

Hebrews 5

Verses 1-3: For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.

Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.

--(1) The writer has previously introduced the idea of Jesus Christ as our great High Priest who has passed into the heavens for us, and who compassionately sits on a throne of grace ready to offer us mercy, grace, and help in our times of need.

--Building on the high priestly ministry of Christ throughout the following chapters, the writer now focuses on some characteristics of human high priests.

--First, the high priest was **taken from among men** and **appointed for men in things pertaining to God**. Meaning that the high priest was appointed by God as an intermediary, or a man who served as representative of other men.

--Secondarily, but primarily, the high priest offered **both gifts and sacrifices for sins**. The high priest's main job was to represent the people of Israel before God in relation to sins (**Lev. 16**).

--(2-3) God wanted human high priests to have the ability to sympathize with those bringing sacrifices for sins.

--The Greek word for **have compassion** (*metriopatheo*) is used only here in the NT. It means *to be affected moderately* or *to preserve moderation*. It describes someone who can bear the task of continually making offerings for sins without becoming angry with the sinners. *Think of the hardness of the Pharisees with sinners—Judas especially.*

--Those offerings were required for the people but also for the high priest himself. He, too, was a sinner in need (**Lev. 16:6**). *Think of Aaron with the golden calf.*

--Of course, Jesus was greater than any human high priest, being without sin (**4:15**), yet compassionate.

Verses 4-6: And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him:

"You are My Son,

Today I have begotten You."

As He also says in another place:

"You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek";

--(4) Another characteristic distinct of the high priest was that he was to be **called by God**. Only a divine appointment could establish God-honoring high priesthood. As Aaron himself was clearly appointed by God (**Lev. 8:1; Num. 16-18**).

Exodus 28:1: “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons:”

--No man could step into that place on their own authority (**Num. 18:7**). And those who ignored God’s will were judged like Nadab and Abihu with the wrong offering (**Lev. 10:1-2**), the sons of Korah trying to take the authority (**Num. 16:20-35**), or Uzziah trying to usurp the tasks of the position (**2 Chron. 26:16-21**).

--(Side note: There is no biblical justification for any current religious priesthood among men. The only New Testament Scriptural references to church-age priests maintains that all true believers are kings and priests: **Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6**. Every modern order of so-called priests is unbiblical.)

--**(5-6)** To prove Christ’s divine appointment to an eternal High Priesthood, the writer quotes from **Ps. 2:7 & 110:4**. What is the tie between these two Scriptures?

--The Son, who was always meant to be the ruling and reigning Messiah, was also always meant to be our great High Priest. Jesus’ divine sonship is as divinely recognized by the Father as His priesthood. Both are bound together.

--**You are. . .** Who is? The ***begotten*** one, **My Son!** The ruling Son (**Zech. 6:13**) is also the eternal High Priest.

Verses 7-10: *who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,”*

--**(7) *who, in the days of His flesh.*** . . He came to us as us! Our great and eternal High Priest was also taken from among men.

1) He was a babe (*brephos*)—**Lk. 2:12+16**.

2) He was a child (*paidion*)—**Lk. 2:27**.

3) He was a boy (*pais*)—**Lk. 2:43**.

4) He was the Son of Man—**Lk. 9:22: *The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.***

--What do we see in ***the days of His flesh***? We see He offered up prayers. . . He learned obedience. . . He became the author of eternal salvation.

--We see that Jesus understands what it is to pray to the Father with ***vehement cries and tears***. Cries describe the noise. Tears, the literal tears.

--When did this happen? I think the circumstance referred to is clearly the garden of Gethsemane (**Mt. 26:36-46; Mk. 14:32-43; Lk. 22:39-46**).

--There alone we have recorded His deep pain, cries, and tears regarding death.

Luke 22:44: And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

--Jesus was crying out to the Father because He ***was able to save Him from death***—the language giving the sense of: *Save Him out of death*. . . and not *Save Him from death*.

--When someone is saved *out of* something, they are already in that thing. Joseph was pulled *out of* the pit; Daniel *out of* the lion's den; Jeremiah *out of* the muddy prison; etc.

--Jesus knew He was being obedient to death—even the death of the cross. He knew He was taking the cup from His Father's hand. He knew He was becoming our curse (**Gal. 3:13**), our sin (**2 Cor. 5:21**), and carrying our iniquities (**Isa. 53:6**).

--Jesus never feared humans. He encouraged His followers not to fear those who could only kill the body. The weight of sin and separation from God—true death—was the agonizing weight that made Him cry out. *Jesus knows what it is to be alone in the dark, bent over on the ground, bleeding, crying, and weeping under inexpressible pressure.*

--What happened? He ***was heard because of His godly fear***. . . The Father responded to the reverent surrender of the Son's will and delivered Him out of death (**Isa. 11:2-3**).

--**(8) though He was a Son**. . . The language gives the sense of: *Though Son He was*. . . Him! The Son of God and Son of Man, crying, weeping, bleeding, pleading. What a mystery!

1 Timothy 3:16: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

--The Son of God, our High Priest, ***learned obedience by the things which He suffered***. The one thing you wouldn't think Jesus needed to learn! Why did He do so? For us! To be our perfect High Priest! *Think of the honor one may have by being noble by birth Vs. Noble acts in actual battle. Which would we respect more? Jesus has both.*

--Jesus Christ fully confirmed God's will through inexplicable suffering and hardship. He knows all it means to obey God in ways we will never understand or be called to understand. From birth to the cross, He experienced all the hardness of obedience.

--**(9) And having been perfected**. . . Means having been *completed or fulfilled*.

--**He became**. . . Jesus Christ became something that He had not been before.

--**The author of eternal salvation**. . . The Greek word for **author** (*aitios*) is used only here in the New Testament and means: *Causer or Catalyst*.

--Jesus Christ became our perfect Catalyst, Captain, and High Priest of the eternal salvation God the Father wanted to bring to lost sinners.

2:10: For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

--The only type of salvation Jesus Christ mediates is ***eternal salvation***. There is no type of conditional salvation in Jesus Christ.

--The writer will use that same word **eternal** for eternal judgment (6:2); redemption (9:12); the Holy Spirit (9:14); our inheritance (9:15); and the new covenant (13:20). None of those things are conditional! No one can lose eternal salvation.

--**to all who obey Him.** . . That said, there is no eternal salvation available to those who live in active disobedience to Jesus Christ. Obedience is faith in action. Faith and obedience are simply two sides of the same coin.

--The emphasis here is on obedience because the writer was keen on making sure the Hebrews knew the eternal salvation they desired would only be found in obedience to Jesus Christ, their Messiah and High Priest, not Moses or ceremonial Judaism.

--This truth is emphasized in other Scriptures as well. Paul, speaking about the gospel, sums it up as: **the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith (Rom. 16:26)**. He also warns of God's vengeance: **on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:8)**. Peter also asks the searching question: **What will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God (1 Peter 4:17)?**

--What are we to obey in the gospel? The call to repent and believe!

--**(10) Called by God.** . . The Greek word here for **called** (*prosagoreuo*) is another unique word used only here in the NT and means: *to address* or *to give a name in public*. The writer is returning to his main point and saying God the Father has publicly named Jesus Christ as your new High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

--Interestingly, Jesus never once tried to serve as an Aaronic priest in the temple. His priestly order was not Aaron's order. His priestly service would be different and related to another, more heavenly temple.

Verses 11-14: of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

--**(11)** The writer wants to talk much more about Melchizedek and will, but he pauses here for another warning and then picks the discussion back up again in 6:20. First, he admits it will be difficult to talk to them because they had become bad listeners!

--Certainly, there are some things in the Bible that are harder to understand than others. Even the Apostle Peter admits that **(2 Peter 3:16)**. *Which is always encouraging to me!*

--But the problem here is not necessarily the content. It is the listeners. They had not always been a rough crowd. They **have become dull of hearing**. Something changed in them.

--**(12a) For though by this time you ought to be teachers.** . . These Hebrews had been believers long enough that they should have been able to explain the basic things of God to others.

--Teachers is used in the basic sense. Not apostles or pastors.

--***you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God. . .***

Unfortunately, they had regressed! They couldn't even explain the most basic of biblical truths.

Like me with 5th grade math, like dividing fractions!

--One sign of arrested spiritual development is when we can no longer help others but constantly require the help of others. *Giving ministry Vs. Needing ministry*

--**(12b-14) *You have come to need milk and not solid food. . .*** Milk is good for babies. Not for adults! In fact, it doesn't take long before even babies need more than milk.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3: *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. *

--What is the writer trying to say?

*Pentecost (Faith That Endures, pg. 100): "What he is indicating is that while both the spiritual baby and spiritual adult have the Word, the baby is unable to use the Word to determine what is right and wrong, to use the Word to guide in his decisions, or to use the Word as his standard of life. On the other hand, the spiritual adult is able to use the Word to determine what is right and wrong. While the baby *has* the Word, he does not *use* the Word. The adult, on the other hand, not only *has* the Word, he *uses* the Word."*

--The writer is contrasting a baby without teeth with someone ***of full age***—fully grown. He is contrasting liquid food, which goes down easy, with solid food, which has texture and must be chewed. Sucking Vs. Chewing.

--Milk correlates to babies and lack of skill. The Hebrews were babies because they needed the basic teachings of the Bible and still didn't know how to use them properly. *Think of someone unskilled in basketball, ice skating, or golf.*

--Particularly, they were unskilled in ***the word of righteousness***. Certainly, that would include the gospel (**Rom. 1:16-17**), but I believe it also related to practical matters such as everything the law of Moses or their traditions would address (**Rom. 9:31**). Ultimately, the righteousness God wanted from man in relation to Himself and others.

--Give a baby solid food, and it can choke on it (**2 Peter 3:16**)!

--Solid food correlates to adults who are skilled through having ***their sense exercised***. *Someone only gains skill in basketball, ice skating, or golf through practice.*

--Adults were those who knew the teachings of the Bible in such a way that they could discern between good and evil doctrines, types, actions, and gospels.

--Babies don't have the experience needed to discern sounds, smells, signs, circumstances, etc. Similarly, spiritual babes would never see the connecting truths the writer made between Aaron, Melchizedek, David's prophetic words, and the role of high priests.

--Why did this happen? Were the Hebrews too tied to their religious ceremonies? At least, that's what James, the elder in Jerusalem, described in **Acts 21:20**: ***"You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law;"***.

--Did the early Hebrews give up on pursuing spiritual truth because it was just easier to settle for religious ceremony? Did they not want to press into the Scriptural revelation of the Messiah because they knew that in the end, they couldn't have both? They couldn't champion worship in Jerusalem, in the temple, with the Levites as priests, and sincerely worship Jesus in spirit and truth, anywhere, as their great High Priest.

--What of us? We might not give up pursuit of God for religious ceremony, but we might for religious entertainment! What do we want? Content about Jesus Christ, or someone charismatic preaching to the crowd?

2 Timothy 4:3-4: *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

--Are we babes or adults? ***Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.***