

TEACHING GOAL

Study the priestly work of Christ with emphasis on His work as the offerer of the sacrifice.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. How does Christ execute the office of Priest?
- A. Christ executes the office of Priest, in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and to reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.
- S.C. 25; L.C. 44; W.C. of F. VIII; Savoy 8; Young 67

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Hebrews 10:11-25

Support Passages: Hebrews 5:1-10, 7:1-28, 9:11-15, 12:24

BIBLE STORY

Leviticus 16; Aaron offers a sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." (Hebrews 10:14, ESV)

APPLICATION

Because it is the blood of God and our Savior Jesus Christ that cleanses His people from their sin and because He is their great priest, let us not fear to trust Him and to draw near to God through Him.

SUMMARY

Our study of this office of Christ will be in done in three parts, namely:

1. Christ as the Offerer.
2. Christ as the Atonement.
3. Christ as the Intercessor.

Thus our study in this lesson will center upon Christ as the one who makes the offering for us as our federal representative. L. Berkhof describes the functions of a priest as they are given in the classical Scripture passage Hebrews 5:1ff. "The following elements are indicated here: (a) the priest is taken from among men to be their representative; (b) he is appointed by God, cf verse 4; (c) he is active in the interest of men in things that pertain to God, that is, in religious things; (d) his special work is to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. But the work of the priest included even more than that. He also made intercession for the people (Hebrews 7:25), and blessed them in the name of God, Leviticus 9:22." ¹

Jesus performs these things perfectly as our great Priest over the house of God. Hebrews 5:1 and following is about Christ of course, who was begotten in the flesh in order to become a Priest-King like Melchizedek. In fact, to use the language of Scripture He is "after the order of Melchizedek."

Notice the basic duties of the priest in Leviticus 16. He was to enter into the Holy of Holies to make this particular sacrifice for sins once each year. Before he did this, however, he was to be properly attired and bathed, for one dare not enter into the very presence of God without having the right to be there and in a manner not pleasing to God. Aaron also was to make a sacrifice for his own sins before he entered. When he did enter, he was to cover the Mercyseat with a cloud of incense, "lest he die" and sprinkle blood seven times on it. The Mercyseat, by the way, was the golden lid that covered the Ark of the Covenant in which were the Law, the Manna, and Aaron's Rod that budded. The whole point to his entering the Holy of Holies in this manner was to put blood upon the Mercyseat, thus effecting the atonement by covering the sins of God's people symbolized by the contents of the Ark with blood. The tables of stone represented the Law of God which we do not keep, the Manna represented the Bread of Life to which we are indifferent, and the Rod that budded represented our rebellion against God's authority. These three things are the essence of all sin.

Let us also notice that the High Priest alone could enter this holy place while no one else could be anywhere in the Tent of Meeting. The Hebrew refers to the Tabernacle in this manner because God met only with an authorized representative of Israel in this place. The congregation of Israel had to remain outside the Tent of Meeting or Tabernacle. Like the High Priest of old, Jesus is

our sole representative except that He is not after the order of Aaron who was a Priest-Prophet, but after the order of the Priest-King Melchizedek. Jesus entered the Tabernacle, of which the old one was a mere shadow, once for all time not yearly, carrying His own blood not the blood of sheep or goats. He had no sin of His own so that He did not have to purify Himself, as did Aaron, before He could do the service of the Priest. In each instance Jesus did the service of a priest, better and perfectly (Hebrews 9:13-14).

Because the unique and finished work of Christ is so clear in Scripture, who, as the great High Priest entered only once into the heavenly Tabernacle; so clear is this that we must utterly repudiate the Roman Catholic Mass wherein Christ is re-sacrificed each time the ordinary elements of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the real flesh and blood of Christ. They do this despite the fact that Scripture states, "for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). Since He has perfected us for all time by His blood on the cross, we should not fear to draw near to Him and to serve Him with all that we are and have.

¹ L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941, p. 361.