

Lesson Eight — Our High Priest

Day One — The Sword

Day Two — A Sympathetic High Priest

Day Three — The Office of the High Priest

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Day Five — The Outer and Inner Sanctuary

What have we seen in the past several weeks? We have seen that there is coming a Day, when

- the Father will seat the Son on the Throne on Mount Zion, and it shall be an eternal Throne.
- the Son will ask the Father for His inheritance, even the ends of the earth. And the Father will gladly give it to Him.
- Jesus Christ will no longer be in a position *lower than the angels* with respect to the earth, nor will mankind be lower than the angels any longer.
- the earth will no longer be subjected to the rulers and principalities and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (Eph. 6:12), but rather it will be subjected to the Messiah and His anointed ones.
- God will bring forth His so great salvation.
- the people of God (who hardened not their hearts, but instead heeded the voice of God) will have rest.

We have studied the first two warnings in the Book of Hebrews. We must keep in mind what we have learned as we move ahead, for this book is interrelated. God used this author to masterfully put this Epistle together, so that He could build upon that which He had previously spoken, allowing us to better understand. Remember, “*we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,*” and “*Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.*” As we move forward, keep these things in mind.

Be sure to pray for this week’s study. Now let’s get started.

Day One — The Sword

Just to get into the flow of our text today, pick up your sheets on Hebrews chapter four and read the entire chapter. We stopped last week at v. 11 because that was the end of the second warning. In our study today, we will pick up at verse twelve. So reacquaint yourself with the whole of chapter four now.

Now notice in verse two the Children of *Israel were not profited by what they had heard because they did not unite what they heard with faith*. By now you should be able to say what that would be referring to? What does it mean that they were *not profited*?

We have seen that this second warning has to do with the idea of redeemed people either having the privilege of entering the Sabbath rest, or **not** having the privilege to enter the Sabbath rest. The Children of Israel were not profited because they were not able to enter to rest. They did not have faith connected with obedience which would have afforded them the rest. They were not able to enter the rest for one reason and one reason only — they *failed to believe* what God had told them about the rest, and *therefore they disobeyed* His command.

With that in mind, check out Hebrews 3:18, 19; 4: 2, 3, 6, 11. Notice how failure to believe (distrust in) God's Word and disobedience to God's Word work together here. Write out what connection disbelief and disobedience has.

With this in mind, notice how the author changes our attention to yet another facet of the picture. Read Hebrews 4:12-16.

What do vv. 12 and 13 deal with? (This question may stretch you, as the answer may not be apparent at first.)

What do vv. 14-16 deal with?

You should have answered that vv. 12 and 13 deal with judgment, and vv. 14-16 deal with Jesus Christ being our High Priest. I hope these two topics do not seem unrelated to you for they are in *no way* unrelated!

Let's first look at vv. 12 and 13. What object is the Word of God likened to?

What is this object able to do?

In your own words, write out v. 13.

OK. With that in mind, we will do a brief word study on the *sword*. This first passage reveals the advantage we can have in using the sword.

Ephesians 6

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil *one*. 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

In reality, what is the sword?

The thing that you should notice about the sword is that the sword is our only weapon in spiritual warfare. All else mentioned has to do with the ability to defend ourselves from the enemy's advances. The sword — the Word of God — is for our offensive tactics to use against the enemy as he makes advances toward us.

Here you see that God allows us the advantage of using His Sword. It is the same way in which the Lord Jesus Christ used the Word of God in dealing with Satan in His temptations in wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11). "*It is written...*"

But in looking at some other passages we can also see how the Lord Jesus Christ will use the Sword in the future. And it is in this way that we see it being used in our text here in Hebrews chapter four. The passages below are from the first two chapters of the Book of Revelation. Chapter one describes Jesus dressed as *Judge in the midst of the lampstands* which represent the churches (Rev. 1:20). As you read, notice what comes out of His mouth in v. 16.

Revelation 1

12 And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; 13 and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. 14 And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; 15 and His feet *were* like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice *was* like the sound of many waters. 16 And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

What comes out of the mouth of the One dressed as Judge?

So how does He use this sword? The next chapter reveal how. Revelation 2:2 begins with the first Words out of the mouth of the Judge:

Revelation 2: 2 ‘I know your deeds...

Over and over again, seven times, the Judge makes this statement... **“I know your deeds.”** To each of the seven churches, “I know your deeds” (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19, and 3:1, 8, 15). (Some of the various translators translate that phrase differently to a few of the churches, but it is exactly the same wording in the original language.) And we know that it is our very works which will be judged in that coming day (1 Cor. 3:13).

Reading further in Revelation, you can see how the word *sword* is used —

Revelation 2:16 “Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

Revelation 19:15 And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

Revelation 19:21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

We see from these verses that the Sword of the Word is not only used for our benefit in warfare in this present age, but in the coming age it will be used as an instrument of judgment.

Having seen these things, let’s look back at our passage in Hebrews.

Hebrews 4

12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Look closely at v. 13. At first glance it may appear that v. 13 is dealing with the future judgment. And while that will be true, *that all things will be laid bare to Him*, look again. Notice that it is speaking in the present tense. Nothing is hidden from His sight **now**. That is to say, that we are not hiding anything from Him right now. He sees all that we do, and knows all of our thoughts and intentions. He knows and sees it all.

So what does this have to do with the text at the end of this second warning in Hebrews chapter four? It has everything to do with it. He Who speaks from Heaven tells us where our focus should be...on *the rest* out ahead of us. And if our focus is not there, *if we do not hold fast this confidence firm until the end*, then we will not enter the Rest. And it is the Word of God which will be our very Judge. The sword, which will come forth from the mouth of Jesus Christ when He becomes our Judge in that future day, will make the distinctions and separations commensurate with each believer’s focus during this present age. And right now, it *all is laid bare to Him with Whom we have to do*. (May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight, Oh LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer [Ps. 19:14].)

This sounds heavy, doesn’t it? I know it does. But the very next passage should give us great courage. (We’ll be studying more about our sympathetic High Priest in the upcoming weeks.)

Hebrews 4

14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

Meditate on these things, and find yourself at the Throne of Grace often. It is good for your soul.

Day Two — A Sympathetic High Priest

Remember to pray for yourself and for those who also may be doing this study.

To begin our study today, will you glance at yesterday's homework, especially focusing on the last passage?

Go through that last passage and make a list of everything you see concerning Jesus as our High Priest:

Now make a list of everything *that we are to do because of* Jesus being our High Priest:

A couple of things need to be understood here. First, we have just come off of two very stern warnings given to us concerning the future rest. Then a reminder is given about the coming judgment. With these two things having been given in his writing, the author may have wondered if his readers would need some encouragement at this point. It seems he desires to give this encouragement by reminding us of the present office that is filled by Jesus Christ — that of High Priest. Today, let's just notice a few interrelated things in this text. Then tomorrow we will begin a rather in depth look at the role of high priest. You'll need your observation sheets of Hebrews in the Appendix.

I am going to have you look up a few verses from the chapters we have already studied. Once you look them up, write them out in your own words.

Hebrews 1:3

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Hebrews 1:13

Hebrews 2:9

Hebrews 2:14-15

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 3:1

Hebrews 4:14-16

What do you see in a general flow of thoughts here?

Now look up passages that concern us. Do the same exercise as above.

Hebrews 2:1

Hebrews 3:6

Hebrews 3:12

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Hebrews 3:14-15

Hebrews 4:1

Hebrews 4:6

Hebrews 4:11

What do you see as the flow of thought here?

Looking back on this day's work, can you see the thought jumping back and forth between the warnings given to believers and the office which Jesus Christ now holds on their behalf? Why do you think this is so?

Tomorrow we will try to get a better handle on the role of the high priest. Until then, have a good day.

Day Three — The Office of the High Priest

You may think today's lesson a bit strange, but there is reason for it. Pray first, then allow me to explain where we are going.

Today we are going to begin to try to capture a clearer understanding of the next five chapters of Hebrews. These chapters can be confusing with so many seemingly unrelated topics. But, as with all of Scripture, nothing is unrelated. Today we will introduce this section of Hebrews which will take several weeks to work through.

All we will do today is read from Hebrews 4:12-10:23. (Yes, that's right, begin in chapter four and go all the way to the middle of chapter ten). The blank space which follows is provided for you to write any personal notes or questions you may have as you read this section. Be sure to pray that the Holy Spirit will begin to enlighten you concerning these chapters. (That is one of the keys in understanding — your seeking the Holy Spirit to teach you.)

Be sure to give yourself enough study time tomorrow's lesson, as you will need it. These chapters need to be understood.

Day Four — Something Good, Something Better

I have been surprised at how many times it has taken me to read through these five or so chapters in Hebrews before I began to see how the pieces fit together. Finally, the more I read it, the more clear it became. We are going to begin today by reading yesterday's section of Scripture over again. (I know you will be tempted to skip this assignment. Please don't skip it. It will be very beneficial for you to become familiar with the text). After praying, read Hebrews 4:12-10:23 now, then follow the rest of the assignment.

OK. Now we are going to begin drawing some obvious comparisons from the text. Below I have listed a number of short passages from this text. In each passage a comparison is being made. A comparison of two things. One good thing compared to one better thing. Or one temporary thing compared to one permanent thing. And so forth. I believe it is this list of numerous comparisons which makes this section of Hebrews seem difficult to understand with just a glance. But as you begin to understand that comparisons are being made here, and as you become more familiar with these comparisons, you will begin to better understand what is being dealt with.

In the space beneath every passage make a note of what is being compared. There may be a few passages where the comparison seems somewhat obscure. Don't get hung up here. Just give it your best shot. At this point, the detail of this is not as important as gaining an overall impression of the comparisons.

Hebrews 5

1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God... 4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was...

...12a being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

What two things are being compared?

There are two orders of the high-priesthood mentioned here. The first is a *priesthood according to the order of Aaron* (v. 1,4). And the other is the *priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek*. There are differences and distinctions in both. You will need to be aware of this as you continue, for the distinctions will need to be understood if you are to understand the middle section of the Book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 5:12b ...For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God...

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 5:12c ... and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

What things are being compared?

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Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity...

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 6

7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; **8** but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 6

11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, **12** that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 7

5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. **6** But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promises. **7** But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.

This may be a little obscure, but what two things are being compared?

Hebrews 7

11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

What things are being compared?

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Hebrews 7

18 For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God...

22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 7

23 And the *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing... 24 but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 7

28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 8

1 ... we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 8

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; 5 who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned *by God* when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "SEE," He says, "THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN." 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

What things are being compared?

Hebrews 8

8 For finding fault with them [the promises of the old covenant], He says, “BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; 9 NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD. 10 “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 INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 11 “AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL SHALL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. 12 “FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE.” 13 When He said, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

What things are being compared?

Well, that is enough of our comparisons for today. There are more to see, but we will pick it up tomorrow. Before we close today, why don't you just summarize what you have seen in today's study? Or at least write down your impressions of today's study.

Day Five — The Outer and Inner Sanctuary

We will begin our study today, as we did yesterday. First, pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten you, then re-read Hebrews 4:12-10:23. Today as you read this same section of Hebrews, I believe you will see yourself beginning to understand more of what the author wants you to see. It is always exciting when this happens. Read those chapters again now. (PLEASE! ☺)

Now we'll continue with a few more comparisons. These comparisons may seem to be on a different topic than what we saw yesterday, but they are definitely related, as you will see next week. The comparisons made in chapter nine and the first half of ten have to do with the sanctuary. See what you come up with. Again, don't get hung up on a passage if you cannot tell what is being compared. This is just for an overall sense of what the author is showing us. We will cover the detail of these things in upcoming weeks.

Hebrews 9

2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which *were* the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. **3** And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies...

What is being compared?

Hebrews 9

8 Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, **7** but into the second only the high priest *enters*, once a year...

What is being compared?

Hebrews 9

11 But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; **12** and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

What is being compared?

Hebrews 9

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, **14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

What is being compared?

Hebrews 9

23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

What is being compared?

Hebrews 10

4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. **5** Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME; **6** IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN THOU HAST TAKEN NO PLEASURE. **7** THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O GOD.’“ **8** After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, NOR HAST THOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*” (which are offered according to the Law), **9** then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. **10** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

What is being compared?

Hebrews 10

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful

What is being compared?

Hebrews 10

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, **25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

What is being compared?

Will you summarize what you have seen in today’s study?

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Lastly, look at where we began this section (4:12, 13), and where we are ending this section (10:25). What is the thought in both of these passages? And what is the main subject covered between these two points?

If you are doing commentary work, here is your assignment according to which book you are reading:

Arlen Chitwood's book Let Us Go On read chapter 1, *From Aaron to Melchizedek*. (This is a different book than what we have previously looked at, which can be found on the website: www.lampbroadcast.org.)

Philip Mauro's book God's Pilgrim, read chapter five *The High Priest of our Confession*.