

• *The Levitical priesthood had limitations*

• *Jesus fulfilled it and brought it to an end*

• *Jesus obedience to the Father grew higher and higher as the Father put greater and greater demands upon him*

• *Obedience and sympathy – Jesus' qualifications*

1. First there was his training

• *Jesus experienced trials and temptations*

• *Knowing something in theory and going through the experience are two different things*

• *A sympathetic Saviour*

2. There then was his 'graduation'.

Jesus fulfils the **Levitical** priesthood mentioned in the Mosaic law in a way that not only fulfilled it but also brought it to an end! The high priests of the Old Testament had one great weakness. The human nature of the high priest was sinful and the high priest himself often sinned. How could one sinner be a perfect saviour for another sinner? The high priest had to offer sacrifice for his own sins, just as he did for the sins of the people. He could 'deal gently with the ignorant and wayward', but there was one type of sin he could not handle. He could not deal with serious sin. There was no sacrifice for murder or adultery or sabbath-breaking.

But Jesus was a sinless high priest! He ⁷*was heard because of his devotion to God*. The Father honoured his intercessions because he was utterly obedient. Jesus was able to pray in the name of his own righteousness – something no one else is able to do. ⁸*Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through the things he suffered*. God trained Jesus to be perfectly sympathetic as a man. He did it by progressively putting burdens upon the Lord Jesus Christ. In this sense Jesus 'learned' obedience. It was not that he was ever disobedient, but his obedience to the Father grew higher and higher as the Father put greater and greater demands upon him.

It is this obedience and sympathy that qualifies Jesus to be our heavenly high priest. ⁹*And being made perfect* – perfectly qualified in obedience – *he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him*, ¹⁰*being designated by God a high priest, the kind of priest that Melchizedek was*. It was as if Jesus had one job but was trained to do a higher job.

1. First there was his training. People who have never suffered are generally not very sympathetic to sufferers. God put Jesus through many troubles and trials and testings. It was not enough that Jesus should **know about** sufferings; God wanted him to personally **experience** it. There is a big difference between knowing about (let us say) the Victoria Falls – Mosi-Oa-Tunya (The Smoke That Thunders) – in the River Zambezi between Zambia and Zimbabwe and having actually been there to see it and hear it. You may have seen a photograph, but even that is not enough! But to have actually been there is different! To see the water spraying high in the air, to hear the thunder from far away. David Livingstone said even the angels flying by stop to admire it! Knowing something in theory and going through the experience are two different things. God wanted Jesus to **experience** the trials and temptations that come to his people. It was as if Jesus were taking a course, doing classes every day, so as to be trained for the work he was about to do. He was being trained as a sympathetic Saviour.

2. There then was his 'graduation'. Jesus finished the course with 100 per cent success. Our writer says he was 'made perfect'. It means 'made perfectly qualified' as a Saviour'. The training got

- Perfectly qualified step by step
- A young boy
- His call to be the Messiah
- Three years he ministered
- Obedient unto death
- Graduation
- A higher kind of high priest

There came a new phase in the ministry of Jesus

- The great high priest who ministers to us all the Father's blessings
- We need to learn how to live on Jesus as our great high priest
- Glory!

higher and higher but Jesus passes each step of training along the way. First he lived as a young boy and was perfectly obedient to his earthly parents and to his heavenly Father. ‘ “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” he said...Then he was submissive to them...And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man’ (Luke 2:49–52). Then he became aware of his call to be the Messiah. His family often did not understand him. He was a prophet without honour in his own country. But he obeyed the Father perfectly amidst all the troubles that came upon him. For three years he ministered. His disciples were weak and quarrelsome. His enemies were endlessly seeking his life. Then there came the cross, when Jesus obeyed the Father in dozens of injustices, was forsaken by the Father, bore the sins of the world. He became obedient unto death, even the death of a cross. But after a couple of days the Father highly exalted him. This was his graduation-day. His day of ‘perfection’ as a Saviour. He reached the pinnacle of obedience in terrible suffering, but that fulfilled the obedience of the law, and also prepared him as a man for his ministry was a higher kind of high priest altogether.

 Luke 2:49-52

3. There came a new phase in the ministry of Jesus. After he had become perfectly qualified – as a human being – as God’s suffering servant, ⁹he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰being designated by God a high priest, the kind of priest that Melchizedek was. As we obey our Lord Jesus Christ he is the great high priest who ministers to us all of the Father’s blessings. Our writer is not referring to conversion here (although Jesus ministers that to us also!) but to the on-going battle to achieve something for God and reach high honours in glory.

Do you know anything about living on Jesus as your great high priest? We need to learn how to do it. We need never feel anxious or panicky or guilty or hopeless. We have someone who perfectly sympathizes with us. He will be like Melchizedek to us – something the writer will develop in full in Hebrews chapter 7. He will bring us through every trouble into his kingdom. That is certain. But more than that, he wants us to get to glory with high honours. He did it for himself. He can do it for us.



slices.org.uk

Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters “Slices of Bread” produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable • In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge • Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation • The same material as Slices for the Nations • Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge • Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) • The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations

To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk
 Details of the availability of *Preaching Through The Bible* books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk