the one given to their fathers. His name was better than any patriarch. He was a better leader, is a better leader, than Moses. He is a better first priest than Aaron. He brought a better priesthood than the Levitical priesthood. He established a better covenant, a better bond.

The gospel is better than the law. Calvary is better than the Sinai. His blood is better than the blood of bulls and goats and sheeps--sheep and lambs. In Him we await a better land than the Israelite dream of Canaan. He is better. He--or He offers a new Jerusalem which is way better than the old Yerushalayim, the old city of peace.

In short, friends, Jesus is better. Better than everything, better than anything that they and us could ever imagine. He is better than everything we could ever leave behind. No matter the cost, Jesus covers it. That is the message of this book. And that's what you cannot miss. That's what you can't leave out of your understanding of Hebrews.

This week's lesson is an emphasis on this reality. You see, friends, the shroud of sin has separated us from God. It's torn us from God. The human heart became, because of sin, polluted. Polluted by pride, by selfishness, by jealousy, by malice and countless other immoralities. In a way--in a way, sin has made humans regress to the point of pre-creation. Humans have become void and formless again. Just as the world was formless and void before, humans because of sin became formless and void, in a state of confusion and darkness. The human race found itself, as a whole, in a state of rebellion, alienated from God. Scripture simply states of the fact that humanity lost its dominion and life: the shade of sin covers our small little planet. And that's the reality that we find ourselves in.

And we are facing an enemy that we cannot, by ourselves, overcome. That's the reality of the Bible. Sadly, the phenomenon of Stockholm Syndrome-- have you ever heard of that phenomenon? That is our reality. That is the reality of this planet, a planet that has fallen in love with its kidnapper. Sinners need a divine recreation, and that is precisely what Jesus did and still does. The plan of redemption answers the question that arose with the great rebellion and it also provides a deliverance for us, a restoration for the human family.

Look what 2 Corinthians 5:17 says. It says: "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is," what? "A new creation." Because we needed a new creation because sin placed us in a state of formlessness and void. So we needed a new creation, a recreation. We have become a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new.

So what this means is that, rather than sitting idly by, than just ignoring everything that had happened, God came into play to help fallen humanity. God didn't just sit idly by. He rolled up His sleeves and He got right into the mess with us. Now, the typology of the sanctuary illustrates how this plan has been executed throughout Christ's atoning priesthood. That's what the whole thing of the sanctuary, the whole doctrine, the whole story that we talk a lot about the sanctuary, it really has to do with this, with what Jesus has done and what He's doing. Throughout the Bible, we see God's effort in this. But nowhere else, nowhere else, is it made more clear than in the life and in the ministry of Jesus. And so that's why our study today focuses precisely on Hebrews chapter 5 through chapter 7. That zero in on this truth. They emphasize the significance of His priesthood in our favor.

Sunday's lesson--Sunday begins the week here with-- it already starts at, you know, 60 miles an hour. The title is "A Priest on Behalf of Human Beings." It comes from--basically, this day covers Hebrews chapter 5, verse 1 through verse 10. Have you ever wondered what a priest was? What was a priest? What was the central purpose of a priest? Well, the Bible answers that. A priest was a mediator between God and the people. All throughout the year, when someone sinned, when people sinned, they would bring a little sacrifice, a little lamb. They would bring it to the temple, and that sacrifice would represent something very specific, and something very specific was done to that sacrifice. And it was all intermediated by the priest.

Priests were mediators between God and between people. Now when we break down Jesus's ministry, both here on earth and in heaven, there are some very similar aspects between Jesus and the Old Testament priests, but there are also some very different aspects. There are some things that Jesus did and still does that the Old Testament priests could not do. They simply could not do. Now, the reason why there are some big similarities first, the reason why there are some very big similarities, is because this entire concept of priesthood was derived from God wanting to be transparent in His plan of redemption.

Everything that those Levitical priests did were shadows, were examples, of things that the ultimate priest would do on our behalf. That's why when we see what the Old Testament priests did, we can see, well, they did this, this is what Jesus is doing. They did this, this is what Jesus is doing. They--there was this ceremony, this ritual, this is what this represents in the heavenly sanctuary.

So that's why--where you get so many similarities between the Old Testament priests. There had to be similarities, otherwise it just wouldn't make sense. But in reading the text here in Hebrews 5:1 through 10, we're not going to be able to read the entire text today for the lack of time, but I do encourage you to read it. But in reading the text here, that defines the role of-- the roles of the priests, we see that there were, by necessity, things that Jesus did that these priests could not do. Some very big differences in Christ's role that all the other priests, they couldn't measure up to. They weren't even called to do.

For example, the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 1, that Jesus was not chosen from among men. It says here, "For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." So, every high priest was taken from among men. But Jesus wasn't. That's what this text is saying. So it already starts off here that Jesus, while He

was a man, He did become a man, He wasn't chosen from the lineage of Levi, of Aaron, to be our high priest. The second thing that was different and this comes from Hebrews chapter 5, verse 3, it says: "Because of this, He is required, as for the people so also for Himself, to offer sacrifices for sins."

So this is talking about the old high priests, the Old Testament high priests. You'll remember that on the Day of Atonement, if you read there, Leviticus chapter 16 and a little portion of chapter 23, you'll remember that the high priest, he would enter the holy of holies and he would do the whole ceremony there, but before everything else, he had to offer sacrifices for who? For himself. Why? Because he was a sinner, he committed sins. He did bad things, wrong things. And so he needed to atone for his own sins or ask atonement for his own sins.

Not so with Jesus. Jesus didn't need to offer sacrifices for Himself like every other high priest, because Jesus had nothing to offer sacrifices for. He didn't sin. If Jesus did have to offer sacrifices for Himself, well then, Jesus would Himself be part of the whole problem and He wouldn't be able to save us. And so that's where you find here in Hebrews 5:3 because of this you see a distinction between the old priests, the old high priests, and Jesus that didn't have to offer sacrifices for Himself. The third difference is that Jesus learned obedience through what He suffered. Look at what Hebrews 5:8 says. It says: "Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."

So some people might look at this text right here and say, "Well, did Jesus have to learn how to be obedient? That doesn't make sense. Why would Jesus need to learn how to obey? Does that mean that before Jesus learned how to obey, He was disobedient?" So this might be a kind of a confusing verse, but no, Jesus wasn't--Jesus wasn't learning obedience because He was before disobedient. You have to think that He's God. Jesus is--was and is God. Did Jesus ever have to obey before? Do you think that Jesus, in the times of eternity past, He ever had to obey anyone? He was God. Jesus was used to people obeying Him.

So, at this point, we're seeing that Jesus, He learned-- it was something new to Him. The lesson here on Sunday, it says: "Obedience was new to Jesus. Not because He was disobedient, but because He was God." And as Sovereign over the universe, Jesus did not obey anyone; instead, everyone obeyed Him. And so, that is another very big difference between Jesus and the other high priests.

A fourth difference is that even Jesus's suffering in regard to sin was different than our suffering, than the suffering of the high priests. Jesus did not suffer to be perfected by His suffering. Jesus did not suffer to be tested or to be refined by His suffering. His suffering didn't make Him stronger or more resilient to sin. Jesus was always strong. Jesus was always resilient to sin. You see that in the desert of temptation. You see that Jesus answering the devil. He was resilient, quoting Scripture, quoting His Father, trusting in His Father.

And so, suffering didn't really refine Jesus. His suffering, rather, revealed Him. It revealed who He was. It revealed the plan of redemption. It revealed the character of God. And that's why this was so central to His mission. In the book of Hebrews, chapter 5, verse 7, we read that "He," it's talking about Jesus, "who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear."

So, what is the context of this text? It can be very confusing, right? Jesus is crying out. He is suffering. Why is Jesus--why is this happening to Jesus? Well, when Jesus goes through this, He does it on our behalf to demonstrate just exactly who God is. See, Jesus is the supreme revelator of God's character. Martin Luther, I think I've said this here before but Martin Luther, the great Protestant reformer, he once said that humans put on masks to hide themselves, right? That's why we wear masks, to--well, that's--masks represent you trying to hide something about yourself.

God did the contrary. God put on a mask so that we could understand Him better. He limited His--Himself into a mask so that we could better understand who God is, and that mask was Jesus Christ. And so, everything that Jesus goes through here serves as an example to us and a revelation to us, for us to understand God a little bit better. The lesson also says that what Hebrews means here in this verse is

that it was through sufferings that the reality of Jesus's brotherly love, the authenticity of His human nature, and the depth of His submission as representative of humanity to the will of the Father, were truly expressed and revealed. He was perfected in the sense that His sufferings qualified Him to be our High Priest. It was His life of perfect obedience and then His death on the cross which constitute the sacrificial offering that Jesus presented before the Father as our priest. And so, Jesus's suffering, it helps us understand God better. It understands--it helps us understand the reality of sin better.

Friends, if there are a few things that we need to understand in our walk with God is, first of all, we need to understand sin. What is sin? That's a big one. There's a whole area of theology called hamartiology that is dedicated to understanding sin, the implications of sin, what happens. Another thing that we need to understand always better is God's relation to sin. Why is sin such a horrible thing to God? And why is it so important for us to get close to Jesus so that we can divest ourselves of that nature, of that reality?

But let's move on. Monday's lesson, the title was, "According to the Order of Melchizedek." So, Monday's lesson and the subject that is covered on Monday's lesson is and has always been kind of a mystery, not only to me but to anyone that reads the Bible. When we hear of this mysterious figure, Melchizedek, there are a lot of questions, right? Because the Bible doesn't talk a lot about him. It doesn't mention him or talk about him all that much. What we do have is found in Genesis chapter 14, verse 19 and 20, and this is basically everything that we have in the Old Testament about Melchizedek. It says: "Then Melchizedek, king of Salem," and Salem, later on, become Jerusalem, right? That's, after King David conquered Jerusalem, the city was renamed. Before, it was Jebbus, and before that, it was called Salem, and so Melchizedek was the King of Salem that later on became Yerushalayim, Jerusalem. And so it says, "Then Melchizedek, the king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: 'Blessed be Abraham of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tithe of all."

So, Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of all. Now, again, we don't know much about him. We don't know--we absolutely don't know much about him. The context of this verse is after Abraham rescues Lot from the hands of the enemies that had conquered, you know, Sodom where Lot lived, and it's really--there's very interesting detail here that Lot, you know, we usually remember Lot referring to his--in the context of him being rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah, from--by God's hands. But Lot was actually rescued twice: once here by Abraham and then another time by those angels sent by God.

There's a lot to be said about Lot's life. But in any case, we don't know much about Melchizedek. Melchizedek was both a priest and a king. As he appears here in the narrative, he was above Abraham because Abraham returns tithe to him, all right? And again, it's a very mysterious reference because we don't know what's going on, we don't know very well the context of what's going on here.

But the book of Hebrews draws a connection, a bridge, between Melchizedek and Jesus. The reason for this is because Jesus-- who could you compare Jesus to? Which one of the priests could you compare Jesus to? None, because all of them were part of the Levitical system, the sacrificial system that for millennia already at that point, over a millennia, over 1500 years, had already been so entrenched into the Jewish tradition that something different, some different reference was needed, to help people understand that Jesus was so much more, that Jesus transcended everything that they could imagine. And so here, the author of Hebrews, he draws from this very mysterious figure of the Old Testament, Melchizedek, the lineage of Levi, and this is why Jesus wasn't part of that.

The lineage of Levi was part of the system. We just saw that they also needed to offer sacrifices for themselves. So Jesus needed, in a way, to be different from that. And while they fulfilled their role that was established by God, they were still part of the problem. Jesus needed to be outside of that, in a way. He needed to be more than that. An example is when Paul tells us that Melchizedek, and here we're understanding there's a very big conversation, who wrote the book of Hebrews, right? And a lot of people say that it was someone else. Ellen White, in a revelation, she understood that it was Paul and

that's why Seventh-day Adventists understand and interpret the book of Hebrews as being written by the apostle Paul.

And so, right here, the apostle Paul, he gives us an example of Melchizedek, right, that he was without-- this is in Hebrews 7:3. He was without father, mother, genealogy, birth, and death. Now, what was Melchizedek? Some kind of alien? Was he, you know, mother, father, he didn't die, he wasn't born. So how do you understand a text like this? If you take it literally, well, you're going to be stumped. And that's, in that kind of incorrect interpretation of the Bible, a lot of people end up believing that Melchizedek himself was Jesus. But that doesn't make sense within the scope of the gospel, within the scope of the Bible.

So, does this mean that Melchizedek was God Himself? No, friends, this is a comparison. This is a parable. You see, what the text is trying to say is that Jesus was untethered. He wasn't held back in the same way or by the same Levitical priesthood system. That's what this text is saying. In the same way, where Melchizedek, the Bible doesn't give us anything about him, Jesus in the same way, Jesus was untethered.

The answer to this is perfectly summed up by the lesson when it says: "Instead, Hebrews uses the silence of Scripture regarding Melchizedek's birth, death, and genealogy, to build up a typology, a symbol, for Jesus's priestly ministry." And you'll find that in Genesis chapter 14. And it reveals that Jesus Himself was eternal. So, in short, Melchizedek was a Canaanite king priest who served as a type of Christ. So I hope I made it clear.

Here, the Bible isn't saying that Melchizedek was Jesus in the Old Testament. Jesus did not have a pre-incarnation before His incarnation, all right? It--that's not how it works. What the Bible is saying, what it all points to, is our initial point, that the message of Hebrews is that Jesus is better, His priesthood was better than the Levitical one, His high priesthood was more effective than Aaron's. The focus here isn't on Melchizedek or that Melchizedek was a divine being himself. The focus, the emphasis, is that he appears as a symbol, a type, representing the qualities of Jesus as our mediator, the qualities of Jesus as our intercessor. Different in that sense than anything that had come before. So, you're getting the scope here, right? Jesus is better. In the context of Hebrews, Jesus was different.

Now, I'm not saying that Jesus wasn't Emmanuel. Jesus was God with us. But Jesus, to be our high priest, there had to be something that transcended what came before. And that kind of leads in, that leads into our Tuesday's lesson which, title is, "An Effective Priest." Now, would you say that Jesus was an effective priest or an ineffective priest? That Jesus is an effective or an ineffective priest? So, the switch that the author of Hebrews is doing his best to drive home is that the only way to actually get something permanent out of the old sacrificial system, the old way of things happening, is through Jesus. The only way how that became permanent, that became eternal, was through eternity, and only God is eternal.

So, the easy way to understand this is by understanding that how many times in the Old Testament do you find sacrifices going on? The sacrifices of lambs and, you know, bulls and--how many times? Countless times. It happens a whole bunch of times. Why does it keep repeating itself? Because it wasn't perfect. It wasn't permanent. Only through Jesus does it become permanent. That's why we don't have to do these things today, because Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of these rituals, these symbols. The only way is through Jesus. There is no other way. At that time, the religious system of the Jews had-- of the Jews had become so mechanical, again, so entrenched by their legalistic self-righteous tradition, that they have lost sight of what these rituals, what the ceremonies, what the feasts were representative of. They couldn't see anymore that they were illustrations, they were symbols, that all pointed towards one concrete reality.

And what was the reality? Jesus, all of it. Everything converges on Jesus. So that's why I said in the beginning, if you remove Jesus from the gospel story, from the biblical narrative, nothing makes sense. All you have is a historical book. That's all that you have. Jesus is the catalyst of Scripture. Everything makes sense in Him. The main reason here for Jesus being not only the most effective priest, but the

only truly effective priest, is because He was the one absolutely perfect. He was the only absolutely perfect one from birth to death, through and through.

Look at what Hebrews 7:11 says: "Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?" So what is this text saying? It's saying that if it were possible for another high priest to substitute Jesus, he would come through the order of Aaron and not through the order of Melchizedek.

Another important thing to note here in the same context is the fact that Paul speaks of a change of law, so do laws change? I mean, Hebrews 7:12 says: "For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law." So, someone might ask, "Well, do laws change? Isn't God eternal? And aren't God's laws a reflection of His character? How is it that these laws are changing?"

Well, when it comes to the ceremonial law, and that's what we're talking about right here: the laws that guided the ceremony, the rituals of Israel, it doesn't change as much as it's completed. These laws, they don't really change, they're just completed, they're fulfilled. What did Jesus say? "I have not come to abolish the law, but to," what? "Fulfill it." And so, these laws are more fulfilled than done away with. With the phenomenon of Jesus Christ, some things did end and some things were commenced. So what things ended? Well, we see that the feasts-- the feasts that were completed in Jesus's life and death-- birth, life, and death, well, they ended. That's why we don't celebrate these feasts anymore is because their meaning was completed in Jesus Christ.

What about the sacrificial system? It was torn. As soon as the veil was torn, top to bottom, when Jesus died, you'll have no more sacrificial system because Jesus completes it. The fact is, friends, that according to the old law, only the Levites could become priests and here, we're answering the question that kind of arose with the verse that we read before. In the Old Testament, only Levites could become priests, but was Jesus from the tribe of Levi? No, he was from the tribe of Judah. And so, the law gives way to another law, a more perfect, more relevant, more complete one where Jesus becomes both sacrifice and high priest.

So, in the Old Testament, you had the sacrifice and you had the high priest. In Jesus, you have the sacrifice and the high priest converging. Everything converges in Jesus. Hebrews 7, verse 18 and 19 says: "For on the one hand there is an annual--there is an annulling," sorry, "an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God."

And the lesson completes this idea by saying, "Jesus's coming also implied a change in the law of sacrifices. Sinners were required to bring different kinds of sacrifices to obtain atonement. But now that Jesus had come and offered a perfect sacrifice, the law of animal sacrifices has been put aside as a result of the new covenant and the fuller revelation of the plan of salvation." And that's what we mean by present truth. In every period of time in history, we've had our present truth: what makes sense for this moment, right now. And the present truth here, revealed here, is that Jesus was better. Better than the old bulls and rams and feasts. Everything--in everything, Jesus was better.

And that segues into Wednesday's lesson. The title is, "An Eternal Priest." So this one kind of completes Tuesday's lesson. Not only is Jesus the effective priest, He is the only eternal priest. And the implications of this are very deep, are very profound. It means that Jesus's ministry on our behalf is eternal. It reaps eternal results. It will always be relevant. And of course, that is why only He could be such a priest.

Why could only Jesus be our eternal priest? Because only God is eternal. Every other created being is infinite, can be infinite. The angels are infinite, they will never die, but they had a point of beginning. They are not sources of life. God is the only source of life. He is the only life-giver. In that way, God breathes life into His ministry and what He does on our behalf. It means that His ministry on our behalf has eternal results. And of course, that's why only He could be that priest.

And so, speaking of Jesus in this context, Hebrews informs us in chapter 7, verse 16, that He "has come not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life." So what authority--what granted Jesus the ability to become an eternal priest and be our eternal priest? Well, it's very simple: the fact that He's eternal. It's obvious. Only He is eternal, only He could be an eternal priest. His endless life is the source of our future endless life.

But friends, it goes beyond the quantity of time. It goes beyond the temporal aspect. The lesson completes this idea by saying that "the implications of these facts are astounding. It means that Jesus's ministry will never be surpassed or outclassed. Jesus saves completely, eternally, to the uttermost. The salvation that Jesus provides is total and final. It reaches the innermost aspects of human nature."

You know what's interesting in the story? You'll remember that in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, the preacher, right, the teacher there in Ecclesiastes, he says that God has placed what in the hearts of men? Eternity. God has placed eternity in the hearts of men. He has written eternity into the hearts of men. But God is the very embodiment of-- He is the very definition of what eternity means. So by saying that God has placed eternity into the hearts of men, what does that imply? God has placed Himself into the hearts of men. Hebrews 10:12 completes this idea because it says: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind, and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be My people."

You see, "I will write My laws in their hearts." He will put eternity, Himself, in our hearts and He will write His laws in our hearts. You cannot have true laws without God in your heart, and that's exactly, precisely, what the Israelite nation was doing in His day, and that's why they failed miserably. God put eternity into our hearts. The entire Bible is interwoven into one grand mosaic that portrays Jesus in His plenitude. Another aspect of this, another thing to consider here, is that Jesus becomes the catalyst to make the covenant better.

You know, friends, I get very-- how do I-- how would--disappointed? Not disappointed, it just annoys me when I see sometimes people making this huge differentiations between the covenant. You'll see, "Well, you have the old covenant, you'll have the new covenant. You have this--" Friends, the covenant has always been about one thing. The covenant has always been about redemption, about God saving us, be that the covenant with Adam, be that the Abrahamic covenant or the covenant with Noah, the covenant with Isaac and Jacob or Israel. The covenant has always been one of salvation, always.

So--and then you can say, "Well, all right, Pastor, what does the New Testament, this text that you just read, why does it say, 'new covenant'?" Well, it's--in the Greek language, there are two words for new. Two words for new. One means new of a-- of the same kind. New of the same kind. Think of a car, all right? I have a, I don't know, a Honda, all right? We have a Honda Civic. Now, let's say that my Honda Civic is a very old Honda and I want a new one. I want a new car, and I go out and I buy a Honda Civic. It's new, but it's of the same kind. Or you could buy a completely different car. You could buy an Altima, a Nissan Altima. It's new, of a different kind. So when the Bible says, "new covenant," is it talking about new of the same kind or new of a different kind? It's talking about new of the same kind. It's a renewed covenant.

You see, the old covenants, it's always God extending His arm to reach out to the human family. The problem is that the human family always slips. You see that with Abraham, you see that with Noah, you see that with Adam, you see that with Israel, and the Israelite kings. The human--the divine hand that's reaching out is always met by the feeble weak hands of humans that end up slipping.

But when Jesus comes, the arm of God reaches out and on the other side, you have the arm of Jesus, and Jesus's arms never slip. Jesus doesn't let go. He keeps the covenant, and that's how we have--it's the same covenant of redemption, but this time, it's perfect. It's a perfect bond. And in that way, not only does Jesus bridge the gap, Jesus becomes the bridge over the gap. He Himself becomes the bridge.

The covenant has always been a covenant of salvation, but with the addition of Jesus's blood, His atoning sacrifice, and the cross, His ministry for us in the heavenly sanctuary, it has been renewed. It's

been made better, perfect, complete. It is still the same covenant of redemption it always has been, but now it's whole. Now it's complete. That's why Hebrews 7:22 informs us: "By so much more Jesus has become a surety of a," what? "Of a better covenant." A better covenant. Renewed, made whole. The covenant in Him becomes the everlasting covenant, because only He is everlasting. Do you understand it?

The everlasting covenant is only everlasting because Jesus is everlasting, and that is why He is our everlasting priest. In Jesus, it will never fail. The covenant will never fail because His ministration on our behalf guarantees a better, unending covenant. The lesson sums it up perfectly by saying that the Father established Jesus as a guarantee to us that He will not default on His promises. That that's how certain we can be of salvation that we have been given in Jesus.

Finally, Thursday's lesson. We're ending the week here. At the foundation of this whole perspective of Jesus as the only effective, the only eternal priest, is the fact that He was spotless. He was sinless. That's where our memory verse comes in. This is such a beautiful memory verse. Hebrews 7:26: "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens."

So, this verse, this very short verse, it describes five characteristics of Jesus needed for Him to be able to mediate for us as the perfect high priest. First of all, He was holy. Jesus was holy. His relationship with God was uninterrupted. It was never broken. The only moment where you see a break is in the Gethsemane. Not even in the Gethsemane. It's really on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Because there, and this is where you see the reality of 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21, that says that "He who had no sin became sin, so that we who were sin could be made the righteousness of God."

That's my favorite Bible verse. "He who knew no sin became sin." But in every other sense, Jesus's relationship with God was uninterrupted, never broken. The arm that God had extended to Adam, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Israel, that arm that had always met, as I said before, the human arm that slipped, it now met the arm of Jesus. He became our bridge. And so, in that way, Jesus was holy. He was separate. The word "holy" literally means separated. We are called to be a holy nation, are we not? What does that mean? We're called to be separate. Jesus was holy. That's what it means: separated.

Second, He was undefiled. That's what the verse is saying. He was never conquered by sin or evil. Jesus was never conquered by sin. So this means that while Jesus was affected by sin, wasn't He? I mean, you see that Jesus on every side was affected by sin, but in that way He was never infected by it, He never caved to it. I'm not saying that Jesus wasn't tempted, and I'm not saying that Jesus couldn't have fallen. But what we see, the empirical truth in the Bible is that Jesus never sinned. And so He remained undefiled. "Although He was tempted in all points," as Hebrews 4:15 says, which truly means, I mean, when you think-- when you truly consider it, He was tempted on all points.

Well, what does that mean? Was Jesus tempted with every single sin? That's impossible. Jesus wasn't tempted to watch wrong things on the Internet because there was no Internet. Jesus was never tempted to use drugs, at least, you know, modern drugs. Why? Because they had no modern drugs. So you can't say, "Jesus was a man; He couldn't be tempted as a woman is." Jesus wasn't a father; He can't be-- He couldn't be tempted as parents were. Jesus wasn't married; He could be tempted as a married man is. So when the Bible says that He was tempted on all points, what does that mean? It means that He was tempted at the foundation of sin, rebellion against God.

When we say, you know, that sin is transgression of the law, what that means is sin is rebellion against God because God's law reflects His character. If I transgress His character, am I not rebelling against His character? And so, in this way, Jesus was tempted at the foundation of every sin, just like all of us. But what this text here is saying is that sin never found echo, it never found resonance. What does the book of John chapter 14, verse 30 say? It said, and this is Jesus saying: "The ruler of this world is coming." He's speaking about Satan. "The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me." There was no echo.

So we have Jesus being undefiled.

Third, He was separate from sinners. Again, this is the--this is the verse that I just read, okay? This isn't me coming up with this stuff, right? So for such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens." So, He was separate from sinners. Now this doesn't mean that He couldn't relate to us because, after all, if Jesus couldn't relate to us, what kind of Savior would He be? That's why the Bible tells us that Jesus-- we don't have a High Priest in heaven that cannot comprehend, He can't feel what we're going through. Or course He can. But what this verse indicates is that while He was here with us, while He was and still is Emmanuel, God with us, He never sinned. He remained unblemished, and in that way He was separate from sinners. That's what the text is saying.

Fourth, He was exalted above the heavens. Now, this text is echoed in Colossians chapter 1, verse 15, that says: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all of creation." So, this verse is misused a lot, with a very early heresy called the Arian heresy. Has nothing to do with Arianism as we understand it today. Has nothing to do with races or anything like that. The Arian--it came from a guy called Arius, and so he believed that Jesus was the first created creature. He was the first created being. So in that way, Jesus wouldn't be God; He would just be the first created being. Now the Bible is completely against that, right? But the thing is that they used this text. Jesus was the firstborn of creation.

There's a very different way-- there are many different ways in which the way of thinking, the biblical way of thinking, is different than ours. And so, when the Bible here is saying that He was the firstborn over all of creation, it's not talking about--it's not speaking quantitatively regarding time, but qualitatively. Qualitatively, Jesus is the firstborn, so let me explain this a little bit better.

Was Jacob the firstborn? No, but did Jacob receive the firstborn blessing? Yeah, that's what this means. He was the more important one, all right, when speaking about the biblical promises. So by saying that Jesus is the firstborn over all of creation, what we're truly saying is that He is--He has preeminence, He is over all of creation. Jesus is better. And so that's what exalted above the heavens means: Jesus is better. He is above. And thank God for that.

Praise God for that reality. Because of His victory, He was exalted and, friends, because He lives we can face tomorrow. We don't have to leave every morning our home to conquer victory, because in Him, we are already victorious. We already have His victory, His righteousness. Finally, He was fully human. That's what the text implies. Since Jesus was fully human, as we talked about before, but also perfect, He is in the perfect position to be our high priest, to mediate between us and the Father. Jesus is precisely what He always needed to be, for all, forever. And as a human, He's our example. We know this. Jesus is our example.

You see, friends, Jesus came to this world with two missions: two ultimate reasons for coming. First, to be your and my substitute. That's what being my high priest implies. I needed someone to substitute what was going to happen to me, because sin--what is the consequence of sin? Death. The wages of sin is death. I needed a substitute.

And secondly, an example. An example in how to live, how to relate to God, how to love, how to relate to those around me, how to love others, how to be kind, how to be pure, how to be better. Jesus is better than everything, and with Him as my example, I can do my best. But here's the thing: it's in that order. First, Jesus is my substitute and then He is my example. There are some things that Jesus did that I'm not called to do. I'm not called to die for anyone else, not in the way that He did. The Bible does say that a good friend dies for-- lays down his life for his brother, right? But in--I'm not--I was never called to be a Messiah, to be anyone's Savior. And so that's what the Bible implies here.

And so, friends, because of all of this, because we have Jesus as our high priest, our eternal, our effective, our great high priest, we can grow in Him, we can reflect His love, we can reflect His mercy, we can extend to a dying world the love, the arm of God, that Jesus took and that He became our bridge.

We can extend that to a dying world, and we can tell them that we have hope in the ultimate priest.

I want to end with a text, a quote from the SDA Bible Commentary written by, really, it's the Letter Number 90. It was written 1906 by Ellen White, and it says: "Christ is watching. He knows all about our burdens, our dangers, and our difficulties; and He fills His mouth with arguments in our behalf. He fits His intercessions to the needs of each soul, as He did in the case of Peter. Our Advocate fills His mouth with arguments to teach His tried, tempted ones to brace against Satan's temptations. He interprets every movement of the enemy and He orders events."

Friends, in Jesus we not only have a judge, we not only have an advocate, we not only have a high priest, we have a brother. We have family. Heaven is invested in us, in you, and in me. And so my invitation to you today is to accept this high priest. Allow Him to be the only mediator that you need. Allow Him to live in your life and I am sure that your life will then be full of hope. Please bow your head and pray with me.

Dear Lord, thank You so much for Your love. Thank You for Your companionship. Thank You for being our high priest. Allow us daily to consider this reality and to put into our life what this means, in a practical way, and allow us to extend to the world around us the implications of our eternal effective high priest. Bless all--please bless all of those that are watching from home, those that were here today, and those that will be watching from the future. Allow this message to inspire and to instigate. I ask these things in Jesus's name, amen.

Friends, please don't forget to take advantage of our free offer: "Blood Behind the Veil." If you want it, you can call 866-788-3966 or you can ask-- and you can ask for Offer Number 130. You can text "SH154" to "40544." Or, if you're outside of North America, you can go to study.aftv.org/SH154 and you can get a digital download. May God bless you. Have a great week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts" Changed Lives.

Female: Well, my conversion story is when I was in the Philippines, I just graduated as a nurse and afterwards I did not have any religion and one time I found myself inside a small church, Catholic church, in Manila, and before a big cross. And I was kneeling before and I could hear Jesus telling me to enter the convent, save myself and also my family. And I said, "Lord, I would like to follow You all the way."

At that point, I seemed to be happy externally, but because inside the convent we don't read the Bible, we don't study about the Word of God. We prayed the rosaries, we also at the same time studied the lives of the saints and also our founders, and the encyclicals of the Pope and the Virgin Mary. And so I do not know the truth and I had this torture of conscience, the guilty feelings that cannot be resolved. So I would confess to the priest in the confessional box, saying, "Father, forgive me. Since my last confession was last week. Since then I have committed the following sin including the root cause: why am I falling and falling in that same sin over and over again."

And still for 21 long years, I struggle and I struggle and I struggle. I realized that I was totally empty, I was totally helpless and hopeless, and so depressed, and so desperate that I would like already to end my life. I was working for five years as dean of the University of San Agustin College of Nursing in Iloilo City, one of the islands in the Philippines. After five years I received a commission from my parents to help my sister who is being a battered woman. This is one of the reasons why I came over to United States. It is because my sister needs my help.

As I was working in the hospital in New York, my boss-- he was so gracious enough to give me an

invitation to the Millennium Prophecy. As I was listening to Pastor Doug Batchelor's presentation, my heart really was beating so fast, and my mind, I'm able to grasp the truth, that this is the truth that I've been longing to hear all my life, that I have been seeking for so long. My personal relationship with Jesus, I can see Jesus as my personal Savior. He is not only the Savior of the whole world but He is my personal Savior. He was the one who delivered me mightily from the depths of sin, from the mighty clay.

Pastor Doug Batchelor has been used by the Lord in my conversion. The Amazing Facts, I owe to them. The Lord really blessed this ministry and I'm so proud I was able to attend this Millennium Prophecy. My life has never been the same. It has given me the peace, the joy, that never-- I have never tasted in my life, and now I am set free to be able to work for Him and to follow Him.