

Fundamentals of Belief  
#9B: Christ—Our High Priest and Advocate

Edited Sermon Transcript  
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Today, we will continue on this series on the Fundamentals of Belief of Church of God, The Eternal. Last time, we began fundamental number nine concerning Christ's resurrection. We want to continue, and hopefully complete that today.

We want to do a little review. Let me begin again by quoting that fundamental number nine.

We believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead after His body reposed three days and three nights in the grave [We went through that, showing that Jesus Christ actually was resurrected and that He was literally three days and three nights completely in the grave.], thus making immortality possible for mortal man [which shows what the purpose of that sacrifice and resurrection really was]; that He thereafter ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father, as our High Priest and Advocate.

This afternoon, we want to focus on what Christ did after He was resurrected. Last time, we went through the facts in the Bible to prove that He was resurrected from the dead and the length of time He was in the grave prior to His resurrection. Let's do a quick review before we get into the main message for the afternoon concerning the activity of Jesus Christ now, since He has been resurrected. That is what this topic of the High Priesthood and the Advocacy of Christ are all about.

Just in short review, certification again of what the purpose of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection was. Remember, as we said last time, it is not the death of Jesus Christ that gave us hope for the future. It is His resurrection that gives us hope for eternal life. If Jesus, who lived a perfect life and died for our sins, had remained in the grave and had not been resurrected, what good would it have done us? It was His resurrection, bringing Him back to life to a state of immortality, which gave us hope for the very same.

Let's notice again the resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15:11–26, 46–57:

"Therefore whether it were I or they . . ." Again, as we said last time, Paul was having to defend as always, as is replete within the epistles, his apostleship and authority as a representative of Jesus Christ. Preaching the truth, defending that he wasn't lying or merchandising, that he was telling them the truth.

Therefore whether it were I or they [Meaning, the other apostles.], so we preach, and so ye believed. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead [which is exactly what those apostles had been claiming from the beginning of their ministry], how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

Believe it or not, some in the church were already questioning the very fundamental teaching of Paul and the other apostles. They were claiming that there is no resurrection and that our hope is not in a resurrection. Whether that was because they were embracing this Gnostic concept of an immortal soul, saying that it wasn't necessary to have a resurrection, or whatever their concept might have been, they were refuting the very revelation that those apostles were teaching.

. . . how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?  
But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen . . .

See, logic must dictate. If there be no resurrection of the dead for all other human beings, then it means neither was there a resurrection for Christ because He was flesh and blood and He died.

. . . if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Why? Because they certified that they were telling the truth. They said they were the apostles of God, that they were teaching the truth that came from Jesus Christ and that they were not liars. Whoever these were in the church that were now refuting that very message and saying, "No, there is no resurrection from the dead," were calling the Apostle Paul a liar. If the Apostle Paul were a liar then yes, his preaching was in vain and so was the hope of their salvation because they learned everything they knew about the truth from the very ministry of Paul. How easily human beings forget the foundation of their faith and how and when they learned it.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

How many people, so often, want to pick apart the original teachings and the body of doctrine that the church once stood for. They don't want to dismantle the whole thing; they want to accept all of it except this one piece or that one piece that just doesn't seem to fit for them. They don't realize that you cannot pull one stick of doctrine out of the pile without having the entire thing crumble.

It wasn't necessarily that these people were refuting all of the other doctrines that came along by the preaching of Paul. No, they just had a problem with the idea of the resurrection from the dead. You cannot isolate those doctrines. You can't isolate any of those fundamental doctrines because they all stand together or else they all fall together. Pull one out and the entire foundation crumbles.

How many people do we have in these splinter groups of the Worldwide Church now, which have basically selected their doctrine on an "a la carte" basis? Yes, they preserved a lot of it. They seem to be speaking a lot of things that we would have in common, but they have picked and chosen things that they didn't like or couldn't agree with. So they threw them out, not realizing that they had just destroyed the entire foundation and that they were now standing on nothing but sand.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

What about all of those people who died in the church in these last days? Those who—three decades ago, four decades ago—were baptized in the church,

believing what Mr. Armstrong preached about the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the plan of salvation, the nature of man, the nature of God, Christ's resurrection and His sacrifice. What about those people who died in that faith? Well, if you listen to the Worldwide Church today, you must believe that those people were wholly separated from Christ.

You see, they believe we are a cult. Those who have remained in that parent organization today have repudiated everything of substance of the teaching of that servant. They are ashamed of him. What about those who died? They must have died in vain also, because they certainly weren't around long enough to embrace the new revelation about what service to Christ is. "Oh, the Sabbath is optional; the Holy Days are optional," so they will tell you. "God is really a trinity. We are unsure," they say, "about the state of the dead," so they make allowances for whatever it might be, whether it is an immortal soul or not. Those who died believing the original doctrines, must—in their minds—have been separated from God. I wonder what their fate is going to be?

What Paul is saying here, and what applies to us just as much, is that our faith was not in vain, brethren. We did not believe a lie; we believed the truth, because the truth is what was preached.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Christ's resurrection has everything to do with our entire hope for the future.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Our hope, brethren, is the destruction of death—being loosed from the penalty of death which we are all under in the flesh, for it is appointed unto men once to die.

If Christ were not resurrected from the dead, if He did not become the first fruit, then there is no hope to follow for us because we certainly do not have an immortal soul.

We have already gone through the scriptures to substantiate that fundamental of belief. We are flesh and blood and if there be no resurrection of the dead, then we have no hope for life once we stop breathing in this fleshly body.

Verse 46:

Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

That is what we believe—our opportunity to bear the image of the heavenly with an eternal body.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

That is our hope. That is why we believe it as a fundamental belief, that Christ did make immortality possible for human beings through His death, burial and resurrection.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is everything. That is why we are here. Who is here for any other reason than the fact that you want to be an immortal being? Isn't that what it is all about? We just want to live forever; that is why we are here. We don't want to die. That is not a wrong goal because that is exactly what God has offered to us. The question is how badly do we want it? How badly do we want to be an immortal being in God's family?

Continuing on now, the next part of our fundamental concerning Christ's resurrection says, ". . . that He thereafter . . ." This is where we start to talk about what Christ did once He was resurrected. ". . . that He thereafter ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father . . ."

Let's notice just a few scriptures that support and substantiate our fundamental of belief about what Christ has done and is doing since the time of His resurrection.

Ephesians 4:8–10:

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . ." What is he referring to? ". . . he led captivity captive . . ." What was the captivity? The captivity was the fact that we were sold under sin; and because of our violation of God's perfect laws, we came under the death penalty. We were captive to the penalty of death because of our sins—because of yours and because of mine. We each bear our own liability.

That was something we could not escape from. It was as if those chains bound us and there was no way that we could be loosed, outside of something very dramatic and providential occurring in the plan of God. That was that captivity. ". . . when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive . . ." Christ broke the bonds of that captivity—our subjection to the death penalty—by His sacrifice and His resurrection. ". . . and gave gifts unto men . . ." What gift did He give? The opportunity for eternal life and salvation.

"(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth . . .)" That is what He did in the flesh. Born of the flesh, He completed God's plan and His purpose, was tortured, crucified, died and was buried.

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that

descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens [This gives us the answer to where He went and what He did after that ascension.], that he might fill all things.)

He ascended up above all heavens, brethren, unto the very throne of God, that which we refer to as the third heaven. It is beyond the realm of human beings in mind and heart to be able to understand or comprehend the very abode of the Father and where His throne is placed.

Back up to Ephesians 1:17–23:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ [This is speaking of the Father now; this is the Father's work. What did the Father do?], when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places . . .

That is what the Father did with Christ, His Son. That is where Christ is now, on that very throne in the third heaven, sitting on the right hand of His Father.

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church . . .

How much power does Jesus Christ have? Whose is it to give and to bestow? Is it not the Father? Is it not God the Father who is the supreme sovereign of the universe? That one who became Jesus Christ was with Him from the beginning and as the Apostle John said, not anything was made that was made without that being, God of the second part. He derived His power and His authority from the Father, who had it to give—He and He alone.

That God, that Father, that incredibly powerful Being, with power to create and to kill, power to uphold and to destroy, to sustain and to obliterate—it is He who

rules. There is no being, spirit or flesh, who will ever stand up to challenge successfully that God. It is His authority and His power to give and He gave it to His Son.

His Son, who took on that responsibility to fulfill the very plan of the Father, willingly gave Himself to be the Messiah, to be the Savior through His own personal sacrifice. Through His death and resurrection, He qualified to sit on the very right hand of that God, the Father. Because He was faithful and fulfilled the will of the Father perfectly, that Father gave Him all power, dominion, and authority.

Christ received His authority through the proper means. He did not usurp; He did not assume or take it unto Himself. The Father, whose it was to give, gave it to Him freely.

. . . which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come . . .

How long is the dominion of Christ going to last? ". . . not only in this world," it says, "but also in that which is to come." Whatever the purpose of God will be after the completion of this plan of salvation when the earth will have used up its usefulness, when it will be destroyed and New Jerusalem will descend, when that family of God will be completed with all of those millions of spirit beings added to that family, we do not know.

We do not know what is going to be a part of God's purpose and His will. We do know that it is going to be an active and dynamic family and that Christ is going to be central. He is going to continue to have the power vested in Him of the Father for whatever that future work might be.

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

How important is the Church in the plan? Here is this being who has been given of His Father all of this dominion and power of the entire universe, delegated to Him to fulfill the will of that Father—and central in the thinking of both of those beings is the Church.

Of the entire far-flung universe, all that has been created and all that is yet to be created, central in the very thinking of all of that power and dominion is the Church—His Body, the body of that incredibly powerful spirit being, ". . . the fulness of Him that filleth all and all."

Do you stop to think, brethren, how significant that calling is? As one called out of this world, through your acceptance of Jesus Christ, you were baptized into the Body of Christ—the Church. How significant is it that you are a part of the very body of that powerful, awe-inspiring being?

What is the current office of Jesus Christ? Yes, He has been given incredible power; but at the very same time, He has yet to have dominion as King on this earth. Right now, He does not bear that office. He has the right of kingship. He has been judged worthy; He will be King of kings and Lord of lords. He will return triumphantly to establish His Kingdom—the very Kingdom of God—on this earth at His second coming, but that has not yet happened.

He is a King in waiting because the dominion over this earth still lies in the hands of that diabolical being, Satan. Through God's own plan and purpose, He has left him in that office. He has failed; his fate is certain; but he still today, according to God's plan, holds that office.

Jesus Christ is waiting for the Father to tell Him when it is time for Him to take possession of His Kingdom. He will take possession of it. The only one who knows that timing is the Father—the time when the Father will hand that book with the seven seals of revelation to the Son on that throne where they both sit right now. Those seals will begin to be opened and the final miraculous events will begin to unfold on this earth, leading up to that witness and that gospel being preached, shaking this world to its foundation.

That Being who qualified, who died, was buried and resurrected, who now sits on the right hand of His Father, will descend again in power and glory and take possession of His Kingdom a great King. He is not currently on that throne of the earth. He is waiting, but what office does He currently hold and what office is Jesus Christ performing and fulfilling right now?

He is our High Priest and our Advocate. That is what Jesus Christ is doing right now. He is not waiting for that one; that one is being carried out even as we speak. That is why our fundamental says, "We believe . . . He thereafter ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father, as our High Priest and Advocate."

Now we want to talk about this office that Christ currently holds and is executing—the office of the High Priest and what it means to fulfill His advocacy on our behalf.

Let's begin in Hebrews 2:14–18; chapter 3:1:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil . . .

How many people think about that Devil having the power of death? How is it so? Because he is the author of sin. We have natures that are just like his. He has that power to influence us and to cause us to run after the lusts of our flesh—those things that are inherent within us. By giving into those urges and those impulses, we become guilty and thereby, incur death.

He does have power. He has power to influence us because that way appeals to our own natures. It says here that Satan has the very power of death. However, Christ says:

. . . he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Now, we recognize the wisdom of this principle in the flesh, when a father wants to teach his son and prepare him for fulfilling a role in the future. I have often heard it talked about in terms of a father with his own business who wants to leave it to his son. What is the best way for a son to learn, in order to take over the reins one day from his father and to be able to fulfill the responsibilities to keep that company viable and to make it prosper and grow? That son has to understand as much about that company and operation as the father does, in order to have the wisdom, experience and training to fulfill it. We are going to talk a lot about those concepts at the Feast of Tabernacles.

You have heard stories of fathers who have done that with their sons in training. Do the fathers give them a high executive office right off the bat? They graduate from high school or college and the father puts him right in the executive

chair and says, "Go to it son; you have everything you need." Or does the wise father have that son—regardless of the fact that he is heir apparent in the corporation—learn that business from the ground up? Do the work at the lowest level, learn how the company operates from the work that is done, and understand it from the ground up.

God used the very same principle even in the qualification of His Son. What better High Priest could we have to be our Advocate than one who experienced in His own physical life the very same things that we deal with day in and day out? We are not talking about a God who is detached from us, who cannot understand, who cannot remotely begin to identify with us.

Think about the very last great trial or temptation that you faced or maybe are facing right now. Something that is really needling at you, giving you difficulty, maybe that you have already been giving in to, or are afraid you might give into. Do you think Christ understands? Do you think He can identify with you? We know that He can because He lived it.

Continuing on:

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.

How perfect is that plan? How perfect is the plan of the Father? He created the circumstance in which the very spiritual High Priest who would act on our behalf as our agent and representative, pleading for our forgiveness at the very throne of the Father, would not just be fulfilling an office in name or function; but He would be sincere because He experienced and lived it.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. (Continuing in chapter 3) Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus . . .

Yes, brethren, consider it. Consider it very carefully—the significance of that office that He holds and His qualification to execute that office on our behalf.

Hebrews 4:14–16; chapter 5:1–10:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities . . .

He identifies with everything you are going through right now, brethren. There is not anything that is hidden from Him and there is not anything that He cannot identify with and console you in. I am not talking about a justification of error. We are not talking about watering down the truth of the doctrine or the commandments. He cannot deny Himself and He is the personification of truth. We are talking about mercy, longsuffering and advocacy—that He loves and cares for us perfectly. He can understand. He can identify with you and with me in every way. There is nothing that we are experiencing—no feeling, no pull, and no draw of the human emotion—that He, Himself, did not endure.

Do we really believe that? That is how close He is to us.

For we have not an 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.

That is the only difference, brethren. Christ never sinned. He never gave in to a single one of those pulls. How phenomenal. It is beyond the very capacity of human minds, I think, to understand or grasp the significance of living with every pull that we have, for all of those years even of His short life in the flesh, but without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." He is there as our High Priest and He is a perfect High Priest. What is more, He loves each one of us and wants us to be successful. He wants to forgive. He wants to make that intercession at the throne of God for us.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Continuing in chapter 5) For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and

sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

We take it for granted that a human being who is acting in the office of the priesthood or as a High Priest of the Levitical priesthood, could identify with the people. Those priests and that High Priest were subject to the very same pulls of the flesh and the weaknesses and infirmities as all of the brethren in that congregation.

There was no way that God was going to allow His Son Jesus Christ to have anything less than the capacity to fulfill it, not even equally as well as a human High Priest could. Therefore, He experienced those things so that there would not be anything that Christ could not know or understand.

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

Again, what do we find? The substantiation that a human being does not arrogate unto himself the office of the priesthood. Christ could not even arrogate to Himself the office of the High Priesthood. It was given to Him of the Father.

"So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest . . ." No, He didn't decide, *You know what? I really think I am worthy. I think I am good. I think I have the skills and capabilities. People like me and respond to me. I think I would make a really good High Priest. I think I will be a High Priest. Yes, I think that is a great idea.* That is not what Christ did. It was the Father's to give. He is the one who made His Son that High Priest and gave Him that office.

It was Lucifer who said, "I'm worthy. I am so radiant, beautiful and wise. I am so magnificent as a being; I am worthy to receive honor. I am worthy to sit in an office of power and prestige on the throne of God." He is the one who arrogated to himself that presumption to take an office which God did not give.

Have we seen that same spirit manifested within the church? How many men are out there doing their own works, right now? They have their church incorporations, Internet websites, and do their works on television and radio. Who

are these men that have arrogated unto themselves to teach in the name of Jesus Christ? There is an incredible penalty that is going to be paid when they come to find out that they are acting in the very spirit of Satan the Devil.

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him [meaning, the Father], 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.

Here, we find some specifics about this High Priesthood. We are going to talk a lot about this.

Who in the days of his flesh [this Melchisedec], when he had offered up prayers [Melchisedec who became Jesus Christ offered prayers in the flesh prior to His suffering, prior to His arrest, crucifixion, and death.] and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death . . .

Remember, Christ said, "If this cup can pass from me," because He knew what He was about to endure. He could see it fully within His mind and He knew the horror that awaited Him in the next few hours. In the flesh, He longed to be saved from that misery and agony which no human being can even remotely understand. Yet, because He perfectly wanted to obey, to fulfill the will of His Father, He said, "Your will, Father, not mine."

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 [Yes, He feared mostly to fulfill the Father's will, even over the fears of the flesh.]; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered . . .

Even Christ learned perfect obedience through the things that He endured in the flesh on our behalf.

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

He qualified through His suffering, faithfulness and obedience to God; living without sin and fulfilling the Father's will perfectly, to become that great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

What is this order of Melchisedec? I thought that the priesthood, according to the law of Moses, was given to Aaron. Isn't that what it was on Mt. Sinai? It was Aaron and his descendants of the Levites who were to be the priests. It had to do with the physical lineage. You could not become a High Priest—you couldn't become a priest at all—unless you were of the tribe of Levi, unless you were the ones appointed by God with that particular lineage and heritage.

So, why are we talking about Melchisedec? I thought the priesthood was after Aaron. Who was this Melchisedec and what is this order of Melchisedec that is being spoken of? What is its relation to the Aaronic priesthood?

Genesis 14:18–20; let's find out:

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." Ok, we are talking about the time of Abraham here, which absolutely preceded the time of Moses and the time of the giving of the law on Mt. Sinai. So obviously, we are talking about a priesthood that existed many, many years prior to the time of the institution of the Levitical priesthood. In fact, we are talking about a priesthood that was in force from the beginning.

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abram] gave him [Melchizedek] tithes of all.

Here we had a relationship prior to the formation of that great nation, which shows you that there was this Great High Priest, Melchisedec. He was the one to whom Abraham paid tithes and you can bet so did Noah and so did Adam because that priesthood was absolutely in effect from the beginning. They paid tithes to this Melchisedec.

Who was this Melchisedec? He was God of the second part. He was the *Yhvh*. He was the one who became Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:19–20; chapter 7:1–28; chapter 8:1–2:

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, 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.

This wasn't a temporary High Priesthood. When Christ qualified to fill this office, it was an eternal office. ". . . made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Chapter 7:1–28:

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all [which is what we just read in Genesis 14]; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God . . .

Yes, who was Melchisedec? ". . . without beginning of days, nor end of life . . ." It can only be He who was with God from the very beginning which we read in John 1:14, ". . . the Word was made flesh . . ." He was God, He was with God and all things were made by Him. It was the same being. He was Melchisedec, the High Priest.

Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi [the Aaronic priesthood], who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham . . .

God of the second part who Himself was Melchisedec, the High Priest, was who Abraham and all of those patriarchs paid tithes to. Yet, something happened on Mt. Sinai with the giving of the law, the codification, and the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. A change occurred so that the office transferred from this

Melchisedec to a physical priesthood—the descendants of Abraham through the tribe of Levi. God made that temporal change. It was only to be temporary because, as we are going to find out, it was to revert again to Melchisedec.

But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less [Abraham] is blessed of the better [Melchisedec]. And here men that die receive tithes . . .

Once the Levitical priesthood was established, it was human beings who were fulfilling that office. They were flesh and blood; they live and they die.

. . . but there he receiveth them [Meaning, before the establishment of that priesthood, it was an eternal being—Melchisedec—who was filling that office.], of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

This is saying that the obligation, even to pay tithes to Melchisedec, was not foregone by the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. Even the Levites who received tithes of the people had to tithe that which they received. So, who were they to pay their tithes to? Themselves? No, they offered tithes to Melchisedec the same way that their forefather Abraham had. There was still a connection.

And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood . . .

What we are talking about is why did the Levitical priesthood not continue? Why did something have to change? If the establishment of the Levitical priesthood was sufficient to carry us through the entire plan that God had in mind for human beings, with the descendants of Aaron filling the priesthood and the High Priest office, then why are we not under the Aaronic priesthood today?

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 . . .

Why was this change necessary? It did move again back from the Aaronic priesthood to that spiritual priesthood of Melchisedec, through Christ.

. . . 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.

Now let's stop right there for a minute. There are individuals who, even recently, have tried to say that this change in the law is concerning tithing—that it is referring to the law of Moses and that tithing is part of the temporal law. They are claiming that by this very transference from the Aaronic priesthood to that of Melchisedec, it took away for us the responsibility of tithing. Oh yes, we are told we are still to give free will offerings according to our blessings, but the obligation to tithe was done away with the change of the law.

It sounds kind of Protestant to me. Is that what we are talking about here, brethren? Paul certainly said it, didn't he? "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Is that what we are talking about—doing away with tithing? Paul explains it if you read the very next sentence.

For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

Are we talking about tithing here, or are we talking about the fact that there had to be a change in the law because Christ was not legally able to become the High Priest? Why? He was not a Levite. He was not of the order of Aaron. Only someone of the order of Aaron could fulfill the High Priest role. Christ was the one who was earmarked to become the great High Priest forever and ever, but that was against the law of the time.

Obviously, for Christ to fulfill that role there had to be a change in the law. A change in the tithing law? No, it was a change of the law concerning the priesthood and who had authority to become the priest. That is the change we are talking about here.

"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda . . ." We are not talking about tithing at all. We are talking about Christ's lineage in the flesh as coming out of Judah and the need for the change in the law in order to make Him eligible to become the High Priest.

For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

The order of Melchisedec was a much greater order because it was that which was filled by God of the second part, the very family of God. When that authority was transferred and delegated to the Levitical priesthood, it was only temporary in nature for the fulfilling of the physical rights of the temporary law.

We are not talking about the spiritual laws that were a part of the law of Moses, but the temporary laws—the sacrifices, the washings, the rituals which were there to point to Christ and His fulfillment of those sacrifices. Once those things were fulfilled by His death, burial, and resurrection, there was no more need for those things to continue to be done. They did not change the spiritual laws that are immutable.

That tithing law, brethren, is part of the immutable law. Tithes were paid to Melchisedec long before Mt. Sinai and what the law does not bring into effect, it cannot aggregate by its own end. What was being changed was the law concerning qualification and a right to hold the office of the High Priest. The law said, only a Levite—only of the order of Aaron. Therefore, for Christ to hold that office, it had to revert. That law had to be changed back to point to the order of Melchisedec.

And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

Shame on anyone, especially those that know better, who attempts to deny the veracity of the laws of God including tithing, by misquoting Paul in Hebrews. Shame on anyone who knows better.

For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect . . .

The Israelites, those ancient people, having that Law codified, carrying out those physical rituals of sacrifice—it didn't do a single thing to change their nature, did it? It certainly didn't justify them, as we know the blood of bulls and goats could not make perfect. It could not take away the penalty of sin, which is death. Only the sacrifice of one who died perfectly in our stead could cover our sins.

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest . . .

What was this oath? Whatever the oath was, it was that which had to do with the Father bestowing upon the Son the right of this priesthood.

(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

God Himself made an oath and it is by that oath that Christ became the High Priest.

By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

The Levites all died, sooner or later. Therefore, someone had to replace them in that office, but not so with Christ.

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. [That is His purpose. That is the office He is fulfilling right now—making intercession for us.] For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's . . .

In the Levitical priesthood, the High Priest himself was a guilty human being. Being guilty of violating the laws of God, he had to first offer a sacrifice of blood as a

sign of purification for himself. Then he could officiate as the High Priest on behalf of the people. Jesus Christ, as being perfect, without sin, need not offer a sacrifice for Himself.

. . . for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law [the oath of God], maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Chapter 8:1–2:

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

". . . the sanctuary of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." Are you attending in the sanctuary that the Lord pitched? Are you attending a congregation that man created and designed? That is a serious, serious question. How do you know the difference? If you know where the truth is and you believe in divine revelation, then you will find out very quickly. I guarantee you one thing, if you do not believe in the revelation of Jesus Christ in the last days, then you will not find it.

This is the very single doctrine, the very point of issue with every other splinter group that I am aware of that came out of Worldwide. No matter how close they appear to be to the truth, ask them if they believe in divine revelation. Ask them if Mr. Armstrong received what he taught from the beginning as divine revelation from Jesus Christ. Watch them squirm all over the place. They don't believe it. If they believed it, then they would be doing what we are doing. They would be holding on to the original teaching.

How can we have a High Priest at the throne of God, who makes intercession for us to the Father, if we deny Him? Have you ever thought about that? How many people are out there right now, claiming to be worshiping Jesus Christ and doing His will? However, because they have violated the very commands that came through the teaching of that last day servant, they are denying Christ and calling Him a liar. They are taking the liberty to teach the things that come naturally to their minds, yet they

still want Christ, whom they are calling a liar, to intercede for them at the throne of God. It is pure, unadulterated arrogance on the part of man's human mind.

The only way that we can hope to receive true intercession for our sins at the hand of the High Priest who died for that purpose, is if we accept Him. We have to accept the real Christ as our High Priest and not deny Him by denying His commandments. We can't call Him a liar by saying that He is not present somewhere now, fulfilling His will through a church and a ministry. If so, He will utterly turn away. He will not make intercession for those that deny Him.

What is this office of the High Priest? What is the activity of the High Priest? We know He was resurrected from the dead. We know He sits on the right hand of His Father. We know that He is heir apparent to be a King, to rule this world; but not now—not yet. However, the office that He does hold, that He is actively fulfilling, is that of High Priest. What is this office of High Priest?

1 John 2:1:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous . . .

That is what He is doing. That is how He is fulfilling the office of the High Priest right now. He is our Advocate. That means He is our agent. He is one who is employed on our behalf to help us succeed—to help us in those things that are beneficial. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." That is why He died. That is why He was resurrected.

What is this advocacy that we are talking about? He is our Advocate. The word there for advocate, which we just found, is Jesus Christ. He is the Advocate. That is why it is in our fundamental of belief—our High Priest and Advocate. It is the Greek word *parakletos*. It means an intercessor, a consoler, an advocate, a comforter. He is there on your behalf—that counselor, that individual who is there because He wants you to succeed.

John 14:15–21:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." I will say further, brethren, if we want Him to intercede for us in the office of the High Priest at the throne of God, we

also had better be keeping His commandments. Otherwise, He just might not be there. In fact, I can guarantee you He won't be there if we are defiantly rebelling against Him.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father [That is what He does as a High Priest.], and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever . . .

"Comforter" here, is the same Greek term *parakletos*. It just as easily could have been translated, "Advocate."

"Even the Spirit of truth . . ." That Advocate, that Comforter, who is Jesus Christ, is synonymous with the Spirit of Truth; they are one and the same.

Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

That is what your Advocate does, brethren, if you are one who has been baptized. You have been willing to accept Christ; you recognize the truth, you want that way of life and you want His help. You have basically employed an advocate. You have employed an agent to represent you, to help you and to be there to help you succeed. He is not going to do it for you. We have to will to live that way; but through the Holy Spirit, we have the power to fulfill that will.

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. [That is what that Advocate does.] Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. [Because He lives after being dead, by His resurrection, we have the hope of living also.] At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them . . .

As opposed to that which you are hearing from our former affiliation now, who is saying that they are optional. They are saying that being in Christ does not require mandated commandment keeping, that the Sabbath and Holy Days are optional.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Your agent—your Advocate—is a servant to each one of us because He died for us and He wants us to make it. By what means, though, do we experience His advocacy? By what means do we experience the literal manifestation of Jesus Christ as our High Priest and Advocate in our lives? In the tape I made for Pentecost this year, I went through this topic of *parakletos*—what that Advocate and Comforter is. Let's quickly look at it again.

There are two ways by which we receive the power of His Advocacy in our lives. Number one: the direct working of the Holy Spirit upon our minds. Notice it in Romans 8:8:

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If God's Spirit is dwelling within us, then we are crucifying the self. We are making more room for that Holy Spirit to dwell. The very mind of Christ then, is beginning to grow within us. We are beginning to respond according to that Spirit, according to His perfection and not according to our own lusts.

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

What is the key requirement for being in the Church—for being one of those who are set apart? It is having the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit living actively within you. That is what makes you a son of God and gives you that hope of salvation.

We do receive, through baptism, the initiation of the receipt of that Spirit and we have an opportunity to be guided directly by God. How does He guide us directly through His Spirit? He shows us how to examine ourselves. It is as if, for the first time, you are given a big mirror in which you can see your own face and you can

begin to recognize the defects in your life that you couldn't even see before. You are able to evaluate yourself appropriately according to that perfect law. Through the Holy Spirit, He guides us and compels us—if we are paying attention and not quenching that Spirit—to make changes in our lives.

It is easy to quench that Spirit, though. The Spirit and that influence of His advocacy do not overpower us. It is very subtle. We have to pay attention to it. We have to be listening. How many times do we quench the Spirit? Something comes up and our conscience bothers us. We become worried. *I did this; I wonder if it was right? Or, I want to do this, but I wonder; maybe it is not right in the eyes of God. What should I do?*

Very often, we can be so compelled by the pull of that nature that we are like a runaway train. We want it no matter what. The Spirit is saying, "It's not right," but it is just a whisper. It is saying, "It is not the right way to go. Turn and walk the other way," but we put our hand out there and we squash it and say, "No, I know what I want. I will worry about the consequences later." Have you had that happen? Then, you feel horrible after the fact.

That is when we need that advocacy, that forgiveness, that intercession, if we are repentant. His advocacy does help us directly. It will act as a light for our paths if we are willing to pay attention to it.

What is the second area of the manifestation of His advocacy, besides the direct intervention of the Spirit in our lives and minds? It is the one that so many hate—the inspiration of a chosen ministry. Oh, how many people hate to hear about that which is done through the ministry.

2 Timothy 4:1–2:

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word [Paul is speaking to Timothy as a minister, as an evangelist, telling him what he needs to do in his role.]; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Ok, that is well and good, but what does that have to do with the advocacy of Jesus Christ, our High Priest? You see that very word "exhort"? "Exhort with all

longsuffering and doctrine" is the Greek word *parakaleo*. It means to call near; to invite; to invoke by imploration, hortation or consolation; to beseech; to call for; to be of good comfort; to desire; to exhort; to entreat; to pray. Lo and behold, what do we find?

That is the term that we were already looking at in 1 John and in the book of John, "advocate," which is what Christ is. Christ is the Advocate; He is the Comforter—that word which we saw already, *parakletos*. *Parakletos* from the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume 3, Page 28, says, "According to its grammatical form, *parakletos* is a passive, verbal adjective from *parakaleo*." It tells you that the *parakletos*, which is Christ—the Advocate, the Comforter—is derived from the same concept as the exhortation that we receive through God's chosen ministry.

Paul was instructing Timothy what he was to do. He told him to reprove, rebuke, exhort. It was a command to use the very power of the office of the ministry to fulfill the advocacy of Jesus Christ. The ministry is an extension of the office because Christ has delegated the use of frail, imperfect and foolish human beings to be His representatives to teach His people.

In spite of our personal frailties and inadequacies, if we are the faithful ministry of Jesus Christ, then we are acting by the authority of that High Priest. It is His advocacy that is manifested in the words that you are hearing from the pulpit. If we are not, and if we are speaking of ourselves and of our own, then we have nothing to do with Christ. If that is the case, then you should go somewhere else because Christ said He would be somewhere.

He is manifested in a ministry—a faithful ministry somewhere—who is preaching the truth, upholding the commandments which are Christ's, through the Spirit of truth. They are exhorting with longsuffering in the way that they deal with each one of you in person—with absolute commitment to doctrine, not denying Christ, who cannot deny Himself and neither can anyone who is acting on behalf of Christ, if they are legitimate.

They are exhorting. Are we paying attention to the exhortation of the Spirit? Are we paying attention to the exhortation of the Advocate by hearing the message of the warnings and the counsel of those servants whom He has called and placed in those positions?

The two ways, brethren—by that ministry teaching, coming from Christ and number two, the gift of the Holy Spirit upon our own minds. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to take that teaching and apply it to ourselves—to recognize how to apply it in our own lives according to our own weaknesses and frailties. In doing so, we can begin to purge out more and become more like the very image of Jesus Christ Himself. That is how the influence of that Spirit works in that duality within our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:20 in closing:

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ [Paul speaking], as though God did beseech you by us [That word "beseech" is *parakaleo*. God is doing the beseeching. He is doing the exhorting—the exhortation—through a human ministry.]: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Anyone who is an agent—a representative of that Great High Priest Jesus Christ, who is our Advocate—is preaching the words to help us become reconciled unto God. They are there to help us prepare ourselves for His revelation at the time of His second coming when He will not only be the High Priest, but He will also become the reigning King on this earth.

Yes, we believe Christ was resurrected from the dead. We believe that He made immortality possible for mortal man, and that He thereafter ascended into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God the Father, as our High Priest and Advocate.