

Our Great High Priest, Part 2

Hebrews 5:1-10

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, August 14, 2022

As you know, I usually say a few words about our text first before we began to introduce it to you set the stage for it. But I didn't want to do that today. I want to jump right on in because what we're going to talk about is so deep, it's going to take some time to think about it. It's been said that some verses in the Bible you swallow while other ones you chew on and this is a chewing passage. You're probably going to be chewing on this all afternoon. And you'll see what I mean is we read it. If you look in Hebrews five, the word of God tells us this:

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men and things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

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"; just as He says also in another passage, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." 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. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And 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.

We'll stop the reading there. The reason I wanted to read this to you so early on in the message is because we've been in the book of Hebrews as a church since the month of February. And in all that time, we've discovered the theme is the supremacy of Christ, or how Jesus is greater than all the Old Testament had to offer. In this book, it says He is greater than the prophets and the angels. It says He's greater than Abraham and Moses. It says, He's greater than the temple, tabernacle, sacrifices, everything the Jewish system had to show us. And in fact, the outline of the book could go this way. In chapter one, it tells you Jesus is God. In Chapter Two, it tells you Jesus is man. And then from chapter three onwards, it tells you what He did as the God-man with this dual nature, and in chapter five, it says He came to be a high priest for us. If you look in verse nine of chapter five, it says that Jesus became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a High Priest. Which to be honest, it sounds pretty strange at first, I don't know how many of you are familiar with the Old Testament. But for many of us, this might be hard to follow, because we don't have a high priest anymore. That office is closed now for the church. So it would probably be good to go back and talk about what that looked like in Israel.

Every time I read a passage like this, I'm reminded of the fact that you really need a Hebrew tutor with you when you read this book; you need the Old Testament Cliff Notes sitting by your side. I don't know if they have Cliff Notes anymore. I was going to say Wikipedia, but don't go to Wikipedia. That thing's a total gamble. But the reason we need the Hebrew tutor is because the question is not what does this mean to us? The question is, what does it mean to them? What did the Jews think when they heard the word "priest"? That's the original audience; he's writing to the Jews. What did they hear when they heard that word? The priest was someone who stood in the

gap between God and man for you. He put himself in the middle between the two parties. Because the idea in the Old Testament was you couldn't come to God on your own. You were too sinful for that. So you needed a priest to help you. He was your intermediary.

We still have the office of intermediary in our world today. When we get in a fight with someone in the 21st century, we often call in a mediator. We call them the lawyer. And it's their job, we pay them hundreds of dollars to sit down both sides and try to reconcile them from a legal perspective. That's what they do. That's what a priest did. I'm not comparing lawyers to priests, by the way, I want to make that very clear. But it was a similar function. Numbers 18, verse five, says to Aaron, "You and your sons will be priests, and will be responsible for the care of the altar, so that my wrath will not fall on Israel again." In other words, Aaron's job as high priest was to keep the wrath of God from falling on Israel. How would you like that job? When Israel sinned against the Lord, it was his job to sit down and reconcile it. Leviticus four verse 20 also says that when whenever someone sins, the priest will make atonement, and they will be forgiven. And that means that when someone sins in Israel, this is what happened, God went here, they went there; there was a rift between them, there was an offense that was made by the sinner, and it was the priest's task to pull them back together. The Jews knew you couldn't just say you were sorry when you sin, the way so many people do today, and expect God to forgive that. You couldn't just shrug it off as if it was no big deal. It was a big deal. A price had to be paid. Blood had to be spilled. Something had to die. And it was up to this man to handle all that.

I told you last time that there were three classifications of priests in the Bible. You had the Levites at the bottom, you had the ordinary priests kind of in the middle, and then you had the high priests who stood over them all so that when you put all those people together, it came to about 30,000. God gave a whole army of them, a very large group, because Israel had a large sin problem. And the way they handled this was by making sacrifices. It's important to remember that the way they helped Israel deal with their sin problem was by taking the life of an animal on the altar.

There were five main sacrifices the priests had to offer in the Old Testament, you can see this on your handout on your bulletin if you want to follow along with me. I do want to spend a little time on this because it sheds light on this passage. But the first one was the burnt offering, which means just what it says, it was an offering you gave to the priest and he burned it on the altar in order to symbolize that it was gone. Now your sin had been wiped away. Leviticus one says, "The Lord called the Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, "When any of man of you brings an offering to the Lord, if his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it a male without defect, and the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering.'"'" That doesn't give you a lot of information about what that looks like. But the way this works is that the altar where this took place was eight feet long by four and a half feet high. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with bronze. Later on, Solomon would change the dimensions for the temple to make it bigger. But in the tabernacle, it was the first thing you saw when you came into the courtyard. You couldn't miss when you walk through the door. The next thing you would see would be the ash heap where the ashes of the altar were placed after it was burned, the animal was burned. The next thing would be the bronze laver where the priests would wash his hands, then you would come into the actual tabernacle itself. But the reason the altar was there first was to remind you that you had to deal with your sin first before you worship the Lord. For as you worship the Lord, you had to make an offering before you came into His presence. And you did it by taking an animal to the priest and watching while he would cut its throat, collect the blood in a bowl, go back to the altar, sprinkle the blood, then skin the body, cut the body up and spread the pieces on top of it, little bit here a little bit there in order

to let the fire consume it. That animal would stay there all night if it had to until every part was turned into ash. They actually left the altar burning all night. The fire was to be continual. And as we'll see in a moment with the other sacrifices, you could keep part of the animal for yourself with the other ones. But with this one you had to let the altar take it all.

A second type of offering in the list is the sin offering. These aren't in order on the list there, but I wanted to put some of these together. It's very similar to the burnt offering. There is overlap because the sin offering was made if you committed an unintentional sin against the Lord. If you committed a sin intentionally, numbers 15 verse 30 says there was no offering for that. But if you did it unintentionally, this is what you could do. Leviticus four says, "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say, 'If a person sins unintentionally, in any of the things which the Lord has commanded, the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.'" And in order to do that, the worshipper would do everything he was asked to do in the previous sacrifice: bring the animal to the priests, let him kill it, drain the blood, sprinkle it on the altar, except this time, the priests got to keep a portion. You didn't put the whole thing up there, because the priests kept some of it as reimbursement for his work. And the animal you brought, depending on your status in society, the idea was that it had to cost you something. So if you are wealthy, you had to bring something like a bull. And then if you were a little poorer than that, you would bring a goat or lamb, a smaller animal. And then if you were poorer than that, you brought turtle doves or pigeons. And if you were very, very poor, you could bring flour. God was gracious in the sacrifices and wasn't trying to bankrupt anybody. But it did have to cost you. I also forgot to mention that with this offering, as well as the previous one, and I think all of them, before the animal was killed, the sinner had to put his hand on the animal's head to identify with it, and show that the animal was dying in my place. I deserve this. I'm the one at fault, this shouldn't be happening to me. And then the priests would kill it.

A third type of offering in the Old Testament is the guilt offering or the trespass offering. If you are wondering how that one's different from the sin offering, the answer is that the first one dealt with sins committed against God primarily. The second one, the guilt offering had to do with sins committed against God and man, there's a little bit of overlap in these. But the guilt offering is one you sacrifice when you are guilty of offending someone. And Leviticus six says it was done according to the regulations of the other ones. Except in this one, the priest would determine how grave your sin was. And after doing that, he would order you to pay back what you owe to the person along with 20% more. It involves more than just the death of an animal, it hit you in the pocket book too. If you stole from someone you had to return the amount you stole and then a fifth more on top of that. There was some discussion in the Old Testament there about if you sinned against the Lord and His temple, you had to do a similar thing. The blood from the sacrifice was also applied to the right ear, right thumb and right big toe of the one making the offering for cleansing.

Another offering is the peace offering, which is unusual, the most unusual one so far, because it's not done merely in response to sin. It was done as an act of worship, there were three ways to make a peace offering, or you could present it to the Lord in order to show thanks for something and express gratitude. You could present it to the Lord in response to a vow you made it was your way of concluding the vow. And you could present it just as a freewill offering just because you wanted to. You just wanted to praise the Lord, you brought this offering. First Kings eight verse 63 says when Solomon dedicated the temple, he made a peace offering of 120,000 sheep, because he just wanted to praise the Lord. This one was unusual because after you made the peace offering, you would take some of the remainder of the animal and you could eat it in the courtyard with your family. The priest was not the only one who kept some of it, you would keep some to celebrate it over a meal.

Which brings you to one more type of offering in the Old Testament and that's the grain offering. It's the only non-violent one in the list. Because in this one, you didn't kill an animal, you brought grain. You could bring flour mixed with oil, you can bring cakes mixed with flour. You could bring green heads of roasted grain and give them to the priest to put on the altar to show that not only does God deserve your animals, He deserves the produce of your fields as well. Not only should he have the best of your livestock, but he should have the best of everything. And we can say more about this, the Bible gives you more details. But let me just stop here.

And as you are looking at that list and your bullets and just ask the question, why is this so important? Why did we take the time to go through that? Well, we did that because that was the job of a priest. In fact, I could tell you a lot more about this, the Jews counted up 613 laws in the Old Testament, and about 100 of them pertained to the sacrifices, but a sixth of them talked about this type of subject. Why? Because remember, the priests stood in the gap between God and man for you, and he kept His wrath from falling down. And he did it this way, by killing things, and substituting their life for yours. This is why it's so important to remember this. Some scholars have even called the priests professional butchers over this, because this is what they did. They just killed and killed and killed animals. It was a constant bloodbath, and it sounds cruel, but it wasn't, it was an act of mercy. Because without it, all of the death would fall on you. And without the killing of those animals, nothing would stop the anger of God from devouring you like a burnt offering.

And with that in mind, if you would read Hebrews five, verse one again, I think it would make more sense for you. Because it says this at the beginning of our chapter that we're studying, "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." Those terms, "gifts and sacrifices," are two ways of summarizing all I just told you about the offerings, because the "gifts" referred to the bloodless sacrifices, or the grain offerings. And then the term "sacrifices" refers to bloody ones, or things like the burnt offering, because the high priests was taken from among men to give both. Other priests could give a sacrifice here or there, that was their job. But the high priests was expected to oversee all of it and watch over all of it. He was the one in charge. And the author compares that to Jesus here because that's what Christ did for you. Except that Jesus didn't give a bunch of sacrifices for sin, He gave one sacrifice. And He didn't give the life of a sheep or goat or bull, He gave His own life instead, which makes it greater. Amen!

Verse nine goes on to say that He became the source of eternal salvation. And that refers to final salvation, or complete salvation, which is why you don't have to bring an animal anymore when you sin. And this is why you don't have to approach Him with some flour or cakes, or green heads of roasted grain so that a priest could put it on the altar. You can trust in Christ and that's it, because Christ is all you need. He laid himself on the altar for you. He let the fire burn him up. And when He did that, he fulfilled the whole Old Covenant system. It's so important to get your mind around this. Because if you were a Jew who came to Christ like these people did in the first century, this would be hard for you. They grew up under the Old Covenant system, they were raised by taking a lamb from Capernaum to Jerusalem every time they sinned and watching the priest slay it, as part of their everyday life. They did it since birth. So they couldn't just turn it off like a switch. We don't think like this anymore today. Because this didn't mean as much to us, but it meant something to them. And the author says you don't have to get rid of that now. What you have to do as a Jew is exchange it for Christ. Because you still have a sacrifice, and you still have to have an offering. And you still have to have a substitute and you still

have to have bloodshed and there still has to be a killing so the wrath of God does not destroy you, but it is Him and not all that now.

I just told you that we can't always relate to this, but let me tell you what you can relate to, you need a priest like this, Amen! You need someone to offer salvation in this way. Otherwise you don't have a chance. Can you just imagine what it would be like if you had to kill an offering every time you sinned? All you would do is just kill animals because you sinned so much. You also need a priest like this who was gentle. Verse two talks about him being gentle, we'll get into that in a second. He doesn't jump down your throat when you fail. If you didn't have that you would be undone. I can't tell you how many times I've sinned and said to myself, Why did I do that? That was so stupid! I should know better than that by now." Well, if I didn't have a priest like this, I'd be lost. And this is a passage, friends, that tells us so much about the glories of Christ. And I'm so grateful it's in the Bible.

Let's talk about that this morning with four reasons why Jesus' priest high priesthood was greater than the high priesthood of Israel. Remember, this whole book is about how Christ is greater than all the stuff in the Old Testament. And this morning, we are going to see how He was greater than the high priesthood of Israel. You couldn't get any greater than this in the eyes of a Jew; the high priests was at the top. The author is telling you here that Jesus was above that and here are four reasons why.

The first one is because He deals gently with us. The first reason why Jesus' high priesthood is greater is because He deals gently, which means that even though He has this exalted position, it doesn't make Christ callous towards us or rough, it has the opposite effect. If you look in verse one, it says, "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; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided since he himself also is beset with weakness." Now, as you read that, again, it may not be clear to you why this is in here coming from the 21st century. But if you put your mind into the mindset of the audience, it becomes very clear, because these people were Jewish. And the reason is significant is because if you are talking to a Jew at this time, and you told them you became a Christian, the first thing you would probably want to know is who is your high priest now? Okay, if you've left Judaism for that, what did you replace it with? The answer is Jesus. In fact, all throughout this passage he is going to go back and forth, comparing the high priest of Israel to Jesus. And in verse one, he says, "For every high priest taken from among men." The word "for" points you back to the previous passage, where it says in chapter four, verse 16, right above this, it says, "Therefore, let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace, to help in time of need." And the idea there is that we can draw near with confidence because Jesus is our high priest now. And we can come into the presence of God with boldness, because He is our Savior. And now the author adds to this when he says, For every high priest, like Jesus, is taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men. And the word appointed there, it means ordained or called, because a priest couldn't be a priest whenever he wanted to, and he couldn't take on this job whenever he chose it, he had to be called to it.

Remember, I told you there were three levels of the priesthood in Israel. And each one of them had their own qualifications. The Levites had to come from the tribe of Levi, that's how they got in. They had to be from that specific line. And then the ordinary priests had to be sons of Aaron or connected to him. And the high priests had to be Aaron's oldest son, or oldest living descendant, because that's how God appointed them. And in a similar way, Christ had his own calling as well. And we're gonna get into that more in verse four, because the passage will talk about it there. But the point here is that the calling was done in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices,

and then in verse two, it says, to deal gently with us. It says, “he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness.” And that’s an important statement to make here, as he compares it to Jesus because as I told you last time, the high priests in Israel were often not very gentle people. They were usually pretty rough. Scholars have estimated that there were 78 High Priests from the time of Solomon’s temple until the time Harrod’s Temple was destroyed, and many of them were pretty crusty mean guys. Aaron, the first high priest, at one time he and his sister Miriam spoke out against Moses, and it made the Lord so angry that He gave Miriam leprosy. Aaron had other faults as well and it just descended from there. In fact, they got so bad that at this time in the first century, history tells us that the Romans killed the high priest named Jonathan. He was the nephew of Caiaphas, the one who presided over Jesus’ trial. And the people didn’t care. They were so fed up with that guy, that when he died, they said, “Good riddance.”

Verse three tells you that because of it, he is obligated. This is the high priest of Israel, he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And what that means is that the high priest didn’t just kill an animal for the people, he did it for his own sins because he was a wicked man. But in contrast to that verse it tells us Jesus deals with us gently. And this is one of those verses you overlook in the Bible. You don’t maybe think too much about it, but the word gently here means to have moderate passion. One commentator said this about it. It said, “We translated this word as gentleness in the English Bible, but that’s not the best translation because the fullness of it can’t really be expressed in our modern tongue. The greats defined virtue as the median between two extremes. And they looked at this virtue as the median between extravagant grief on the one hand, and utter indifference on the other. In other words, this was the act of feeling the right way toward someone all the time.” It’s a beautiful word, it describes the ability to bear with people without getting irritated. And talking to people without losing your temper. We all want to have that. And to help people when they make the same mistakes over and over again, without flying into a rage, and no one has this quality more than the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we just stop there for a moment and say amen to that? Aren’t you glad Jesus has this virtue with you? Aren’t you thankful He doesn’t fly into a rage when you make the same mistakes? He could; He should, because we keep messing up all the time. Just think about practical example of this, you snap at your husband today, you snap at him tomorrow. Blow up at your best friend today, blow up at him tomorrow, then you go to work and you swear under your breath. Walk through the door boss says something mean to you. And the moment he turns his back, you let out profanity. Then you sit down at your desk and you lust after someone, then you go into the parking lot after work and you covet their new car, then on the drive home, you get anxious because the traffic is bad, then you walk through the door to see your family and you start to neglect them. And the worst part about all that is you didn’t mean to; the most tragic part of our lives is that if you’re a believer, you probably weren’t trying to sin that way. It just happened.

That’s what’s in your heart. You are a sinner. You didn’t wake up in the morning and say, “Let’s see, what do I want to do today? I want to fail God.” Christians don’t act like that. Let me ask you this, do you know why Jesus doesn’t send you to hell for that? Do you know why God doesn’t destroy you in His wrath like He should? It’s because He has this quality, He’s gentle toward you. There’s no other reason. You can’t explain it any other way. He takes your sin and nails it to the cross with Him. He takes your failures. And just as the priest would take the lamb and cut its throat and let the blood drain out on the altar, and then skin it and cut it up and arrange the pieces and burn them until they were consumed. God did the same thing to Christ at Calvary for your sins. Even when He had every reason to judge you, He didn’t because He’s that kind of Saviour.

Interestingly enough, if you want to write this verse in your notes, Matthew 11, verse 29, this word gentle is actually repeated by Jesus Himself. He says, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.” And I've heard it said that that's the only place where Jesus describes His heart in the Bible. And He describes it this way by saying that His heart is gentle. His yoke is easy, which means it's not heavy, and His burden is light, which means it doesn't drag you down. Following Christ is not a burdensome thing because He is a tender savior. Matthew 21 Verse five, also says, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, gentle and mounted on a donkey.’” So even when Jesus marched into Jerusalem, He didn't do it to tear people's eyes out. He did it gently.

And it says here, if you look in your Bibles, it says he can deal gently with the ignorant. That's a pretty apt description of us sometimes, isn't it? The word ignorant means someone who sins unintentionally. The significance to the word is that the sacrificial system addresses this in Numbers 15, verse 28, when it said the priest shall make atonement before the Lord, for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, because they and the Lord understood there are times when someone does this, there are days when you sin, and you don't mean to like I just described. And the word “misguided” here talks about the opposite of that; it refers to intentional sins, or ones you do on purpose. The English Standard Version renders this word as “wayward,” which is scarier for a Jew because Numbers 15 Verse 30, says, “But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he's native or alien, that one is blaspheming the Lord and He shall be cut off from among his people.” In other words, there was no sacrifice for something like that, under the Old Covenant, not if they did not repent. But in the New Covenant, if someone repented, Christ could save both. Whether you're an ignorant sinner or a wayward one, whether you do it unconsciously or consciously, Jesus can deliver you if you turn from that and believe, because He's that great of a Saviour.

To be honest, when I first came across this passage this week, I was a little bit intimidated by it because I didn't know where to start. You read something like this, and you wonder, “Well, how am I going to relate this to where our people are at in the 21st century?” And then I came to the word gentle. And I said, I know how this relates. Who has felt the gentle hand of Christ before? Raise your hand. Everybody who has experienced the tender mercies of His grace, who has experienced the forgiveness of God, listen, friends, you're getting into heaven, because Jesus is gentle to you. Not because you deserve it. Not because you're worthy. It's because He's all these things here.

Which brings us to another reason why Jesus' high priesthood is greater than the high priesthood of Israel. And that is because He was a priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. The first one is because He deals gently with us. But the second reason is because He is a priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. Which means that unlike the other high priests in Israel, who are called according to Aaron's line, Jesus comes from a different one. And if you read in verse two, it says he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness. And because of it, he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. “And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.” Now in order to understand this one, it's good to remember that this brings up another question that Jews would have had, as they considered all this stuff about Jesus' high priesthood, and that is, why doesn't He come from Aaron's line? Okay, if what you're saying is true, and Jesus is my high priests now, then Exodus 40, verse 15, tells us he had to come from one specific bloodline in Israel, but he didn't. He came from Judah and from the line of David. So how do you reconcile that with this?

And in order to address that, verse four says, "No one takes the honor to himself." And what that means is that you're right. No man can take the honor of the priesthood on himself; you can't be a priest whenever you want. You receive it from God because that's what Aaron did. Aaron did not come from a special tribe when he became a priest, because he was the first one you get. Does that make sense? There was no bloodline to come from before him. But God called him anyway, because it's God's prerogative to choose His priests. It's God's power to do decide who He wants to put into this office. And it's the same way with Christ. In fact, verse five alludes to this when it says, so also Christ did not glorify Himself as to become a high priest. And when it says that Christ did not glorify Himself, it doesn't mean he received no glory from this office because He did. What that means is that just as Aaron did not glorify or exalt himself into the role, so neither did Christ because both of them received it from God. Anytime a man is called into ministry, it's from the call from the hand of God. And anytime a man stands up to preach for the Lord, and does it the right way, it is because the Lord brought him to it.

To show you this, he quotes from Psalm two and Psalm 110, to say, "You are My Son, today I have begotten you." Just as he says, also, in another passage, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." In the reference to Melchizedek, there is a reference to an Old Testament person from the book of Genesis who met Abraham after a battle and impressed him so much that Abraham gave him a 10th of his spoils. The reason he's mentioned here is because Abraham had never met anybody like him, because he was a priest before the priesthood began. He served in that role before the law came about and Aaron was born, which shows he didn't have any special bloodline either. But the Lord appointed him anyway, because his priesthood superseded all of that. And the same can be said for Jesus. Later on in the book of Hebrews, chapter seven will make the argument that Melchizedek's priesthood was greater than Aaron's because it was older. And since Aaron's ancestor Abraham gave Melchizedek a 10th of his spoils, it shows that he was the better man. And it's the same argument here. The reason this is important for the Jews to get this is because the author is trying to get them to make a paradigm shift here in their thinking. He's trying to get them to make a fundamental change in the way they see their faith. Because Israel had a tendency to get caught up in things like genealogies and bloodlines and ancestry all the time. They had a propensity to get consumed with stuff like the law and the commandments, and the ceremonies and the burnt offerings and the sin offerings to the point that they forgot what it all represented. There's a spiritual truth behind all of that. And that's what Christ came to emphasize. His priesthood had a spiritual genealogy, and a spiritual lineage and a spiritual background first. That was what was most important to him.

For centuries, the Jews were so meticulous about this, that before the temple was destroyed, it was said they had records that went all the way back to Abraham, can you imagine that? They had a special room set aside that had scrolls in which the names of every one of their ancestors was put on there dating back 1000s of years, because that's how you're getting into heaven. So if you ask them, if they were saved, they would take you to that room and say, of course, I'm saved. Just look at my records. And if you ask them, "Are you a child of God?" They would say, "Of course, I'm a child of God. Just look what it says in the scroll." Some of the rabbi's even taught their people to pray, "Lord, thank You that I'm not a Gentile, as a woman or a Samaritan." Because all those people are lost. They thought the Jewish women could be saved, but they still despise them greatly. But what this passage is showing is that with Christ, that thinking is over now. He has a different priesthood, different ministry, different purpose.

If anything, this was probably the greatest difference between the old covenant and the new in that the Old Covenant had a major physical component to it. It wasn't just physical. It was spiritual, too. But it had a big

emphasis on that. The new covenant doesn't. With Christ, you don't need it anymore. Because once the real thing is here, the shadows vanish. This is why when you come to church and you want to join, we don't ask you about your father. And we don't ask you about your grandfather, and we don't ask you about your great grandfather. It doesn't matter if you're saved just because you believe in Christ, not because they did. And when you want to be part of this fellowship, and you want to join, we don't ask you what your race is. We don't care if you're Dutch, Mennonite, Canadian, American. None of that matters anymore because you are saved by the power and calling of God. You come to Christ by trusting on a one-on-one basis. I've heard it said that God has children, but He has no grandchildren.

Another reason why Christ's high priesthood was greater than the high priests of Israel is because He suffered, which means He paid a price for it. If you read on the passage here, it says in verse seven, "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." Now as I read over that, I was reminded of what one pastor said when he told me that the book of Hebrews sounds like a rabbi preached. Because when rabbis would preach, they wouldn't follow an outline, they would kind of let one thought lead into another. And that's what's happening here. Because after talking about Jesus' gentle nature, and His calling from God, the passage now talks about the days of His flesh, which refers to the days of His life on Earth, what it was like for Him when He lived on this planet. And it says He offered up both prayers, and supplications, which means He was a man of prayer. Even though Jesus was the Son of God, and our Great High Priest in the line of Melchizedek, it doesn't mean His life was easy, because it was not. It doesn't mean that things were very smooth for Him all the time. They were not smooth, He still had to pray. And the author puts us in an interesting way, because He gives you three terms that get progressively stronger as you read them, because he mentioned prayers, which refers to general prayers or general conversations with the Lord. And then he mentions supplications, which refers to petitions are the times when you ask for something. And then he talks about loud cries. And that refers to just what it says, the times when Christ cried out in prayer, like the moment in the Garden of Gethsemane when He sweat drops of blood, and He said, "Father, if you're willing to take this cup from me." They said there were three types of prayers that you could make. There were prayers made in silence when you talk to God in your heart. And there were supplications made to God when you used words, and there were loud cries when the words turned into weeping. And the idea here is that Christ did all three.

Just out of curiosity, I looked it up this week and I found that there were several times when Jesus wept in the Bible. He wept at the grave of Lazarus, He wept over the city of Jerusalem, and He wept in the Garden of Gethsemane and in all those places, but one, I found that He prayed. In every single instance, except for one single one of them, He endured it with an appeal to God. And verse seven says He was heard because of His piety. Although he was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And that's a passage that's caused a lot of concern throughout the years because it has raised questions like, "How could Jesus learn obedience?" I mean, what does that mean? How could a perfect, omniscient, eternal Son of God be taught something? And who would do the teaching? Who would sit over Christ in a heavenly classroom? It doesn't make sense. And the answer is, we don't know, it's not revealed here. All that we know is that all this is referring to the days of His flesh, because there was something about His experiences on earth that this is referring to. And it all revolves around suffering. Although He was a second person of the Trinity, and the Alpha and the Omega, and the everlasting God and the Prince of Peace and one with the Father, when He came to earth, He suffered, and it enabled him to be a high priest for us. In order for Jesus to be a high priest for men, he had to become a man. In

order for Him to be a sacrifice, He had to die. And that's what He did. He was touched with our infirmities, despised and forsaken of man, smitten and afflicted.

In fact, the rest of this verse says, in verse nine, that He was made perfect as well. And the idea there is not that Jesus was imperfect before and His suffering made Him perfect. And it's not that He was faulty, and the pain fixed Him because it didn't, you can't fix Jesus. He's already perfect. The word means that His suffering finished or completed Him in His role in this office, which is a very mysterious thing. I mean, to be honest, we don't know all the ins and outs of this. So you have to be humble when you approach it.

But let me just take a moment here to talk about what this means for us. And that is that you can never find a better high priest than Jesus; you can never find a better man to stand in the gap for you. Because you can never suffer more than He suffered. And you can never weep more than He wept. And you can never go lower than He did in this ministry. Because He went to the Garden of Gethsemane, He went to the cross, He bore the sins of the world on His shoulders and that makes Him stand far above any other priests, which means you don't have to go somewhere else when you sin. When you fail God, you don't have to go find another Saviour, because Jesus is all you need. I think we all needed to be reminded of that, because there are times when we sin, and we're tempted to look for something else to help us, we find ourselves being guilty of something, and we try to find some other thing to help take the pain away. I have seen people turn to food at times; they tell a lie, they sin and all of a sudden, the guilt comes rushing in and they start eating large portions of things to take the pain away. I've seen other people go the other direction and start turning to exercise. Nothing wrong with exercising, but they tell a lie, and they feel the conviction, and in order to fix it, they began to eat right and drink right and overly exercise to make themselves mentally whole again. In worst cases, people turn to drugs, some turned to alcohol. I've seen people get involved in pornography, because they want to disappear into a fantasy world where there's no consequences and there's no guilt. And I want to tell you, all that will fail you in the end. Because the problem is not found out there, it's found in here, in your heart, and the only person to take the guilt out of your soul is the Lord Jesus Christ. There's no one else.

The reason He can do it is because He suffered. He went to the cross and died in your place. The word suffered and it's open ended here. But in the context of the passage, it refers to the cross because that's what Jesus did. As our high priest, He was crucified for us to bear our guilt and shame. Verse eight says that He was a Son and verse seven says He did it in the days of His flesh. The passage will go on to say it made Him the source. He became the source of our eternal salvation.

I remember the time I heard an interview with a Christian musician, who said when he was getting started in his career, he committed a terrible sin and lost everything. He was disqualified, thrown out of his ministry was so embarrassed. But he said as he did that, he learned that with Jesus, the bottom is solid. You'll never fall out of His arms if you're His. And he's right.

This brings us to one more reason why Jesus' high priesthood was greater. Let me review these other ones here. The first one is because He deals gently with us. Secondly, because He came from the line of Melchizedek. Thirdly, He suffered. And then a fourth reason why Christ is greater is because He gives us eternal salvation. You can see the build up to this in the passage, but a fourth reason why His high priesthood is greater than the high priesthood of Israel is because He gives us an eternal salvation. Which means he gives you a salvation that does not have to be repeated over and over again, like the Old Testament sacrifices. He only had to die one time and

that was enough. And if you read in verse eight, it says, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who will obey Him, the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek."

In this one here, the passage is answering one more question that would have been plaguing the mind of a Jew if he was reading this in the first century, sitting in a church. Matter of fact, they would read the letters out loud back then, so he would have been sitting in an audience like this, someone would be reading to them; all the people couldn't read. A lot of them were illiterate so one person would stand up in church and read the letter. There's one more question that would have come up as they listened, and that is: Okay, if Jesus has all these things, what do I get for it? I mean, if He is gentle and a high priest, and He's my Saviour, and He's the one time offering for sin, what does it do for me? Because I really did like the old system. I enjoyed the sacrifices. I enjoy the priesthood. I like seeing the way it helped me. How does this help me and the passage says this, it gives you eternal salvation. Hebrews 10 verse four says it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, because they couldn't do it. No matter how many you made, you always had to make another. This is different. It says having been made perfect Jesus is the source of eternal salvation. And the word "source" here means the source or cause or origin of something. The King James Version has "authored," because just like a book comes out of an author's hand, salvation came from Christ's hand. Some of you on your drive home today are going to see the Veddar River. And as you do that, you might wonder what's the source of that thing? Because you want to know where it came from, where did it begin? Where did it start? That's this word. Salvation starts with Christ. And the way it connects to what we've been talking about is that the source of your salvation doesn't come from the blood of bulls and goats anymore. It doesn't come from a priest. It doesn't come from the smoke and the fires and the ash and the bloodshed, and the killing and the altar. It comes from a Lamb of God. The word for source, is preceded by the definite article, to show that there are not many ways of salvation or many sources, there's one source, there are not many roads to get you there, there's one road. You can't find that salvation through Christianity and Islam and Buddhism and fate. Why? Because Buddha didn't die for you like this. Islam sent no one to the cross. Only Christ.

If someone tells you that's narrow minded, you can say thank you. I'm trying to be narrow minded. Narrow is the way to the Lord. Broad is a path that leads to destruction. If they tell you that is slavish, you can say thank you, I'm trying to be a slave of Christ. When I die, I want to hear well done good and faithful slave. If they tell you that's dogmatic, then you can apologize and say it's not dogmatic. It's bull-dogmatic. We're not messing around with this. We're serious about the fact that salvation is found in Christ alone. He's offering you eternal salvation.

This is something we would often take for granted, you hear about this so much in the church. But in this passage, the context is everything. Because eternal salvation is written here as opposed to the temporary one of Israel. Because once the temple was destroyed, the Jews could not keep the old covenant anymore. In 70 A.D., in the first century, the Romans burned it to the ground, and they took away the altar, it took away the priests, they took away the sacrifices, there was no way to keep it. But what Christ is offering you is better, because it is eternal, and no one can take it away. It's also eternal as opposed to the physical one Israel represented. It's eternal, as opposed to the one where the priests had to keep coming back to the altar. You don't have to do that with Christ. Because His salvation is perfect in every way.

In this passage, if you notice one more thing, you can have the benefit of that, if you do this, you have to obey. It says, "And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."

That's the action verb here, that's the command. If you want this salvation, you have to bow the knee. When he says obey, it doesn't mean you have to work in order to get this. It means you have to obey His command to believe. Remember, Christ is a source of your salvation, not us. So this is not works righteousness. This is all of Him, but you have to acknowledge that He is an authority over your life. He's the king of the universe. And yes, He will save you. And yes, He'll pardon you. And yes, He will forgive. But He will only do that if you see Him this way. In order to get this you have to obey Christ over the old covenant and Christ over the sacrifices. You have to obey Christ over the altar and Christ over the priests. And you have to obey Christ over your sin. You have to follow Him and believe in Him over your lust, and passions, and anger, and all the wicked things that you can do. And I'll tell you what you can have, if you get this you can have eternity. And I'll tell you what you can receive if you don't do this, you'll go to hell. Because let me tell you something, you're not offering all those sacrifices we talked about a moment ago. You didn't come in here with a bull or ram or goat and do you know what that means? That means that if you're without Christ, you have nothing to pay for your sin right now. You have no offering, there's no animal dying for you. There's no blood being spilled for you. There's no life being slain, and yet you keep sinning. And the wrath of God keeps hanging over your head. It was the priest's job to keep that off of you, but you don't have that without a priest. But the good news this morning is that you can have that if you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was really encouraged this week, by studying all the background for the priesthood. It was very eye opening for me. And one item that I found particularly striking was the high priest's robes. Some of you have studied this before, but if you have, you'll know that everything they wore had a unique connection to what they did. For example, the two things they put on first, when they stepped into office were the linen breeches and coat, which were white and woven without seem from end to end, to demonstrate their purity and righteousness. He was to show that next to their skin, they were right before God. Then the next thing was the linen ephod, which was another piece of fabric that went over the torso. And it wasn't white, it was blue to represent the color of heaven to show that heaven was on his heart as he made the sacrifices. Then on top of that, he would put the breastplate, which had 12 precious stones on it with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel to show that he represented God's people wherever he went; they hung on his shoulders, they were held up in history. Then on top of that would be the miter or the hat. It was put on top of his head with the words holiness unto the Lord engraved upon it. And when I read all that this week, it really struck me that there was only one high priests in all of history that could wear that. And that's Jesus. There's no fallen man that can wear a hat that says holiness on it. There's no mortal being that can have a shirt that demonstrates righteousness; Christ is the only one. And what this whole passage is telling you is that He will be this for you if you trust in Him. He will be your high priest. And He will be your Saviour. He just has to be your King as well. Will you make Him your king today if you haven't before? Let's go to him in a word of prayer.

Heavenly Father, our hearts are overwhelmed today about what all we've talked about with our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's so fitting that we're going to take communion here in a moment. And as we do that, we're going to remember the Lamb of God that was slain, who was also the priest. He was the offerer and the offering. He was the one who brought life and the one who gave His life. Lord, thank You for Jesus. We're all sinners in this room. When we go out of this room will sin, when we go about our days will sin. And there needs to be remorse. There needs to be brokenness, there needs to be a level of obedience and turning back to you. But at the same time, there's no way we can go to heaven without Christ, so we thank you for such a Saviour. And Lord, I pray that our church would be a church that always puts Him on the throne. He is a king. He deserves to be treated that way. We go about our business and do that with every step of our lives. Father, would you be glorified as we

come to the Lord's table today? We want to remember what He's done continually in our lives so that He may be glorified. We pray this in Jesus' name for His honor and glory. Amen.