

## **The High Priesthood of Christ**

### **Hebrews 4:14 - 5:10**

#### **1. Christ's High Priesthood an Encouragement to His People 4:14-16**

4:14 Encouragement follows warning.

Fear of final failure, consciousness of weakness and partial failure.

Turn the thoughts again to the Mediator.

2:17 already seen Him to be a *merciful* and *faithful* High Priest.

He has entered the rest, so He can bring His people to it.

Present consequences implied - greater than Aaronic priests - Son of God

Jesus - stress on humanity, greatness of person.

4:15 His transcendence has made no difference to His humanity.

Absolute capacity to sympathise.

Likeness to us. NEB "one who, because of His likeness to us, has been tested every way, only without sin."

*sumpaqhsai* - Not simply one who regards suffering from without, but the feeling of one who enters into the suffering and makes it his own.

Sympathy does not depend on experience of sin but on experience of strength of sin's temptation.

Jesus too had his day's of trial.

4:16 *parrhsia* - full confidence. *Note in NT*

Throne of God = throne of grace.

Jesus, on His people's behalf, sits exalted at God's right hand.

Antitype to mercy-seat in earthly sanctuary.

That is where Christ made propitiation.

work completed - not half done

constant availability of divine aid in all need.

eij" eujkairon bohqeian - for timely help

i.e. help comes when it is needed and not till then.

## 2. **Qualifications for High Priesthood 5:1-4**

General qualifications for any High Priest.

Sets out these qualifications in relation to Aaronic High Priesthood.

A High Priest must be able to:

- a. sympathise with those whom he represents
- b. be divinely appointed to his office.

### 5.1 (a) High Priest represents men "in matters for which they are responsible to God."

Necessary to be a man himself. Aaron and successors were Israelites themselves.

Knew conditions, exposed to same trials. Task to offer dw'ra and quaiva". ie. general expression for offerings.

Particular class, i.e. to deal with sins.

Sin offerings (later) these which he had in mind for day of Atonement.

High Priest in person to discharge sacrificial functions.

### 5.2 Fulfil duties worthily - not only ritual details.

Must have inward feelings to carry out work.

Hasmonaeon period - Alexander Jannaeus poorly equipped.

metriopaqein - to bear gently. Balance between indifferent and sentimentality.

Hear, forbearance and magnanimity on part of those subject of great provision.

Not make expiation re. those sins of which he had feelings of indignation or exasperation re. people who had committed them.

Aaron showed great forbearance to those who "go astray through ignorance" (Num 14:5; 16:22, 47f.; Ps 106:16), sin offering prescribed (Num 15:28, cf. Joshua)

High Priest was prone to same weakness - cleansing word from God (Jos 3:3)

Aaron re. golden calf (cf. Exod 32:24)

5.3 High Priest provided sin offering for himself too. cf. Yoma

Bullock for self and family (Lev 16:6), then atone for people.

Jesus did not have to offer preliminary sacrifice for self (cf. Heb 7:27)

5.4 (b) Called by God to this service.

Cannot truly hold position by earthly authority (Exod 28ff)

Aaron held office by divine appointment (Lev 8:1f; Num 16:5, 17:5, 18:1f)

So did his successors (Num 20:23ff; 25:10ff)

So did one such as Samuel (1 Sam 6:3f)

### 3. **Christ's Qualifications for High Priesthood** 5:5-10

Same 2 qualifications necessary in Christ's case.

5.5 (a) His divine appointment.

Not assume high priestly dignity on own initiative.

Called to it by God who acclaimed Him as son in Ps 27.

"This day" (cf Acts 2:36) day that God exalted Jesus as both Lord and Christ.

So same god who acclaimed Jesus as Son, has acclaimed Him as High Priest perpetually.

5.6 Ps 110. Author of Hebrews applies v. 4 in an unprecedented way to Jesus.

Said that title is addressed to those who held a 2-Messiah view (eg Essenes).

But Ps 110 applied to Him. He is both priest and king.

Melchizedek: makes appearance in Gen 14:18.

King of Salem; priest of El Elyon

Jerusalem later fell to David's hands.

So he and heirs became successors of Messiah's kingship

Promised prince of house of David is perpetual priest of Melchizedek's order.

5.7 (b) Ability to sympathise with those whose cause He maintains.

Faithful and merciful High Priest - exposed to trials of His people.

Elaboration of above statements

Temptations befell him in "days of His earthly life". NEB

"offered up prayers and supplications ...

Gethsemane experience (cf John 12:27f)

But more general reference to whole course of our Lord's humiliation & passion

Psalm 22 is basis

"strong crying and tears" - supplication and complains of first part of Psalm.

Christ was "heard" (Ps 22:24)

Being heard was understood as referring to resurrection of Christ.

Justyn Martyr

But main point is that Jesus is well qualified to be people's High Priest.

"What gives the reality to the priesthood is that it is no external office, inherited, usurped, or granted by favour, but its an inward vocation and qualification in experience and character". *Expos. Times*

Jesus was heard for His godly fear.

Not fear of death

ejudabeia in 12:28; verb of Noah's taking heed and constructing the Ark.

ejudabeia = h[;a;]D] Josh 22:24, Prov 28:14

ejudabeomai 11:7

Consistent meaning is reverence towards God.

Our Lord's devotion and submission to will of God.

Cup not removed. People faced with mystery and trial of unanswered prayer.

High Priest tested in same way. Did not seek miraculous way of escape.

5.8 "Son though He was" NEB, but "son", i.e. Son of God.