

Hebrews 5

- Just completed the second warning
 - Which was the culmination of a sidebar or detour into discussing the need to believe what they have heard concerning Jesus
 - Having finished that sidebar, he's ready to return to his discussion of the High Priesthood of Jesus
 - Exposition again
 - This is the second major comparison the author makes in the letter
 - The first was between Jesus and other messengers
 - Angels
 - Moses
 - The second is between the earthly high priests and our heavenly high priest, Jesus

[Heb. 4:14](#) ¶ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

[Heb. 4:15](#) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

- There are two details here that are important to the rest of the author's argument concerning priests
 - First, Jesus is a HP who has passed through the heavens
 - Heaven is plural because it refers to the three kinds of heavens that were understood to exist in the creation
 - First heaven = sky
 - Second heaven = realm of the sun and stars
 - Third heaven = the throne room of God
 - Jesus has passed through the heavens

- He has traveled through the 1st and 2nd heavens
 - Which means He is now in the 3rd heaven, with the Father
 - In other words, He is a superior priest because of His proximity to the Father
 - Jesus is in the presence of the Father
 - In a superior position for the purpose of intercession
 - The earthly HP entered the Holy of Holies to perform his work of atonement before God
 - But it took place in the earthly throne
 - Which is far removed from God's actual throne in heaven
 - Example
 - If you needed the help of the President of the United States
 - You weren't allowed to go into the oval office much less speak to the President directly
 - You have two options
 - Chief of staff
 - 4th assistant campaign manager from the 54th precinct or RI?
 - What if I told you that you lived in the 54th precinct and the 4th assistant campaign manager was your cousin's landlord
 - No difference
 - You want to guy closest to the top
- So we have a HP who has made the trip to the top and sits at the right hand of the Father
 - But the readers were evidently conflicted over whether to rely on Jesus or to return to the high priest of the temple
 - The local guy they knew so well

- And the writer says think about it...who do you want representing you to God?
- But he doesn't stop with that comparison
 - In verse 14, my translation said we have a HP
 - But the Greek conjugation of the verb echo means a continuous action
 - Our HP is continuously available to us and continuously in the presence of the Father
 - So not only is He a better priest in terms of proximity to the Father
 - He is a better HP because he isn't limited to certain times a year
 - The HP only entered one day a year
- In light of these differences, who would prefer the earthly version over the heavenly version?
 - Some still did
 - So the writer moves into chapter 5 to really dive into the weakness of the one and the strength of the other
- First he lists the qualifications of a HP
 - Look to see how many you can find

[Heb. 5:1](#) ¶ For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; [Heb. 5:2](#) he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; [Heb. 5:3](#) and because of it he is obligated to offer *sacrifices* for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. [Heb. 5:4](#) And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

- Qualifications
 - Must be taken from among men

- Can't be an angel, can't be God Himself unless God were in the form of man
 - The purpose of priest is to act as a representative (stand in) of mankind
 - If the HP is appointed on behalf of men (verse 1) then the representative must be a man
- Secondly, he had to serve in the capacity of offering gifts and sacrifices
 - Sacrifices are the blood sacrifices that provided atonement for sin
 - Gifts refers to the meal-offerings that often accompanied sacrifice
 - Like Passover meal that accompanies the Passover sacrifice
- Third, he had to sympathetic with compassion for those he represents
 - He will deal gently with the sinners he represents, because he knows what it's like to be in their situation
 - Gently implies a balance between mercy and correction
 - A HP wouldn't ignore the sin nor will he deal harshly with it
 - He remains sympathetic regardless of whether the sin is a result of ignorance or who purposely go astray (planao)
- Finally, the HP could only be appointed by God Himself
 - Because he must be acceptable to God other wise God won't recognize him as a representative
 - When we send an ambassador to a foreign country, he must be received and accepted by the host country or he can't serve as an ambassador
 - So he presents his credentials
 - So just like Aaron was appointed

[Ex. 28:1](#) ¶ “Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.

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- Review
 - Man
 - Offering sacrifice
 - With compassion and understanding
 - Appointed and approved by God
- What about our eternal HP?
 - The writer covers the same material but in a different order
 - Try to find the pattern

[Heb. 5:5](#) ¶ So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him,

“YOU ARE MY SON,
TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU”;

[Heb. 5:6](#) just as He says also in another *passage*,

“YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.”

[Heb. 5:7](#) In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

[Heb. 5:8](#) Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

[Heb. 5:9](#) And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

[Heb. 5:10](#) being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

- The last point the writer covers concerning the earthly priesthood is the first point he covers concerning Christ
 - Christ didn’t glorify Himself, but God the Father choose Him
 - The writer cites the OT twice
 - First, Psalm 2:7

- This Psalm gives evidence that the Messiah would be called Son by God Himself

[Psa. 2:6](#) "But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

[Psa. 2:7](#) ¶ "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

[Psa. 2:8](#) 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession.

[Psa. 2:9](#) 'You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.'"

[Psa. 2:10](#) ¶ Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;
Take warning, O judges of the earth.

[Psa. 2:11](#) Worship the LORD with reverence
And rejoice with trembling.

[Psa. 2:12](#) Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in*
the way,

For His wrath may soon be kindled.
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

- So the first proof gives evidence that the Messiah would be declared a Son by God
 - This becomes more important later when the author begins to talk about Jesus' lineage (his progeny)
- Second proof is Psalm 110

[Psa. 110:2](#) The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*,
"Rule in the midst of Your enemies."

[Psa. 110:3](#) Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power;
In holy array, from the womb of the dawn,
Your youth are to You *as* the dew.

[Psa. 110:4](#) ¶ The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind,
"You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek."

[Psa. 110:5](#) The Lord is at Your right hand;
He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.

[Psa. 110:6](#) He will judge among the nations,
He will fill *them* with corpses,
He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.

- The proof here shows that this same Son, the same king will be a priest
 - And he will have an order different than the order of Aaron
 - His order will be that of Melchizedek
 - So he is a priest appointed by God
- The next point the writer covers is humanity
 - In the days of his flesh
 - All the days He was on earth
 - He offered prayers and supplications
 - Loud crying, tears
 - Suffering in the Garden

[Luke 22:41](#) And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and *began* to pray,

[Luke 22:42](#) saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

[Luke 22:43](#) Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.

[Luke 22:44](#) And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.

- These references to suffering reflect his humanity
 - He appealed to the Father like any man would in a stressful situation
 - He felt real fear and anguish
- Not he deals with compassion by reference to Jesus learning obedience
 - Even though Jesus was God's Son, nevertheless He endured suffering and learned obedience

[Phil. 2:8](#) Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- He hadn't been disobedience, He simply had never been in a situation where disobedience was even a consideration

- Innocence is life untested, virtue is innocence tested and triumphed
- And in His suffering and nevertheless obeying, he became an even more compassionate and sympathetic HP
 - Been there, done that way
 - But in a been there, overcame that way
- Third, the writer shows Jesus qualification to offer sacrifice
 - But it comes in a subtle reference
 - He was made perfect
 - The word is teleioo (having been made perfect)

[John 4:34](#) Jesus *said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

[Luke 13:32](#) And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I reach My goal.'

[John 19:28](#) ¶ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, *said, "I am thirsty."

[John 19:30](#) Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

- Accomplish, reach a goal, fulfill, finished
 - So in verse 9, we could say having accomplished all that God required
 - More specifically, He did the work of the cross
 - He was the sacrifice, and therefore being made perfect is really a reference to His personal work of sacrifice on the cross
 - And to all who would obey Him, He becomes the source of their salvation

[1Pet. 4:17](#) For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not **obey** the gospel of God?

- In other words, to obey the calling of the Gospel to repent and believe
- Finally, Jesus is appointed to an order of His own – the order of Melchizedek
 - Now this is a fascinating insight
 - All priests before Jesus came from an order of Aaron
 - Of in the likeness or according to the rules and lineage of Aaron
 - Remember how God appointed priests (Ex verse earlier)

[Ex. 28:1](#) ¶ “Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me—Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.

[Ex. 29:9](#) “You shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and bind caps on them, and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute. So you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

- Aaron was a Levite (Ex 4:14)
 - And God appointed Aaron and his sons to be the first priests
 - They established the priesthood and set the pattern
 - After the worshipping of the golden calf, Moses called for those who stood with him
 - Only those of the tribe of Levi answered that call
 - Moses instructed them to exact justice on the other tribe leadership
 - So Moses declared they should consecrate themselves because they had turned against their brothers (Ex 33)
 - So the Levites became the ones to serve as priests in the priesthood of Aaron

- Melchizedek is a new character
 - He's a shadowy character
 - He appears in Psalm 110
 - And in Genesis 14 (go to that chapter)
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- The story of Mel leaves us with more questions than answers
 - But the writer here seems to be on the verge of giving us those answers
 - And showing us who Melchizedek truly was
 - And how he established a different order of the priesthood from which Jesus descends
- But he stops before he even gets going

[Heb. 5:11](#) ¶ Concerning him we have much to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

[Heb. 5:12](#) For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

[Heb. 5:13](#) For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

[Heb. 5:14](#) But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

- The writer takes a turn here away from exposition and toward an exhortation
 - But much like the detour he took earlier to address the unbelievers among the congregation
 - Here's another detour beginning, but now the question is which group do you think he is interested in talking to this time?
- Concerning him
 - Concerning Mel
 - We have much to say (we have much to talk about)

- It is hard to explain
- Why?
 - Because they are dull of hearing
 - Very specific phrase
 - Nothros = sluggish, slothful, lazy
 - They weren't doing the hard work of studying and learning what God had provided for them in His word
 - In this case, it would be the background of what had been what was written concerning the priesthood
 - And Abraham and Lot in Genesis
 - And what David wrote in the Psalms
 - Because any understanding of who Mel was is predicated upon the student have a solid understanding of a minimum degree of Biblical truth
- How did the writer know they would have this trouble?
 - Presumably because of their ongoing mistakes in practice and thought
 - They were confused over whether to follow the teachings of angels or Jesus
 - They weren't sure whether Moses was the right messenger or Jesus
 - They didn't know whether to seek intercession from the earthly HP or Jesus
 - They were unable to accept and live out even the most basic principles of their faith
- This first comment introduces an important first principle we must understand ourselves
 - Our ability to grasp the deep and rewarding truths of our faith found in scripture is a matter of hard work

- We must be practiced in study of basic concepts before we can hope to understand and accept the more difficult ones
 - And unless we understand the more difficult ones, we remain vulnerable and weak to wrong teaching, wrong assumptions, wrong thought and wrong practices
- More importantly, we don't have a choice as to whether we commit ourselves to the hard work of studying and understanding the Bible
 - God's word calls all believers to dedicate themselves to that work
 - Look at ver 12
 - They should have been teachers now
 - This is not a reference to the spiritual gift of teaching
 - You don't have to have the gift of teaching to teach
 - You don't even have to teach
 - But every Christian should make it their goal to be able to teach
 - In other words, every Christian should know the scriptures well enough to get up here and teach chapter 6 of Hebrews were I to phone in sick
 - And of course, that doesn't mean I see myself as a standard in any sense,
 - Because I am likewise a student who continues to learn also
 - But every Christian is called to learn the word of God for themselves and to do seriously and without ever reaching a stopping point
- These Christians were still in need for someone to teach them the elementary principles of the oracles of God (word of God)
 - Elementary means beginning...the foundation ideas of the faith
 - Those elementary principles are milk, not solid food

- The writer is introducing an analogy which we will consider more next week, but the essential point is obvious
 - We are called to do more than understand the basics
 - But because these folks had never matured beyond the basics, even the basics had been eroded and lost
 - Now they were utterly confused about the foundational teachings of the church
 - The same can happen to any of us if we will not mature beyond our beginnings and reach for the more complex and rich teaching of our faith found in scripture
- If we don't mature, the consequence is in the end of verse 14
 - We can't discern good from evil
- More next week...