



Lesson 7 October 15th, 2016

The Great High Priest

Study Scripture – Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10

Background Scripture – Hebrews 3-5

Key Verse:

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

Hebrews 4:14

INTRODUCTION

Our Study Scripture focuses on the supremacy of the ministry of Jesus Christ as High priest who is forever faithful and who ever lives to make intercession for us and to keep us and present us faultless before the throne of His Father.

The matter before us cannot be properly understood unless we ask ourselves the question as to what moves the heart of God. What is it that makes Him want to support us as we face the burdens of life, take us through what some call the dark nights of the soul, keep us through the times of agony and our own Gethsemane, and who acts to keep us from falling?

We have been shown the contrast between the angels and the Son of God, the contrast between Moses and the Son and now in this Text, we have the beginning of the longest contrast passage, which contrasts Israel's High Priest Aaron and our High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ.

The epistle emphasized that the Son is greater than the angels who worked under the instructions of God to bring the Law to Moses, greater than the messengers of the Law, and Moses the great leader who managed the nation, and who was regarded as the great Law Giver.

Now, the writer faces head-on the issue of "so great salvation", which involves the priesthood, the covenant which rests on the Promises, and the sacrifices. The length of the contrasts now alerts us to the importance of our Better priesthood, our Better High Priest, the Better covenant, and the Better sacrifices.

This then is the basis for the exhortation in our opening verse 14 for that begins *"Seeing then"* or, for we are now introduced to inferences on the preceding texts. *"Therefore"*

Given our weaknesses and inability we need a unique intercessor, that is, one that can mediate for us and obtain mercy and forgiveness for our sins, so that we will not face the wrath of the perfectly holy Father in heaven.

The focus is on a compassionate High priest who provides mercy for our needs and strength in our weakness.

Note as we begin to examine the contrast between Aaron the High Priest of Israel and his successors and the Lord Jesus Christ we should observe the similarities and the differences between them so that we understand why the Lord Jesus is superior and is truly the Great High Priest.

The High Priest in Israel was the supreme religious leader. The officer inherited his position for the office was a hereditary one with the holder tracing the lineage from Aaron, Moses' brother. He thus had to be from the tribe of Levi (Exodus 28:1; Numbers 18:7). He had to be free of physical defect and holy in conduct (Leviticus 21:6-8) He had general supervision over the other priests but he had specific duties which included determining the will of God for the people and answering their questions on God's will for them by using the Urim and the Thummin which only he could wear. These items were dice-like stone used to determine truth and falsity. We do not know how they were used to determine this.

His main task was to offer a sin offering for his sins and the sins of the congregation (Leviticus 4:3-21) and when he died all those who fled from the avengers to the city of refuge because they accidentally caused the death of another person were pardoned.

But his most important role was on the Day of Atonement. He was the one empowered to conduct the religious rituals commanded by God, offering a sacrifice for himself and the people, bringing the blood of the sacrifice which he would sprinkle on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holiest behind the veil as he stand before God. Only the High Priest was allowed to once a year enter the Holy of Holiest to intercede for his sins and the sins of the people.

The Jewish Encyclopedia gives us an interesting insight in the biblical data about the High priests of Israel showing the deviations from the word of God which occurred frequently and the instability, the negative events and practices, and the human imperfections that showed themselves up in the office:

"Aaron, though he is but rarely called "the high priest" being simply designated "as ha-kohen" (the priest), was the first incumbent of the office, to which he had been appointed by God (Ex. Xviii. 1,2; xxix. 4,5). The succession was to be through one of his sons, and was to



remain in his own family (Lev. Vi. 15; comp. Josephus, "Ant" xx. 10, 1) Failing a son, the office devolved upon the brother next of age: such appears to have been the practice in the Maccabean period. In the time of Eli, however (1 Sam. ii. 23), the office passed to the collateral branch of Ithamar (see Eleazar). But Solomon is reported to have deposed Abiathar, and to have appointed Zadok, a descendant of Eleazar, in his stead (1 Kings ii. 35; 1 Chron. xxiv. 2, 3).

After the Exile, the succession seems to have been, at first, in a direct line from father to son, but later the civil authorities arrogated to themselves the right of appointment. Antiochus IV., Epiphanes, for instance, deposed Onias III. In favour of Jason, who was followed by Menelaus.

Herod nominated no less than six high priests; Archelaus, two. The Roman Legate Quirinius and his successors exercised the right of appointment, as did Agrippa I., Herod of Chalcis, and Agrippa II. Even the people occasionally elected candidates to the office.

The high priests before the Exile were, it seems, appointed for life (comp. Num. Xxxv, 25, 28); in fact, from Aaron to the Captivity the number of the high priests was not greater than during the sixty years preceding the fall of the Second Temple".

As we therefore look at the very chequered past of the high priests of Israel, the mixture of holiness and un-holiness in those who held the office, the political squabbles, and the usurpation of the direct imperative of God, let us never forget the problems that all human beings have.

No one can really deny that feelings of guilt are universal and are real and not imaginary. Attempted solutions such as developing positive self-esteem, and other solutions psychologists offer, and blaming the culture, religious teaching, parental teachings and other reasons for the feelings of guilt simply avoid the root causes of guilt.

Persons in fact need someone that they can trust to handle the huge problems human beings have. Our Study Text therefore offers Jesus as the authoritative answer to the problem of guilt, for not only can we trust Him, we know He deals with this problem with compassion, effectively, and eternally.

The entire context of our Study is the clearly stated fact that if there is a real conversion and the consequent acquiring of the right to call oneself a Christian, there is a principle on which life has to be lived. This principle of life is called "the rest of the people of God". (Verse 9). This principle is not something that one can choose to accept or ignore. It is not an option. If this is absent there is no right to call oneself a Christian.

This principle of life means the Christian ceases from self-directed activities that previously dominated our life, and so there now exists activity out of "rest". Jesus has made Himself available so that we trust in Him and have Him work through us.

This is the life of faith, or in other words, the life of rest. It means trusting in the Lord Jesus to be our Lord for He has indwelt our hearts, doing through us all that we need to do. Every



situation of life is therefore met through Him. Divine wisdom, not human wisdom, the strength of the Lord, not our strength, not dependence on our own will power, but exercising complete trust in Jesus, is what to be the norm according to our Study Scripture in the book of Hebrews.

Behind this of course is what verse 13 tells us, which is that Jesus knows us absolutely and completely and sees everything that we are or what we do. Nothing is hidden from Him, and so we are told that we are absolutely naked before Him. He therefore knows our weaknesses, our temper and lack of self-control, and how we act so that those around us will accept us. He knows the excuses that we make when the stress on us becomes too great.

Accordingly, Jesus knows how to bring us hope when we are drifting away and the book of Hebrews tells us that His mercy and grace are greater than our ability to escape from Him.

This warning follows on the previous warning that we should listen to His message, for if not we can become hardened and so vulnerable to the fads and attractions of the world and incapable of paying close attention to the things of **God**. A hardened heart will make choices that will develop into habits which will then lead to character traits that take us to destruction.

The stark warning is given that believers should

“Labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief”.

The warning continues to point to the fact that there is no one who can fool God.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”.

There is a great difference between hard heartedness and weakness. Christian believers are very often weak at times and so they foolishly do things they wish with all their hearts they had not done. Sometimes they realize that they have been deceived but they cannot help themselves and so they suffer real godly sorrow and repent for their actions. But they are to avoid continually sinning for sin eventually produces hard heartedness.

Sin is so powerful and so deceitful that God wants us to understand that He is tender, and committed to us in the face of our weakness, our ignorance, and our inability. He has therefore provided the ministry of the Great High Priest to those in need.

The discussion in our Study Scripture is therefore not an academic one, but it is designed to impress on us how God has met our needs through a compassionate High priest. There are significant ramifications for the high priesthood of Christ.



THE TEXT

Chapter 4

Verse 14: As Christians, it is up to us to learn about all aspects of Christ, His titles, His role, and His mission. The writer of Hebrews, which some believe is the Apostle Paul, in this verse starts to look at Christ as a High priest, bringing to light the exact nature of this role as taken on by Christ.

As Hebrews' interest is in the saints producing a faith that endures and which will not be lost as the faith of the Israelites at Meribah, (see Numbers 14:22 for references to Israel's multiple faith problems) it states that He, Christ is a "great" High Priest, much greater than Aaron or any of the priests of his order and superior to them. The high priests under the law were accounted great and venerable persons, but they were faint types and shadows of Christ.

Notice especially that it is stated that "**we**" have a Great High Priest. This is a matter of possession. It is therefore first to be noted that "**we**" have a powerful possession and we should ensure this is a "personal possession" for when we appreciate this it brings great blessing.

He is not just a High Priest, but a Great High Priest. Israel's high priests were many and of varied qualities. Some performed well, but many did not. The nation was left dangling and blowing in the wind many times. For example, we are told sadly that in the time of Josiah the High priest found a copy of the Book of the Law which was obviously missing for very many years and was astounded by what it contained. Such were the days. God therefore had to act for He could not depend on that system to bring ultimate salvation and remove sin.

In terms of function, the High priest under the law, once a year, on the annual Day of Atonement, went out of the people's sight within the veil, passing through the spheres of the Temple, going from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place, the holiest of all, where were the sacred signals of the presence of God. In this Most Holy Place were the Ark of the Covenant with the Mercy Seat and the Lord's throne on earth.

Aaron and the other High Priest did their work on that Day of Atonement as representatives of Israel's Twelve tribes and did not offer sacrifices and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the Mercy Seat on behalf for the Philistines, the Syrians, the Moabites, the Greeks, the Assyrians, the Romans, or the Gentiles. As far as these High Priests were concerned only Israelites were the people of God or could be the beneficiaries of mercy.

Christ differs from all High priests in that He, after His death and resurrection, after He had once and for all completed the Atonement, He ascended and had once for all passed through the heavenly spheres which separated God from man, appearing before His Father's throne in heaven to take the government of all upon Him, to send the Spirit to prepare a place for His people, and to make intercession for them.



He was not like the earthly High Priest who once they had finished their work on the Day of Atonement went back to their homes and carried out their other normal duties, sinning, helping, and offering sacrifices for themselves, their families, and for the people.

But Jesus in contrast, when He Christ completed one part of His priesthood role on earth including the act of dying for us, passed through the heavens, went to the right hand of the Father, and now He executes the other part in heaven, by pleading the cause, and presenting the offerings of His people. Jesus is declared the Son of God and assumes His role as the Anointed One.

The name of this GREAT ONE is made clear. The greatness of Christ is in His name, *Jesus*. This is a name of a physician and a Saviour, and one of a divine nature, the Son of God by eternal generation. This Name alone indicates that He is a different kind of High priest, and therefore having divine perfection, He is able to save to the uttermost all those who come to God by Him.

This of course calls for a response. It is clear that God rejects sin which every man has committed and by that every man deserves condemnation. Given the fact that we have an all powerful and effective High priest, a great High priest, the very Son of God, who has gone through the heavens and into the presence of God the Father, not just through the curtains in the earthly Temple, we should therefore hold **fast** our confession.

Note that the word for “hold fast” is used about something being seized and gripped tightly. So now that we have made our confession or a public statement of allegiance to Jesus Christ to the world we are told to hold fast our allegiance to Him and not to seek any other source of spiritual help or associate ourselves with any other different banner or philosophy.

This is not to imply that compassion wasn't in the nature of the previous other High priest, but Christ clearly exhibited more compassion than the other High priest in that He died for His creation. Thus what we have in Christ is a gracious High priest, merciful, compassionate, and sympathizing with His people.

Verse 15. The little word “for” now explains the greatness of Jesus and gives us reasons for motivating us to hold on to our faith in Him.

None can successfully contest how great Christ is and so far above us. Yet He is very kind, and tenderly concerned for us. We can see this in the fact He came from glory in heaven and died for us, but also when He was on earth as man, how He moved among us and His actions towards us when He saw us in need.

Hence, we can say that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities in such a manner as none else can be, for He Himself was tried with all the afflictions and troubles that are incident to our nature in its fallen state. Thus, not only is He in a unique position as to be able to satisfy us, but He is able to sympathize with us.



The greatness in Jesus Christ is found in the fact that He is a sinless High priest. This distinction from other High priests is important. He was tempted by Satan, but He came out of this without sin. Besides this our great High priest came as superior in His encounter with the devil without stain and no error. There was no interruption to His purpose or mission on earth.

The Book of Hebrews explains how Jesus met the requirement of the High priest, stating that He had genuine, real humanity, even though He is God and was called of God.

Jesus was a genuine human and He had the weaknesses of any human being. He could be tired, weary, cry, be frustrated at the behaviour of people including His disciples. But though He had weaknesses of any human being, He Himself was not subject to sin. But He had felt every pressure and pull and had been confronted by every allurements that every human being faced. One writer explains how this verse connects with the statements about Jesus in this verse and in chapter 5: 2 as follows:

“Jesus is able to sympathize, or, literally, “suffer along with”. He sympathizes with us in our “weaknesses”, a word that is connected with temptation in this verse and in Hebrews 5: 2. He sympathizes with us, then, when we are suffering under temptation. He can sympathize with us because he himself has been tempted “in all things”.

Every temptation that Jesus faced and every temptation that we face relate to one temptation, really: the temptation to reject God. If we attempted to disobey God’s word, we are tempted to disobey him, and if we disobey him, we have decided that what he says is wrong and that he cannot be trusted. Jesus faced that temptation from beginning to end, from the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11) to the cross (Matthew 27).

He was tempted, yet he was “without sin”- he did not yield to the temptation. We may be inclined to think,” He doesn’t know what I go through; he didn’t sin”. But the fact that he didn’t sin means that he knows what we go through.

Only one who has not yielded the temptation can know the intensity of it.

Someone who gives up in the first mile of a marathon doesn’t know how difficult it is to run a marathon.

Jesus is the only one who’s run a successful marathon against temptation, so to speak. He knows how hard it is. He knows more than we do. Way more. All of hell’s fury was unleashed against him.

How encouraging it is to know that in Jesus, we have someone who suffers with us, who identifies with us, who knows how we feel, who knows how hard it is to follow God”.

Remember this also.

Christ was tried severely by the Father. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and yet He sinned not either in thought, word, or deed. He had done no violence; neither was there any deceit in His mouth. He was holy, harmless, and undefiled.

Do not therefore believe that Jesus’ transcendence means He cannot sympathize with us. He had a depth of sympathy that was infinitely great and therefore He does not just say as we



often do, “We are sorry for that person”, He enters into the suffering with us and uphold us just as the angel entered into the fire with Daniel and so Daniel did not even smell of smoke. Jesus in the language literally “has fellow feelings with us”.

One writer Charles Spurgeon warns us
“Sympathy in sin is conspiracy in crime”.

So never feel or say that Jesus must have sinned in order to sympathize with us. But He lived with us and His experiences with temptation make Him understand what we go through. He has fellow feelings in the strength of our temptation. He was tested in all points like we are yet He did not sin. He knew what it was like to lose a loved one, to not having a place to lay His head, to be hungry and weary, to be pressed by the crowd so much He had to seek a place of rest, for His human nature made Him like we are.

All this the writer of Hebrews brings to our attention so that He can make the connection to Christ’s purpose and ours in our considering the role of High Priest.

How Christ acted shows how Christ will always act towards God the Father and how He will act towards us, in His role as intercessor. We can learn from this how we must therefore act towards God the Father and towards our Mediator Christ.

We should hold fast our profession of faith in Him. Never deny Him, never be ashamed of Him before men. Let us hold fast the enlightening doctrines of Christianity in our heads, the enlivening principles of it in our hearts, the open profession of it in our lips and our practical and universal subjection to it in our lives.

We ought to be possessed of the doctrines, principles, and practice of the Christian life. When we do not so, we may be in danger of losing our hold from the corruption of our hearts, the temptations of Satan, and the allurements of this evil world.

This is the goal for all Christians as it will put us in a position to serve our Father with great success. All Christians who hold to our governing principles, and endure to the end shall be saved. If all Christians make the excellence of the High priest our profession, it would then make our apostasy from Him most heinous and inexcusable; it would be the greatest folly and the basest ingratitude.

However, as Christians looking to the glory of God, we should understand that we should encourage ourselves, by the excellence of our High priest, to come boldly to the throne of grace.

Verse 16_We therefore have confidence to approach God because of our great High priest who is in the heavens as the beloved Son, seated beside the ever loving God the Father. Remember that Jesus and His Father communicate perfectly and the Father knows from the Beloved Son, the compassionate High priest, how hard it is for human beings to go through life and obey the commandments of God and resist temptation.



There is a throne of grace set up, a way of worship instituted, in which God may with honour meet poor sinners, and treat with them, and they may with hope draw nigh to Him, repenting and believing.

Since He is the sovereign, God sets up a throne of grace, as opposed to one of strict and inexorable justice which exists and is dispensing death. A throne speaks authority, and bespeaks awe and reverence. A throne of grace speaks great encouragement even to the chief of sinners.

There grace reigns, and acts with sovereign freedom, power, and bounty. It is our duty and interest to be often found before this throne of grace, waiting on the Lord in all the duties of His worship, private and public.

Our business and errand at the throne of grace should be that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Mercy and grace are the things we want, mercy to pardon all our sins and grace to purify our souls. Besides the daily dependence we have upon God for present supplies, there are occasions in which we shall most sensibly need the mercy and grace of God.

It is wise to every day put up a petition for mercy in our last days!

In all our approaches to this throne of grace for mercy, we should come with a humble freedom and boldness, with a liberty of spirit and a liberty of speech. We should ask in faith, nothing doubting, we should come with a Spirit of adoption, as children to a reconciled God and Father. We are to come with reverence and godly fear, kindly invited to the Mercy seat, where grace reigns, and loves to exert and exalt itself towards us.

Recall the incident of the woman from Tyre and Sidon that requested Jesus to heal her daughter, and despite His initial remark that He had come only to the house of Israel she pointed out that even the little dogs ate the meat from the Master's Table. This brought her a commendation of great faith, only given to her and the Roman centurion. Such is Jesus' mercy. It is unlimited and all are now openly invited to eat in total dignity at His Table.

With Christ as our High priest, it should provide Christians with a stable footing of confidence in all our approaches to the throne of grace. Had we not a Mediator, we could have no boldness in coming to God, for we are guilty and polluted creatures. All we do is polluted, we cannot go into the presence of God alone, we must either go in the hand of a Mediator or our hearts and our hopes will fail us. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. He is our Advocate, and, while He pleads for His people, He pleads with the price in His hand, by which He purchased all that our souls want or can desire.

Note carefully therefore that given the beauty of Jesus' priesthood, you should never want to abandon faith in Him for you can never find that kind of compassion mercy and grace anywhere else. Nobody can draw you closer to the Father and give you the confidence you can have in approaching Him. If you want to find mercy and grace and not judgment and condemnation, you have to come to Jesus.



Chapter 5

Verse 1. Hebrews now discusses the nature of the office and person of the High priest.

He must be taken from among men. He must be a man, one of ourselves, bone of our bones, flesh of our flesh, and spirit of our spirits, a partaker of our nature, and a standard-bearer among ten thousand. Hence we have been exposed to the concept of the kinsman Redeemer.

In addition, for a priest to be effective he must be appointed by God, chosen by God to help others as a priest. It is obvious therefore that no matter how educated a man is or what family he is from or how many degrees he has, this cannot replace the need for God's call and appointment. Unfortunately, the church has more often than not ignored this important matter of God's calling and appointment.

This implies that man had sinned. It also means that God would not admit sinful man to come to Him immediately and alone, without a High priest, who must be taken from among men.

Further, God was pleased to take one from among men, by whom they might approach God in hope, so that He might receive them with honour. The purpose, that everyone shall now be welcomed by God that comes to Him by this His priest.

For who is every High priest ordained? The High priest is called and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, for the glory of God and the good of men, that He might come between God and man. So Christ did, and therefore let us never attempt to go to God but through Christ, nor expect any favour from God but through Christ.

For what purpose was every High priest ordained? That he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin. The words gifts and sacrifices mean very specific things in terms of intent. Through the High priests, we may offer gifts or free will offerings for the glory of God, and as an acknowledgment that our all is of Him and from Him, we have nothing but what He is pleased to give us, and of His own we offer to Him an oblation of acknowledgment. This intimates that all we bring to God must be free and not forced, it must be a gift, it must be given and not taken away again; that all we bring to God must go through the High priest's hands, as He is the great agent and mediator between God and man.

Only the High priest might offer sacrifices for sin, the offerings that were appointed to make atonement, that sin might be pardoned and sinners accepted. Thus Christ is constituted a High priest for both these ends. Our good deeds must be presented by Christ, to render ourselves and them acceptable, and our evil deeds must be expiated by the sacrifice of Himself, that they may not condemn and destroy us. It must follow that as we value acceptance with God and pardon, we must apply ourselves by faith to this our great High priest.

Verse 2 & 3 In the following verses, Hebrews leads us through the qualifications of a High priest. The person of a High priest must have compassion for different sorts of persons.



The first of these people are the ignorant, those that are guilty of sins of ignorance. He must be one who can find in his heart to pity them, and intercede with God for them, one that is willing to instruct those that are dull of understanding.

The second kinds of persons are those that are out of the way, out of the way of truth, duty, and happiness. These people are misguided.

He must be one who has tenderness enough to lead them back from the paths of error, sin, and misery, into the right way. This will require great patience and compassion, even the compassion of God.

In summary therefore a priest is one who understands the failures of human beings. Not only does he deal with the problem of ignorance and foolishness, the problems of the misguided and those of the weak, but he also has to deal with the ongoing problem of sin which afflicts even believers.

Another aspect to the High priest is that he is compassed with infirmity. He is able from himself with feeling and sensitivity to consider our frame, and to sympathize with us. He knows that he has to offer sacrifices not only for the people but also for himself.

Thus Christ was qualified. He took upon Him our sins and infirmities, and this gives us great encouragement to apply ourselves to seek Him under every affliction, for in all the afflictions of His People He is afflicted.

Jesus was appointed by God. Like other high priest, He did make an offering for the sin of others, but only one offering was needed from Him for the sins of the people. Being sinless, He did not need to make any sacrifice for His own sins, for He had no sin.

Verse 4 To be called as a high priest you must have both an internal and external call to his office. No man ought to do take the office without being called by God; if any does it, he must be reckoned a usurper, and treated accordingly.

The office of the priesthood was a very great honour. The priest was employed to stand between God and man, one while representing God and His will to men, at another time representing man and his case to God, and dealing between them about matters of the highest importance, entrusted on both sides with the honour of God and the happiness of man.

No man can just take on the office of priesthood, if he does, he can expect no success in it, nor any reward for it, only self reward determined by himself. He is an intruder who is not called of God, as was Aaron called of God.

Aaron was an Israelite and a human being. He was called by God and appointed to the office of High priest, and so he had received God's approval. He had like the other High priest's special prerogatives to approach God and enter into the holiest of all once a year on the Day of Atonement. Any other person who tried to usurp this office such as Korah, as recorded in



Numbers 16:10-21, came under the wrath of God. This should be a lesson for people who are not appointed by God but who say that they represent God and stand between God and the people.

God is the fountain of all honour, especially true spiritual honour. He is the fountain of true authority, whether He calls any to the priesthood in an extraordinary way, as He did Aaron, or in an ordinary way, as He called his successors. Those alone who are called by God can expect assistance from God, and acceptance with Him, and His presence and blessing on them and their administrations.

Verse 5 Taking the example of Christ in this office, He reckoned it His glory to be made a High priest yet He would not assume that glory by Himself. He could truly say, *I seek not my own glory*. Considered as God, He was not capable of any additional glory, but as man and Mediator He did not run without being sent, and if He did not surely others should be afraid to do it.

Christ as the High priest is preferred before Aaron, both in manner of His call and in the holiness of His person, in the manner of His call, in which God said unto Him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, referring to His eternal generation as God, His wonderful conception as man, and His perfect qualification as Mediator. Thus God solemnly declared His affection to Christ, His authoritative appointment of Him to the office of a Mediator, His installation and approbation of Him in that office, His acceptance of Him, and of all He had done or should do in the discharge of it.

Hebrews therefore takes the passage from Psalms 2 and the passage from Psalm 110 and puts them all together referring to the Father's calling Christ to the ministry of the High priest.

Verse 6 The Scripture is referred to in the call of Christ to the position of High priest. The Psalm states that

Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.

God the Father appointed Him a priest of higher order than that of Aaron. The priesthood of Aaron was to be successive, descending from the fathers to the children. The priesthood of Christ, after the order of Melchisedec, means that this priesthood was to be personal. It was unlike that of the Levites for the Greek word used suggests something that cannot be passed won or changed. This High priest of that order was immortal as to His office, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, as it is more largely described in the seventh chapter.

The word Melchisedec is the combination of two Hebrew words for "king" and "righteous" making Melchisedec a righteous, godly king. This kind of priesthood perfectly describes the priesthood for only He would be perfect, righteous, and a king.



Christ is here preferred to Aaron in the holiness of His person. Other priests were to offer up sacrifices, as for the *sins of others, so for themselves*, but Christ needed not to offer up for sins for Himself, *for he had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth*.

Verse 7 Jesus took to Him flesh, and for some days, tabernacled therein. This means He became a mortal man, and reckoned His life by days, herein setting us an example how we should reckon ours. Were we to reckon our lives by days, it would be a means to quicken us to do the work of every day in its day.

Christ, in the days of His flesh, subjected Himself to death, He hungered, and He was tempted, bleeding, and a dying Jesus. His body is now in heaven, but it is a spiritual glorious body. God the Father was able to save Him from death. He could have prevented His dying, but He would not, for then the great design of His wisdom and grace must have been defeated. What would have become of us if God had saved Christ from dying? But it was in kindness to us that the Father would not suffer that bitter cup to pass away from Him, as an unbearable misery in eternity would lie with us.

Christ in his days of flesh, offered up prayers and supplications to His Father, as an earnest of His intercession in heaven. A great many instances we have of Christ's praying. The prayers and supplications that Christ offered up were joined with strong cries and tears, herein setting us an example not only to pray, but to be fervent and importunate in prayer. Christ was heard in that He feared.

We are now therefore looking at the revelation of the genuine humanity of Jesus. When we look at Matthew chapter 26 for his portrayal of the events in the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus being extremely disturbed at what was happening. He was very agitated when he began to drink the cup that contained our sins mingled together. He asked the disciples to pray with Him and we are told He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. He told the three disciples that His soul was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death. He then went a little further away from them and prayed to the Father asking that if it was possible the Father should let the cup pass from Him.

Luke tells us that as He prayed He was in agony and His sweat became like drops of blood falling down on the ground. We can draw from this description that they were loud tears and crying while the disciples slept.

We must never therefore treat lightly what Jesus went through. He would face agony from different sources. He would be forever separated from His mother, His brethren and for a while from the Father. Remember that at His Resurrection He would now be into a completely different relationship with them which was different from His earthly relationship and His earthly love. As High Priest He must offer a sacrifice and that would change everything.

He would die as a criminal, would have to be in anguish and suspense over the will of God. He would face the hellish ordeal of demonic opposition. He would be in agony as He anticipated



the divine condemnation of sin that He must bear for others. He would as the Psalm 22:6 state feel like a worm and not a man.

He was perfectly human, He suffered, and at the same time remained as the infinitely divine Son of God. As a man about to die for the sins of others He had godly fear as He became a partaker of our trials. For the perfect man who knew no sin His soul must have recoiled from what was coming on Him. Drinking the cup of sin must have been the ultimate horror, for that meant taking on the condemnation of sin which He now had to bear for others. So in His anguish His sweats fell as great drops of blood.

Just remember that bearing or facing the wrath of God is not a light thing. It is the heaviest possible thing to face. There is nothing like it. So make sure that you do not face the wrath of God.

The importance of this is that He had an awful sense of the wrath of God, of the weight of sin. His human nature was ready to sink under the heavy load, and would have sunk, had He been quite forsaken in point of help and comfort from God. He had discussed His coming death with Moses and Elijah when they met on the Mount of Transfiguration but nothing could prepare Him for the horrors of experiencing sin. We are told an angel was sent by the Father to minister to Him. He was heard in this, He was supported under the agonies of death. He was carried through death, and there is no real deliverance from death **but** to be carried through it.

Those that are saved from death will be fully delivered at last by a glorious resurrection, of which the resurrection of Christ was the earnest and first fruits.

Verse 8. It might seem strange that Jesus, very God of very God as the ancient creeds put it, could learn anything. We have always been taught that Jesus was God Himself and was to be worshiped as God. God is omniscient, and so how could Jesus learn?

One writer explains this for us:

“Jesus Christ is one in person. He is not two persons, he’s one person, but he possesses two natures; a human nature, a divine nature. There are qualities that pertain to both. The person, of course, possesses the qualities of both of the natures.

Now, with reference to his human nature, he learned. Now, we have many instances of that in the gospel of Luke, for example, we read in verse 52 of Chapter 2,

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man “.

Now, if he increased in wisdom, he did not increase in wisdom in his divine nature, for he was omniscient. But he increased in wisdom in his human nature are in the sphere of his human nature. So here we read, *“He learned obedience”.*

All God’s children go to school and He too was one of God’s children and He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Another writer explains further:



“It belongs to the very essence of human nature that it must grow from stage to stage. And the perfection of our Lord, just because it was human had to realize itself on every step of the ladder of development. He was always both perfect on the stage which he had reached, and at the same time, rising to a higher level of perfection”.

Another writer adds:

“So he learned obedience, but he was never disobedient. He learned obedience by experiencing it. He did not learn to obey, in the sense that he was disobedient and learned to obey; like every one of you in this audience, if you are obeying, had to learn. What you told your children was meant to teach them to obey. Our Lord did not have to learn to obey, but he went through the experience of obedience, responding to the requirement of obedience at every step of the way”.

But in Gethsemane when Jesus faced the strong sense of rejection and defilement He cried to God and learned obedience from the things He suffered. He did not want to disobey God, but it is clear that He did not easily agree with the will of God for He wanted no part of that and so He prayed as one writer paraphrases
, “Let this cup pass from me. I don’t want this assignment”.

For the first time in His life Jesus came face-to-face with the real choice of disobeying His father. But He followed the will of His Father although His body screamed and His human desires screamed at Him not to do that, but He was faithful and learned obedience in the process. He learned obedience through suffering.

The Father heard His cries through this experience of agony for even before it began the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him.

Verses 9-10. The result of His reaction to the will of God and the demands of His flesh was that he became perfect:

“and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation”.

Clearly therefore we have been told by Hebrews that Jesus made a choice willingly to go to the Cross and become defiled before God. In so doing He became perfect, “a perfect sacrifice” for us. He made His choice to do what was required, and that choice made Him a “perfect and effective sin bearer” for us. One writer applies this to us as follows:

“In that time of knowing that God had rejected him, of fearing what he had to go through, of asking his friends and others to help him, of calling out to his Father to spare him, in that time he entered into our human experience.

We know that God rejects sin. We know what it is like to deserve condemnation. We know we must obey even when it is painful to do so. Jesus came to understand all of those human experiences. And not because he sinned himself, as Hebrews 4 makes clear. He never sinned,



but there was a time in his life when our sin was applied to him and he experienced it all, therefore he is qualified to be a high priest.

He knows how you and I feel. He understands what it is like to sense distance from God, to be weak, inadequate, afraid, therefore he is qualified as a high priest.

“Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation: being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek”. Jesus is a qualified high priest because he knows in every way what it is like to be human”.

CONCLUSION

Through all the actions of Jesus we see sympathy and compassion. His mediation is not only effective, it is everlasting. In Jesus we have “forever”.

Notice that Jesus is God’s solution and therefore we can trust Him with the huge problem of guilt that we face. Jesus deals with our guilt effectively, compassionately, and eternally.

So we have an eternal priest to the end of time, someone to whom we can go with all the experiences of life that we have.

Our confidence rest in the fact that God the Father has appointed His Son to be our Priest and so we know that it is safe to accept Him. He will always be relevant.

All the infinite details of our life, and the trials and problems of our life can be brought to our great High priest, knowing confidently and with full assurance that He will care for them as our intercessor with the Father.

We need a triumphant passage through the trials of life. When we are tempted, when we are sick, when worried, when we have lost our financial resources, when a friend has died, when we have questions of conscience that have plagued us we can turn things over to the Lord Jesus Christ our Great High priest.

How did Jesus win? And how can we win?

The principle is right before us. Jesus refused to question His Father’s wisdom, to strike back at God, to blame Him, and to say that it was unfair. One writer puts it this way:

“He took no refuge in unbelief, even though this came suddenly and unexpectedly upon him. Instead, he cast himself up on the Fathers loving, tender care and look to him to sustain him. When he did, he was brought safely through and was perfected for priesthood”.

We too therefore have been shown the way. We have been told that we should confidently draw near to the throne of grace so that we can receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need no matter how serious our need may be.



Do not be dull or hard of hearing. This help is not something that is intended for emergency situations only. God expects us to face every circumstance according to the principles we have learned. When we do that we enter into God's rest.

Psalm 107:1,6 states:

*"o give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endures forever.
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.
They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.
Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.
Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.
And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.
Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he satisfies the longing soul, and let the hungry soul with goodness".*

