

Note: Hebrews 5:1-4 were included on session 10 but not covered

THE WORK OF THE HIGH PRIEST | HEBREWS 5:1-4

- These verses build upon the exhortation of Hebrews 4:14-16
- Verse 1: The High Priest: ἀρχιερεύς [*archiereus*] is *arche* (first) and *hieros* (that which is holy or sacred). Our English word hierarchy comes from the same term, and was originally only used of the clergy.
 - The appointment of the High Priest: **Ordained** is the word καθίστημι [*kathistomi*] is *kata* (a prefix which takes its adjoining word to the ultimate degree) and *histomai* (to stand). Thus, the word is "the ultimate stand" before God. The word always implies an "in charge" kind of leadership of one who is assigned, appointed, or ordained to a particular task on behalf of another.
 - The work of the High Priest was to offer the **gifts and sacrifices**. Under Levitical Law, there were both "offerings" (here "gifts") and "sacrifices." The difference: a sacrifice involved the shedding of blood.
- Verse 2: The demeanor of the High Priest: **have compassion**
 - The word μετριοπαθῶ [*metriopatheo*] is to have a "measured feeling," that is, he acts in mercy because he himself is in need of mercy.
 - He does this because he is **compassed with infirmity** (not "beset with weakness" as in NASB). It is used in Mark 9:42 as "hanged about his neck." **Infirmity** is *asthenia*. The Greek *sthenos* is strength (from which we get calisthenics), negated by the prefix *a*. Thus, the High Priest is "surrounded by lack of strength."
- Verse 3: The need of the High Priest: Even though the Priest has made "the ultimate stand before God on behalf of men," since he is surrounded by weakness he is not immune to an obligation to sacrifice. The sacrifices are as much for him as for the people.
- Verse 4: The Call of the High Priest:
 - One must take care not to build a doctrine of the call to ministry on this verse. This is a discussion of the Old Testament Priesthood, not the New Testament Pastor. The word "call" is not mysterious, but simply means to be "named," as in Revelation 12:9, a passage which clearly says a "calling" is not mystical or spiritual, but simply a reality.
 - The reality is that no Old Testament Priest sought after the position. Rather, it was a matter of birth, as in a royal family. The only person who was "called" a Priest by God was the rightful heir to Aaron's ministry.
 - Note that in the dispensation of the church, a man may "desire the office of a bishop," and such desire is commendable (1 Timothy 3:1-2). There is no requirement for a mystical call from God, but rather a Christian character and an orderly family. The church is now the one who "calls" someone as their minister.

THE WITNESS OF GOD ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST | VV. 5-6

- Two quotes from One "Person," each quote being spoken by the Father concerning the Son.
 - The quotes are secondary, the point being that God the Father has appointed Jesus as Priest, just as Aaron was also "called" by God.
 - If God alone determines the Priesthood (as stated in v. 4), He can remove the priestly role from the family of Aaron and give it to Christ.
- This "speech" of God concerning Christ will be noted again in verse 10.
- The quotes, both Messianic, are from Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4

- Verse 7: His Priestly work of offering.
 - First, note that this **prayers and supplication** is a different set of words than Philippians 4:6. In Philippians "supplication" is the same word as this verse translates as "prayer."
 - What are the two meanings in Hebrews 5:7?
 - **Prayers** - δέησις (*deasis*) is a word that emphasizes need.
 - **Supplication** - ἱκετηρία (*hiketaia*) is a word that emphasizes provision (see the root word, ἰκανός (*hikanos*) which is sometimes translated as "sufficient"). This word is used only here in the New Testament.
 - Thus Christ offered both the need and the provision to the Father. No one else could offer the *hiketaia* except Christ.
 - Be careful with the archaic nature of the KJV in "fear" of v. 7.
 - This is not *phobia* but *eulabeia*. Any Greek word with the prefix "eu" is "good." In Hebrews 12:28 KJV translates as "goodly fear." The word *eulabeia* is literally a "good taking," thus, "exercise of caution in dealing with the transcendent realm."¹
 - Thus, Christ offered both the need and the provision to the Father, exercising the caution of His temporary state of being "for a little while made lower."
- Verse 8 - He learned from His obedience:
 - Jesus was a Son eternally, He did not "become a Son" in the sense of having a time in which He did not exist or a time in which He was not a son. As the Son "in the days of His flesh" (v. 7), He learned obedience.
 - To comprehend this, one must remember that one cannot attribute all the characteristics of the Godhead to each person of the Trinity. God is omnipresent through the Spirit, not through the Son or the Father. Here, God is omniscient (all-knowing), but not through God the Son. Rather, the Son looks to the Father for all that He does.
 - "Obedience" is *hupakon*, "to come under hearing." In suffering, Jesus "learned obedience" or "had the experience of coming fully under the hearing of God the Father.
- Verse 9: **Being made perfect** - The word is literally to "reach the ultimate goal or purpose" or, "to be completed." See note on Hebrews 2:10. Also note Luke 13:32, John 4:34, 17:4, Acts 20:24, and Phil 3:12.
 - **He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey him:**
 - **Obey** is the same as in v. 8, "to come under His hearing." When Christ accomplished His work of redemption through the shedding of blood, the Jewish people who "put themselves under His hearing" found Him to be the source of eternal salvation. In both the days before "the Mystery" revealed to Paul and after, belief was always the work of God (see John 6:29). Faith has always been the primary requirement of God. Since Paul, this work is available to both Jew and gentile, and the subsequent works of the Law are abolished.
 - On "source" (NASB) or "author" (KJV) of eternal salvation, note Luke 23:4, 14, 22. and Acts 19:40. The best translation would be "cause." The point is that salvation is out of the work of Christ alone.
- Verse 10 – **Called of God**: Though KJV uses "called," it is a different word than the "called" in v. 4. God did more than "name Him," but rather "made a speech" or, literally, "declared in the open market" that Christ was a Priest after the order of Melchizedek. His speech has already been presented in v. 6, from Psalm 110. The word **called** is *prosagoreo*, or "toward the assembly" (*agora*-the Town Square or marketplace). Thus, the word is in reference to a public speech. English derives categorical (an ultimate speech) and allegorical (an "another" (*allos*) kind of speech) from the agora-speech (open-market speech).

• ¹ Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature 2000 : 407. Print.