

Jesus: Apostle and High Priest

MEMORY VERSE: “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Hebrews 3:1).

“Study Christ. Study His character, feature by feature. He is our Pattern that we are required to copy in our lives and our characters, else we fail to represent Jesus, but present to the world a spurious copy. Do not imitate any man, for men are defective in habits, in speech, in manners, in character. I present before you the Man Christ Jesus. You must individually know Him as your Saviour before you can study Him as your pattern and your example.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 170.

Suggested Reading: *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 340-344. (At the bottom of this page)

1. GREATER THAN MOSES

Sunday, January 14

a. In what sense is Christ greater than Moses? Hebrews 3:1–6.

Hebrews 3:1-6

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; **2** Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. **3** For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. **4** For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. **5** And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; **6** But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

b. When should we surrender our life to Jesus our Saviour? Hebrews 3:7, 8 (first part).

Hebrews 3:7-8

Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, **8** Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

“Oh, that now, while it is called today, you would turn to the Lord! Your every deed is making you either better or worse. If your actions are on Satan’s side, they leave behind them an influence that continues to work its baleful results. Only the pure, the clean, and the holy can enter the city of God, ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden

not your hearts,’ but turn to the Lord, that the path you travel may not leave desolation in its track.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 358.

“Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. ‘Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.’ ‘Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.’ 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 34.

2. LESSONS FROM ANCIENT ISRAEL

Monday, January 15

a. How did the example of ancient Israel reveal the unbelief of the people—and what was the sure result? Hebrews 3:8–11.

Hebrews 3:8-11

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. **11** So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

b. With this reality in mind, what solemn appeal is addressed to us who are living in these last days? Hebrews 3:12, 13.

Hebrews 3:12-13

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. **13** But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

“There is no encouragement given for unbelief. The Lord manifests His grace and His power over and over again, and this should teach us that it is always profitable under all circumstances to cherish faith, to talk faith, to act faith. We are not to have our hearts and hands weakened by allowing the suggestions of suspicious minds to plant in our hearts the seeds of doubt and distrust [Hebrews 3:12 quoted].

“The Lord works in cooperation with the will and action of the human agent. It is the privilege and duty of every man to take God at His word, to believe in Jesus as his personal Saviour, and to respond eagerly, immediately, to the gracious propositions which He makes. He is to study to believe and obey the divine instruction in the Scriptures. He is to base his faith not on feeling but upon the evidence and the Word of God.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments]*, vol. 7, p. 928.

“Many look back to the Israelites, and marvel at their unbelief and murmuring, feeling that they themselves would not have been so ungrateful; but when their faith is tested, even by little trials, they manifest no more faith or patience than did ancient Israel. When brought into strait places, they murmur at the process by which God has chosen to purify them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 293.

“God . . . gave His people a bitter cup to drink, to purify and cleanse them. It is a bitter draught, and they can make it still more bitter by murmuring, complaining, and repining. But those who receive it thus must have another draught, for the first does not

have its designed effect upon the heart. And if the second does not effect the work, then they must have another, and another, until it does have its designed effect, or they will be left filthy, impure in heart. . . . This bitter cup can be sweetened by patience, endurance, and prayer, and that it will have its designed effect upon the hearts of those who thus receive it, and God will be honored and glorified. . . .

“If we seek our own interest, how we can best please ourselves, instead of seeking to please God and advance His precious, suffering cause, we shall dishonor God and the holy cause we profess to love.”—*Early Writings*, p. 47.

3. PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE

Tuesday, January 16

a. How can we be partakers of Christ? Hebrews 3:14, 15; 2 Peter 1:4.

Hebrews 3:14-15

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; **15** While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

2 Peter 1:4

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

“We must learn of Christ. We must know what He is to those He has ransomed. We must realize that through belief in Him it is our privilege to be partakers of the divine nature, and so escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Then we are cleansed from all sin, all defects of character. We need not retain one sinful propensity. . . . [Ephesians 2:1–6 quoted.] . . .

“As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments]*, vol. 7, p. 943.

b. How did the Israelites provoke the Lord? Hebrews 3:16. What was the fatal result of their provocation? Hebrews 3:17.

Hebrews 3:16

For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

Hebrews 3:17

But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

“In their rebellion the people had exclaimed, ‘Would God we had died in this wilderness!’ Now this prayer was to be granted. The Lord declared: ‘As ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward. . . . But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.’ . . . As the spies had spent forty days in their journey, so the hosts of Israel were to wander in the wilderness forty years.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 391.

c. What sin was the main cause of this rebellion? Hebrews 3:18, 19.

Hebrews 3:18-19

And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? **19** So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness; He desired to lead them directly to the land of Canaan and establish them there, a holy, happy people. But ‘they could not enter in because of unbelief.’ Hebrews 3:19.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 458.

4. FINDING REST IN JESUS

Wednesday, January 17

a. What special invitation do we receive from Jesus, our Saviour—and what should we learn from Him? Matthew 11:28–30.

Matthew 11:28-30

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

“ ‘Come unto Me,’ is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer. The rest that Christ offers depends upon conditions, but these conditions are plainly specified. They are those with which all can comply. He tells us just how His rest is to be found.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 329.

“None but God can subdue the pride of man’s heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in this world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness.

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

b. What is the yoke Christ offers to each one of us? Matthew 11:29.

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

“ ‘Take My yoke upon you,’ Jesus says. The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labor, and the yoke is essential that they may labor effectually. By this illustration Christ teaches us that we are called to service as long as life shall last. We are to take upon us His yoke, that we may be coworkers with Him.

“The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan’s ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 329.

5. CHRIST’S YOKE

Thursday, January 18

a. What did Jesus say regarding His yoke? Matthew 11:30; 1 John 5:2, 3.

Matthew 11:30

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

1 John 5:2-3

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. **3** For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

“The yoke is placed upon the oxen to aid them in drawing the load, to lighten the burden. So with the yoke of Christ. When our will is swallowed up in the will of God, and we use His gifts to bless others, we shall find life’s burden light. He who walks in the way of God’s commandments is walking in company with Christ, and in His love the heart is at rest. When Moses prayed, ‘Show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee,’ the Lord answered him, ‘My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’ And through the prophets the message was given, ‘Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.’ Exodus 33:13, 14; Jeremiah 6:16. And He says, ‘O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.’ Isaiah 48:18.

“Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee.’ Isaiah 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the

glory—character—of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 331.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Friday, January 19

1. As the light from Heaven shines on our hearts, what action must we take?
2. In what ways am I in danger of repeating the sin of the Israelites?
3. Describe the miraculous results of partaking of the divine nature.
4. Describe the rest that Jesus is willing to provide to whomever seeks it.
5. Explain the benefits of accepting the yoke of Christ.

Suggested Reading: Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 340-344.

Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man’s stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon. **(ISM 340.1)**

Man through sin has been severed from the life of God. His soul is palsied through the machinations of Satan, the author of sin. Of himself he is incapable of sensing sin, incapable of appreciating and appropriating the divine nature. Were it brought within his reach there is nothing in it that his natural heart would desire it. The bewitching power of Satan is upon him. All the ingenious subterfuges the devil can suggest are presented to his mind to prevent every good impulse. Every faculty and power given him of God has been used as a weapon against the divine Benefactor. So, although He loves him, God cannot safely impart to him the gifts and blessings He desires to bestow. **(ISM 340.2)**

But God will not be defeated by Satan. He sent His Son into the world, that through His taking the human form and nature, humanity and divinity combined in Him would elevate man in the scale of moral value with God. **(ISM 340.3)**

There is no other way for man’s salvation. “Without me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Through Christ, and Christ alone, the springs of life can vitalize man’s nature, transform his tastes, and set his affections flowing toward heaven. Through the union of the divine with the human nature Christ could enlighten the understanding and infuse His life-giving properties through the soul dead in trespasses and sins. **(ISM 341.1)**

When the mind is drawn to the cross of Calvary, Christ by imperfect sight is discerned on the shameful cross. Why did He die? In consequence of sin. What is sin? The transgression of the law. Then the eyes are open to see the character of sin. The law is broken but cannot pardon the transgressor. It is our schoolmaster, condemning to punishment. Where is the remedy? The law drives us to Christ, who was hanged upon the cross that He might be able to impart His righteousness to fallen, sinful man and thus present men to His Father in His righteous character. **(ISM 341.2)**

Christ on the cross not only draws men to repentance toward God for the transgression of His law—for whom God pardons He first makes penitent—but Christ has satisfied Justice; He has proffered Himself as an atonement. His gushing blood, His broken body, satisfy the claims of the broken law, and thus He bridges the gulf which sin has made. He suffered in the flesh, that with His bruised and broken body He might cover the defenseless sinner. The victory gained at His death on Calvary broke forever the accusing power of Satan over the universe and silenced his charges that self-denial was impossible with God and therefore not essential in the human family. **(ISM 341.3)**

Satan's position in heaven had been next to the Son of God. He was first among the angels. His power had been debasing, but God could not reveal it in its true light and carry all heaven in harmony with Him in removing him with his evil influences. His power was increasing, but the evil was yet unrecognized. It was a deadly power to the universe, but for the security of the worlds and the government of heaven, it was necessary that it should develop and be revealed in its true light. **(ISM 341.4)**

Self-denial With God

In carrying out his enmity to Christ until He hung upon the cross of Calvary, with wounded, bruised body and broken heart, Satan completely uprooted himself from the affections of the universe. It was then seen that God had in His Son denied Himself, giving Himself for the sins of the world, because He loved mankind. The Creator was revealed in the Son of the infinite God. Here the question, "Can there be self-denial with God?" was forever answered. Christ was God, and condescending to be made flesh, He assumed humanity and became obedient unto death, that He might undergo infinite sacrifice. **(ISM 342.1)**

Whatever sacrifice a human being could undergo Christ endured, notwithstanding Satan put forth every effort to seduce Him with temptations; but the greater the temptation, the more perfect was the sacrifice. All that was possible for man to endure in the conflict with Satan, Christ endured in His human and divine nature combined. Obedient, sinless to the last, He died for man, his substitute and surety, enduring all that men ever endure from the deceiving tempter, that man may overcome by being a partaker of the divine nature. **(ISM 342.2)**

Pure truth was found to be a match for falsehood, honesty and integrity for subtlety and intrigue, in everyone who is, like Christ, willing to sacrifice all, even life itself, for the truth's sake. To resist Satan's desires is no easy task. It demands a firm hold of the divine nature from beginning to end, or it cannot be done. Christ, in the victories achieved in His death on Calvary's cross, plainly lays open the way for man, and thus makes it possible for him to keep the law of God through the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is no other way. **(ISM 342.3)**

The righteousness of Christ is presented as a free gift to the sinner if he will accept it. He has nothing of his own but what is tainted and corrupted, polluted with sin, utterly repulsive to a pure and holy God. Only through the righteous character of Jesus Christ can man come nigh to God. **(ISM 342.4) 2 I**

Christ as high priest within the veil so immortalized Calvary that though He liveth unto God, He dies continually to sin, and thus if any man sin, he has an advocate with the Father. **(ISM 343.1) 2 I**

He arose from the tomb enshrouded with a cloud of angels in wondrous power and glory—the Deity and humanity combined. He took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God.... **(ISM 343.2)**

Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must cease haggling over your pet ideas, and with humble hearts survey the atonement. This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary. Thus the cross, in earnest appeals, continually proffers to the sinner a thorough expiation. **(ISM 343.3)**

Repentance and Pardon

As you near the cross of Calvary there is seen love that is without a parallel. As you by faith grasp the meaning of the sacrifice, you see yourself a sinner, condemned by a broken law. This is repentance. As you come with humble heart, you find pardon, for Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. The typical shadows of the Jewish tabernacle no longer possess any virtue. A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner. **(ISM 343.4)**

Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy Spirit are constantly interceding in man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ, who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit's striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart. **(ISM 344.1)**

The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not

acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned. **(ISM 344.2)**

Oh, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving, must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ. The fragrance of this righteousness ascends like a cloud around the mercy seat. **(ISM 344.3)**