

February 8, 2015  
Sunday Evening Service  
Series: Hebrews  
Community Baptist Church  
643 S. Suber Road  
Greer, SC 29650  
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*To Ponder . . .*

Questions to ponder as you prepare to hear from Hebrews 5:5-10.

1. Does verse five, the quotation from Psalm 110:4, mean that God fathered Jesus like humans do or does it have something to do with coronation? Explain how that fits with Jesus.
2. How does the statement that Jesus prayed with loud shouts effect you?
3. Does your prayer, praise, and worship reveal reverence for God?
4. How was Christ made perfect?

### **JESUS CHRIST IS A PRIEST LIKE MELCHIZEDEK Hebrews 5:5-10**

Tyndall Air Force base is located about twelve miles from Panama City, Florida. This past November, Pat and I were taking a vacation in the area and I thought it would be nice for us to visit the base. It is the home of the 325<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, and first home of the F-22A Raptor which makes it a chief training base for the F-22 pilots. High tech fighter jets intrigue me. Many years ago, I knew a man who was stationed at Tyndall and was aware that they have a half dozen or so F-15s, F-16s, and F-106s on static display.

So, one sunny day Pat and I pulled up to the welcome center that sits just outside the gate. With unwarranted confidence I walked up to the nice air force lady at the counter and told her I wanted to

tour the base. She said, “Fine, who is your sponsor?” I said, “I don’t have a sponsor.” She said, “Sir, no civilian gets on the base without a sponsor.” I began to beg saying that all I wanted to do was look at the static displays. “Sorry, no sponsor, no lookie.” No matter how I pleaded or whined she wasn’t going to let me in. I never did lower myself to protest that the taxes I pay keep the base open, though I thought about it.

That is a good picture of heaven—sort of. No doubt there have been many airmen stationed at Tyndall who have concluded it is quite a bit different than heaven. But I mean that the concept of not being able to get in reminds me of how it will be for multitudes of people.

How many people will get to the gates of heaven as it were and request permission to enter. But the guard at the gate will ask, “Where is your sponsor?” “Sponsor?” they will respond. “I don’t need a sponsor because I have done so many good things that they almost outweigh my sins.” “Sorry sir, but no sponsor, no entrance.” “Oh” he protests, “I have heard about the many wonderful things that are in heaven, not the least of which is the astonishing throne room of God. I just want to enjoy that for eternity.”

The truth of the matter is that without the One acceptable sponsor, no one gets into heaven. That sponsor was pictured throughout the Old Testament by the high priest. Once each year he entered into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the sacrifice which he sprinkled on the mercy seat that sat on the ark of the covenant. God taught that His presence among the people was at the mercy seat. He taught that the annual blood of the sacrifice was a fitting picture of the coming final sacrifice for sin. Without the high priest taking that sacrifice before the mercy seat each year, the people of Israel were hopelessly lost in their sins.

All of those old sacrifices pointed to the final perfect sacrifice of the perfect Lamb Jesus Christ. But this is where the story really gets exciting. God our Creator sits enthroned in glory in heaven. He is offended by the sins of every single person in history. But because He is so loving, He provided that He Himself, in the person of God the Son, would take on human flesh, live perfectly under His own law, and then die innocently to offer His own blood as the acceptable sacrifice for our sins.

Now, God the Son fulfills both the acceptable sacrifice and the acceptable means for presenting that sacrifice to God as our high priest. He provides the only sacrifice and He provides the only means to deliver the sacrifice. Is He not the only possible “sponsor” who will get us into heaven? Absolutely. That is why His instruction on the matter is so critical. In a simple statement that explains the exclusivity of the matter Jesus said, *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6)*. He alone is our representative. And what a representative He is. There is no one else like Him who will meet us at heaven’s gate as it were to welcome us into God’s everlasting rest.

### **Christ Was like Melchizedek (vv.5-6).**

Again we have a reminder at the beginning of this text that, like it was for human high priests, Jesus Christ was appointed. He did not exalt Himself to the significant position of high priest. *So also Christ did not exalt Himself to be made a high priest (v.5a)*. It certainly was true in those ancient days that it was a great honor to be a high priest. When Israel was living in fellowship with God, the high priest was one of the most esteemed individuals in the nation. Even during Christ’s ministry the people who occupied the office were feared, though not respected. It was such an exalted office that aggressive men vied for it, and it ended up being extended through one particular family.

But the high priest was not supposed to take the honor upon himself which is exactly what the religious leaders did in Jesus’ day. Annas and his son-in-law Caiaphas had the office tied up for about thirty years. It came to the point that the office of high priest was such a political matter that the Roman government deposed sitting high priests and appointed new ones. Annas knew how to work the system so that five of his sons occupied the office in succession followed by his son-in-law Caiaphas, who was the priest who delivered Jesus to the Romans for crucifixion.

God’s plan from the beginning was that Aaron was the chief priest, then after he died one of his sons would be appointed and so on with all high priests coming from the family of Aaron who was of the tribe of Levi. Because the priest was to be appointed, Christ did

not exalt Himself to that position. Nowhere do we find any evidence that Jesus Christ aspired to be the high priest. He was not even born in Levi’s tribe, but in the tribe of Judah which fulfilled Old Testament prophecy (Gen. 49:10).

Who appointed Jesus to the exalted position? Another human priest? No. God appointed Him. He did not exalt Himself, *but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you” (v.5b)*. God the Son did not give splendor to Himself, nor did he take glory upon Himself. Instead He humbled Himself, did not demand what was rightfully His, and having become a human became obedient to death (Phil. 2:5-7). Rather, God the Father appointed Him, or gave Him the splendor, the exaltation of being the High Priest.

We need to understand that this appointment was in connection with the coronation of the Son. That becomes clear in the quotation that is Psalm 2:7 in the Old Testament. We saw the same quote used previously in 1:5. At that point, we concluded that this statement was part of a coronation psalm. A coronation psalm would have been sung when the son was crowned to sit on the king’s throne. As applied to Jesus Christ, God the Father honored God the Son and appointed Him as King and Priest.

Would we like to see a picture of the concept? There is a perfect picture of the Son being coronated to take the throne when He was also coronated to be priest. In fact, Christ was appointed to be a unique priest. The author wrote, *As he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (v.6)*. That is an interesting proposition. What or who was Melchizedek?

There are only three statements about this mysterious Melchizedek fellow in the Bible. First, he showed up in the context of Abraham returning from battle where his men defeated an alliance of four kings who had defeated an alliance of five kings in Sodom and Gomorrah. The kings of that alliance had captured Lot and his family. Abraham rounded up his three hundred- man army (servants?) went to do battle with them, and delivered the five kings and all the stuff that had been stolen. On the way home from battle, this guy shows up. *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and*

earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” And Abram gave him a tenth of everything (Genesis 14:18-20).

A second mention of this interesting priest is found in a statement from David 1,000 years after the Melchizedek/Abraham meeting that promises that Messiah who would come 1,000 after David would be like Melchizedek. *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4).* This is the statement that is quoted in our text.

Third, there is a brief description of the man later in this letter which was written 1,000 after David’s statement and 2,000 years after the event. *For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever. See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! (Hebrews 7:1-4).*

Is the Bible inspired? How else could we explain such continuity? All of these statements scattered over a 2,000 year period reveal that God’s plan called for Messiah, Jesus Christ, to do a ministry that was like the unique ministry of Melchizedek.

So what does that mean for Jesus Christ? The larger context of David’s prophecy about Messiah connects the dots. He wrote, *The LORD says to My Lord: “Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies your footstool.” The LORD sends forth from Zion Your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of Your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of Your youth will be Yours. The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath (Psalm 110:1-5).*

Melchizedek was both a priest and a king who lived and ruled in Jerusalem. Jesus Christ is also the High Priest who offers His own blood as the sacrifice for sin AND the victorious King who will rule and reign from Jerusalem in a literal kingdom.

But, while He was in the form of man, He was tempted like we are. He had to endure many of the same trials and processes we endure.

### **Christ learned obedience (vv.7-8).**

Part of the obedience is found when God the Father heard the Son cry out to Him. It happened during the days of His flesh. *In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears (v.7a).* The phrase, *the days of His flesh* has to refer to a time during the human ministry of Christ. It is a vivid picture of the human nature of Jesus Christ. There are a variety of Scripture texts that show Jesus spending time praying to God His Father, sometimes all night. In those times, He offered up requests and petitions just like He instructs us to do.

At some point, these requests and petitions were accompanied by loud cries and tears. That last statement in the verse almost shocks us. Jesus cried out and wept while He prayed? Why is that so surprising? We know that is exactly what happened in the Garden of Gethsemane. For some reason, we typically picture Jesus groaning quietly in the garden. But there are two Greek words used together here that require the translation to be “strong shouts.” That was some serious praying. And why could Jesus not have prayed with such fervor at other times as He observed the ravages of sin in His world?

He prayed to God who heard. He prayed, *to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence (v.7b).* God the Son knew He was petitioning, requesting the very Creator who could, if according to His will, deliver Him from death. Jesus cried out for deliverance from physical death, if that could in any way be the Father’s will. That was the ultimate “*testing in every way like we are tested.*” Acting as our high priest, Jesus was preparing to take the blood of the sacrifice, the sacrifice of Himself, into the presence of God for deliverance from sin. But His blood demanded His death.

The good news is that God the Father heard His pleas. Though wrestling on the precipice of death and destruction, the Son never lost reverence for the Father. The word translated *reverence* speaks of fear, awe, or extreme reverence. It is the kind of attitude that Isaiah had when He saw God's glory in the temple and concluded, "Woe is me" because of his sin (Isaiah 6:1-6). It is how Peter, James, and John felt when they saw a small glimpse of Jesus' glory—*they were terrified* (Mark 9:6). It is the kind of awe that John experienced when He saw Jesus glorified (Revelation 1:17). He fell down like a dead man. The glory of God WILL extract reverence.

So does our praying and asking of God come from a heart and attitude anywhere near to reverence? We the creatures try to create God in our image. We bring the Creator down to the level of the creature. As a result, we have prayers that are characterized by the weakness of our flesh. We offer praise that is characterized by creature flesh. We really don't worship the Creator. We worship the creature because we press down the truth about Him. If we told the truth and believed the truth about God, we too would pray, praise, and worship Him with awesome respect.

Obviously, because the Father heard the Son's pleas, He delivered Him. Well, yes, He did—sort of. The Father did not deliver the Son *from* death as we would expect. But He delivered Him *through* death. This is a very important lesson for us to learn – we who will likely be delivered through death.

In the process, the Son learned obedience. Surely the Father loves the Son. The writer reminds us concerning Jesus *although He was a son* (v.8a). He was not just any son. He is the eternal Son of God. As such, He is the perfect revelation, manifestation, or illustration of God our Creator (Heb. 1:1-2). God the Father made it known publicly that He is pleased with the Son. He made the public statement at Jesus' baptism. *And a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased"* (Mark 1:11). He said so at Jesus' transfiguration. *And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him"* (Mark 9:7).

But the Father's love did not preclude the Son being tested like we are. He was learning obedience through suffering. *He learned obedience through what he suffered* (v.8b). He was obedient from the

moment He entered human life. *And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man* (Luke 2:52). He often said that He came to do the Father's will which was perfect obedience. The author of this letter certainly understood this and wrote, *Consequently, when Christ came into the world, He said, "Sacrifices and offerings You have not desired, but a body have You prepared for Me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings You have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God, as it is written of Me in the scroll of the book'"* (Hebrews 10:5-7).

In doing the Father's will, the Son *learned obedience*. He came to know by human experience human conformity to God's will. Like us, He learned in the school of suffering. In this school, our loving Heavenly Father disciplines us so that we will understand His love (Heb. 12:5-11). Who better to serve as our High Priest than He who learned obedience through suffering the same way we do? Jesus Christ never had to learn **not** to disobey. But He did experience the pain of obedience throughout ministry as He was despised and rejected by men, and ultimately when He was crucified.

### **Christ was made perfect (vv.9-10).**

That our perfect Savior was made perfect is a bit hard to grasp. Maybe if we used the word "complete" instead of perfect we could understand this truth better. Because He was completed, Christ is the source of salvation. Again, how was Christ made perfect? Jesus was not ready to serve as the human's high priest until He had been tempted in every way like we are. Jesus was not ready to serve as our high priest until He had lived completely under the law of God without sin. In that process of being tempted yet without sin, God the Son was brought to completion.

This idea brings up the argument as to whether God the Son had the potential to sin. As one of us, a fellow-human, He experienced every temptation to sin and could have sinned. As God, it was impossible for Him to sin. He was fully God and fully man. He was brought to completion in that unique union.

In so doing, *He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him* (v.9b). What kind of obedience leads to salvation through Christ? First, He is the undisputed source of eternal salvation.

He won that position through a sinless life. He won it through the innocent sacrifice. He won it by rising from the dead and ascending to heaven. But you and I have to name Jesus Christ as our intercessor, our Savior by faith. And simply saying the words “Jesus is Lord” is not the same as faith. Faith leans wholly and only on the truth of the gospel that Jesus Christ alone in our Savior. Faith confesses sin and forsakes it. Therefore, the obedience of faith establishes a relationship.

What would have happened if when I went to the desk at Tyndall Air Force base, I had named Colonel Derek France as my sponsor? In the first place, the people at the desk never would have called him because he is the base commander. If they had called him, France would have said, “I have never heard of David Whitcomb.” That is the very thing Jesus the Savior and Judge will say at the judgment (the gate of heaven). To those who never established a relation with Him He will say, “*I never knew you, go away you law breaker*” (Mat. 7:23). He alone is our source of salvation. Only a relationship with Him and through Him with God will get us into heaven. Why? Says who?

Because He is designated high priest, Christ offers salvation. God made the appointment. *Being designated by God a high priest (v.10a)*. All high priests in the human arena are appointed. We remember that truth from previous studies. God our Creator, who established the picture and the principle of a high priest who intercedes for people before Him, made Jesus the perfect and final High Priest. He sits in heaven today “having been given title.”

Not only is Christ appointed but He is appointed as the unique high priest, *after the order of Melchizedek (v.10b)*. That means that Jesus Christ is both our Priest and our King. He rules and will rule all the kingdoms of the world and eternity. He intercedes so that we can be right with Him and with God through Him.

What does all this mean for you and for me? First, we must come to grips with the reality that life is not about us. Immaturity says that it is. Our sin nature demands that it be so. That is all Satan’s idea; and if he is our father, we believe and act like it. But the fact remains that life is about God our Creator. He created all things for His glory. He created us to reflect His image for His glory. Sin

marred all that and renders us spiritually dead – unable to appreciate God, unable to reflect God.

True life is God living through us for His glory. That process begins with us sinners being reconciled to our Creator. Reconciliation with our Creator requires the work of the perfect priest Jesus Christ. Without an approved sponsor, I couldn’t get on Tyndall AFB. Without **the** approved Priest, we will never get into heaven.