

CHRIST, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

TEXT: HEBREWS 4:14—5:10

Introduction:

One of the great themes of the epistle to the Hebrews is Christ is our great high priest (2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; 5:1, 5, 10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1, 3; 9:7, 11, 25; 10:21; 13:11).

I. OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS SINLESS (4:15)

II. OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS NOT DESCENDED FROM AARON

III. OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC

I. OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS SINLESS (4:15)

1. The priests represented God to man, and man to God.
2. None of the other high priests were sinless. They were “taken from among men” (5:1), and all men are sinners – except the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man – “God manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16).
3. The other high priests went into the tabernacle to offer up sacrifice for their own sins (5:1, 3; cf. 7:27; 9:7).
4. Consider Leviticus 16:11, “And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself.”
5. But Christ is sinless. He is Man, as well as God. And as man, He has in all points been tempted like us, yet He is “without sin” (4:15).
6. Our Lord said to the Jewish religious leaders, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46).
7. Our Lord also said, “For the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing (no inbred sin) in me” (John 14:30).
8. Second Corinthians 5:21 says Christ “knew no sin.”
9. First Peter 2:22 says, “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.”
10. First John 3:5 says, “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”
11. Our Lord was “tempted like as we are” (4:15), yet His temptations were entirely from without. Ours are from both within and without.
12. E. Schuyler English said our Lord’s temptations “proved His matchless worth, declared His holiness, and testified to His deity.”

13. If Christ were not sinless, He could not be “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).
14. The Old Testament priests offered up “both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (5:1). But Christ offered Himself (cf. 7:27).
15. “Compassion on the ignorant” (5:2) refers to sins of ignorance (cf. Lev. 4:1-4).
16. God does make a distinction between sins of ignorance and those committed presumptuously (cf. Numbers 15:24-31). Provision was made for sins of ignorance, but those who sinned committed presumptuously were often stoned to death (cf. Num. 15:30-36).
17. The point here is that the high priest would “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way,” because he himself was also “compassed with infirmity” (5:2). In other words, the high priest recognized the tendency of men to sin because he himself was a sinner.
18. But Christ is far better than any of the high priests because He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (4:15).

II. OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS NOT DESCENDED FROM AARON

1. Today men surrender to preach the Gospel. They volunteer to serve as pastors and evangelists and missionaries. “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (I Tim. 3:1).
2. But no man could aspire to the position of priest. “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (5:4).
3. In Judges 17, we read about a mixed-up fellow named Micah, who “had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest” (Judges 17:5).
4. In I Kings 12:28, we read that wicked King Jeroboam “made two calves of gold, and said...Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”
5. King Jeroboam started his own religion, “and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi” (I Kings 12:31).
6. But all of this was in violation of God’s Word. Just as much of what is going on today in churches is in violation of God’s Word.
7. The worse thing about Korah’s rebellion – referred to in Jude 11 as “the gainsaying of Core” – was that Korah and his rebels intruded into the priest’s office.

8. Numbers 16:5 says, “And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.”
9. Moses said to Korah, “Seek ye the priesthood also?” (Num. 16:10).
10. Aaron was “called of God” (5:4) to be the high priest. That is why Moses said to Korah, “For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?” (Num. 16:11).
11. Aaron was “called of God” (5:4) to be the high priest, but our great high priest is not descended from Aaron. He is not from the tribe of Levi.
12. Hebrews 7:14 says, “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.”
13. Revelation 5:5 refers to the Lord Jesus Christ as “the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David.”

III. OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST IS AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC

1. Christ is superior to all the other high priests. He alone is our “great high priest” (4:14).
2. “So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” (5:5; cf. 1:5).
3. These quotations from Psalm 2:7 refer to our Lord’s eternal sonship, incarnation, and resurrection.
4. All of the other high priests died and were buried, but our great high priest rose from the dead. He “is passed into the heavens” (4:14).
5. He is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us (1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).
6. The Lord Jesus Christ is after the order of Melchisedec (5:6).
7. The *Scofield Study Bible* says Melchisedec was a suitable type of Christ as High Priest, because:
 - (1) he was a king-priest (Genesis 14:18; Zech. 6:12, 13).
 - (2) his name means, “my king is righteous” (cf. Isaiah 11:5 and he was king of Salem (i.e. “peace,” cf. Isaiah 11:6-9).
 - (3) he had no (recorded) “beginning of days” (cf. John 1:1 nor “end of life” (cf. Romans 6:9; Hebrews 7:23-25).
8. Roman Catholics and Mormons quote this Scripture – “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4; Heb. 5:6) during their rituals.

9. Hebrews 5:7-9 describe “the mystery of godliness.” Christ suffered. He prayed. He cried. He obeyed God the Father.
10. By His perfect obedience, “he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (5:7-9).
11. This is a mystery beyond our human comprehension. The Lord Jesus “learned he obedience” (5:8).
12. Luke 2:52 says, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”
13. Philippians 2:8 says, “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
14. J. Vernon McGee said, “I stand here in the presence of a mystery, a mystery that I cannot fathom...Now I am well acquainted with the explanations that men give, but none of them satisfy me. I just recognize that it is a great mystery. Christ took upon Himself our humanity, and in that He obeyed God.”
15. Unlike the Aaronic priesthood, the order of Melchisedec (5:7, 10) is not an order with a hereditary succession (7:3). Therefore no one can be consecrated in it except by God Himself.
16. Furthermore, no one else before Christ belonged to it, and no one else after Christ (despite what the Mormons teach).

CONCLUSION:

1. Hebrews 5:9 refers to our “eternal salvation.”
 2. Hebrews 6:2 refers to “eternal judgment.”
 3. Hebrews 9:12 refers to our “eternal redemption.”
 4. Hebrews 9:14 refers to “the eternal Spirit.”
 5. Hebrews 9:15 refers to our “eternal inheritance.”
- Hebrews 13:20 refers to “the everlasting (eternal) covenant.”