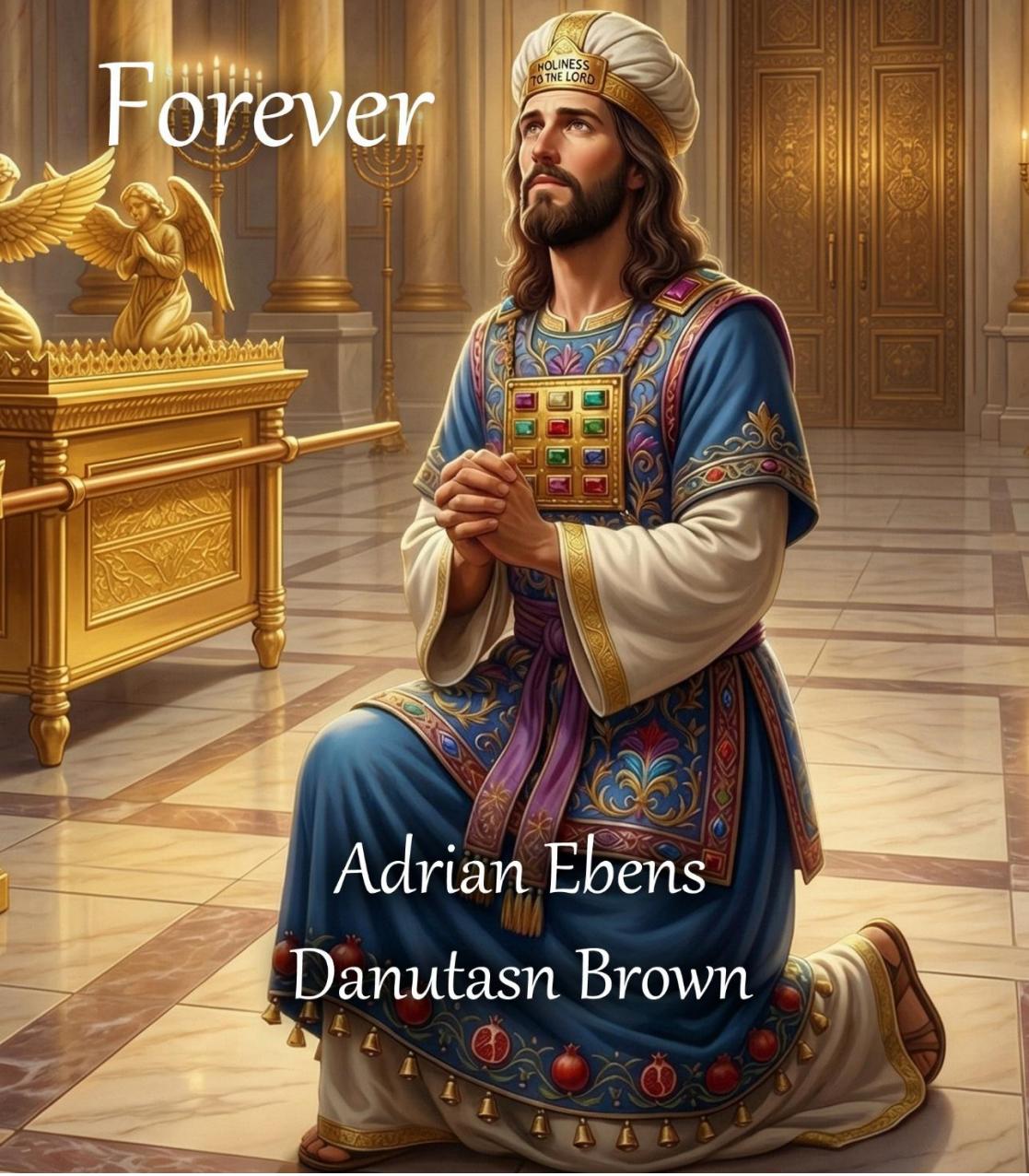


# A Priest Forever



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## Contents

No Priesthood for those living before the Cross? .....	5
Shadows Can't Exist Without a Reality .....	9
Priesthood of Melchisedec begins since Christ was Begotten .....	13
The Presence of God with the Israelites .....	16
Christ, "In the Days of His Flesh" .....	19
Dull of Hearing Regarding Jesus in the Flesh .....	21
Priceless Gems in Wrong Settings .....	26
The Relationship between Grace and Law .....	29
Answering the Original Questions .....	35

## No Priesthood for those living before the Cross?

**W**hen did the priesthood of Jesus begin? Many think it began after his resurrection, beginning our post-cross era of grace, because of verses like this:

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Hebrews 2:10.

**Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God,** to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:17.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Hebrews 8:6.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him... Hebrews 5:8-9.

What is the implication here? Jesus had to be born as a man, “made like unto His brethren,” to be able and qualified to be our high priest. He had to “suffer being tempted” before He is able to “succor them that are tempted.” He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered” which made Him “perfect” – obtaining a “more excellent ministry by becoming a “merciful and faithful high priest.” This was the understanding of men like Uriah Smith. Under the subheading called *The Incarnation* he states:

**Taking upon himself our nature, he brought himself into a position where he can call us brethren.** Heb.2:11. **He can therefore be touched with a feeling of our infirmities,** for he

was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; and having been thus tempted, he is able to succor them which are tempted. Heb. 4:15; 2:18. **He came down to pass with us through the school of life and show us the way. He comes down among his pupils to work out in their presence the intractable problems by which they have been hopelessly baffled.** He planted his feet in every spot which we can be required to tread. He was in all points tempted like as we are, and in all points was a victor in our behalf. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He made himself of no reputation. He was despised and rejected of men, because they would not deny the carnal heart, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. They saw in him no form nor comeliness nor beauty, because the ways of virtue, purity, and peace, which only he could sanction, they would not follow. The darkness would not comprehend the light. Uriah Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus*, p. 28 (1898).

Uriah Smith indicates that Christ had to be incarnated as a man to place him in a position where he could call us brethren and therefore be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Who then did Solomon write about that sticks closer than a brother (Prov 18:24) 1000 years before the incarnation?

The work of overcoming on the part of the Son of God was on account of our sins. **The temptations he suffered and the victories he gained, were to enable him to succor mortal men and women suffering under the weakness of the flesh**, and beset with strong temptations. The apostle speaks definitely on this point: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being

tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." **The divine Redeemer was subjected to the fiercest temptations, passed through the most fearful struggles, and gained victories the most glorious, that he might redeem man from the ruin of the fall, the weaknesses of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil.** James White, Bible Hygiene 203.2.

Blessed be God, "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the fellow-feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin." And blessed be his holy name for the encouragement we are to draw therefrom: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." **Christ suffered not only that he might satisfy divine justice, but also that he might be qualified to sympathize with his people in their sufferings.** Review and Herald, January 29, 1861.

The idea that Christ was only qualified as a priest by His incarnation seems to make sense according to the verses in Hebrews. But some questions come to mind. Was Jesus not perfect before He became a man? Before He died on the cross was He unable to succor them that are tempted? How then were people succored for the first 4000 years of creation? Did Christ not truly understand men before He was born in Bethlehem? How then could He faithfully lead the Israelites? Was that nation potentially doomed to destruction because they never had a "merciful and faithful high priest?" Isn't that unfair to those who lived prior to the cross? How could they be expected to be righteous without a High Priest to impute righteousness? How could they be expected to have victory against sin without a high priest able to succor them? This makes the history of the Jewish nation an inevitable tragedy, whose failings were not because of their own decisions but because the Son of God was not perfect enough to save them.

This is a highly troubling thought. Is there really such a dramatic difference prior to the cross to after it? Was the first 4000 years merely a broken trial run predestined to fail, in contrast to the last 2000 years which are full of glory, grace, and victory over sin? Was Christ a priest at all in the first 4000 years, or just an imperfect one, one who was not yet completely "merciful and faithful"? If there was no priest prior to Calvary, what was going on in the first 4000 years? And how did Enoch, Moses, and Elijah make their way to Heaven if they were not made perfect through a perfect mediator?

Is Jesus's position as our high priest the same as His role as our mediator? If He wasn't our priest prior to the cross, then was there no mediator? "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (Heb 10:4) Does that mean there was no actual forgiveness in Old Testament times? So was David just acting out a role play for our sake post-Calvary when he said this:

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Psalm 32:5.

Ellen White says this:

Adam and Eve were given a probation in which to return to their allegiance; and in this plan of benevolence all their posterity were embraced. **After the fall, Christ became Adam's instructor. He acted in God's stead toward humanity, saving the race from immediate death. He took upon Him the work of mediator between God and man.** In the fulness of time He was to be revealed in human form. He was to take His position at the head of humanity by taking the nature but not the sinfulness of man. In heaven was heard the voice, "The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." Signs of the Times, May 29, 1901, para. 11.

“Christ became Adam’s instructor.” But if Christ had never been tempted, was He completely prepared to instruct Adam? Let us look into this issue carefully.

## Shadows Can’t Exist Without a Reality

When Isaiah had the opportunity to see the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, he immediately felt his sinfulness and cried out “Woe is me! For I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips.” Isa 6:5. Immediately an angel took a coal from the altar and laid it on his mouth and his iniquity was taken away. Isa 6:6. There was a symbol employed here. An actual coal touching the lips of Isaiah would have only burned his lips and caused him pain. The coal from the altar was from the roasted lamb, a symbol of the death of Christ that takes away the sin of the world. How could Isaiah’s sin have been taken away that he might be enabled to live in the presence of God?

A connection is made between the presence of God and the Sanctuary by reference to the altar. The presence of God is connected to the Sanctuary.

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. Exodus 25:8.

Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God? Psalm 77:13.

The earthly Sanctuary would provide a symbolic type of the process of how God would dwell among the children of Israel. The sacrifice of the lambs and the mediation of the priests would demonstrate the cost to allow God’s presence to dwell amongst Israel. Yet it was not the blood of bulls and goats that caused the actual presence of God to dwell with Israel. No coal from a burnt animal on an altar could purge away the sin of Isaiah. Yet Isaiah’s sin was purged and the presence of God did dwell with Israel through the Sanctuary system. How could the actual presence of God be present through a symbolic Sanctuary and the offering of dumb animals?

Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. Hebrews 8:5.

Now we need to ask a very important question. Is it possible for a shadow to exist when the reality does not yet exist? Can the shadow of a tree be left on the ground when the tree itself does not yet exist? The sacrificial system given to Moses was a shadow of heavenly things and if a shadow was being cast onto the earth then the reality must have existed for that shadow to be cast.

So were not the sacrifices offered typical of Christ? Yes. But it was typical of Christ present by faith. Was not Christ right there?

**Was not Christ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?** Was not Christ a gift of God there before the world was?

Then when he called on men from Adam unto all--as long as the sacrifices were offered in that way--when He taught them to offer those sacrifices, what was that but teaching them that **that was a token of their appreciation of the great sacrifice that God had already made for them**, and of which they were enjoying the benefit by having that gift in the heart which was Jesus Christ?

Well, we need not go any farther. That is enough to illustrate it. Is it not plain, then, that everything that God gave to them in that day was intended to teach them concerning the personal, living Saviour, personally present with them, if they had only received Him? And all they needed to do to receive Him was to believe in Him. The gospel was preached unto them. Heb. 4:2. A.T. Jones General Conference Bulletin 1895, Sermon 25 p. 478.3,4.

The only possible way for the presence of God to dwell with Israel was that faith in the sacrifice of Christ was being applied directly in the days of Moses. This had to be, for the grace of God and the presence of God are the same thing. We see this in the story of the sin of Israel with the Golden Calf.

Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, **shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight:** and consider that this nation is thy people. **And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.** And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. **For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us?** so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. Exodus 33:13-17.

The promise that the presence of God would go with Israel and be a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night was evidence that the grace of God was being given. Again the point must be made that the real presence of God was as a result of real grace, and real grace can only come from a real sacrifice that had power to bring that real presence. Therefore wherever we have reference to the presence of God with a person or people we are seeing evidence of the grace of God through the sacrifice and mediation of Christ. So if the presence is real and the sacrifice is real, then the mediation must also be real for such grace to be given. Notice again the thought expressed by A.T. Jones in sermon 25 of his 1895 sermons, which is part of the expanded 1888 message.

There too was a priesthood of the earthly temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. There was a priesthood of the sanctuary at Shiloh in the wilderness. That, it is true, represented the priesthood of Christ, **but did that represent any priesthood of Christ before A. D. 1?** Shall we say that that represented a priesthood of Christ that was afar off? No. **That priesthood in Jerusalem, in the sanctuary in the wilderness, represented a priesthood that was already in existence after the order of Melchisedek?** Thou shalt be a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek? No, No. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." **Was not**

**Melchisedek a priest in the days of Abraham? and is not the priesthood of Christ forever after the order of Melchisedek? Do you not see, then, that this whole system of services given to Israel was to teach them the presence of the Christ then and there for the present salvation of their souls and not for the salvation of their souls eighteen hundred years or two thousand years or four thousand years away? Surely, surely, it is so.** A.T. Jones, General Conference Bulletin 1895, Sermon 25 p 477.6,7.

A.T. Jones speaks of the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchisedek that existed in the days of the sanctuary in the wilderness in the context of the words “a priest forever.” The Spirit of Prophecy is more explicit when it states:

**The priesthood of Christ commenced as soon as man had sinned. He was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek.** The order had fallen and [they were] under the dominion of death, but they were made prisoners of hope; they were not left to become extinguished. Satan thought the Lord had given up His hold on man, but the Star of Hope lighted up the dark and dismal future in the gospel preached in Eden. The seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head and the serpent should bruise his heel. The other worlds that God had created were watching with intense interest the sad apostasy. “But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” 1 Corinthians 2:7, 8. See Romans 16:25-27. Ms43b-1891. (July 4, 1891) par. 5.

We see the light of the everlasting covenant coming through in the writings of Ellen White in 1891. This was an updated understanding from what she wrote in 1872.

The high priest was designed in an especial manner to represent Christ, who **was to become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec**. Review and Herald, December 17, 1872.

How do we make sense of the statement that Christ was to become a priest forever? This verse is from the Psalms and was written 1000 years before Christ came to the earth. It states that “thou art a priest forever” at that time. How then did Christ *become* a priest forever? In the minds of men who were seeking salvation. This is the only possible way to make sense of this statement without contradiction.

The shadow that was given to Moses indeed had a reality that existed before it. We also note that the Spirit of Prophecy did not advance the doctrine of the priesthood of Christ from the fall of man until God had revealed this to Bible students first. The Spirit of Prophecy confirmed what had been revealed through the study of the Scripture first.

## Priesthood of Melchisedec begins since Christ was Begotten

Let us study more carefully in Scripture the Melchisedec priesthood. Notice carefully a parallel that Paul makes between Christ and Aaron.

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Hebrews 5:4-6.

Paul is employing the typical Hebrew parallelism. If we put this in a table we can more easily note the parallels.

Hebrews 5:4	Hebrews 5:5	Process
A. And no man taketh this honour unto himself,	So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest	Position of High Priest not self-appointed (Statement A)
B. but	but	But (contrast)
C. he that is called of God,	he that said unto him,	Called by God (Statement B)
D. as was Aaron.	Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.	Timing Reference (Example)

The answer to when God said to His Son “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” is given in the verse before it:

Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. Hebrews 5:5

So we see in Scripture the reality of what Ellen White and A.T. Jones both stated, that the priesthood of Christ was operating since the fall of man into sin.

The priesthood of Christ commenced as soon as man had sinned.  
He was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek. {Ms43b-1891 (July 4, 1891) par. 5}

That priesthood in Jerusalem, in the sanctuary in the wilderness, represented a priesthood that was already in existence after the order of Melchisedek? Thou shalt be a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek? No, No. "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek." Was not Melchisedek a priest in the days of Abraham? and is not the priesthood of Christ forever after the order of Melchi-sedek...Surely, Surely it is so. A.T. Jones, General Conference Bulletin 1895, Sermon 25 p 477.6,7

Ellen White and AT Jones both disagree with common opinion that Christ only became High Priest to mankind after He died on the cross. Are they contradicting the Bible?

Remember the gospel was preached unto those prior to the cross, as it was to us (Heb 4:2). And is not the gospel that we have a Saviour? Was Abraham, who is “the father of us all” (Rom 4:16), without Christ? Were the heroes of faith in Hebrew 11 imputed righteous without a high priest? If Abraham had no knowledge of Christ and was righteous by faith through a mediator who had not yet begun his priesthood, how do we “also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham?” (Rom 4:12)

Remember, that ye being time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world... Ephesians 2:11-12.

If from Abel to Abraham to Moses had hope, had God, had the covenants of promise, and were part of Israel, then they must also have Christ. For without Christ they would be without God, without hope, and be aliens and strangers to Israel and the covenants of promise. Christ must have been intercessor from the beginning, since the first promise was given in Genesis 3:15 – “I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed...”

We see a clear example of the priesthood of Christ in effect prior to the cross in Zechariah 3:

And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD [Christ], and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. Zechariah 3:2.

But let us see what position Christ takes toward Joshua and the accuser: “And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is

not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Review and Herald September 22, 1896, par. 3.

Satan would cover the people of God with blackness, and ruin them; but Jesus interposes. Although they had sinned, yet Jesus took the guilt of their sins upon his own soul. He snatched the race as a brand from the fire. **With his long human arm he encircled humanity, while with his divine arm he grasped the throne of the infinite God.** And thus man has strength given him that he may overcome Satan, and triumph in God. Help is brought within the reach of perishing souls; the adversary is rebuked. Review and Herald, September 22, 1896, par. 4.

Why does the Spirit of prophecy speak of Christ with a long human arm and apply this to the story of Joshua the High Priest that occurred over 500 years before Christ was incarnated?

## The Presence of God with the Israelites

So now we are prepared to show how God could answer the prayer of Moses that the presence of God would not leave them and that He would go with them and give them rest.

They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour **revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings.** Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. **Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.** Patriarchs and Prophets 371.4.

The blessings of the New Covenant were given to Israel through repentance and the sense of a need of a Saviour. Again: Ancient Israel were able, in their time, to "appreciate the blessings of the new covenant." The New covenant was there for those who "felt their need of the Saviour;" they didn't need to wait 1500 years. The new covenant was not any less available for them than for us.

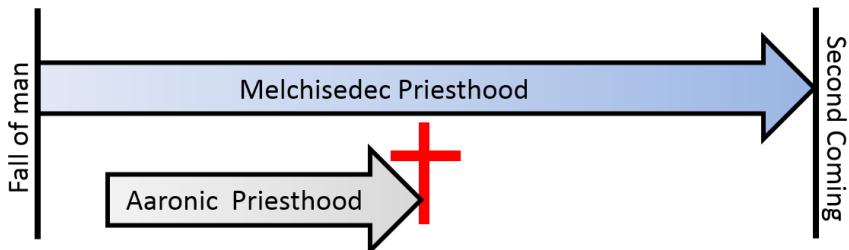
Note carefully in the quote above that the sacrifices and offerings were shadows of the New Covenant and not of the Old Covenant, for there was no forgiveness in the Old Covenant.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:14, 15.

NOTE.-The fact that Christ, as mediator of the second covenant, died for the remission of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, shows that there was no forgiveness by virtue of that first covenant. Bible Readings Study on the Covenants by E.J Waggoner 1899.

When we begin to realise that the grace of Jesus Christ has been available from the foundation of the world and that the New Covenant promises were fully available through the priesthood of Christ from that time, then we are ready to understand the full impact of the First Angel's message.

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, **having the everlasting gospel** to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Revelation 14:6.



For a gospel to be everlasting there must be an everlasting priesthood that can provide forgiveness, grace and victory in the life by the indwelling of the presence of Christ. The preachers of the First Angel's Message came into a knowledge that the gospel was indeed everlasting. Moses preached the gospel to Israel, not merely the promise of the gospel 1500 years in the future.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them:  
 Hebrews 4:2

The gospel is good news of forgiveness and grace freely available. It would not have been good news for Israel to have preached to them that forgiveness and grace would come 1500 years after they were dead, leaving them with no ability to overcome sin in this life. This would have been merely the promise of the gospel and not the gospel itself. Such preaching would have only been words of mockery to Israel, condemning them to death without any hope of tasting in their lives the grace of Christ. We repeat the point that shadows only exist because the reality existed before them.

Only when we see the truth that the mediation of Christ existed from the foundation of the world can we say that we have the everlasting gospel and grasp the power contained in the First's Angel's message. Then we can begin to appreciate inspired statements like these:

The world has been committed to Christ, and through Him has come every blessing from God to the fallen race. **He was the Redeemer before as after His incarnation. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour.** Desire of Ages 210.

As soon as Adam sinned, the Son of God presented Himself as surety for the human race, with **just as much power** to avert the doom pronounced upon the guilty as when He died upon the cross of Calvary. Faith I Live By 75.4.

The gospel was first preached to Adam by Christ. Adam and Eve felt sincere sorrow and repentance for their guilt. They believed the precious promise of God, and were saved from utter ruin. Review and Herald April 29, 1875.

The bird slain was over living water; that flowing stream was a symbol of the ever flowing, ever cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the fountain that was open for Judah and Jerusalem**, wherein they may wash and be clean from every stain of sin. We are to have free access to the atoning blood of Christ. This we must regard as the most precious privilege, the greatest blessing, ever granted to sinful man. Bible Commentary Volume 1, p. 1111.

The spirit which Enoch, Joseph, and Daniel possessed, we may have. We may draw from the same source of strength, and realize the same power of self-control; and the same graces may shine out in our lives. Our High Calling 278.6.

## Christ, “In the Days of His Flesh”

But we still get caught up by some verses. Oftentimes it is because of the traditions we have inherited. For example, the subheading given to this section in my Bible in Hebrews 5 is “Christ’s Preparation to Serve as High Priest”:

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he

suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchisedec. Hebrews 5:7-10.

The “days of his flesh” refers to Christ’s 33 years on this earth, right? And then after that “he became the author of eternal salvation.” But how do we know this for sure? Did Jesus only begin his connection with humanity when He was born a man? The last verse suggests different, because to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec means for it to be forever, and included Old Testament times because:

The LORD **hath** sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 110:4.

Even at the time of David, God the Father had sworn that Christ is a priest forever. The moment Adam sinned and Jesus offered to take His place and give Him life as the “lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” (Rev 13:8) Christ entered upon “the days of His flesh.”

With his long human arm he encircled humanity, while with his divine arm he grasped the throne of the infinite God. Review and Herald, September 22, 1896, par. 4. (In the time of Zechariah)

**Christ took humanity that He might reach humanity. A divine-human Saviour was needed to bring salvation to the world.**  
And to men and women has been committed the sacred trust of making known "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Ephesians 3:8. Acts of the Apostles 134.2.

**In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.** Isaiah 63:9 (He bore mankind since the entrance of sin)

**The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of**

God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, "Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man's place. He shall have another chance." Faith I Live By 75.3.

In His humanity Christ was tried with as much greater temptation, with as much more persevering energy than man is tried by the evil one, as His nature was greater than man's. This is a deep mysterious truth, that Christ is bound to humanity by the most sensitive sympathies. The evil works, the evil thoughts, the evil words of every son and daughter of Adam press upon His divine soul. Our Father Cares 119,120.

## Dull of Hearing Regarding Jesus in the Flesh

All mankind has not understood this, because these things are spiritually understood. After Paul's statements about "the days of His flesh" he makes this interesting statement in verse 11.

Of whom [Christ as High Priest] we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. Hebrews 5:11.

The dullness of our senses on this matter is expressed by Ellen White in this way:

Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel think of it in relation to themselves and to the world. Few think of its relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator. All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him. Education 263.

E.J. Waggoner also was not clear on this. In 1891 he explain Hebrews 5:7-10 in terms of the visible incarnation of Christ 2000 years ago.

"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered." Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to the Father. Why should this be, if He had not been oppressed by the enemy, through the inherited weakness of the flesh? He "**learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**" Not that **He was ever disobedient, for He "knew no sin;" but by the things which He suffered in the flesh, He learned what men have to contend against in their efforts to be obedient.** And so, "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." "For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need." Heb. 4: 15, 16. E.J Waggoner, Present Truth UK July 2, 1891

In the Divine Pattern, (See the booklet Divine Pattern of Life at [fatheroflove.info](http://fatheroflove.info)) the visible leads to the invisible (Col 1:15); and meditating on this visible work of Christ eventually led Waggoner to an understanding that Christ took humanity/flesh upon Himself the moment Adam fell into sin. That was the only way He could be our Saviour:

**It is quite commonly assumed that the Word was made flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth eighteen hundred years ago, in order that He might learn man's condition and needs, and thus be able to sympathise with and help them.** That this is a mistaken idea can be seen by a moment's reflection, as well as by plain statements of Scripture. The Psalmist says, "**He knoweth our frame;** He remembereth that we are dust." Ps. 103:14. Again,

"O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, **and art acquainted with all my ways.** For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." Ps. 139: 1-4. It is He upon whom men must depend for a knowledge of themselves. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." Jer. 17: 9. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer. 10: 23.

All this was as true eighteen hundred years before Christ as eighteen hundred years after. God knew men as well, and sympathised with them as much, four thousand years ago as He does to-day. When the children of Israel were in the wilderness, "in all their affliction He was afflicted." Isa. 63: 9. The prophet could say of a truth, seven hundred years before Christ, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Isa. 53: 4. God was in Christ, not that He might know men, but in order that man might know that He does know them. In Jesus we learn how kind and sympathising God has always been, and have an example of what He will do in any man who will fully yield to Him. E.J. Waggoner, Present Truth UK, December 19, 1895.

EJ Waggoner summarizes the matter gloriously. Jesus was born as a man "not that He might know men, but in order that man might know that He does know them." Christ is our Creator, He knows us better than we could ever know ourselves on our own. We are sinful men whose hearts are "deceitful above all things" (Jer 17:9), and we don't realize how Jesus has been carrying us the whole time – He bore us "all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:9). How arrogant to think that Jesus could not know us unless He was born as a man. But sinful man finds it hard to believe unless Christ "proves" that He could truly perform a sinless life and overcome;

even though He had already overcome in Enoch and Elijah. "In Jesus we learn how kind and sympathising God has always been, and have an example of what He will do in any man who will fully yield to Him." That is why grace is more freely available after the cross – because we are more willing to believe it is there, even though it has always been there.

**Still in the Flesh.**—"Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God." 1 John iv. 2, 3. **To confess Christ, it is not enough to believe that He once lived and suffered and died and rose again. We must confess not merely that He did come in the flesh, but that He "is come in the flesh."** He is a present Saviour. As in all the afflictions of the Israelites of old He was afflicted, so now "we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Heb. 4: 15. He still feels everything that touches us, for He is still in the flesh. Even in the heavenly places. He is still "the Man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2: 5. He is our forerunner, that is, one of the brethren who has gone before to prepare a place for the rest. When He comes again, He will come in the flesh for His flesh did not see corruption and the same flesh that went into the grave also ascended to heaven. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things." Eph. iv. 10. E.J. Waggoner, *Present Truth UK*, December 19, 1895.

To deny that the Spirit of Jesus comes into our flesh today is the Spirit of Antichrist. Christ is manifest in the flesh today through the combination of His divinity with our humanity. We become partakers of the divine nature which is the divine nature of Christ (2 Pet 1:4).

This Divine and human combination was just the same before the Cross as after it as indicated in this verse.

Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.  
Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched

diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time **the Spirit of Christ which was in them** did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 Peter 1:9-11.

Once again in the following passage we see Christ in the flesh of Ezekiel.

And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. **And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me**, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. Ezekiel 2:1-2.

And the prayer of David was to unite his humanity to Christ's divine nature that Christ might be manifested in human flesh.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10.

Concerning the life of Abigail we read:

In the character of Abigail, the wife of Nabal, we have an illustration of womanhood after the order of Christ... 21 Manuscript Release 213.

These words could have come only from the lips of one who had partaken of the wisdom from above. The piety of Abigail, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out all unconsciously in face and word and action. **The Spirit of the Son of God was abiding in her soul.** Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence. Patriarchs & Prophets 667.

When Abigail appealed to David in regard his plan to be avenged of Nabal's ingratitude, Christ was manifest in Abigail's flesh at this moment as she submitted herself to the Spirit of Jesus and let His character shine out of her heart. Christ was in her, the hope of glory.

## Priceless Gems in Wrong Settings

So what has been the chief reason why this precious everlasting gospel has been hidden from the human race in these last days? Notice again the words of A.T. Jones in Sermon 25. He is quoting from the precursor to *Desire of Ages* called the *Life of Christ* at that point.

Christ did not come to set aside what the patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for He Himself had spoken through these representative men. He Himself was the originator of all truth. Every jewel of truth came from Christ. **But those priceless gems had been placed in false settings. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. Men had taken them to adorn tradition and superstition. Jesus came to take them out of the false settings of error and to put them into the framework of truth.** A.T. Jones General Conference Bulletin 1895, Sermon 25 p. 472.16; *Desire of Ages* 287.

What was the key to the false framework that stood in the way of the everlasting gospel and the truth that Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec? Augustine, the father of modern Christianity whom Jerome said “established anew the ancient faith,” said that only “earthly happiness is expressly promised to the Jews.” This makes sense if they didn’t yet have a fully qualified High Priest.

In that testament, however, which is properly called the Old, and was given on Mount Sinai, **only earthly happiness is expressly promised.** Accordingly that land, into which the nation, after being led through the wilderness, was conducted, is called the land of promise, wherein peace and royal power, and the gaining of victories over enemies, and an abundance of children and of fruits of the ground, and gifts of a similar kind **are the promises of the Old Testament. And these, indeed, are figures of the spiritual blessings which appertain to the New Testament;** Philip Schaff, “*Augustine, Anti Pelagian Writings*,” Nicene and Post Nicene Father Series 1, Volume 5.

Protestantism continued this idea, as seen expressed here by John Calvin:

The Old Testament, considered from the distinctive idea of "law," is one of "bondage," whereas the New Testament is one of "freedom" through the gospel. John Calvin, Institutes 2.11.9-10, pp. 458-460).

The Adam Clark commentary expressed this idea as follows:

His office of priesthood is more excellent than the Levitical, because the covenant is better, and established on better promises: the old covenant referred to earthly things; the new covenant, to heavenly. The old covenant had promises of secular good; the new covenant, of spiritual and eternal blessings. As far as Christianity is preferable to Judaism, as far as Christ is preferable to Moses, as far as spiritual blessings are preferable to earthly blessings, and as far as the enjoyment of God throughout eternity is preferable to the communication of earthly good during time; so far does the new covenant exceed the old.

*Commentary on Heb 8:6*

The framework that Rome and the Protestants all followed was that the covenants were accidents of time. For them, the Old Covenant and its connected priesthood existed up until the time of the Cross, and the New Covenant and its connected priesthood came into force after Christ died on the cross. This framework made the truth to serve error, and the Lord sent a most precious message through Elders Jones and Waggoner to dismantle this false framework and let the true power of the gospel shine.<sup>1</sup> In 1888 Waggoner responded to the dispensational approach to the covenants by George Butler. He begins by quoting Butler:

"There was no propriety, therefore, in still keeping up the wall of separation between them and others. They all stood now upon the same level in the sight of God. All must approach Him

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<sup>1</sup> See the booklet *Discarding Augustine's Covenant Glasses* at maranathamedia.com

through the Messiah who had come into the world; through Him alone man could be saved." (Quote from G.I Butler)

Do you mean to intimate by this that there was ever a time when any people could approach God except through Christ? If not, the language means nothing. Your words seem to imply that before the first advent men approached God by means of the ceremonial law, and that after that they approached Him through the Messiah; but we shall have to go outside the Bible to find any support for the idea that anybody could ever approach God except through Christ. Amos 5:22; Micah 6:6-8, Gospel in Galatians, E.J. Waggoner, 1888, page 7,8.

This false framework of the Old and New Covenant developed by men like Augustine and Calvin stood in the way of the First Angel taking full possession of the everlasting gospel. The truth of Adventism was made to serve with error because it was held captive to this false framework of the covenants. Waggoner states this idea even more explicitly in 1896:

**But the main thing with reference to Melchizedek is that Abraham lived under the same "dispensation" that we do. The priesthood was the same then as now.** Not only are we the children of Abraham, if we are of faith, but our great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, is by the oath of God made a High Priest forever, "after the order of Melchizedek." Thus in a double sense it is shown that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day. And he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56.

**Abraham therefore was a Christian as much as any one who has ever lived since the crucifixion of Christ.** "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26) But the disciples were no different after they were called Christians from what they were before. When they were known only as Jews, they were Christians just as much as they were after they were called

such. The name is of but little account. The name "Christians" was given them because they were followers of Christ; but they were followers of Christ before they were called Christians, just as much as they were afterwards. **Abraham, hundreds of years before the days of Jesus of Nazareth, was just what the disciples were who in Antioch were called Christians; he was a follower of Christ.** Therefore he was in the fullest sense of the word a Christian. All Christians, and none others, are children of Abraham. E.J. Waggoner, *Present Truth UK*, May 28, 1896

In the Old Covenant we try to enter into God's presence by our own works and our own flesh, but in the New Covenant we do so through the blood of Christ. This is the case whether we lived before or after the cross, for Abraham was righteous only through Christ, for there is no righteousness outside of Christ.

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Hebrews 6:19-20.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-22.

## The Relationship between Grace and Law

The King James translators, under the influence of this false covenant system, added supplied words to the Bible to make it fit their understanding.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17.

The added word *but* contrasts the period before and after the cross as law versus grace. When we remove the supplied word and dig a little deeper into the Greek regarding the word *For*, we see a different picture.

Because the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. John 1:17.

You will find these false settings in a number of places with supplied words. Colossians 2:16,17 is one of the most critical.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. Colossians 2:16,17.

Read in the light of the everlasting covenant, the law ceases to be at war with the gospel and the text reads more naturally this way:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or the portion of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath which are a shadow of things to come, even the body of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Colossians 2:16,17.

When we see the everlasting covenant revealed in the time of Moses then the holy days, new moons, and Sabbaths cease to conflict with the gospel, and this is why God's people will joyfully observe the Sabbaths and New Moon in the earth made new.

And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD. Isaiah 66:23.

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<sup>2</sup> See the booklet *Showing Respect for Colossians 2:16-17* at maranathamedia.com

If we read the Bible using the false framework of the covenants we can run into all kinds of problems. Notice this passage in Hebrews:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,... Hebrews 1:1-2.

If we read this verse in contrast then it could tell us that God only began to speak to the world through his Son in these last days; prior to that He spoke to the fathers through the prophets directly and not through Christ. But this is incorrect.

Those who hold that Christ abolished the law teach that He broke the Sabbath and justified His disciples in doing the same. Thus they are really taking the same ground as did the caviling Jews. In this they contradict the testimony of Christ Himself, who declared, "I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 15:10. Neither the Saviour nor His followers broke the law of the Sabbath. Christ was a living representative of the law. No violation of its holy precepts was found in His life. Looking upon a nation of witnesses who were seeking occasion to condemn Him, He could say unchallenged, "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" John 8:46, RV.

**The Saviour had not come to set aside what patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for He Himself had spoken through these representative men. All the truths of God's word came from Him. But these priceless gems had been placed in false settings.** Their precious light had been made to minister to error. God desired them to be removed from their settings of error and replaced in the framework of truth. Desire of Ages 287,288.

It was Christ, the only mediator between God and man, who spoke to the fathers through the prophets. When God spoke to us in these last days through His Son, this is telling us that through the coming of Christ into

the world we now have revealed to us that which was hidden from the time when the world began.

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, Romans 16:25.

The sufferings of Christ and his consequent priesthood that was revealed when Christ came to this world 2000 years ago had already existed; but it was not made manifest, or made clear and openly known, until His birth as the man Jesus of Nazareth.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1.

When Moses wrote the book of Genesis he was wrote out the gospel in the creation of the world. Paul makes this connection as follows:

So then faith cometh by hearing [the gospel], and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? **Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.** Romans 10:17-18.

Paul quotes from the book of Psalms in relation to the creation of the world.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. **Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.** In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Psalm 19:1-4.

The light that God created on day one of creation had no light source. The light just appeared. It was not until day four of creation that two great lights actually appeared in the heavens. This represents the truth that Christ:

...was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. John 1:9.

The light was there in the Old Testament it just was not seen until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium when Christ became incarnated as a man.

Moses had evidence of things not seen. He held the substance of the gospel in what he hoped for. Men before the Cross were aware that there was a Heavenly Sanctuary and that God dwelt there but it was not clearly made manifest until Christ was revealed in the flesh.

The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. Psalm 11:4.

And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall **pray toward this place[1]: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place[2]:** and when thou hearest, forgive. 1 Kings 8:30.

The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was **not yet made manifest**, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Hebrews 9:8.

Many men who looked towards the earthly temple were blinded to the spiritual reality that it represented in heaven. Not until Christ went back to heaven did the truth of the heavenly Sanctuary finally become clear. The Spirit of God was able to press this truth more clearly upon their minds after Christ's ascension and also when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed.

The great trouble with the Jews from the beginning unto the end was in having the Lord so far away that even the things which God had given to signify His perfect nearness were taken and used as the tokens of His being far away. **Sacrifices, offerings, the tabernacle, the temple, its services, all those things were used by the Jewish teachers and the great mass of the people in such a way that all that these services meant to them was that**

**they pointed to Christ away off yonder somewhere.** It was understood that these things meant the Messiah, but it was the Messiah afar off. And they must make themselves good so as to bring Him near, and these things were looked to as having virtue in themselves and so as able to give righteousness.

I am not certain whether Seventh-day Adventists have got beyond the idea of those things back there, that they signified Christ afar off. I am not saying now that Seventh-day Adventists think that Christ is now away off. But I am afraid that they have not gotten away from the idea, when they look at the sanctuary and its services, the sacrifices and offerings, that that was intended to teach them of Christ away off yonder somewhere. So it is said that these things all pointed to Christ. These things did all point to Christ, that is the truth. But it was Christ near and not far off. God intended that all these things should point to Christ living in their hearts, not 1800 years away, not as far off as heaven is from the earth, **but pointing to Christ in their living experience from day to day. When we get fast hold of that idea and then study the sanctuary, the sacrifices, the offerings, in short, the gospel as it is in Leviticus--then we shall see that that meant Christ a living, present Saviour to them day by day and we shall also see that He is that to us today also.** A.T. Jones *General Conference Bulletin 1895, Sermon 25 p 476.*

A.T. Jones reveals a deep truth for us, that if we believe that the sacrifices and temple system of the Jews pointed to Christ way off in the future, then we become exposed to ideas that encourage our carnal tendency to believe that Christ is distant from us, even when we profess that He is near. Remember that Rome developed a system specifically to create:

... a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these. *Great Controversy* 572.

The system of the covenants in two dispensations was certainly taught by Augustine, one of the key crafters of the Roman Catholic system, and it is calculated to make it seem that Christ is close to us but actually pushes him further away.

## Answering the Original Questions

It is important before we close this study to consider again the original passages used to state the priesthood of Christ began only after His death on the cross. Even after clearly reading that Ellen White spoke under inspiration that the priesthood of Christ commenced at the fall of man, and that the Bible clearly teaches that Christ was made a priest forever from when the Father told Him you are my Son, still, some men will willingly blind themselves with verses like these:

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:16-18.

Many people in reading these verses suggest that until Christ came to this earth 2000 years ago as a human being He was not qualified to be a priest, for He did not have the divine-human combination of Spirit to give to the human race. The implication of this line of reasoning is that Christ was not able to fully be a merciful and faithful High priest until He came to this earth. He was not truly qualified to represent us and He was not able to succour us because he apparently did not have that experience. He needed to be born a man to “truly” understand the human experience.

The first response to this line of reasoning is to ask the question as to whether the One who created us has the capacity to understand the joys and sufferings of His creatures. If we allow this idea to remain unchecked then we are left with the awkward thought that our Father in heaven is

still incapable of understanding our sufferings because He did not come to this earth and show that He has experienced it with us (Only His Son fully understands, God the Father doesn't). Do we forget the words of Scripture?

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Psalm 139:1-7.

Our Father in heaven knows us intimately; He knows every aspect of our lives because not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing. He knows the very hairs of our heads, "for in Him we live and move and have our being." Acts 17:28. Secondly the Bible tells us clearly that Christ is intimately acquainted with the trials and joys of His people through all the days of old.

In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.  
Isaiah 63:9.

The reason we are comforted by the first coming of Christ is that as E.J. Waggoner stated, humanity did not know that Christ and the Father understood us intimately, but once Christ came we now know that He is a merciful and faithful High Priest. That which was kept secret from the beginning was now made manifest, and the way into the holiest of all was now made manifest.

For those who need to touch the marks in Christ's body and demand clearer proof as to whether Christ was qualified to represent the human

race from the fall of man: We ask in response, who is the seed of the woman?

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Galatians 3:16.

When did the Seed come to this world?

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Genesis 3:15

The Bible tells us of the existence of the Seed of the woman at the time it was spoken in Eden. We ask the question, do we consider a child to only become human when it is born? Does it not exist within its mother's womb as a child for nine months before this even though at first it is completely unknown and unseen? When Adam and Eve sinned, the Spirit of Jesus was given to them and all those after who would acknowledge His sacrifice. Christ laboured and travailed in the hearts of men from the beginning of the race. As a child experiences the influences of the parents in the womb and suffers with them, so the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of men learned of the sufferings of humanity and was influenced by them. It took 4000 years for the Messiah to be brought into the world and be born, yet He was in that womb as the seed of the woman from the very fall of man and therefore was qualified to be our priest from this time.

Did the experience of Christ in coming to this world increase His knowledge and understanding of the human experience? Absolutely, but this did not mean that He was not a completely merciful and faithful High Priest before this. It means that He increased in wisdom and stature in favour with God and man, waxing strong in spirit even as the Moon waxes into its fullness. Luke 2:52; Luke 1:80.

For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus

could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.  
Desire of Ages 117.1.

As man was continuing to degrade in moral worth, the experience of Christ on earth gave him greater knowledge and wisdom to rescue man from the *lowest* depth of degradation that he was continuing to slide into. As man has continued to decline in physical and mental strength as well as moral worth, so Christ has continued to expand in His capacities to apply the grace and power of God that has been available from the entrance of sin into the world. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom 5:20.

Another passage that has been made to serve error because of a wrong framework is this one:

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. Hebrews 7:11-12.

Let us notice some commentary on these verses by the church fathers.

What need was there then of another priesthood? "For the priesthood being changed, there is of necessity a change of the law also." But if there must be another priest, or rather another priesthood, there must needs be also another law. This is for those who say, What need was there of a new Covenant? For he could indeed have alleged a testimony from prophecy also. "This is the covenant which I made with your fathers" [&c.]. Hebrews 8:10 But for the present he contends on the ground of the priesthood. And observe, how he says this from the first. He said, "According to the order of Melchisedec." By this he excluded the order of Aaron. For he would not have said "After the order of Melchisedec," if the other had been better. **If therefore another priesthood has been brought in, there must be also [another]**

**Covenant;** for neither is it possible that there should be a priest, without a covenant and laws and ordinances, **nor that having received a different priesthood He should use the former [covenant].** Homily on Hebrews by Chrysostom.

<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240213.htm>

*If therefore perfection, or, moreover if perfection, etc.* From the same testimony **the Apostle concludes, that the old covenant was abrogated by the coming of Christ.** He has hitherto spoken of the office and person of the priest; but as God had instituted a priesthood for the purpose of ratifying the Law, the former being abolished, the latter necessarily ceases. That this may be better understood, we must bear in mind the general truth, — **That no covenant between God and man is in force and ratified, except it rests on a priesthood.** Hence the Apostle says, that the Law was introduced among the ancient people under the Levitical priesthood; by which he intimates, that it not only prevailed during the time of the Law, but that it was instituted, as we have said for the sake of confirming the Law. Commentary on Hebrews by John Calvin.

By expressing the Old and New Covenants as mutually exclusive dispensations or periods of time that existed before and after the cross, these men make the priesthoods of Christ and Aaron mutually exclusive. The Aaronic priesthood is presented from the time of Moses till the Cross, and the priesthood of Christ is presented from the time of the Cross forward. There are many glaring problems with this notion. Firstly, as perfection cannot come from the Levitical Priesthood, if this is the only priesthood that existed then there could be no perfection of character in this time period and we are troubled to explain how Elijah was taken to heaven. Secondly, there is no forgiveness of sins in the Levitical priesthood for the blood of bulls and goats cannot purge the conscience of sin, it can only symbolise forgiveness.

The Israelites did not receive the Law of God through the Levitical priesthood. Moses received the Ten Commandments and several statutes and Judgements in Exodus 20-23 before the existence of the Levitical priesthood. In fact it was never God's intention for the Levitical Priesthood to exist, for they were all to be a kingdom of priests. Ex 19:6. This means that God designed the Israelites to be priests of the Melchisedec priesthood (1 Pet 2:9), but their sin with the golden calf destroyed that possibility; therefore the Levitical Priesthood was established with the Sanctuary placed outside the camp. The Levitical priesthood was a ministration of death. (2 Cor 3:7). This ministration made nothing perfect except the bringing in of a better hope. (Heb 7:19). The Law was administered in such a manner as to cause death to self, and acting as a school master it would bring the soul to the feet of Christ if they were willing. Commenting on these verses Adam Clarke states:

*For under it the people received the law* - That is, as most interpret this place, under the priesthood, *ιερωσυνή* being understood; because, on the priesthood the whole Mosaical law and the Jewish economy depended: but it is much better to understand *επ' αυτῇ* on account of it, instead of under it; for it is a positive fact that the law was given before any priesthood was established, for Aaron and his sons were not called nor separated to this office till Moses came down the second time from the mount with the tables renewed, after that he had broken them, Exo\_40:12-14. **But it was in reference to the great sacrificial system that the law was given, and on that law the priesthood was established;** Adam Clarke Commentary on Hebrews 7:11

The change in the law was that sacrifice and oblation ceased (Dan 9:27), and therefore the priesthood that administered it also ceased. The work of convicting of sin was done directly by the Holy Spirit (John 16:8) by pointing the sinner to crucified Saviour. Once the cross was revealed, the former administration was redundant. The Melchisedec priesthood no longer needed the Levitical priesthood to act as a channel to bring sinners to Christ. The Spirit of God now did this work directly through the

preaching of the crucified Saviour. And so the Lord's desire from the beginning for a kingdom of priests was finally achieved in the death of Christ on the cross as revealed in 1 Peter 2:9. The Melchisedec priesthood that had been kept obscured for so long was now clearly manifested.

How wonderful to know that our Saviour abounds in grace towards us; and that He is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, willing to dispense rich currents of grace equally to all peoples of all eras. In fact Melchisedec himself was a channel for the ministry of Christ.

It was Christ that spoke through Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God. Melchisedec was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father. And all through the generations of the past, Christ has spoken; Christ has led his people, and has been the light of the world. Review and Herald February 18, 1890.

As the light of this world shone in the darkness from the first day of Creation and then light manifested itself in sun, moon and stars upon the fourth day, so too, Christ has been priest from the fall of man but was manifested at the end of the fourth millennium of the history of the world. That which was hidden and kept secret and manifested through shadows was manifested and brought to light 2000 years ago and magnified exceedingly.

Let us not be like Julian the Apostate, emperor of Rome, who declared that the Genesis creation story was a myth and illogical because light was created on the 1<sup>st</sup> day but the sun was created on the 4<sup>th</sup> day. He needed a visible light source before believing that there could be any light; he needed the sun to appear on day 1. So do many follow in his footsteps spiritually, not believing that Jesus was with us since the beginning because they could not see Him, only believing He was with us since the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium when He was born a man and we could see Him. But we who are spiritual see the spiritual lesson to the creation story, and its spiritual application.

But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13.

Will you join yourself fully to the First Angel of Revelation 14 that has in its hand the everlasting gospel, or will you cling to a false setting of the covenants and continue to cause truth to serve with error? Will you persist in robbing yourself of the Priest forever, who has dispensed His rich grace from the foundation of the world?



# A Priest Forever

**“The priesthood of Christ commenced as soon as man had sinned. He was made a priest after the order of Melchizedek. ...Satan thought the Lord had given up His hold on man, but the Star of Hope lighted up the dark and dismal future in the gospel preached in Eden.”**

Ms43b-1891 (July 4, 1891) par. 5

The everlasting gospel is from everlasting and comes to all the word in these last days. The gospel was preached to the pair in Eden, to the world before the flood by Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Children of Israel. Jesus bore them upon His breast “all the days of old” and saved them through the eternal intercession of His blood as the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world.

Pastor Ebens explains the covenants in light of the Melchizedac priesthood of Christ which “commenced as soon as man had sinned.”