

Hebrews: A Bridge from the Old to the New

Hebrews – Chapter 5

Jesus Christ: Superior to Aaron (cont)

Jesus, the Greatest High Priest (Verses 1-10)

In these first ten verses of Hebrews 5, the author points out that the Priesthood of Jesus offers:
a Better Ordination ^{v.1,4-6}, a Better Human Sympathy ^{v.2,7-8}, and a Better Sacrifice ^{v.3,9-10}.

- 1 The author indicated high priests were chosen (note the words “selected” & “appointed”) and must be a man. The primary responsibility of the high priest was to “represent” man to God – one way he did this was by offering “gifts and sacrifices for [the] sins” of man ^{Hebrews 2:17}. The “gifts” may have been grain offerings for thanksgiving or dedication, while “sacrifices” were blood offerings for the atonement of sins ^{Leviticus 1-5}.
- 2 When a spiritually-minded man was chosen as high priest, he would “deal gently” (*metriopatheō*: mildness or meekness) with others in recognition of his own human imperfections ^{Isaiah 29:24}.
- 3 In their human frailty, the high priest in the Levitical system had to bring a sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, before he could offer a sacrifice for the people ^{Leviticus 9:7, 16:1-34, Hebrews 9:7}.
- 4 Earlier ^{v.1}, the author declared the high priests must be selected/appointed, and here he completed the thought by stating each high priest must also have a calling from God ^{Exodus 28:1, Numbers 16:1-50, 18:5-7}.
- 5 Jesus could not appoint Himself a high priest, because His glory had to come from His Father ^{John 8:54, 16:12-15}. The author then repeated ^{Hebrews 1:5 (Paul also quoted this verse in Acts 13:33)} a quote from the Psalms ^{Psalms 2:7} that he used to emphasize God the Father’s proclamation of Jesus as His Son ^{Matthew 3:17}.
- 6 Furthermore, the priesthood of Jesus was/is the result of an appointment by God the Father, as stated in another quote from the Psalms ^{Psalms 110:4}, and partially repeated multiple times for emphasis ^{Hebrews 5:10, 6:20}. This directive by God the Father named Jesus as an everlasting priest “in the order of Melchizedek”. The significance of this statement was that Melchizedek was both a king and priest during the time of Abraham ^{Genesis 14:18-20, Hebrews 7:1-22}, and the only Biblical person (prior to Jesus) to legally hold both titles. In addition, this demonstrated a higher calling than the Levitical priesthood for Jesus ^{Hebrews 10:11-12}.
In addition to being king, Saul decided on his own to act in the position of a priest. However, the Lord told Samuel to reveal that because of these actions, He would remove Saul from both positions ^{1 Samuel 13:1-14}.
- 7 During the last twenty-four hours of the earthly life of Jesus, He cried out to the Father with many requests. Following the Last Supper ^{Luke 22:7-20}, Jesus prayed for relief in the Garden of Gethsemane ^{Matthew 26:36-46} and God responded by sending an angel ^{Luke 22:43}. Later, Jesus cried out to His Father from the cross with passionate statements like “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” ^{Luke 23:34}, “My God, why have you forsaken me?” ^{Matthew 27:46} and “Into your hands I commit my spirit.” ^{Luke 23:46}. In anguish, God heard His Son’s pleas ^{Psalms 22:24} and responded by raising Him from the grave ^{Psalms 16:9-10}.

Although Jesus knew what would happen ahead of time, He faced it freely [John 10:18](#) with joy [Hebrews 12:1-3](#) for the sake of all humans, who had no chance of fellowship with God without His sacrifice [Hebrews 10:9-10](#). Jesus also modeled the correct approach to powerful prayer: praying in “reverent submission” [Mark 14:36](#).

8-9 Although He was and is the Son of God (as well as being truly God), Jesus has always completely submitted Himself to His Father, including facing the cross [Philippians 2:5-8](#) to show man how to live in perfect obedience [John 5:19-20](#). In humbling Himself as a man, Jesus also demonstrated how to respond to temptation [Luke 4:1-13](#) and how to follow God’s commands by submitting to baptism in order to “fulfill all righteousness”, [Matthew 3:13-17](#). These actions proved Him perfectly righteous, enabling Him to provide those who obey [John 14:23-24](#) with eternal righteousness through His sacrifice for sins [Romans 3:21-26](#), [1 Peter 3:17-18](#).

10 The author summarized by stating the Father called Jesus to be “high priest in the order of Melchizedek”, and not a priest in the human, imperfect Levitical line. The Levite high priests offered repeated sacrifices in obedience to God’s commands; however, these animal sacrifices could not save anyone [Hebrews 10:11](#). In contrast, Jesus offered His own death [1 Corinthians 15:3](#) as the ultimate, one-time sacrifice [Hebrews 7:27, 10:12](#).

Heed God’s Principles, Fully Commit to Christ: Warning against Deteriorating (5:11-6:20)

11 The author of Hebrews first states there is much more to say about the priesthood of Jesus [Hebrews 4:14-7:28](#), and then is pretty hard on his readers, by telling them they are “slow to learn” (alternate translation ‘dull’), indicating not only a learning speed, but also a negative attitude toward gaining wisdom. These problems not only existed at that time, but have been prevalent throughout time, and especially evident today. All are aware of the special revelation of God’s creation [Romans 1:18-20](#), but so many choose to reject [Romans 1:21-32](#).

12 Many of the Jewish Christians addressed by the author should have matured to the point of being “teachers”, but their spiritual lethargy restrained their progress in the faith. The author exhorted them to wake up by suggesting they find someone to teach them the “elementary truths” and then press on [Philippians 3:12-14](#). God calls all believers to teach His Word in one way or another [Deuteronomy 6:5-9](#), [Colossians 3:15-17](#), [1 Peter 3:15b](#).

13 The body of a normally healthy child needs milk, but as the child’s body matures, it requires solid food. The author used this analogy to explain the development of a believer maturing from the basics of the faith (spiritual milk [1 Corinthians 3:1-2](#), [1 Peter 2:2](#)) to more complex concepts, like an understanding of the splendor of the “teaching about righteousness”; Christ’s righteousness [1 Corinthians 1:26-31](#), [2 Corinthians 5:21](#), [Philippians 3:7-11](#).

14 By using the phrases “solid food”, “mature”, “constant use”, “trained” and “distinguish” (or ‘discern’), the author was emphasizing that faith will only be deepened with increasing knowledge, along with obedience. All believers have access to the boundless gifts of God, but those who never move beyond spiritual “milk” continue to be slaves of their old lives [Galatians 4:1-3](#). As a result, the author continued to encourage new Christians to be actively training in spiritual knowledge [1 Timothy 4:7b-8](#) and Godly wisdom [1 Corinthians 2:1-8](#), and to transition from thinking like a spiritual “child” to more mature thoughts of their faith [1 Corinthians 14:20](#). These are the marks of the truly saved, because salvation is ‘a faith that leads to obedience’ [Romans 1:5](#).

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, ron@hopeinchristnm.com, 505-294-4743.

- Exodus 28:1** [The Lord said to Moses:] "Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests."
- Leviticus 9:7** Moses said to Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."
- Psalms 22:24** For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.
- Mark 14:36** "*Abba, Father,*" [Jesus] said, "*everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.*"
- John 8:54** Jesus [said], "*If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.*"
- John 10:18** [Jesus said:] "*No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.*"
- Romans 1:5** Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.
- Romans 1:21a** For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him...
- 1 Corinthians 2:6-7** We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.
- 1 Corinthians 3:1-2** Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly - mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.
- 1 Corinthians 14:20** Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.
- 2 Corinthians 5:21** God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
- Galatians 4:1** What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate.
- Colossians 3:16a** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom...
- 1 Timothy 4:7b-8** ...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.
- Hebrews 12:2** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
- 1 Peter 3:18a** For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.