

The Book Of Hebrews

Part Two

Jesus, Our Great High Priest (4:14-10:18)

Lesson 4 (4:14-5:10)

Outline thus far.

- I. God's Final Word Spoken Through His Son (1:1-2:18).
- II. The Need For The Incarnation Explained (2:5-18).
- III. Exhortation To "Hold Fast" And Warning Against Unbelief (3:1-4:13).

I. Jesus Qualified For Priesthood (4:14-5:10)

A. Jesus' Priesthood - An Encouragement To Faithfulness (4:14-16).

Connections.

The priesthood of Jesus is a major theme of this epistle. Two previous allusions/references having already been made to it (1:3; cf. Lev 16:1-34; Heb 2:17-18). This passage (5:1-10), considers His qualifications to be High Priest and chapter 7, after a digression from this subject in ch. 6, expands upon His greatness in this office.

The thing that should provide encouragement to "hold fast our confession" (14).

He begins this longer discussion by depicting Christ's priesthood as an antidote to apostasy by presenting the hope that is in Him. The previous section (3:1-4:13) put the emphasis on the danger of falling away, "beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (3:12).

This great High Priest rather than enter the inner sanctum of the earthly tabernacle as did Aaron's descendents every year, showed His greatness by passing into the heavenly (cf. 7:26; 8:1).

Because of His greatness, action is required – "let us hold fast..."

The encouragement to do so vested in the character of the High priest (15).

He is not one who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses seeing that in every point He was tempted as we are (cf. 10:34).

How can He show such compassion If He was without sin? The explanation might be that the very fact that He did not yield exposed Him to the full force of sin in a way that a sinner is not.

The effect upon the petitioner (16).

In consequence we are to approach boldly in time of need; God's throne is not something to be feared but a source of aid in times of trouble.

B. Christ A High Priest By Divine Appointment (5:1-10).

Universal truths respecting High Priests (1):

- Every High Priest Is taken from among men.
- Is appointed for men in things pertaining to God.
- With the purpose that he offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

Two qualifications needed if the High Priest is to be effective in this service (2-4).

Possess the capacity to be Compassionate (2-3). The reason why a man is normally able to enter into the condition of a sinner is because he shares the same propensity (2). Because of this common tendency he is to offer sin sacrifices for himself as well as the people (3). However, a distinction was to be made between unwitting and presumptive sins (Num 15:27-31). Firstly this offering was to be made for himself and only after he is cleansed, for the people (Lev 16:11-15).

Called by Divine appointment (4; cf. Num 16).

These qualifications possessed by Jesus (5-10).

He came to this office by Divine calling; He did not assume the honour (5-6; Psa 2:7; 110:4).

As a man He experienced the temptations common to the human race (7-9).

1. An occasion cited (7; Lk 22:41-44). His prayer was both heard and answered; it was answered in that He was strengthened and His petition was conditional, "If thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done".
2. The effect- "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (8). Not that He was ever disobedient but He experienced the impact of what it felt like to be obedient in the flesh.
3. The result - He was "perfected (teleioo)" (9). Teleioo carries the idea of "bringing to completeness" (Vine). Jesus was never imperfect or incomplete but contextually it can be thought of in this way: He had been called to the priesthood by the appointment of God but was not fully qualified and able to so function until He had gone through these experiences. Being "made perfect", He became the "author" or "cause" (Grk. ASV) and thus source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

The order of His priesthood defined and pronouncement concerning the dullness of hearing of the readers (10-11). Much was to be explained concerning the order of Melchizedek but this was difficult to explain because they had become dull of hearing or "slow to learn" (RSV).