

Wednesday Night Bible Study on Hebrews
Hebrews 5:4-10

Prayer:

Context:

In chapter 3 and 4 the author was writing to urge the people not to fall away. He was quoting Psalm 95 and referencing Numbers 14 using the Old Testament Hebrew people as an example. Then, at the end of chapter 4 the author moved to start talking about the High Priest. Jesus has gone through temptations and struggles on earth, yet He didn't sin. So, He is a faithful High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses.

In the beginning of chapter 5 the author continues to write about High Priest, but he seems to digress in order to write more about the human high priest. The human High Priest is selected from among men and must offer sacrifices for his own sins.

Hebrews 5:1-10: A High Priest after the order of Melchizedek

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;² he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness;³ and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself.

Now, verses 4-10

And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

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”;*

⁶ *just as He says also in another passage,*

*“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”*

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. ⁸ Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, ¹⁰ being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Verse by verse

Verse 4:

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- In the Greek as well as some English translations this verse starts with the continuing coordinating conjunction “and.” This is a copulative conjunction which means that it connects to equal units together.
 - This means we must look back at the preceding material which we have already done. The author is writing about the human High Priest.
- Now he makes a strong statement--- “no one’ takes the honor himself.”
- It is an honor to be the High Priest.
- This is a calling from God.
- Aaron was called by God to be the High Priest
- The author uses the masculine pronoun for the High Priest.
 - Priests were all men
- Num 16:40; 18:7; 2 Chr 26:18: These Old Testament passages are all about who can be High Priests. The 1 Chr 26:18 passage is about Uzziah the king burning incense when he was not supposed to.
- Ex 28:1; 1 Chr 23:13: more passages about Aaron’s call to the priesthood.

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

5:4. *The writer follows the Old Testament law on the high priestly succession; in Palestine in his own day, the office of high priest was a political favor granted by the Romans. Outside Palestine, however, this was not an issue; the writer speaks of the system God had appointed in the Bible.*¹

Verse 5:

- The author connects Christ with the High Priest. Christ did not choose this position.
- The NASB says that Christ didn’t “glorify Himself” to become High Priest.
- The ESV says “exalt Himself” to be High Priest.
- The NIV says Christ didn’t take upon Himself the “glory” of being High Priest
- This comes from a verb in the Greek which means to “give glory or exalt.”
 - There is glory and exaltation in being High Priest
 - Yet, Jesus didn’t decide this of His own desires.
 - →I might be able to take some application from this. Am I seeking glory and exaltation in a position? In a Christian leadership class at Asbury Theological

Old Testament ***Old Testament.** The common modern term for the Hebrew Bible (including Aramaic portions) as defined by the Jewish and Protestant Christian canons; Jewish readers generally call this the Tenach.

¹Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 5:4). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Seminary the professor, Dr. Grey, said that as Christians we should not seek leadership. He said all of his positions were offered to him. Just a thought.

- How did Christ receive this position? The author will tell us in the next sentence and verse.
- John 8:54: Jesus says He doesn't glorify Himself, but the Father glorifies Him.
- The following verse was also quoted in Hebrews 1:5
 - I think it is interesting, and good writing, that in the first chapter the writer quotes a list of verses and uses most of them again in the rest of the book.
- **Psalm 2:7 is now quoted**
- God said to Jesus that He is His Son.
- The text in the original language doesn't say "God said." The text says that "one said." This still implies that God said this especially when we look at the passage and the context. We can also cross reference and see how this passage was used in Hebrews 1:5.
- That still doesn't say how Jesus became the High priest, but that will come.

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

5:5. *Citing again Psalm 2:7 (see comment on Heb 1:5), the writer proves from it that Christ's royal coronation was God's initiative. In the next verse he links this kingship with the high priesthood.²*

Verse 6:

- Verse 6 is short and to the point.
- The author says that God says in another place.
 - He doesn't name the place, but the author likely knows it. It was not easy to have the whole Old Testament in one book then as we do now.
- **This is a quote from Psalm 110:4**
- Now the author is saying that Jesus is a priest
- Jesus is a priest forever. Human are limited by their life. Jesus being eternal has no limitations.
- His Priesthood is in the order of Melchizedek.
- But is Jesus Priest forever?
- →The High Priest made offerings for our sins and intercessions. Those offerings will no longer be needed once we are in Heaven and with God. So, Jesus could still hold the position of High Priest without having to make intercession. In Ezekiel 40:38ff Ezekiel has a vision of a magnificent new temple. Yet this temple has a place for sacrifices. People don't know whether that vision was of a temple for the millennial reign, a temple for the New Jerusalem

Christ's ***Christ**. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term for "Messiah." Some Gentile readers, unfamiliar with the Jewish sense of the term, may have taken it merely as Jesus' surname, a usage that became more common over time.

²Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 5:5). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

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or metaphorical. Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice. We will need His intercession until all sin is eradicated.

- Just some things to think about.
- All verses about Jesus being a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Heb 5:10; 6:20; 7:11, 17

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

5:6. *Although the Romans had a powerful high priest, too (the pontifex maximus), the writer's model for this high priesthood and all its nuances derive unquestionably from the Old Testament and Jewish tradition. **Melchizedek was a Canaanite priest-king (Gen 14:18); to speak of a "priest like Melchizedek" was thus to speak first of all of a priest who was also king. Israel had known a dynasty of priest-kings only in Hasmonean times, after they threw off the Syrian yoke and before they were subdued by Rome; some Jews opposed this combination. The Dead Sea Scrolls came to separate the anointed high priest from the anointed King Messiah, which was a necessary distinction so long as one was from Levi and the other from Judah (cf. 7:14). But Melchizedek was not Levitical; one like him would be a priest-king without being descended from the Jewish priesthood.***

The rabbis later contended that Psalm 110:4 meant that God transferred Melchizedek's priesthood from Melchizedek to Abraham; they may have argued this point to counteract Christian claims that it referred to Jesus. Melchizedek appears in some other Jewish traditions (Dead Sea Scrolls) as a heavenly figure, perhaps Michael, and is sometimes associated in Jewish

Dead Sea Scrolls ***Dead Sea Scrolls.** Writings from a strict Jewish sect (usually agreed to be Essenes) that lived in the Judean desert, near modern Khirbet Qumran. The writings include the War Scroll, the Community Rule, the Damascus Document, the Thanksgiving Hymns, the Genesis Apocryphon, the Temple Scroll and commentaries on and expansions of various biblical books.

Messiah ***Messiah.** The rendering of a Hebrew term meaning "anointed one," equivalent to the original sense of the Greek term translated "Christ." In the Old Testament, different kinds of people were anointed, and some of the Dead Sea Scrolls mention two main anointed ones in the end time, a king and a priest. But the common expectation reflected in the biblical Psalms and Prophets was that one of David's royal descendants would take the throne again when God reestablished his kingdom for Israel. Most people believed that God would somehow have to intervene to put down Roman rule so the Messiah's kingdom could be secure; many seem to have thought this intervention would be accomplished through force of arms. Various messianic figures arose in first-century Palestine, expecting a miraculous intervention from God; all were crushed by the Romans. (Jesus was the only one claimed to have been resurrected; he was also one of the only messiahs claiming Davidic descent, proof of which became difficult for any claimants arising after A.D. 70.)

rabbis ***Rabbi.** Jewish teacher. Sometime after A.D. 70 the term became a technical one for those ordained in the rabbinic movement, which probably consisted primarily of Pharisaic scribes. (To accommodate customary usage this commentary sometimes applies the term to Jewish teachers of the law in general, although such common usage may have technically been later; it also applies the term to the teachings of Jewish legal experts collected in rabbinic literature.)

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literature with the end time. The writer does not appeal to this extrabiblical tradition, however, which could play into the hands of those wishing to reduce Christ to angelic status (2:5–18); the plain statement of Psalm 110:4 is sufficient for his case.³

Verse 7:

- This verse could be talking about Melchizedek but I think the text is talking about Jesus. The NASB has the male pronoun capitalized. It specifically says Jesus in the NIV but in the Greek it simply has the male pronoun.
- When Jesus was on earth, He offered up prayers
- Jesus offered up petitions or supplications
- Look how this is modified. Jesus' prayers were offered up with:
 - Loud cries
 - And tears
- These prayers were offered up to:
 - The One who could save Him from death
- The text says that Jesus was heard because of His reverent submission.
 - →Do I have reverent submission in my prayers? Do I give my requests and needs to God.
- Matt 26:39, 42, 44; Mark 14:36, 39; Luke 22:41, 44: all texts about Jesus' prayers. In Luke 22:44 His sweat was like drops of blood. John 17 is a prayer of Him praying for us.
- Matt 27:46, 50; Mark 15:34, 37; Luke 23:46: Jesus' loud cry on the cross

The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary:

5:7. *Judaism stressed that God heard the pious; God answered Jesus' prayers by the resurrection, however, not by escape from death. Although the writer's source here could be*

Christ ***Christ**. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term for "Messiah." Some Gentile readers, unfamiliar with the Jewish sense of the term, may have taken it merely as Jesus' surname, a usage that became more common over time.

³Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 5:6). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

resurrection ***Resurrection**. Although some scholars earlier in the twentieth century derived the idea of Jesus' resurrection from Greek mystery cults, it is now widely understood that early Christian belief shared little in common with the Mysteries' myths, which simply reenacted a seasonal revivification of fertility. Rather, Jesus' resurrection was rooted in a Jewish hope, which in turn was rooted in notions of God's covenant, promise and justice from early in Israel's history. Most Palestinian Jews believed that God would resurrect the bodies of the dead (at least the righteous, and many believed also the wicked), at the end of the age (Dan 12:2). There was, however, never any thought that one person would rise ahead of everyone else; thus Jesus' resurrection, as an inauguration of the future kingdom within history, caught even the disciples by surprise.

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Psalm 22:5 and 24, it is more likely that he and his readers are acquainted with the tradition of Jesus' struggle and commitment in Gethsemane.⁴

Verse 8:

- Jesus was a Son. It is interesting that the text makes it as if with Jesus being a Son He would not need to learn obedience. Phil 2:5-11 does make it sound like Jesus chose to come down to us.
- Jesus learned obedience. This shows Jesus' human side.
- Jesus suffered and in this suffering He learned obedience.
- There have been cults that take the human side away from Jesus but this verse and others affirm His human side. Docetism was an early cult that took the humanity out of Jesus.

Verse 9:

- Jesus was made perfect
 - How was Jesus made perfect? Heb 2:10 implies that His obedience through suffering led to His perfection.
- Jesus is the source of salvation but only
 - For all who obey Him.
 - Salvation is in our hands.
- Jesus could not have been the source of salvation if He sinned. Then He would have had to pay for His sin as well as ours.

Verse 10:

- This verse is comparable to verse 6
- But verse six was a quote from Psalm 110:4 and here the author is specifically applying it to Jesus.
- Jesus is High Priest
- This verse comes to us after the other verses. It seems that the author was making an orderly case.
 - Jesus offered up prayers through life (verse 7)
 - Jesus learned obedience in suffering (verse 8)
 - Jesus was perfected and is salvation (verse 9)
 - Jesus is High Priest

⁴Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament* (Heb 5:7). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.