

# Jesus is the Better Priest

Being the better High Priest, Jesus authored our eternal life and secured it with His blood. In response, we ought to practically obey Him to spiritually mature.

*Hebrews 5*

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## ILLUSTRATION

### Travel experience from Colorado to home.

- Plain's mechanical failure
- The Pilot wasn't comfortable flying
- When you're in a tin bucket 30,000 feet in the air, you want to be confident about the plane and the pilot!

## INTRO

For the person that has left Judaism to come to Jesus, one of the greatest arguments they would receive from their Jewish brothers and sisters and family members, is the argument that they have left the necessary system that God had implemented for their justification.

For the Jew, God had established a system of worship that included the necessity of a mediator between broken man and a holy God. This system included sacrifice that had to be mediated by a priest. The priest was the "go-between" for man and God. He as one would represent men and women on their behalf before God, and likewise, represent God to the people. This would be done through the blood of an animal sacrifice that he was responsible for taking before the altar.

## PRIESTHOOD

The priesthood was established by God first in Aaron (Moses' brother) and his sons (Exodus 28) through the tribe of Levi (Exodus 32), the third son of Jacob. The priests were chosen by God to be ministers of the legal Covenant, the law that was given on Mount Sinai.

- The High Priest was in authority over the priestly duties. While he could minister in any of the duties, certain unique responsibilities were designated to him.
- Annually on the Day of Atonement, only the high priest could enter behind the temple/tabernacle veil into the Holy of Holies, where the ark of God's covenant resided. There, on the mercy seat of the ark, the blood of a sacrifice would be sprinkled both for the high priest and the sins of the people.
- Only the High Priest wore the Urim and Thummim as part of his priestly garb. Under the **breastplate made of 12 stones that had the names of the 12 tribes inscribed upon them, these stones would be placed next to the High Priest's heart.** This was so that the Priest might, **"bear the weight of the judgment of God's people upon His heart."** The priest would wear this in the presence of God as a memorial of the 12 chosen tribes of Israel before God.
- Exodus 28:30 – Urim- brightness light / Thummim – fullness perfection
- Colossians 1:19 (NKJV)  
For it pleased [the Father that] in Him all the fullness should dwell,
- Hebrews 1:3 (NKJV) who being the brightness of [His] glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
- John 1:4-5 (NKJV) 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
- John 1:14-17 (NKJV) 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " 16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, [but] grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**WHY THE PRIESTHOOD?** It was an act of God's grace that gave humanity a constant reminder that there was a breach between them and God. The Levitical priesthood, while an imperfect

picture, was a picture nonetheless of mankind's desperate need for someone to stand in the gap between them and their God.

- Under the Mosaic law, no one could have unfettered access to God, or forgiveness of sin, without a high priest going before God on their behalf. So, for the Christian who exited the system of Judaism, the question would be, "Who is your high priest, and where is your sacrifice?"

The Christians spoke of this New Covenant that came not through the law of Moses, but through the grace of Jesus... **but who was the priest? What was the sacrifice? Who would stand before God with your name upon His chest so that God saw and looked upon you favorably?**

After all, Jesus wasn't of the tribe of Levi, he was from the tribe of Judah, the kingly tribe. ***This could legally legitimize Jesus as a king, but not as a priest...*** at least according to the law of Moses. It's in response to this reasoning that Hebrews 5-9 is written. The author will go to great lengths to display that Jesus is not only the rightful King of Israel but the Great High priest of the New Covenant. Not only is He is the perfect high priest, but he is also the perfect sacrifice.

## BIBLE VERSE

## APPLICATION

For us Gentiles, this concept is foreign to us. However, it's really not. People still seek, through religion, mediation between themselves and God.

- In the Roman Catholic tradition, priests have an implied title tied to the Old Testament priesthood. The ideas of confession and penance through the human priest come dangerously close to the line of minimizing Christ's role as the only High Priest.
  - If you need to confess your sins for forgiveness, you need not go to anyone other than Jesus. Yes, there is spiritual and sometimes physical healing when we confess to one another, but forgiveness of sin before God comes solely through the finished work of Jesus. There is no priest or saint that one needs to confess or pray to for extra favor or insurance.
- The Mormon priesthood is ordained through the orders of Aaron and Melchizedek, which is a clear violation of the New Covenant under our High priest Jesus.

## THE MARKS OF JESUS' PRIESTHOOD

*Chapter 5 tells us the qualities and characteristics of the High Priesthood of Jesus, and it's tremendously comforting. In Chapter 5 we get a picture of the kind of Captain that's piloting our ship, the kind of lawyer that's representing our case, and the kind of priest who represents us before our Holy God.*

# 1

## Marked by Compassion

### BIBLE VERSE

**Heb 5:1-3 NKJV – 1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.**

### CONTEXT

The first requirement of a priest was that they had to be human. Why? ***Because only a person could empathize with another person.***

- The priest dealt with the same emotions, difficulties, pains, temptations, and sorrows as the rest of the people he represented. This common struggle was the birthplace of compassion and empathy from the priest to the people.
- When you've felt what someone else is feeling, your heart goes out to them.

**In the same way, Jesus subjected himself to weakness and to the human experience that he might experience the fullest extent of empathy and compassion for human beings.**

- Jesus experienced sorrow, pain, difficulty, discouragement, betrayal, and anger. He was hungry, tired, and experienced thirst, etc. And He did so willingly. Why?
- So that we, in our weaknesses and challenges, can experience the full compassion of Christ.
- Jesus has walked in your shoes, he's been where you're at and has a full understanding of what you need.
- As a result, he is able to provide the solace and strength that we need.

## COMPASSION

### ONLY TIME THIS WORD IS USED IN THE NT.

- It means to be controlled in one's emotions in order to deal gently with others.
- In other words, Jesus, because he lived as a human, is a high priest who doesn't lose His temper with people who are ignorant, wandering, knuckleheads.

The patience of Jesus is perfect.

- This is not an excuse for you to persist in your sin, but you should know that Jesus is incredibly gentle and patient with our weaknesses and failures.
- Jesus succeeded where we failed in order for us to not have to walk on eggshells every time we recognize a new area of failure within us.

## 2

## Marked by Perfection

### BIBLE VERSE

**Heb 5:3 NKJV – 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.**

### CONTEXT

Not only did the High Priest need to identify with natural human weakness, but he also understood the weight of human sin.

- The job of the High Priest was never designed to become a ***“holier than thou”*** position. The high priest would tremble in knowing that he was in as much need of forgiveness as the people he was representing.
- ***Leviticus 16 tells us that on the day of atonement, the priest had to offer a sacrifice for himself before he could offer a sacrifice for the people.***
- The problem this poses is that his lack of perfection hindered him from fully being able to satisfy God's righteous requirements for people.

The Bible makes it clear: **As High Priest, Jesus knew no sin.** He never faltered or gave in to temptation. He resisted the enemy and overcame. This means that Jesus could empathize with us, but also help us. When he offered himself a sacrifice, he did it for us, not for himself.

Well, great, but how then can Jesus identify with the weight of human sin if he never sinned?

Well, remember the words of Paul?

### BIBLE VERSE

**1 Corinthians 5:21 – He made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God.**

### APPLICATION

On the cross, Jesus felt the weight, shame, and penalty for all of our sin as he took it upon himself.

- He saw the horrific thoughts we've thought. He experienced the curse of all my wicked deeds and actions. He felt the alienation that sin causes.
- And not just for one of us, but for all of us.
- This means that even though Jesus never compromised His own personal purity, He knows the horrors of sin more than any of us. Because of his first-hand experience and perspective on sin, He also knows more than anyone the extent of grace and mercy that we actually need.

### QUOTE

*The perfect Son of God took on our imperfection in order to understand the strength of sin without ever compromising his own holiness or breaking His own standards.*

Pastor Josh,

## BIBLE VERSE

**Heb 5:4-6 NKJV – 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. (Psalm 2:7)”**

## APPLICATION

The position of the priest was a position of great honor and responsibility, but it was not a position that one could choose. In order to be a priest, a person had to be chosen by God.

- Some might have asked, “What qualifies Jesus to be a High Priest? He’s not a Levite.” There’s a calling that trumps pedigree and bloodlines, it’s the will and call of God.
- Jesus didn’t hijack the priesthood, rather God chose him to be the final and perfect High Priest for all people, for all time.

There was a history of people in Israel’s history who tried to bestow upon themselves the role of priest, and it never ended well for them:

- In 1 Samuel 13, Saul was impatient. He didn’t want to wait for Samuel to offer a sacrifice, so he offered a sacrifice himself. It was one of the reasons he lost his kingdom
- In Numbers 16, Korah and his family tried to overthrow the priests and throw a priestly coup. The result? The earth opened up and swallowed them alive.
- In 2 Chronicles 26, King Uzziah wasn’t content with simply being king. He overstepped his boundaries and took upon a priestly duty. When he did, the Lord struck him with leprosy.

***And here’s the point: God takes the priesthood seriously, and only allows those who he chooses to be a priest. He will not stand for imposters or usurpers.***

## CONTEXT

- Psalm 2 now references Jesus’ resurrection, “Today I have begotten you.”
  - ***In Acts 13:33, Paul quotes Psalm 2:7*** in reference to the resurrection of Jesus!
  - Jesus was begotten when he was born into a human body, but he was also the first begotten from the dead. When he was raised to life, he was raised as the high priest of the new covenant as He was seated at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus was chosen by the father, and he Humbly serves the role of our High Priest.

- The mind of Christ is the mind of humility. One who would step out of heaven to humble himself to the point of death.
- Paul writes:

## BIBLE VERSE

**Phi 2:5-8 NKJV – 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.**

## APPLICATION

Though it's obviously a different position, I think this is still a good principle for ministers today.

- A person cannot rise through the ranks of Christian leadership or ministry to obtain a calling or position in the church.
- A person can only lead or teach in the church when God calls them and empowers them to do so.
- Oh, someone can take that position in the flesh, but not without devastating consequences both to themselves and those they are attempting to lead.

## ILLUSTRATION

When Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a young preacher in London, his successful ministry aroused the envy of some of the clergy; and they attacked him with various kinds of slander and gossip. His sermons were called “trashy,” and he was called “an actor” and “a pulpit buffoon.” Even after his ministry was established, Spurgeon was lied about in the press (including the religious press); and this was bound to discourage him.

After one particularly scandalous report in the press, Spurgeon fell before the Lord and prayed, **“O Lord Jesus, Thou didst make Thyself of no reputation for me. I willingly lay my reputation**

*down for Thy sake.*” From that time on, Spurgeon had peace in his heart. He knew that his Great High Priest understood his need and would give him the grace that he needed for each hour.

## BIBLE VERSE

**6 As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4)”;**

## SIDE

We are going to save our study for this interesting character named Melchizedek when we get to chapter 7.

- Here, Paul establishes that Jesus’ order of priesthood is actually far greater than the Aaronic line.
- In short, **Melchizedek** was a priest, ordained by God prior to Moses, Aaron, and the tribe of Levi. He was a priest pre-law during the time of Abraham.
- Melchizedek would serve as a symbolic picture of the priesthood of Jesus apart from the law. He symbolizes a priesthood that is eternal, not temporal.

The prophecy from Psalm 110 indicates that Jesus was of a different order, outside the law of Moses, and would be a high priest forever. No earthly high priest could ever fulfill an unlimited term! 6 times in Hebrews, the author references that Jesus is the high priest of the new covenant, “**Forever.**”

**EXAMPLE:** Every two – four years we have a shift of power in our nation. Sometimes we rejoice because the new president and cabinet reverse bad policy decisions from the previous administration. Sometimes we cringe because the new administration undoes all the good things from the previous.

The good news about following Jesus is that he reigns forever!

- No one will rewrite His policies
- No one will cancel out his sacrifice
- No one will overstep His authority
- No one will reverse His salvation

- Forever he will oversee and fulfill his new covenant for all who trust in Him.

## 4

## Marked by Obedience

### BIBLE VERSE

**Heb 5:7-8 NKJV – 7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

### VERSE 7

This is a reference to Jesus' experience in the garden of Gethsemane.

- Jesus knew agony like none other in the garden. The cross before him, his cause clear, his mission undeniable; Jesus, in His humanity, expressed the weight of his burden to the Father.
- When you are in the Garden of Gethsemane, you have a clear view of the **Eastern Gate**.
  - **When Jesus was sweating drops of blood in agony as He cried out to His Father, looking toward death on a cross for the sins of mankind, He would have been looking at the eastern gate. He knew the prophecy of Ezekiel 44, that the Messiah, the Glory of the Lord, would enter into the temple through the Eastern (Golden) gate though it was sealed. Jesus could have bypassed the cross, and gone through that gate to conquer and reign as king, but he rather chose the path of suffering in order to accomplish God's eternal plan for salvation. He will enter that gate again one day, but now as the king who has triumphed over sin and death.**
- And we are told here that God heard Him, answered Him.
- [Wait, Josh, I thought God said no. He did, but it was a temporary no that was leading to an eternal yes!](#)

[Jesus wasn't necessarily praying for deliverance from death, but for ultimate victory over death... that the cup of death would not have a permanent hold on Him, and God did answer](#)

[that prayer.](#)

## APPLICATION

Do you know that sometimes ***God hears you and says no at the moment for a greater yes in the future***? When we are experiencing suffering that God isn't taking away, sometimes the temptation is to slack in our obedience. We kinda make a deal with God, ***“God you take this away from me and I'll do what you want. God, if you keep this in my life, forget it, I'm done with you.”***

**8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

Jesus didn't have to learn to obey in the sense of a sinner who is disobedient and needs to learn obedience, for the son of God could not disobey. But he did have to personally go through the process of obedience and surrender. as a human being. He did this so that he could identify with people and fulfill every righteous requirement of God in His flesh. Jesus had to obediently endure through suffering in order to have ultimate victory over death and sin!

- Jesus was perfect. As God, He was all-knowing, yet he willingly laid certain aspects aside in order to learn. He learned how to read. He learned how to write. He learned how to walk, swing a hammer, makes food. Jesus learned in that he gained experiences.
- Jesus gained the experience of walking in full obedience to the Father's will, and the method of teaching was suffering.

## ILLUSTRATION

**There was a time when Delta Airlines required all newly-hired executives to first work in the grunt areas of the business. They would do a stint handling baggage, ticketing passengers, cleaning out planes. Before they were trusted to hand down decisions from the top, they first have to learn from experience how those decisions affected the people at the bottom!**

**Likewise, Jesus experienced being a good servant so He could be a good boss. Now you know when a command comes down from Jesus its not coming from a bigwig who's oblivious to the challenges you face. Before Jesus started giving orders, He learned how to take them.**

## APPLICATION

But here's another lesson that comes from this reality:

- People, Jesus didn't have to learn obedience through suffering because He was disobedient, but because we are. Jesus modeled obedience in suffering and the ultimate reward it yields so that we could have an example to follow when we are suffering and tempted to wain in our obedience. When we begin to question the outcome of our suffering and whether or not it's worth enduring, all we have to do is look at the example of Jesus.

If we can learn obedience through suffering, then suffering is worth it because the reward of obedience is worth it that much more. When God says no to removing our temporary suffering, it's because there is a bigger and better YES after we have obeyed through the suffering.

#### BIBLE VERSE

[Jas 1:2-4 NKJV] **2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

## 5

## Marked by Completion

#### BIBLE VERSE

**Heb 5:9-11 NKJV – 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,”**

#### APPLICATION

Jesus always finishes what He starts!

***Perfected – not in the sense of moral perfection, but in the sense of completion.***

Jesus fulfilled every single requirement for our salvation. He obeyed unto death. Now, he is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

**NOTE: The gospel must not merely be believed, it must be obeyed.**

Would you like Jesus, the eternal creator and God to author your story? Would you like Jesus to rewrite your story from a tragedy to a victory? From a horrific ending to a beautiful new beginning and a triumphant end?

- **He is willing, capable, and eager, but that story won't begin until your life and will come into obedience to the gospel.**
- **Turn from your sin. Trust wholly upon what Jesus did at the cross. Crown Jesus the king of your life and heart. submit to His authority, receive His grace, and linger in His love. That kind of obedience is called faith, and faith will save you. Save you from yourself, your sin, and hell itself.**

Once you do obey the gospel, you must continue to grow in it!

- The author realizes that he is starting to dive into some theologically deep waters with this priest named Melchizedek, and he is concerned that his audience is going to miss its significance.

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

**Heb 5:11-14 NKJV – 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.**

#### **APPLICATION**

Paul has a moment of hesitation about diving into the realm of Melchizedek. This isn't going to stop him, but he does offer a quick parenthetical word of rebuke. They were going to have a difficult time receiving God's word because they had become dull of hearing.

**Now let me be clear: There are times when the reception of God's word is hindered because of dull preaching.**

#### **QUOTE**

***“One of the proofs for the inspiration of the Bible is that it has withstood so much poor preaching.”***

## APPLICATION

I don't doubt that you have had to endure many of these Sundays!

But for the Hebrew audience, it wasn't **dull material** or **dull preaching** that kept these Christians from growing in their understanding of Christ... it was **dull hearing**.

**The word dull means, "Sluggish in the ears."**

The Hebrews didn't lack *in-depth teaching* or *good teachers*. They lacked open ears and receptive hearts. Their refusal to eat the feast of God's Word that was on the table right in front of them stunted their spiritual growth.

## ILLUSTRATION

**It reminds me of the time a pastor was once asked if he needed a deaf ministry in His church. He responded, a deaf ministry? I think our entire church needs a deaf ministry because it seems as though they are never listening to anything I say!" Apparently, the Hebrews needed a ministry for the spiritually deaf!**

## BIBLE VERSE

**12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.**

**13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.**

## CONTEXT

Apparently, these were people who had all the resources to be spiritual giants but instead were old spiritual babies.

- They've been a Christian for many years, but can't seem to explain John 3:16 to their neighbor.

- They've gone to the same church for ages, but have never lifted a finger to serve, have never reached out to a lost soul to share the gospel, and have never taken it upon themselves to embark on a more in-depth study of their faith.
- They should be teaching and making disciples of the next generation of believers, but they've never invested their faith in anyone other than themselves.
- They should have learned to chew and digest biblical steak dinners, instead, they want to be spiritually maintained by the same one-liners they've been hearing from the day they got saved. **Their itching ears are sluggish toward the truth but quick to latch on to anything that meets their temporal, carnal desires.**

As a result of a steady diet of babies' milk, they haven't learned how to use the Word of God in their lives as that double-edged sword. Paul says, ***"They are unskilled in the word or righteousness."***

#### APPLICATION

I, like Paul, don't bring this up to condemn or guilt others. I myself am frequently guilty of not being as mature as I ought to be in the things of the Lord.

- But here's the thing about diets. It's never too late to start one. Retraining the taste buds and changing habits is difficult, but rewarding.
- If you find yourself guilty of not being as far along as you ought to be with the Lord, the best time to get started is NOW.

#### BIBLE VERSE

**14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.**

#### APPLICATION

Spiritual maturity is possible and it is expected!

- But the meat belongs to those who are mature. And how does one become mature? By exercising their senses to discern good and evil. In other words, it's the application of God's word that causes growth.

- **You can look at the treadmill and the weight machine all you want. You can even stand next to it in your yoga pants and muscle T-shirt. You can turn on the exercise video and workout music. But at the end of the day, if you stand there eating a twinkie, you won't shape up!**

Every time we learn a truth that is never practically implemented into our lives, we contribute to our spiritual atrophy. If we refuse to exercise the muscles of our faith, they won't grow into what God intended them to be.

#### QUOTE

*“God’s Word must not only be supplied but applied, for spiritual maturity to occur.”*

Josh, Quote

#### APPLICATION

There are many people who say, “I’m just not getting fed at that church.”

- Sometimes this is a result of poor handling or mishandling of God’s word. Dull or incomplete teaching can starve God’s people.
- But there are many times where it is dull listening that creates a poorly fed Christian.
- A Christian who is fed a feast but refuses to exercise off what they have ingested, will not grow up. Many times, a lack of growth in our lives rests upon our own shoulders and our own neglect.

#### CONCLUSION

Hey, in Hebrews, we are learning a lot of deep truths, but at the end of the day, they exist so that we might practically be transformed.

- Jesus is the Great High Priest
- Compassionate – he has walked in our shoes.
- Perfect – He can carry our sin and present us faultless before God’s throne
- Humble – chosen by God

- Obedient – he helps us overcome.
- Faithful to complete – He suffered and overcame so that we might see the pathway for us to overcome

But what good is all this knowledge if it doesn't cause us to practically act on it?

- How will we grow unless we truly are coming daily before the throne of grace to receive mercy and grace to help in our time of need?
- How will we mature unless we actually choose to obey and trust the Lord in the midst of our suffering?

Today, let us be those who are not hearers of the word, but doers as well!

## **COMMUNION**