

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 5

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight as we return to our study of the book of Hebrews we come to Hebrews 5:5-10. In Hebrews 5:1-4 the writer pointed back to the Old Testament to refresh the minds of his readers of the qualifications of the high priest under the Old Covenant. There were 3 qualifications which the writer pointed out.

1. **He had to be appointed by God.**
2. **He had to be able to feel compassion for those he offered sacrifices for.**
3. **He had to offer sacrifices for sinful man.**

Now remember that in this section the writer's desire is to show that Jesus is the Great High Priest. The writer had introduced Jesus as the Great High Priest in Hebrews 4:14-16.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ *Seeing then that we have a **great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

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.*

¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

Here in these verses the writer encourages his readers to HOLD FAST TO THEIR PROFESSION. Remember these people were considering going back to Judaism and the Holy Spirit is working through the writer to show them that Jesus Christ is better than anything under the Old Covenant. Therefore in this section of the letter the Holy Spirit points them to Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest. In 4:14-16 we were able to see that Jesus Christ did what no other Old Testament priest could do and that was He made a way for the common man to come into the presence of God.

But this section would have raised questions in the minds of the Hebrew believers:

1. Did Jesus qualify to be the High Priest?

2. How could He be the High Priest when He was of the tribe of Judah and not of the tribe of Levi?
3. How could Jesus, as the Son of God, identify with people who were sinners?
4. How could Jesus do what no High Priest of the Old Covenant could ever do and that was make a way for the common man to enter into the presence of God?

The Holy Spirit knowing the hearts and the minds of the readers went on to answer these questions. He does so by presenting the qualifications of the high priest under the Old Covenant. Then He brings Jesus alongside the qualifications to show that He meets each and everyone.

II. Jesus, the Qualified High Priest

Part 1

A. Jesus was appointed by the Father

Notice Hebrews 5:5

Here within these verses there is much to be considered. First of all we see that Jesus did not glorify Himself to be the Great High Priest. Jesus was chosen by the Father to be the High Priest. Jesus did nothing while He walked on this earth to bring glory to Himself.

John 8:54

⁵⁴ *Jesus answered, **If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me;** of whom ye say, that he is your God:*

Jesus did not glorify Himself to be the High Priest but He was chosen and appointed by the Father. This statement by the writer is so very important in light of the fact that these Hebrew believers were contemplating going back to the Judaism. You see the priests that were functioning at the time were NOT chosen and appointed by God. Remember Ananias and Caiaphas of Jesus day and how they served as high priests only for the purpose of personal profit and personal gain? While Jesus was on the earth He cleansed the Temple twice. The reason was because of how the worship system had been corrupted by the high priests. They were rejecting the sacrifices of the Jews who came to worship and they were then selling them animals which they had at inflated prices. Their entire purpose was to gain power and honor for themselves and their families. They honored themselves only!

Jesus was honored by the Father and not by Himself.

Notice Hebrews 5:5 again.

The writer points back to Psalm 2 in this verse to show that He had been chosen by the Father. Just as a side note here it is very interesting that the writer always uses the Scriptures to make his point. He lets the Word of God do the work in the hearts of his readers. Here the writer points to Psalm 2 because the Hebrews would have understood that this was a Psalm which spoke of the Messiah. Here is how Psalm 2:7 reads:

⁷ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Psalm 2:7 points to the conception of Jesus Christ in the womb of Mary. But the writer does not stop with this.

Notice Hebrews 5:6

Here we see that the writer again points to the Old Testament to show that Jesus was appointed by God to be the Great High Priest. Here in this verse the writer points to Psalm 110:4. So if we put verses 5 and 6 together we see that Jesus was the Son of God and as the Son of God He was appointed by God to fill the office of the High Priest. Jesus therefore received the right to be the High Priest because the very God that had begotten Him also appointed Him to the office.

But there is so much more here in Hebrews 5:6. In Psalm 110 the Holy Spirit tells us that Jesus is a Priest but not a Priest from the line of Aaron. The writer opens up a thought that would have most likely escaped the minds of the Hebrew believers. There was a priesthood that existed long before the Aaronic Priesthood and it was a priesthood that far exceeded the Aaronic Priesthood. It was the priesthood of Melchisedec. Melchisedec was a priest long before Aaron was on the scene. We see in Hebrews 5:6 that Jesus was a Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Jesus was not Priest after the order of Aaron but He was a Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Now I do not want to get into a study of Melchisedec until we get to chapter 7 where the writer will lead us deeper into this study but I do want to give you some information here that will help you to see why Jesus Priesthood was superior to the priesthood of Aaron.

Hebrews 5:6 raises a question about Melchisedec and that is this: "Why was his priesthood better than the priesthood of Aaron?" There are several reasons which I want you to see.

Let us start by going to the Old Testament to gather some more information on Melchisedec. In Genesis 14 we read of Abram's nephew Lot being captured. Abram then gathers his servants and he went into battle to set Lot free.

Genesis 14:14-17

¹⁴ *And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.*

¹⁵ *And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.*

¹⁶ *And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.*

¹⁷ *And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.*

Now it was not only the king of Sodom who went out to meet Abram but there was someone else who came to bless Abram.

Genesis 14:18

¹⁸ *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.*

Here we are introduced to Melchisedec who is the king of Salem which was Jerusalem and within this verse we read 2 very interesting points about the man. First of all we see he was a KING and secondly we see he was a PRIEST.

This immediately separates Melchisedec from Aaron. Aaron was a priest but he was never a king. That makes Melchisedec's priesthood superior to Aaron's priesthood.

Notice Hebrews 5:6 again.

Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec and that is because He is both **King** and **Priest**. This makes His Priesthood superior to the Aaronic priesthood. There is something else here also. Hebrews 5:6 tells us that Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchisedec FOREVER. This also makes Jesus superior to Aaron because Aaron was a priest but he was not a priest forever. Jesus Christ is an ETERNAL HIGH PRIEST. That is why the writer of Hebrews refers to Him as the Great High Priest.

Now all of this would have stirred the minds of the Hebrew believers and they would have understood that the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to Aaron and since Jesus was

a Priest after the order of Melchisedec FOREVER they would have understood that He was superior to Aaron. There was something else about Melchisedec that they would have known and that was that Abraham paid tithes to him which meant he was greater than Abraham.

Hebrews 7:1-4

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

² ***To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;***

³ *Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*

⁴ ***Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.***

Abraham was great in the mind of the Hebrew and so for Abraham to pay tithes to Melchisedec really spoke of the superiority of the man. Therefore, for Jesus to be a Priest after the order of Melchisedec showed the superiority of Jesus' Priesthood above Aaron's priesthood.

From this we can see how the statements in Hebrews 5:5-6 would have impacted the Hebrew believers. They were considering going back under the Old Covenant but after being confronted with the Priesthood of Jesus they could see that the Aaronic priesthood was inferior. But what about sympathy? Could Jesus sympathize with sinners?

B. Jesus could sympathize with sinners.

Notice Hebrews 5:7

The account mentioned here probably refers to what Jesus went through in the Garden of Gethsemane as well as through the trials and while on the cross. But I don't think we can limit the strong crying and the tears to just the Garden of Gethsemane and I will show you why I say that.

John 21:24-25

²⁴ *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.*

²⁵ *And there are also **many other things which Jesus did**, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even **the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.** Amen.*

John 21:25 tells us there were many other things which Jesus did but the world could not contain the books so there are many experiences of our Lord that we do not have record of. So there could have been other times when Jesus wept and came under great temptation. But let us get back to the thought again.

Let me take you to the Garden of Gethsemane to look at what our Lord went through there.

Matthew 26:36-45

³⁶ *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.*

³⁷ *And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.*

³⁸ *Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.*

³⁹ *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.***

⁴⁰ *And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*

⁴¹ *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

⁴² *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.***

⁴³ *And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.*

⁴⁴ *And he left them, and went away again, **and prayed the third time, saying the same words.***

⁴⁵ *Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

That night in the Garden Jesus came under 3 spiritual attacks from Satan. Each time He went to His Father in prayer. Satan was doing his best to pull Jesus from the will of God. That is why Jesus prays, "O my Father". He is clinging to His Father as Satan attempts to pull Him away. So the point here is that Jesus was confronted with great temptation that

night in the Garden as Satan tried to get Him to abandon the will of the Father. Let me show you how great the pressure was.

Luke 22:42-44

⁴² *Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

⁴³ *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

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.*

The sweat which came from His body was as it were great drops of blood.

Conclusion:

The question is, "How can Jesus identify with me in the pressures of life when He never once gave into sin?" I want you to grasp what I am about to tell you. Jesus experienced far greater pressure than we do because we have always taken the easy way out which is to give in to temptation." He never gave in so He endured a pressure from temptation that we do not know about. So when it comes to the pressures of sin Jesus has experienced far more than we can imagine.

Hebrews 4:15

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.*