

Jesus, the Spiritual Leader We Can Trust



SABBATH—JANUARY 29

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Hebrews 5:1–10; Hebrews 7:1–3; Genesis 14:18–20; Hebrews 7:11–16; Hebrews 7:26.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus is the high priest [top spiritual leader] we need. He is holy and innocent and faultless [has no sin or guilt], and not at all like [He is separate from] us sinners [because He never sinned]. Jesus is honored above all beings [angels] in heaven” (Hebrews 7:26, CEV).

SIN CAUSED AN AWFUL SEPARATION between God and man. The problem was made worse because sin also changed us. The human heart became evil after Adam and Eve sinned. God is holy. Sin can't come near God. So, as sinners, we became separated from Him. Because our hearts are evil, we can't obey the law of God. Sin also caused misunderstanding. We often believe lies about the love of God and His mercy.

This week, we shall study the wonderful things that God our Father and Jesus the Son did to end the separation between God and humans. Hebrews 5–7 explains the job that Jesus does as our High Priest or Top Spiritual Leader. Paul talks about how and why Jesus became our High Priest (Hebrews 5:1–10). Next, Paul tells his readers not to reject the work that Jesus their High Priest does for them (Hebrews 5:11–Hebrews 6:8). Paul tells his readers to hold on to the hope they get from believing in Jesus as their High Priest, too (Hebrews 6:9–20). Paul also compares Jesus to Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:1–10). Then Paul shows us how Jesus makes a way for us to go to God (Hebrews 7:11–28). We will look mostly at Hebrews 5:1–10 and Hebrews 7:1–28.



This week, we shall study the wonderful things that God our Father and Jesus the Son did to end the separation between God and humans.

**A TOP SPIRITUAL LEADER WHO WORKS FOR US
(Hebrews 5:1–10)**

What is the job of the high priest or top spiritual leader? How does Jesus show that He does this work? For the answers, read Hebrews 5:1–10.

A priest or spiritual leader helps sinners come to God. God Himself chose the priests of Israel to do this special work. So, the priests needed to show mercy to sinners because they are weak.

In Hebrews 5:5–10, Paul shows us that Jesus does this special work. God chooses Jesus to be our High Priest (Hebrews 5:5, 6). Also, Jesus understands us because He also suffered (Hebrews 5:7, 8).

But Jesus is different from human priests in important ways. God does not select Jesus from a group of humans (Hebrews 5:1). Jesus became human to serve as a Priest for us. Jesus did not offer gifts for His own sins (Hebrews 5:3). Jesus offered gifts only for our sins because “he never sinned” (Hebrews 4:15, ERV; Hebrews 7:26–28).

Hebrews says that Jesus prayed to God who had the power “to save Him from death” (Hebrews 5:7, WE). What “death” is Paul talking about? The second death. God saved Jesus from the second death when He woke Him up from His grave (Hebrews 13:20). Paul also says that Jesus “learned to obey by the things He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8, NLV). For Jesus, obedience was something new. Why? Because Jesus was God. As God, Jesus obeyed no one. Everyone obeyed Jesus.

So, Jesus suffered. He died on the cross. His suffering and death are important to His work as our High Priest. Suffering did not make Jesus clean inside or fill Jesus with more mercy. Jesus came to this earth because He already had mercy for us in His heart. As God, Jesus felt so much pity for us (Hebrews 2:17). So, why did Jesus need to suffer? By His suffering, Jesus showed that He really became human. He showed us a life of perfect obedience. He showed us that He was a Brother to suffering humans. Jesus showed us how to give our lives fully to God. Jesus showed us how to let God control our minds and hearts completely. As our High Priest, Jesus offers the Father two gifts to help us: His life of perfect obedience and His death.

1 Peter 2:9 says you are “priests to your king” (WE). Jesus is our King. What does this Bible truth show us that God expects us, as His priests, to do to help other people?



God saved Jesus from the second death when He woke Him up from His grave (Hebrews 13:20).

BUT BETTER THAN MELCHIZEDEK (Hebrews 7:1–3)

Who was Melchizedek? How does he show us Jesus? For the answers, read Genesis 14:18–20 and Hebrews 7:1–3.



Jesus is a priest “who is like [the same in many ways but better than] Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:15, WE).

Melchizedek was both a king and a priest or spiritual leader. Melchizedek also was a more important person than Abraham because Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. Tithe is a special offering to God that is equal to 10% of all the money we get. Jesus is a King and Priest, too (Hebrews 1:3). But Jesus also is different from Melchizedek, because Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 7:26–28).

Paul explains that Jesus is a priest “who is like [the same in many ways but better than] Melchizedek” (Hebrews 7:15, WE). Jesus does not replace Melchizedek as priest. But Jesus does many things Melchizedek does. So, if we study about Melchizedek, we can learn many things about the work of Jesus as our High Priest.

Let us look at what Paul says about Melchizedek:

“No one knows who his father or mother was or where he came from. And no one knows when he was born or when he died” (Hebrews 7:3, ERV). Some people think this means that Melchizedek was Jesus. But Paul does not agree. Paul says, “Melchizedek is like [the same in many ways as] the Son of God” (Hebrews 7:3, ERV). “Much the same” does not mean “exactly the same.” So, Melchizedek was different from Jesus.

Other people say Melchizedek came from heaven. But that idea also does not agree with Hebrews 7. If Melchizedek really had no father or mother, then he must be God Himself. That means Melchizedek was a priest before Jesus was. This idea causes a problem. “If those priests [sons of Aaron] were good enough, why would another priest need to come who was like [much the same as but better than] Melchizedek?” (Hebrews 7:11, WE).

Melchizedek was only a king-priest from the land of Canaan. The Bible does not say who his father or mother are or where he was born. So, this missing information makes Melchizedek an excellent word picture for Jesus. In this way, Melchizedek shows us Jesus. Jesus has no beginning or end. Jesus has always been alive. He will live forever.

“Melchizedek was a priest of God. Melchizedek was not Jesus. Melchizedek was the messenger of Jesus on earth. Melchizedek showed us who God is.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 409, adapted.

A SPIRITUAL LEADER WHO MEETS OUR NEEDS (Hebrews 7:11–16)

“If the work of . . . religious leaders had been perfect in taking away the sins of the people, there would have been no need for another religious leader. But one [leader] like [the same in many ways but better than] Melchizedek was needed and not one from the family group of Aaron” (Hebrews 7:11, NLT).

Priests, or spiritual leaders, worked to help people come to God. But their work was not perfect or complete. Why? Because the priests came from the family group of Levi. As sinners, the priests from the family of Levi are not perfect. So, how can their work make anyone else perfect (Hebrews 7:11, 18, 19)?

The priests brought God animal offerings. These animals were killed for the sins of Israel. But the offerings did not make sinners clean. The gifts only showed people a picture of the future work of Jesus. Only His death removes sin from our hearts (Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:1–3, 10–14). So, the priests and their work were a word picture. They helped people trust the real “Lamb of God [Jesus]. He takes away the sins of the world!” (John 1:29, ERV).

Why did God need to change the law? For the answer, read Hebrews 7:11–16.

Hebrews 7:12 explains the reason for the change: God made a change to the rules about priests. So, God needed to change the law. Why was this change necessary? Because Moses gave Israel a very strict law about who can be a priest. Only a male from the family group of Levi and the line of Aaron can serve as a priest (Numbers 3:10; Numbers 16:39, 40). Hebrews 7:13, 14 explains that Jesus was from the family group of Judah, not Levi. So, the law did not allow Jesus to be a priest. Paul shows that God changed the law about who can serve as a priest when He made Jesus our High Priest, or Top Spiritual Leader.

God also made another change to the law after Jesus offered Himself as the perfect gift for our sins. God stopped all animal offerings for sin (Hebrews 10:17, 18).

Think about all the animals that people in Bible times offered for their sins. All these animals showed them a picture of Jesus’ death for us on the cross. But not one of these gifts ever paid for their sins. Why can only the death of Jesus pay for sin?



Priests, or spiritual leaders, worked to help people come to God.

A PRIEST OR SPIRITUAL LEADER FOREVER (Hebrews 7:16)

What makes Jesus our perfect High Priest or Top Spiritual Leader? For the answer, read Hebrews 7:16.

God made Jesus our High Priest because Jesus will never die. Jesus always serves and helps His people. These Bible truths give us wonderful hope! Jesus “can save those [people] who come to God through [by faith in] him. Christ [Jesus] can do this forever, because he always lives and is ready to help people when they come before [to] God” (Hebrews 7:25, ERV). Jesus saves us in every way. He shows us our sins. He makes us completely clean from sin. He removes our guilt, too (Hebrews 4:12; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:1–4).

Jesus helps us share the Good News about Him. He also puts His law in our hearts. Jesus gives us power over sin and makes our lives new. He is our Lawyer in the court of heaven. Jesus can do this work because He brings together God and humans. Because Jesus offered Himself for us, God gives Jesus everything He asks for.

What part does Jesus have in the New Agreement? For the answer, read Hebrews 7:22.



**Jesus is our Lawyer
in the court of heaven.**

Jesus agreed to pay the price for our sins. Because of this promise, God swore an oath. An oath is an important promise. God promised to make Jesus a priest “forever” (Hebrews 7:21, ERV). So, we must try to understand why God made this promise. As you will remember, Paul told us that God made an oath to Abraham and the Israelites (Hebrews 3:7–11; Hebrews 6:13–15). God kept His promise to Abraham when He brought the Israelites to the Promised Land. We can trust God to keep His oath to Abraham’s family (see Exodus 19:3–6). God can’t lie (Hebrews 6:17, 18). God’s oath is better than any human oath. God’s promises can’t change. Why? Because God’s oath is everlasting. When God brings the Israelites to the Promised Land, He blesses them. God promises them He will keep Abraham’s children in His family forever. But what if someone is not from Abraham’s family? We don’t need to worry. Any person with faith can join God’s family too.

Humans die. But Jesus lives forever. The oath that God made to Jesus continues forever, too. We can trust Jesus that anyone with faith can join His family.

A SPIRITUAL LEADER WHO NEVER SINNED (Hebrews 7:26)

Read Hebrews 7:26. What five things do we learn about Jesus in this verse?

Jesus was holy. “He never sinned” (Hebrews 4:15, ERV; read also Hebrews 2:18). His connection to God was never broken.

Jesus “has no sin in him” (Hebrews 7:26, ERV). So, He has no guilt or blame. Jesus was “tested [given a test] in every way, just as we are. But he did not do anything wrong” (Hebrews 4:15, WE; Hebrews 2:18). Satan tried to get Jesus to sin, the same as Satan tempts us or tries to get us to sin. But Jesus kept His mind and body clean. This Bible truth is important. The Old Testament shows us that any animal that an Israelite offered for sin must be perfect. There must be “nothing wrong with it” (Leviticus 1:3, 10, ERV). The perfect animal shows us that Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience. His perfect obedience made His offering for our sins possible. Because of His obedience, God accepted the offering (Hebrews 9:14).

Jesus was “separated from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26, NRSV) when He went up to heaven. Sinners hated Jesus while He lived on the earth. But Jesus was patient. He won the war against sin. Then He went back to God in heaven (Hebrews 12:2, 3). Jesus also is “separate from sinners” because “He did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15, NLV).

Jesus also “has the place of honor above the heavens [skies]” (Hebrews 7:26, NLV). What does this verse show? God gave more honor to Jesus than He gave to anyone or anything else alive. This honor shows us that Jesus is equal with God. The Psalms show that only God is “honored above the heavens [skies]” (Psalm 57:5, 11, NIV; Psalm 108:5).

Jesus was fully human. But again, He never sinned (Hebrews 2:14–16; Hebrews 4:15). So, Jesus is perfect.

Because “Jesus became a man like [as real as] us” (Hebrews 2:14, NLV), He is our Example. He helps us love people and live by faith (Hebrews 12:1–4; 1 Peter 2:21–23). “Jesus is holy and has no guilt. He has never sinned and is different from” people who choose to sin (Hebrews 7:26, NLV). He is our Savior.

Yes, Jesus was a human the same as we are. But He never sinned. For sure, Jesus must be very holy! Because of Jesus, the Father views us as if we never sinned. This wonderful promise belongs to us. Why should this promise help us to trust God to save us?



The Old Testament shows us that any animal that an Israelite offered for sin must be perfect.



“Jesus joins the family on earth to the family in heaven.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Jesus watches His children. He knows all about our heavy loads, dangers, and troubles. Jesus goes to God for us. Jesus meets the needs of each person, just as He did with Peter. . . . Jesus is our Lawyer. He teaches us to stay strong when Satan tries to get us to do wrong. Jesus stops every evil plan Satan makes against us. Jesus controls everything that happens in heaven and on earth.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 7, page 931, Letter 90, 1906, adapted.

“Satan wanted to separate God and humans forever. But with Jesus, we love God the same as if we never sinned. When the Savior came to earth as one of us, He connected Himself to the human family forever. This connection between us and the Savior can’t be broken. . . . God made this special pledge: ‘God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people.’ [Isaiah 9:6, ERV]. With the birth of Jesus, God also became Human. As a Man, Jesus can feel as we feel and think as we think. When Jesus woke up from the dead and went to heaven, He continued His connection with humans. He is the ‘Son of Man.’ The ‘Son of Man’ shares the throne of His Father. The ‘Son of Man’ shall be named ‘Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.’ ’ Isaiah 9:6, [ERV]. Jesus is I AM. He also helps humans come to God. Jesus stands between God and humans. Jesus is ‘holy and has no guilt. He has never sinned and is different from’ people who choose to sin. Hebrews 7:26, [NLV]; Hebrews 2:11. Jesus joins the family on earth to the family in heaven. In heaven, Jesus is honored with praise and worship. This same Jesus is our Brother. He loves us with an everlasting love.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pages 25, 26, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① The first quote above says: “Jesus goes to God for us.” What does this wonderful promise mean to you? How does this promise show God’s love for us? How does this idea about God’s love encourage you? Why do we need someone to go to God for us?
- ② The second quote above says: “But with Jesus, we love God the same as if we never sinned.” Wow! What does this beautiful promise mean? How can we have this experience? How does this promise about your becoming so close to God give you comfort?

A FAITH BIGGER THAN FEAR

My name is Daisy. I have a secret to tell you about myself that makes me feel ashamed: I am a coward.

When I first move away to school in South Korea, I am afraid. South Korea is a country in East Asia. My fear is so bad that I have trouble sleeping. Soon after I start school, I get robbed in the bathroom at the train station. After that, I am too afraid to go into the bathroom at the train station again.

My fears get worse when I go to the Philippines as a student Bible worker. There are many young men in the village where I work. They are curious about me. So, they come to my house at night and try to look in my windows at me. I am so afraid I can hardly sleep. I can only fall asleep if I stay up all night reading the Bible.

Later, I get married and move to Southern Asia. I now live there with my two sons. Many times, my husband watches me carefully check to make sure everything is safe before I get on a train or bus or before I fall asleep.

“Daisy,” my husband says. “You are so scared! How did you find the courage to leave your home to become a church worker in the Philippines?”

For sure, I enjoy being safe and staying in safe places.

But then something happens that causes me to change. At dinner one night, my young sons and I talk about war. I tell my boys that many wars are happening all over the earth. My seven-year-old son Saint asks, “Mom, we cannot go to those places now and work for Jesus there, right?”

“Yes, we cannot go to those places right now,” I say.

“Then does that mean that the people there do not know Jesus?” Saint asks.

“Yes, many people are dying, and they do not know Jesus.”

Saint says, “Mom, then we need to go to those places. Let us go there and be Bible workers!”

How can I say no to the faith in the heart of my son? “Let us do that someday,” I agree.

Deep down in my heart, I have many questions. I ask myself: “Yes, I am here in Southern Asia as a Bible worker. But am I too worried about myself? Yes, I say I believe in God, but do I trust Him only when I feel that I am safe first?”

Since that conversation with my sons, my prayers have changed. Now I pray, “God please give me mighty faith. Give me a heart to love all people and help them. Give me a faith that is bigger than my fears.”

This story shows us the “I Will Go” plan of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This plan is about how we can share Jesus with everyone. Learn more about this plan at IWillGo2020.org.

INSIDE
Story
by DAISY JUNG



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“God, . . . give me a faith
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