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## Into Thy Word Bible Study in Hebrews

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### Hebrews 5:1-10: Jesus the One Who we Go To!

**General idea:** The high priests were the mediators between the people and the Holy God. They made petitions and prayed, as our Lord also did. Jesus is now the One who we go to. He not only prays for our sin, He became the sacrifice that paid for our salvation and our lives as Christians. Because He has lived as one of us, He knows and understands us even more, perhaps because as living as a human being gives Him a further perspective of empathy. Thus, even as Sovereign, beyond our thinking, He can relate to anything we deal with in life. As He walked this earth, Jesus demonstrated for us what it means to be human in a fallen world. He paid His dues, shed tears for our troubles and tribulations, and still held reverence for and obedience and trust to God the Father. He became the ultimate sacrifice and atonement for sin on our behalf. His is fully qualified to be not only our source for salvation, but also our Mediator and our eternal, most Holy God. This is also about appointment; for Jesus to have this position, He was appointed to it as well as being born into humanity to this position of Redeemer and Savior, just like as the priests of old were born into it and then called by God and man to offer sacrifices. The distinction is that our Lord is God eternal who was also born as a man, appointed by God to serve humanity.

### Contexts and Background:

This passage shows us the qualifications of Jesus to be our High Priest, sole Mediator, God, and Friend. Jesus' life on earth was His preparation and ordination to be our Priest. Here, He prepared by knowing us even more intimately and undergoing trials on His journey for our redemption. He faced what we face, experienced what we experience, in all things effectual to being human. Our Lord underwent and endured and persevered when we were not able to do so. Thus, Jesus Christ is the only One who is called and qualified to be our Mediator. Because He was born as a human from the Tribe of Judah, His ordination was extra ordinary and yet not unprecedented, as Melchizedek paved the way of an outsider of Judaism serving God and man as priest. Thus, our eternal, loving God is Sovereign, Savior, and Server to us. But, make no mistake: He is still fully God and deserves our utmost reverence, respect, and obedience. This may not be demanded, but our proper and only response to being a true follower of Jesus is to trust and obey, just as He demonstrated.

### Commentary, Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Appointed / ordained* means to bring into place to be used as a sacred object in a temple. Here, it indicates the authoritative appointment by God to an office. Christ is being offered up as our Priest. A Jewish high priest was from the tribe of Levi and was selected by God and men, going through elaborate, cleansing ceremonies. His role was to represent the Jewish people before God and offer sacrifices and

offerings for atonement. Now Christ is the only one who is worthy to serve in this role (Psalm 22:24; Heb. 2:12; 8:3; 9:9)!

- *Offer gifts and sacrifices* indicates an Old Testament practice of appeasing God by offering sacrifices and atonement. Although greatly abused by many of the priests of old, now Christ fills that role with kindness and compassion (Lev. Chap 1-7; 2:1; Heb. 8:3; 9:9).
- *Deal gently / have compassion*, meaning to hold or restrain one's passions. An essential character of a priest was that they must love God and people in order to be a good moderator and minister. If they were prideful or had personal agendas contrary to God's, they failed, and in effect led the Jewish nation into rebellion and apostasy. When they were gentle, they and the nation prospered. God deals with us gently. As fallen humans, we all need redemption; the priests of old needed atonement and forgiveness. The contrast and qualification is this: Christ is superior and sinless and has no agenda other than our best interest in His heart and mind (Lev. 9:7; 16:6-11; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:26-27).
- *Ignorant and are going astray/wayward*. This is about the knowledge of God's law and precepts, that we have no excuse not to know them. At the same time, He gives us grace up to a point. There is a difference between sins committed willfully and defiantly and those committed by accident or ignorance. We are warned that to further defy or rebel against God willfully will have consequences. This brings the question, *Are there degrees of sin to God?* The degrees of sin is that some are more heinous than others, such as *the seven things that God's hates*, being pride, and those that violate His commandments verses the minor sins such as procedural law such as the OT food ordinances. Such in the OT were demonstrated by their degrees of differing punishments or how God relates to them. Yet, all sin is evil and all sin separates from God equally, as any sin and it only takes one to separate us eternally from God. Thus, all sin is damning in God's sight. Here this passage demonstrates that Jesus died to forgive our sins, except the one sin that is "unpardonable" which is when we totally outright reject His election (Num. 15:27-31; Deut 32:22; Ps 62:12; Prov. 6:16-19; Isa 53:6; Matt 12:31-32; 23:15; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10; Rom 2:6; 6:23; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31; James 3:1; 1 John 1:7)!
- *No one takes this honor*. We cannot save ourselves or be our own priest or go to a human priest without Christ. No one could aspire to that role; they had to be born in it and then become qualified to do it. Today, a minister must be qualified and called by God and see himself as a servant; else pride will set in bringing certain ruin to him and his church!
- *Called by God*. This is about the initial call by God to Aaron and his sons to be priests and mediators for Him, and those who challenged Aaron and Moses and thus challenged God. At the same time, the only way to enter God's presence is by

invitation, which Christ does for us today. We have no right to challenge God. (Ex. 28:1; Num 16:1-17:10; Heb. 7:11-28).

- *Christ also did not ...becoming a high priest.* Jesus was called and appointed by the Father (Psalm 2:7-9; 110:4; Rom. 1:4; Heb.1:5).
- *You are my Son.* A quote from Psalm 2:7, an opening to the precedence, person, and leading role of Melchizedek. This also was a symbol for the Davidic heir, the One who would rule. This is also the pronouncement that God the Father calls the Son as King, Lord, and Priest (Psalm 2:7-8; 110:4; Heb. 1:3-5).
- *Melchizedek.* For the most part, he is a mystery to us, as we do not know the full details of who he was. We do know he was honored before the Levitical priesthoods' inception. He is mentioned twice before in the Old Testament as giving and receiving honor, tribute, and tithes from Abraham of a tenth of *the heap*, which he took from the kings with whom he fought in battle. He is designated a king and a high priest who may not be of Jewish origin, rather a Canaanite priestly king. This is perhaps to show us the importance of the priesthood and that God chooses whom He desires; now, Christ is the chosen one. Jewish tradition states that this was a ceremony in which God transferred the priesthood from Canaan to Abraham and then to his descendents, the Levites. Some Christian groups say this was a "Christophany" a pre-incarnate form of Christ, but neither view has biblical support. The main point is that Jesus is descended from the tribe of Judah and thus could not serve as a Levitical or high priest, but Melchizedek is the precedent exception and thus, Christ is ordained in his "order," circumventing the need to be a Levite (Gen. 14:18; Psalm 110:4; Heb. 7:2-6).
- *The days of Jesus* refers to the Passion of Christ—His suffering at Gethsemane and the road to the cross as well as His life on earth to identify as one of us. This also refers to His sacrificial work on our behalf. Jesus did not waver from or avoid His call or His physical suffering and death, even though He sought another way. He remained obedient to His unspeakable anguish of taking humanity's sins upon Himself (Matt. 26:36-46; 27:46).
- *Loud cries and tears.* Another reference to the Passion of Christ and His suffering. We have a God who knows, understands, and cares; He knows and feels our pain, which must reach us deeply (Psalm 22; Mark 14:33-36; John 12:27).
- *Was heard.* Even as Christ pleaded before the Father for an alternate way, He was obedient to the cross and finished His Work and the consequential acceptance by God of it. Because He did this, God hears us and our pleas; thus, we should praise Him for doing so. Jewish tradition states that God hears the prayers and petitions of the righteous. Now through Christ, we have His covering of righteousness; therefore God hears us and responds accordingly to His perfect will (Psalm 22:24-25; 30:23; 116:1; 1 John 5:14).

- *Reverent submission / in that he feared.* This does not mean fear as in anxiety; rather, it is about being pious and having reverence and awe for God. Jesus becomes the victor; where Adam failed, Jesus resisted sin and prevailed (Prov. 28:14; Heb. 12:28).
- *Learned obedience.* In Greek culture, this *learning* meant “to endure.” Here, it is Jesus’ temptation in the desert and the suffering in His ordeal on the cross. Jesus was free from sin, yet paid our debt of sin. He did not have to, but He did; this was the only way we could be forgiven and receive His grace and salvation. Some commentators see this as Jesus growing up as a human (Luke 2:52; Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 2:10, 17-18; 10:7).
- *From what he suffered.* A retort to the Greek thinking that people learn through chastisement and suffering, so to get their lessons, need to be beaten. Here, Christ takes our beating (Mark 8:34-35).
- *Made perfect.* A language of consecration, this does not mean Jesus was made perfect, for He already was; He was always without sin. This means He finished His work of the cross—of life, death, and resurrection for the payment of our sins. He became our sacrifice and thus was qualified to redeem and save us. (Heb. 9:12).
- *Eternal salvation.* This is what we receive from His work, by no work or effort on our own except to receive it by trusting faith (Heb. 7:24-25).
- *Designated / called,* God calls and chooses whom He wills to belong to Him.

### **Devotional Thoughts and Applications:**

As priests, ministers, pastors, or church leaders, we are called to restrain our passions, including anger and judgmentalism. Being gentle is an essential character of a servant of God. If we are going into ministry, it has to be for servitude, not selfish ambition, power, or control. It must never be for prestige or for gratification or to please someone; it must, it has to be all about our love to God and love for His people. To be a good moderator and minister, the call must be real; it must reach us deeply and be confirmed by others too. If we are prideful or have personal agendas contrary to God’s, we will fail at leading His church, rather leading the people He gives us to love and care for into rebellion and apostasy. When we are gentle, as in kindness, this leads to care and compassion because we are concerned about the same things our Lord is. He calls us to be nurturing to others as He is with us. Effective leadership is always in gentleness; a Fruit of the Spirit, this is the character that will show calmness, personal care, tenderness, and the Love of Christ in meeting the needs of others. It is to be more than just a personality; it is to be who we are from the work of the Spirit within us (Prov. 15:1; Isa. 40:11; 42:2-3; Phil. 4: 5; Matt. 5:5; 11:29; 12:15; Eph. 4:1-2; Col. 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:24; 1 Thessalonians 2:7). When this occurs, your church will prosper. Pastors and church leaders are being good ministers when they realize they are still human and

fallen, and face their own sins and temptations that would cloud them from being true representatives of Christ. Thus, we point others to Him by our actions and deeds.

Christ is the only one who is worthy to serve in this role as our High Priest!

**The Essential Inductive Questions** (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

***Additional Questions:***

1. Have you ever sought out a mediator or a priest to talk to God on your behalf? Why? Was that necessary? What is the difference between priestly mediation and prayerful intercession?
2. Why do you not need anyone to mediate between you and God? How does that make you feel? Why would some Christian groups say you must have a mediator in order to go before God?
3. Why is Jesus Christ the only one who is worthy to serve in the role of our High Priest?
4. Why is it important that Jesus is fully qualified to be our source for salvation and mediator and our eternal, most Holy God?
5. What would you say to a Christian who thinks it is OK to have a priest make petitions to our Lord so he/she does not have to?
6. What does it mean to your faith that Jesus knows you and can relate to anything you would ever deal with in life?
7. How have you seen Jesus demonstrate for you what it means to be human in a fallen world (either in His Word or in the lives of others)?

8. What is the difference between sins committed willfully and defiantly and those committed by accident or ignorance? Why are they both wrong?
9. How will pride ruin you as a servant of God? What about your church? What can you do to prevent this?
10. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus knows and feels your pain? How can that reach you more deeply in your heart, will and mind?
11. What do you need to do to improve your reverence, obedience, and trust to God?
12. What can you do better to draw near to Christ and be an offering of thanksgiving? What would that mean to your faith and church?

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