

Christ the Perfect Priest

Hebrews 5:1-10

“For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”

INTRODUCTION:

ILLUSTRATION (silly):

“Wanted- A rector for St. James' Church. He must possess all Christian graces and a few worldly ones; must have such tact and disposition as will enable

him to side with all parties in the parish an all points, giving offense to none; should possess a will of his own, but agree with all the vestry; must be socially inclined and of dignified manners--affable to all, neither running after the wealthy nor turning his back upon the poor; a man of high-low church tendencies preferred. Must be willing to preach first-class sermons and do first-class work on second-class compensation--salary should not be so much of an object as the desire to be a zealous laborer in the vineyard; should be able to convince all that they are miserable sinners without giving offense. Each sermon must be short, but complete in itself--full of old-fashioned theology in modern dress: deep but polished, and free from the eloquence peculiar to newly-graduated theologians; should be young enough to be enthusiastic, but possess judgment of one of ripe years and experience. Only he who possesses the above qualifications need apply. To such a one will be given steady employment for a term of years.”

- † Paul has just introduced the Priesthood of Christ back in chapter 4
- † This will be that theme that Paul will focus on for the majority of the book of Hebrews
- † And soon as Paul mentioned Christ's priesthood—the Jewish mind would have objected
 - How Can Jesus be a Priest?
 - He Doesn't Fit the Qualifications That God Prescribed For Priesthood!

† Paul will answer that Question for the next 5 chapters

CIT: How Does Christ Perfectly Qualify as Our Great High Priest?

I. A Look At the Qualifications For the High Priest (vs. 1-4)—“*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*”

A. The High Priest Is Appointed By God (vs. 1a, 4)—“*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God... And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*”

1. He Had to Be Man

a. Nothing other than Man can fill the High Priest’s Office

i. Though Angels were highly revered among the people—they were never placed in the office of High Priest

ii. All the Jews knew this about the office

- Something other than man could not adequately represent man as High Priest
- A High Priest needed to know what the experience of man is all about

b. The stumbling block of the Jews about Christ

- i.** They stumbled at the incarnation—God becoming man
- ii.** But the thing that they did not understand—was that God had to become man in order that He may fully qualify as Man’s Perfect Priest
- iii.** The very nature of the priesthood—is that he is man!

Hebrews 2:14-17—“*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, **he also himself likewise took part of the same**; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; **but he took on him the seed of Abraham.** 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be **made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in***

things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

Hebrews 4:15—“*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*”

2. He Had to Be God’s Man—“*For every high priest taken from among men is **ordained for men in things pertaining to God**... And no man taketh this honour unto himself, **but he that is called of God, as was Aaron**”*

a. The high priest’s office was not given to just any man

i. It wasn’t given to the most popular man

ii. It was not earned by man

b. It was ordained by God

i. God appointed the man

- The first appointed man to that office was Aaron
- All those of the family of Aaron were given authority by God to enter into the high priest’s position

Exodus 28:1—“*And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel,*

that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.”

ii. God appointed the ministry

- The chosen high priest **HAD TO minister GOD’S WAY**
- He didn’t get to call the shots on how to offer sacrifices to God

NOTE: The whole book of Leviticus is a book written to the priests of Israel on how they were to minister to God on behalf of the people.

- It involved the type of sacrifices they could offer
- Who offered the sacrifices
- When the sacrifices were to be offered
- How they were to be applied
- What type of clothing needed to be worn
- What kind of incense needed to be offered
- The list goes on

Numbers 16—tells us of a few men (who were priests—but not High Priests) who tried to take that role upon themselves. God’s reaction to that was to open up the ground and swallow them whole.

God made it very clear, “**No One Takes This Role Upon Themselves.**”

B. The High Priest Is To Be Sympathetic With

Man (vs. 2)—“*who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity*”

1. He Had to be Sympathetic With Man’s Weakness

a. Man’s basic nature is to be sinful

i. When Adam and Eve sinned against God—they plunged all of mankind into a sinful state

- Man is a sinner by birth
- Man is a sinner by choice
- Man is a sinner by practice

Romans 5:12—“*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*”

ii. Even Israel, who were set apart to be a Holy people, were filled with sin

- They had all sorts of laws and rules to keep them unspotted from sin—but they continually messed up
- In fact that is why God set up the sacrificial system—and why it never stopped

running—BECAUSE
ISRAEL NEVER
STOPPED SINNING

iii. All men, Even Israel, are sinners and would need the sympathy from the high priest on a continual basis

b. The Sympathy of the high priest—“*who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*”

i. Compassion—“*Metriopatheo*”

- It carries the idea of being in the middle of two things
- Described as “*a feeling somewhere between being angry with people because they sin and not caring whether they do or not*”
- Not being too tough, not being too lenient
- The sinner deserves death, but his compassion keeps him from giving him the full penalty

ii. Compassion upon the “ignorant” and those “out of the way”

- God makes provision for the “ignorant” and “out of the way” people—those who sin in ignorance

Numbers 15:28—“*And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.*”

- But He never provides a means to get right with those who sin presumptuously

Numbers 15:30-31—“*But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.*”

NOTE: The difference between sins of ignorance and sins of presumption deal with the attitude of heart.

Those who sin in ignorance—either sin because they didn’t know they were sinning or they sin out of a sense of weakness. They do not sin in defiance of God’s authority.

Those who sin presumptuously—sin, knowing they are sinning, and do it out of a heart of stubborn rebellion. They

are not repentant of their sin at all. The responsibility of Israel was to “cut off” (kill) people like that from the congregation.

2. His Sympathy Came From His Own Weakness (motivation)—“*for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity*”

- a. What was to be his motivation to minister to his people—was his own weakness
- b. He was not to take sin lightly—but because he knows the power of sin and the weakness of man he is able to be more compassionate

NOTE: The high priest, before he could offer for the sins of the people, had to offer for his sins and the sins of the priests first. His sin was just as glaring as the sin of the people.

NOTE: That leads us to the last qualification of the High Priest.

C. The High Priest Is To Make Sacrifices For His People (vs. 1b, 3)—“*that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins...And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.*”

1. Offering Gifts For Men

- a. The Gifts in the broadest understanding

- i.** Money, Jewelry, Valuables—that the priests would offer from the people to God
- ii.** Those gifts would probably go to aiding financially the Temple and the services in the Temple

b. More specifically

- i.** Grain and meal offerings prescribed in Leviticus 2
- ii.** It consisted of fine flour and oil, mixed with frankincense and baked or fried
- iii.** Part of it would be burned upon the altar—the other part would be eaten by the priest
- iv.** It was the only non-blood offering that God prescribed in the Law
- v.** It was an offering of dedication to God—thanksgiving

2. Offering **Sacrifices** For Men

- a.** The sacrifices always dealt with the sins of the people
 - i.** The people were to come in repentance of their sin
 - ii.** Then they were to offer a sacrifice for their sin (according to the prescriptions of the law)

- iii.** It was the priest who administered the sacrifices on behalf of the people

b. This was a continual process

- i.** Daily—they offered sacrifices
- ii.** Once a year—Day of Atonement—they would sacrifice within the most holy place

3. Offerings For All Men—*“And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.”*

- a.** For the people
- b.** For Himself

NOTE: Those are the 3 qualifications of the priesthood:

- † Chosen by God
- † Sympathetic Toward Men
- † Sacrificing For Men

Paul’s next line in verse 5—*“So also Christ”*

Christ fits the qualifications of the priesthood

II. Christ Fits All the Qualifications (vs. 5-10)—*“So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

7 *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;* 8 *though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;* 9 *and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;* 10 *called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”*

A. Jesus Was Appointed By God (vs. 5-6)—“*So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”*

1. Christ’s Humility

a. Christ never came to do His own will

John 4:34—“*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work”*

John 6:38—“*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me”*

b. The priesthood was not sought by Christ—it was given to Him by God

John 8:54—“*Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me”*

2. The Father’s Call—“*So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. 6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”*

a. Paul’s argument points to the fact that the ONE who called Jesus His SON is the same ONE who called Jesus a PRIEST

i. Paul quotes from **Psalm 2:7**

Psalm 2:7—“*the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”*

ii. Then he quotes from **Psalm 110:4**

Psalm 110:4—“*The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”*

NOTE: The Jews knew that both of those Psalms (2 and 110) were prophecies given about the coming Messiah. He was to be called “God’s Son” and He would be given a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

b. This was one of the big objections that the Jews had about Christianity

i. Christianity claims to be greater than Judaism

ii. *“If it’s so great where’s the priest that is to intercede for the people?”*

iii. Paul’s answer: Christ is the Great High Priest

iv. The Jews couldn’t object to it

- They knew those Psalms referred to the Messiah
- They knew these were His prophecies

c. Who is Melchizedek?

i. Melchizedek is a person we see only one time in the Old Testament

Genesis 14:18—*“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God”*

ii. Melchizedek was both a king and priest that existed during the time of Abraham

- He ruled over the ancient city of Jerusalem
- And Abraham—in meeting with him, honored him as the priest to the Most High Priest

- Abraham honored him as the greatest priest in the world
- Melchizedek was a Great High Priest during his day

iii. Melchizedek existed over 500 years before Aaron ever did (before the nation of Israel came into existence)

iv. So when God says in Psalm 110 that Christ would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek— He is saying that Christ would be after the order of a priesthood that existed outside of the priesthood of Israel

- It wasn’t bound to the Aaronic priesthood of Israel
- It was separate from it

NOTE: In chapter 7 we will talk more of Melchizedek.

d. Christ is a priest because God ordained Him to be

B. Jesus Was Sympathetic With Man (vs. 7-8)—*“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 though he were a*

Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered”

1. The Sufferings of Christ

a. Christ suffered as a man

- i. Though He never was overcome with the sin of man—He suffered under its weight
- ii. He knew what it was like to be tempted with sin

- He knew what it was like more than any man every will
- God sets limits to what we will and won't be tempted—but Jesus had none
- He was tempted beyond any man's level

Hebrews 4:15—*“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”*

b. Paul's example of Christ's suffering—*“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared”*

i. Paul is referring to the night in Gethsemane before Christ's arrest

- Christ experienced the greatest suffering up to this point in His life for man's sin
- He was bearing the awful weight of man's sin
 - Sorrow of man's sin
 - Sorrow of Separation from God
 - Sorrow of Death at the hand of God
 - Sorrow of Harassment of Satan (seed of sin)
- The sorrow was so intense that Jesus said of that night—*“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”*
- It drove Him to intense prayer—*“he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears”*

Luke 22:44—*“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*

ii. He prayed to the ONE that was able to “*save Him from death*”

- God was able to save Him from that hour of great sorrow
- But His prayer was NOT directed towards deliverance for Himself
- What did He pray?

Matthew 26:39—“*O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*”

- He prayed that He might do the Will of God—even though, humanly He did not want to bear this great weight

iii. His prayer was heard—“*Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared*”

- Jesus surrendered to the will of God—he feared

- God’s answer was not **deliverance from this place**
- God’s answer was **the Cup**
 - To drink it all up

QUESTION: Why Did God Not Deliver Jesus From Death?

2. The Lesson Learned—“*though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered*”

- a. The only way a person can truly learn to sympathize with someone else is that they suffer through it
- b. Jesus, though He were God’s own Son, had to learn through suffering, what it meant to obey God fully—so that He could accurately sympathize for the sinner

NOTE: Jesus knew how to sympathize greater than all the high priests of all time put together.

C. Jesus Made the Ultimate Sacrifice For Man (vs. 9-10)—“*and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10 called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*”

1. Christ’s High Priesthood Perfected

a. *“Being Made Perfect”*

i. That is NOT speaking about Christ’s character or nature

- It’s NOT SAYING that Christ wasn’t perfect before, but now He is
- It’s NOT SAYING that Christ had sin, but now He doesn’t

ii. What IT IS SAYING

- Before Christ’s suffering He COULD NOT provide salvation and eternal life to anyone
- Before Christ’s suffering His Priesthood was inept
- But NOW that He has suffered—dying on the cross—He has opened the floodgates to salvation and eternal life

“he became the author of eternal salvation”

NOTE: Did you know that NO PRIEST ever before Him was able to do that, though they offered sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice?

NONE!

Hebrews 10:1—*“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.”*

NOTE: How eternal salvation is applied is important!

2. The Obedience of Faith—*“he became the author of eternal salvation **unto all them that obey him**”*

a. What that DOES NOT mean

i. It DOES NOT mean you are saved by keeping a bunch of rules

b. What it DOES mean

i. Obedience of Faith

Romans 1:5—*“by whom we have received grace and apostleship, **for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name**”*

Romans 2:8—*“but unto them that are contentious, and do **not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath**”*

Romans 6:17—*“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye **have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.**”*

Romans 10:16—“*But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*”

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8—“*the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ*”

ii. The Command of Christ is to believe the Gospel

- Recognizing your sin and turning from it
- Embracing Christ as Lord and Savior

CONCLUSION:

† **Have You Obeyed the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?**

† **Do You Know If You Are Going to Heaven?**

† **There's Too Much at Stake For You Not to Be Sure Christ is Your Personal Great Priest!**