

Hebrews: Chapter 5

Heb 5:1 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:

- high priest- Gk.749- *chief priest*. This was the only one upon whom was bestowed the right to enter the Most Holy (9:7-12), whose wife was to be a virgin (*Lev 21:13; 2 Cor 11:2*) and was to serve a life term in office (5:6). He was to be a descendant of Aaron (*Ex 29:9*) who was the brother of Moses, but in time that office was frequently given to those of other men within the tribe of Levi. Only one was to hold that office until death but by the time Jesus came on the scene that office was held by more than one (*Lk 3:2*). Once Rome became the world power that office was appointed by the Roman government. Caiaphas, according to Wayne Jackson, was an appointee of the Roman government for 18 years (18-36 AD). Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas (*Jn 18:13*), was the legitimate high priest (7-15 AD) and was still regarded as such by the Jews when Caiaphas was appointed. (See: *Caiaphas- Official at the trial of Jesus; by Wayne Jackson at www.christiancourier.com*)
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- taken from among men- (*Ex 28:1*) Explained further in the next verse. Remember, Jesus had to inherit our human nature in order to “become a merciful and faithful High Priest in service to God” (see notes on 2:17).
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- ordained- Gk.2525- to *place down* (permanently). Thayer- “to conduct the worship of God”.
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- Under the Mosaic Law the high priest was the mediator between God and the Jewish nation, and as such was qualified to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Christ has taken on that role and is now the only One qualified “to make intercession” on our behalf (7:25).

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Heb 5:2 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.

- Because he was “taken from among men” he understood the human nature of the people. He was able to *be moderate in passion*, that is, *gentle* with those who (*through lack of information or intelligence*) had no knowledge of what the Law required of them and on those who went astray. He also suffered from the reality of his own moral *frailty*.

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Heb 5:3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

- Because of his own moral *frailty*, he was to *be under obligation to offer* (Gk.4374- *bear towards*) for his own offences since, in that way, he was no different than the people he represented before God.

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Heb 5:4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was Aaron*.

- Man has the tendency to make up his own rules pertaining to priesthood (*as the Roman Catholic Church and other religious denominations have*). The O.T. office of high priest had qualifications that were designed by God and only those who met them were ordained as *was Aaron*.

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Heb 5:5 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.

- Christ, not having been a descendent of Aaron or even a Levite, glorified not Himself to the office of high priest which, in a sense, would have changed the priesthood and in turn would have required “a change in the Law as well” (7:12). He met God’s qualifications to serve in that office under the New Covenant “by means of His Own blood” (9:12).

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- “Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee” - See notes on 1:5.

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Heb 5:6 As He saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

- Priest forever- There can be no succession while this High Priest lives. Christ is Deity whereas Melchizedek was human and thus his priesthood ceased the moment he died (*of which we have no information*). As the O.T. high priest was to serve until death (*Num 35:25, 28; Jos 20:6; regular Levites could serve no more than 25 years in office- Num 8:23-26*), not so with the eternal Christ “since He always lives to make intercession for” the saints (7:25).

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- order- Gk.5010- fixed *succession* (of rank or character). Christ followed Melchisedec in that neither was from the priestly tribe of Levi (*both having lived long before Levi was even born- 7:3, 10*).

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- Melchisedec- Heb.4442- *Malki-Tsedek*; *king of right* (“*king of righteousness*” 7:2); a.k.a., King of Salem (*name for Jerusalem in ancient times which means ‘peace’*). He was called “priest of God Most High” (*Gen 14:18*) and since not much has been written about him as to his heritage, not much should be speculated about him beyond the bounds of Scripture. (*Ps 110:4*)

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Heb 5:7 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;

- A qualification “for every high priest chosen from among men” was for them to be able to sympathize with others of like passions (4:15). Christ as “the Word [Who] became flesh” (*Jn 1:14*) and the “Son of Man” after His baptism (*which was His initiation into the office of High Priest*), became “like His brothers in every respect” (2:17), i.e., He met that condition. His humanity caused Him to fear the sufferings and type of death that He was about to undergo that all humans would fear. Thus, His prayer in the garden for His Father to “Remove this cup” (*Mk 14:36*). One can only speculate on what was heard coming from the mouth of our Savior on that fateful night in Gethsemane while His disciples slept.

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- was heard- In His prayer in the garden Jesus said to His Father “I knew that You always hear Me” (*Jn 11:42*). God did hear His prayer for relief, but Both knew the fate of mankind’s redemption rested on how the Father answered, and the Son accepted His responsibility, toward the salvation of the world (*Jn 3:16*).
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- He feared- Gk.2124- Thayer- “simply *reverence towards God, godly fear, piety...*, for by using this more select word the writer, skilled as he was in the Greek tongue, speaks more reverently of the Son of God than if he had used *φόβος [phobos]*”. It was not that Jesus feared death in and of itself as much as His own humanity would have feared that which was to happen before it. Here, He showed His reverence to the Father, having made the decision to fulfill His mission in order to “deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery” (2:15).

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Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;

- Though He were (Gk.5607- *being*) a Son- Even as (*being*) the Son of God...

- learned- Gk.3129- to *learn* (in any way): -understand. Christ became “sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21). “He Himself bore our sins in His body...” (1 Pet 2:24). Christ would never have gone against the Father (Mat 3:15) so there exists another thought on His having to become acquainted with obedience (Gk.5218- *compliance or submission*) personally. Our disobedience is what caused Him to *understand*, through His flesh, obedience by the things which He suffered, thus giving us the example of what it means to obey, remaining silent, even when disciplined for the sins of others (Isa 53:7). We become His “brother and sister and mother” when we do “the will of [His] Father in Heaven” (Mat 12:50) as He did through coming in the flesh and assimilating into the natural realm in order to be “tempted as we are, yet without sin” (4:15). In this way He learned (*understood*) obedience and so man has no excuse not to.

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Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him;

- perfect- Gk.5048- to *complete*, that is, (literally) *accomplish*. It was through His suffering that Christ accomplished what He came to do (Jn 19:30). Through His death, burial and resurrection He authored (*caused*) *perpetual deliverance (rescue)* to everyone who *conforms* to His authority (Mat 28:18).

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Heb 5:10 Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

- Christ was *addressed*, that is, saluted by *name*, by God as High Priest, thus His position came directly from God and not through the O.T. Levitical order. His came after the order of Melchizedek (see notes v. 6).

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Heb 5:11 Of Whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

- The inspired writer of this epistle knew, and thus wanted to write even more than he was attempting to express here on the *topic* of Christ’s High Priesthood being similar to that of Melchizedek’s. He found it *difficult of explanation*, not because he couldn’t clarify his own understanding but, because these Hebrew saints had ears that were *sluggish (lazy)* toward anything that they should have been able to grasp by that time.

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Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

- for the time- The writer is giving insight as to the length of time these brethren were Christians. He seemed to be chiding them on their immaturity as having had enough time to have studied (*as the Bereans of Act 17:11*) to the point of being able to teach others what they themselves were taught concerning the *chief fundamentals* of the *utterances* of God, things “the Jews were entrusted with” (*Rom 3:2*). Jesus told the Jews “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me” (*Jn 5:39*). They needed a reiteration of basic Christianity via O.T. scrolls and the letters of the apostles already in circulation (*Col 4:16; 2 Pet 3:16*). Their need of milk and not of strong meat explains their maturity level in the faith. They weren’t growing “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (*2 Pet 3:18*). How many supposedly mature Christians today can be chided for this same default?

- strong meat- Gk.4731/5160- *stable/nourishment*. Their need of milk also showed they were not mature enough in the faith to digest what was beyond a basic understanding.

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Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

- In writing to the Corinthians, Paul stated “Brothers, do not be children in your thinking (*Gk.5424- the mind or cognitive faculties*). Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature” (*1 Cor 14:20*). The Hebrews writer here is not negating the fact that they have, in fact, been converted to Christianity, but is calling them *inexperienced*, that is, *ignorant* where it concerned the fundamental teachings on (*Christian*) *justification*, equating them to a *simple-minded* person and as being *immature* Christians. Milk is only to sustain an infant until it is ready for solid food.

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Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- On the other hand, *stable nourishment* is easily digested by those who are *complete* (in mental and moral character), even those *through habit* have had their “*faculty of the mind* for perceiving, understanding, judging” (*Thayer*) exercised (*Gk.1128- Thayer: “to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind: of one who strives earnestly to become godly”*) to consistently be able to discern the difference between things that are good and those that are *worthless* as to what benefits for salvation. How else was Timothy (*or any other faithful saint for that matter*) able to, in whatever incident, “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (*2 Tim 4:2*) were it not for a steady diet of the word?

Worksheet Hebrews: Chapter 5

1. Who was the only one permitted to enter the Most Holy place of the Temple?
2. What tribe and order were these priests to be descendants from?
3. Explain what the Mosaic high priest had in common with the rest of the Israelites.
4. What qualified Christ to serve as High Priest under the New Covenant?
5. What does it mean to be a “Priest forever?”

6. Explain the phrase “after the order of Melchizedek”.
7. Why would Jesus fear death, knowing what lied beyond the grave?
8. Since Jesus had always obeyed the Father, why was it necessary for Him to learn “obedience through what He suffered”?
9. What was/is the product of His suffering?
10. Explain why these Hebrew saints needed “milk, not solid food”.
11. In this context, what purpose did “milk” serve?
12. Why is a daily exercise of Bible study important to a Christian?

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