

EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

Message #9

Hebrews 5:1-10

In the first four chapters of Hebrews we saw that Jesus Christ is God's highly exalted King/Son who is far superior to everything. His exalted state will one day be seen when He establishes His Kingdom on this earth. As we have seen, He is prepared to share that Kingdom with those who faithfully obey the Word of God and serve Him. God has given us His Word, His presence, and His Son to give us the grace we need.

As we come to chapter 5, we now see that this Superior King /Son is also God's Superior High Priest.

JESUS CHRIST IS NOT ONLY GOD'S SUPERIOR KING/SON HE IS THE SUPERIOR HIGH PRIEST.

Now in this section of Scripture, God gives a contrast between a human who functioned as a high priest and Jesus Christ who is the Divine High Priest.

HUMAN HIGH PRIEST REVELATION #1 – The calling of and the conditions of a human becoming a high priest. **5:1-4**

As we look down through these verses, there are at least six conditions that were met if one was a high priest:

Condition #1 - Every high priest was just a man. **5:1a**

Every high priest is taken out of the sphere of humanity. In other words, these were normal, sinful men who became high priests. High priests were humans. It needs to be pointed out that these high priests came from the realm of men, not women. Even though our world strives to be politically correct and tolerant of anything, the fact is these leaders were men not women.

Condition #2 - Every high priest was appointed from among men. **5:1b**

Now it is emphasized twice in this context that God is the One who appoints men to this position (**5:1, 4**). The men He appointed were just men. They are not super-saints, but normal, finite, sinful men. The thing that separates them is not that they do not have certain struggles and sins, but it is the appointment God has given to them.

Condition #3 - Every high priest was man's representative in things pertaining to God. **5:1c**

Their job was to lead worship and offer gifts and sacrifices to God in behalf of the people. **A prophet came from God to bring man God's revelation. A priest was appointed by God to bring man God's representation.** His responsibilities included offering God gifts and offering the sacrifices for sins (8:3; 9:9).

He was supposed to have enough so he could give gifts to God, and he also was supposed to recognize that he was a sinner who needed those sacrifices to cover his own sin just like everyone else.

Condition #4 - Every high priest was to be gentle in dealing with the ignorant and misguided. **5:2**

The word “gently” implies that a high priest was to be a compassionate man since he had his own struggles and weaknesses. A good minister cannot be too lenient nor too severe, when it comes to dealing with people because he knows what real struggles are. That phrase “he himself is also beset with weaknesses” is one that means that every priest continually (present tense) has his own weaknesses hanging around (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 355). Every man priest has his own frailties and weaknesses always clothing him. Because of this, the high priest always must deal gently with the unlearned and the misguided.

So many times in churches, leaders project themselves as higher and holier than the average person sitting in the pew. There are those who are almost heartless when it comes to the struggling sinner. There are leaders in churches who strut around as if they have reached an ultimate level of spiritual perfection. It is a lie. It is a sham. This kind of leader should not be a leader because he is living a life that is total false delusion. Every leader has his own struggles and failures and that is, in part, what makes him a good leader. He can empathize with people who are struggling and failing and he can help show them the way to victory.

Truth is, no sinful struggle should shock a good honest leader, because all he has to do is look at himself and he will deal gently with those struggling.

Condition #5 - Every high priest was obligated to offer sacrifices for sins. **5:3**

Every high priest had to offer sacrifices for sins, both for himself and for the sins of the people. All people are sinners, even the high priests of Israel. This was and is a big part of Israel’s problem. When Jesus came to His own nation and said they needed to repent of sin, they would not acknowledge they were sinners. This is a major difference between every human minister and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ never had to make any sin offering for Himself. He had to make it for you and me.

A true leader sees himself honestly and clearly and he recognizes he has his own sin flaws. He will realize he needs his own cleansing. He needs his own confession time. Leaders are obligated this way. Even the best of ministers have solidarity with humanity in that we are all sinners.

Condition #6 - The high priest did not receive his position by aspiration but by appointment. **5:4**

Again this point is brought up; God is the one who determined who became high priest. No one made themselves a high priest because they wanted to be one. This glory and honor was not earned. You did not take a course on how to become a high priest. God selected who these would be and they got their credentials from an appointment of God.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe told the story of when he pastored a church in Kentucky, the state required that a minister be bonded or else he could not perform wedding ceremonies. He said he had to take his ordination certificate to city hall and prove he was the pastor of the church. One weekend, he received a frantic call from a parishioner who wondered if he could lead a couple through their marriage vows.

Apparently a minister from out-of-state had come to perform the ceremony, but the state of Kentucky did not recognize him with authority to conduct the service. Dr. Wiersbe said, he could have performed the ceremony as good as me, but he was not authorized to do so (*Be Confident*, pp. 49-50).

That is precisely the way the priesthood worked. You needed to be appointed by God or else God would not accept it. It is God who decides, not you and not me.

It is interesting that if we read Leviticus and Deuteronomy concerning the responsibilities of the priests, they were God's psychologists and psychiatrists. They taught the true way to get over fears, insecurities, anxieties, guilt, shame, and sin. They played an important role in the plan of God.

DIVINE HIGH PRIEST REVELATION #2 – The call of God's Son to being a High Priest. **5:5-10**

Now in this portion of the chapter, God wants us to know data about His Son being our High Priest. There are four facts He reveals:

Fact #1 - Jesus Christ did not seek to glorify Himself in becoming a High Priest, He was declared to be the High Priest by God the Father. **5:5-6**

The one Person who had every right to appoint Himself to being High Priest, never did. Jesus Christ did not sit in heaven wanting to get glory by becoming a human high priest on earth. He did not seek the position. God the Father declared this. God the Father appointed His own Son to this position.

Now God did not just appoint Christ to be any high priest, but it is stated that Jesus Christ was like a Melchizedek high priest.

According to Genesis 14:18, the thing that made Melchizedek such a unique priest was the fact that he was a king /priest who had been specifically appointed by God. Most priests were not kings, but Melchizedek was one who was. Jesus Christ is the King of Kings High Priest appointed by His Father.

Now the peculiar feature of Hebrews 5:6 is that Jesus Christ is the King/Priest forever . Melchizedek's kingly priesthood eventually ended; but Jesus Christ's priesthood is forever. This point is stressed at least six times in the book of Hebrews (5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28). Since He is the High Priest forever, He is in a position to give a salvation forever (7:23-28).

Fact #2 - Jesus Christ offered up prayers and supplications in behalf of the people. **5:7**

His prayers were heard because of His perfect piety. He was not beset with sins and weaknesses like the other high priests.

God the Son aimed His prayers at God the Father. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ wept on three occasions:

- 1) At the tomb of Lazarus because of the unbelief (John 11:35);
- 2) When He saw Jerusalem because of what He knew He could have done (Luke 19:41);
- 3) When He was in Gethsemane facing His crucifixion (Psalm 22:24).

Many have believed that this verse in Psalm specifically refers to the Garden of Gethsemane. Dr. Ray Stedman said that most commentators believe that this crying occurred in the “dark shadows of Gethsemane” (*Hebrews*, p. 64). Psalm 22:24 sits in a context discussing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He was willing to die on that cross but He needed His Father’s help, and He cried to Him and was heard because of His perfection.

He was saved from death via His resurrection. That resurrection proves Jesus Christ was perfect, and the rest of humanity who dies and is not raised proves they were not perfect.

Fact #3 - Jesus Christ learned perfect obedience through the suffering even though He was God’s Son. **5:8**

I want us to see a very important point here; **obedience to do the will of God is learned** . Becoming obedient is a learning process. **Now we typically learn by failure ; Christ never failed.** He learned a little differently than we do.

What Jesus learned is that when you obey the will of God on earth, it will often lead to suffering and pain before it leads to great elation and joy.

W. H. Griffith Thomas really captures the meaning of this when he writes: “This does not mean for an instant that there was anything like disobedience or even the slightest tendency toward a difference between His will and that of the Father. His attitude of obedience was perfect from the first, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.” But by means of His experience of human life the attitude of obedience was expressed in action. And so it was not that He was learning to obey as though there was any opposition of will, but was learning obedience by means of discipline” (*Let Us Go On*, p. 64).

The whole experience of Jesus Christ’s journey to earth was an educational experience. Jesus Christ learned all about the discipline and suffering that it would take to fulfill God’s will as the God/man and as our High Priest.

Fact #4 - Jesus Christ became the only perfect source of an eternal inheritance. **5:9**

The word “perfect” is the word used for complete. Jesus Christ perfectly completed the full course of eternal salvation. It has been well observed that the only kind of salvation that God offers is eternal, not temporal.

The term “salvation” used in **verse 9** is not referring specifically to the salvation from sins. Salvation from sins is not contingent upon our obedience but by believing on Jesus Christ. The kind of salvation that is being discussed here is the acquisition of an eternal inheritance (i.e. Heb. 9:15).

Jesus Christ is the High Priest who is the source of a salvation that can end in an eternal inheritance. This obedience that His people may have that will end in an eternal inheritance comes as we experience His amazing Mercy and Grace.

The reason why **verse 10** brings up Melchizedek again is because Jesus Christ is the only perfect High Priest who as King can give a Kingdom inheritance.