

A STUDY OF HEBREWS

Christ is Better Than Aaron - Chapter 4:14-5:10

I. Review: Christ is the Greatest and Final Prophet (1:1-3)

A. Whereas every OT prophet carried piecemeal revelation from God as a mere human messenger, Christ brings the full and final revelation of God as the embodiment of the Message!

II. Review: Christ is Lord Over the Angels (1:4-2:18)

A. Since Christ is far above angels in His incarnate, ascended, exalted, supreme Lordship and Sonship, we must pay attention all the more to the message of this suffering Savior.

III. Review: Christ is Greater than Moses (3:1-4:13)

- A. While Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ is faithful as a Son, and is therefore worthy of more glory.
 B. The hard-heartedness of the Israelites in the wilderness is a warning to Christians to persevere in order to reach the abiding rest of God's eternity, which still remains for the people of God.

"After terrifying us, the Apostle now comforts us; after pouring wine into our wound, he now pours oil."

- Martin Luther

Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Heb 2:17-18)

II. Text: Hebrews 5:1-10 – Christ is Better Than Aaron and Other Former Priests

5:1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³ Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵ So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

"You are my Son, today I have begotten you" [Ps 2:7];

⁶ as he says also in another place,

"You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." [Ps 110:4]

⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Heb 5:1-5:10)

1. According to Ch. 5, what was (a) the purpose, (b) the benefit, and (c) the qualification of a human priest in the Old Testament (vv.1-4)?

2. According to Heb 5, how does the priestly ministry of Christ meet these three features? What His purpose the same? Was His qualification the same? Was His benefit the same?

"...so far was the Son from exalting and glorifying himself that he accepted [the office of savior and high priest] knowing full well that it meant for him the experience of the darkest depths of humiliation, rejection, agony, and death." - Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, 180.

The Literary Structure of Heb 5:1-10 – A “Chiasm”

- A The old office of high priest (5:1)
- B The solidarity of the high priest with the people (5:2-3)
 - C The calling of the high priest (5:4)
 - C' The calling of Christ (5:5-6)
- B' The solidarity of Christ with the people (5:7-8)
- A The new office of high priest (5:9-10)

II. Text: Hebrews 4:14-16 – Christ Our Great High Priest!

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:14-16)

“Whatever sufferings the soul of a man may be brought under, by grief, sorrow, shame, fear, pain, danger, loss, by any afflictive passions within or impressions of force from without, he underwent, he felt it all. ...The great duty of tempted souls, is to cry out unto the Lord Christ for help and relief.”
- John Owen, *Hebrews*, Vol 3, 484-486.

1. What is the relationship between temptation and sin? Is temptation neutral? In other words, does temptation, in itself, indicate virtue or sinfulness?
2. How can Christ sympathize with our weaknesses and temptations “in every respect”? In every temptation we face?
3. Why is the invitation given in v. 16 so stunning in the face of Old Testament priestly practice? Do you do this?!

“And the chief benefit of divine teaching is a sure confidence in calling on God, as, on the other hand, *the whole of religion falls to the ground, and is lost* when this certainty is taken away from consciences.”

- John Calvin, *Hebrews*, 110.