

THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST (Hebrews 5:1-10)

I. The role of the Jewish high priest (Hebrews 5:1-14).

- a. The writer begins introducing Jesus as the high priest by talking about the role the high priest was supposed to have fulfilled under the Mosaic Law.
 - i. As we study the life of Christ and read about Annas and Caiphas, it is not hard to see that those two at least, did not fit the description given us of the high priest by our writer.
 - ii. Instead, those men were concerned about power and how to keep what they had and get more if possible.
 - iii. God never wanted the high priest to think that way.
- b. I came across one article that said the high priest had to be the richest of his brothers and if he was not, his brothers were to give him some of their money until he had more than them.
- c. All of these ideas came from perversions of the Mosaic Law.
- d. The high priest was a man, taken from among men, and was set before the people to go to God on their behalf.
 - i. He offered the various gifts that could be given, such as the thank offerings.
 - ii. He also offered sacrifices for the people.
- e. His role was to be one who showed compassion on the people who were ignorant of God's law or had committed sins.
 - i. This was definitely not the case during the time this was written.
 - ii. It had become a political appointment instead of a role to bring people to God.
- f. The reason he could do that was because he himself was beset by sin and weakness.
 - i. In chapter 9, the writer will touch on this more, but he wanted the people to see God's intent for the role of high priest.
 - ii. He was a man, just like every other person, who would show compassion on those who needed it because of ignorance and sin.
- g. Because of his own sinfulness, he would offer sacrifices for himself as well as for the people.
 - i. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest would offer for himself first.
 - ii. He would then offer for the people before he went into the most holy place.
- h. The role of the high priest was to come to God on behalf of the people and for himself.

II. The calling of Jesus as High Priest (Hebrews 5:4-6).

- i. The office of high priest was never intended to be an office or role that was taken up on one's own.
 - i. It had gotten to the point where it was almost a man running for office.
 - ii. He would do favors for the one's in control or show himself loyal in some way so as to get the position.
- j. It was one appointed by God just the way Aaron had been appointed.
- k. It was in this fashion that Jesus was appointed High Priest.
 - i. Our Lord did not take on this title Himself.

- ii. It was bestowed upon Him by God.
- l. God called Jesus His Son and called Him a priest after the order of Melchisedec.
 - i. The first quote is from Psalm 2:7.
 - ii. The second is from Psalm 110:4.
- m. Melchisedec is mentioned again later, but we meet him in Genesis 14:18.
 - i. He was the king of Salem as well as a priest of God.
 - ii. Abraham honored him by paying tribute to him after returning from freeing Lot who had been kidnapped.
- n. We won't go any deeper into this aspect other than to say that Jesus was made a King and a Priest, which is what Melchisedec had been and those are the only two about whom we read in scripture that held those two offices simultaneously.
- o. Our God called His Son Jesus to be our High Priest.
 - i. A high priest was to show compassion for those ignorant of God's word and who were in sin.
 - ii. From the life of Jesus, we know that is exactly what He did.
- p. He is the High Priest who knows what we are going through, because we need that and it was a requirement of a high priest (Hebrews 4:15).

III. The perfecting of Jesus to be High Priest (Hebrews 5:7-10).

- q. I hope that no one believes that this passage teaches that Jesus was not perfect.
 - i. We just read the verse that tells us that Jesus was without sin.
 - ii. This word perfect in verse 9 is a word that simply means complete.
 - iii. This section tells us that Jesus had to endure what He did to complete Him for the role of our Savior and High Priest.
- r. The night of His betrayal, Jesus went into the garden to pray.
 - i. We know that He prayed for God to release Him from the anguish He was going to have to endure but that He knew God's will must be done.
 - ii. Notice the words, "strong crying and tears".
 - iii. Luke tells us that it was so severe that Jesus began to have blood mingled in with His sweat.
 - iv. He used the word agony to describe the condition of Jesus while praying.
 - v. He was in such a state that God sent an angel to minister to Him.
- s. The last phrase of verse 7 is very interesting and has caused a lot of disagreement among Bible scholars.
- t. I'm no scholar so I won't disagree with anyone.
- u. The last phrase says that Jesus's prayer was heard because He feared God.
 - i. There is no doubt that Jesus feared, or had reverence for, God the Father the entire time that He was on earth.
 - ii. Some say that the writer was inspired to simply write this truth, that Jesus was heard because He revered God.
- v. Another line of thought is that this carries the idea that because Jesus feared God, God heard His prayer for comfort.
 - i. Remember our Lord was human just like us.
 - ii. It had to be extremely tempting for the human side of Jesus to want to get out of the extreme pain and anguish He was about to face.

- iii. Those prayers that Jesus prayed in the garden were prayers for strength in the hour of temptation.
- iv. He was praying for the human side of Himself to go along with the will of God.
- v. His prayer was heard and answered in the form of the angel coming to minister to Him in His deeply emotional state.
- w. Either of these views does nothing to hurt the text or disagrees with any other passage of scripture.
- x. It does seem odd that the writer would be inspired to simply tell us that Jesus was heard because He feared when we realize that He always had feared God the Father, but that does not mean it is not the case.
- y. Despite the fact that He was a Son and not just a servant, He still learned obedience.
 - i. This does not mean He didn't know it before.
 - ii. What it does seem to mean is that Jesus learned of the true consequences of obedience.
 - iii. One of the temptations facing those to whom this book was written was to forsake God because of the cost.
 - iv. It was going to possibly cost them their lives.
 - v. Our Lord understands the cost because that was the price He had to pay to obey the Father.
 - vi. He can see us through that temptation because He faced it and conquered it Himself.
- z. His following through with being obedient completed Him and allowed Him to be the author, or source, of salvation for all those that obey Him.
 - i. By His suffering for us because of obedience, He was made the perfect Savior and High Priest.
 - ii. Those that obey Jesus, not just believe on Him, can obtain salvation because of what Jesus did for us.
- aa. This all allowed Jesus to be called by God to be our High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.