

A Greater Priest

Jesus is Greater #8 - Pastor Gary Combs - November 19, 2023 - Hebrews 5:1-10

INTRO: Good morning church! We are continuing our series entitled, “JESUS IS GREATER: An Exposition of Hebrews.” Remember our theme verse is:

Hebrews 1:4 (NLT) This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

Today, we'll be looking at Hebrews 5:1-10 in a sermon entitled “A Greater Priest.” We've already learned that Jesus is greater than the angels, than Moses, than Joshua, than the Sabbath, and now, we'll see that He is greater than Aaron and all the high priests after him. For Jesus is the Great High Priest. He is our go between, our Mediator. He understands us and represents us before the Father.

ILL: There's a big DIY movement these days and it's really accelerated with the coming of You Tube “how-to” videos. I watched a bunch of them in putting in our above ground pool and building a deck around it this past year. I think we did a pretty good job and saved a lot of money, but it was a lot of work and I had a steep learning curve on several aspects that caused us to have several “do-overs!”

But there are some things that you really don't want to do yourself. I don't care how many You Tube vids you watch, I wouldn't recommend doing surgery on yourself. Or representing yourself in court over a legal issue... Or as I've learned as a pastor trying to lead our church, I don't want to be the one figuring out how to jump through all the hoops with zoning, building, and fire inspectors in building remodels or new construction. It's too much.

I need an expert. Someone who knows how to meet all the requirements and get us across the goal line. I need a go-between, a mediator someone to represent my interests before those in authority.

That's what Job cried out for... he needed a mediator to represent him before God.

Job 9:33-35 (NLT) ³³ If only there were a mediator between us, someone who could bring us together. ³⁴ The mediator could make God stop beating me, and I would no longer live in terror of his punishment. ³⁵ Then I could speak to him without fear, but I cannot do that in my own strength.

Need: Do you ever feel like Job? “If only there were someone who could bring me together with God!” Someone who not only understands you and your situation, but also is able to bring you near to God?

Trans: That was the purpose of the Old Testament high priest. He represented the people before God. Yet, they had shortcomings. Their ministry was always only a foreshadowing of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

BODY: In Hebrews 5:1-10, the author helped the Hebrew background believers understand why Jesus is a greater high priest. We can understand why Jesus is the greater high priest. Why is Jesus the greater high priest? The text gives **three reasons** why Jesus is the greater high priest.

Read text: Hebrews 5:1-10 (ESV) ¹ For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. ³ Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. ⁴ And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; ⁶ as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” ⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

THREE REASONS WHY JESUS IS THE GREATER HIGH PRIEST:

1. Because He better fulfills the personal requirement.

EXP: (1-4) Chapter 5 continues the thought of 4:14-16, that Christ is the greater high priest. While Hebrews 4 showed us Christ's superiority in his sinlessness and sympathy for us, Hebrews 5 focuses on the **superiority of Christ in his person** and appointment as high priest that comes from God alone. “Hebrews 5, like the final verses of chapter 4, continues explaining why Christians can hold fast their confession: they have a better high priest” (Mohler, p.70). These first 4 verses describe the **personal requirements of a human high priest**, which **Christ better fulfills** than any.

“High Priest” (1) (ἀρχιερεύς, *archiereus*) - chief priest, high priest, duties are described here.

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“**Chosen**” (1) (λαμβάνω, *lambanō*) - to take, to choose, select. “From among men.” Human requirement, specifically from the line of Aaron, brother of Moses.

“**Appointed**” (1) (καθίστημι, *kathistēmi*) - to set, place, put, appoint. To represent humanity before God.

“**Offer gifts**” (1) (προσφέρω, *prospherō*) - to offer a gift or present. Gifts brought to the Temple. They took many forms (flour, wheat, cakes... see chart)



“**Sacrifices for sin**” (1) (θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, *thusias hyper hamartion*) - sin offering, the sacrifice. The amount of sacrifice was amazing. See number for just one week of Succoth.

“**Deal gently**” (2) (μετριοπαθεῖω, *metriopatheō*) - to be affected in due measure, of one who is not unduly disturbed by the errors, faults, sins of others, but bears them gently. Jesus is greater at this!

“**Ignorant and wayward**” (2) (ἀγνοεῖω, *agnoeō*) - ignorant, not to know, not to understand. (πλανᾶω, *planaō*) - to cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way, to go astray, wander, roam.

“**Beset with weakness**” (2) (περίκειμαι, *perikeimai*) - inclosed, encircled, hampered (compassed) with “weakness” (ἀσθένεια, *astheneia*) - want of strength, weakness, infirmity, feebleness, sickness.

“**Obligated**” (3) (ὀφείλω, *opheilō*) - to owe, in debt, to be under obligation, here for his “own sins.”



Leviticus 16:11 (ESV) “Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself.”

“**Aaron**” (4) - the elder brother of Moses (3 years older, Ex.7:7), of the tribe of Levi, God appointed him the first high priest of Israel (Ex.28) and his sons after him (Ex.29:29).

ARG: Remember ch.2? Jesus meets the human requirement.

Hebrews 2:17 (ESV) Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Jesus is greater because His credentials better fulfill the personal requirements for a priest.

Hebrews 4:14-15 (ESV) ¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

ILL: In July 1956, President Eisenhower created the President's Council on Youth Fitness by Executive Order. I remember every year in PE we had to take the President's Physical Fitness Test. The test would consist of 1) Pull-ups, 2) sit-ups, 3) shuttle run, 4) standing broad jump, 5) 50-yard dash, and 6) a 600-yard run. If you met the requirements, you'd get a President's medal. I never got one. Pull-ups... ugh! But killed in the 600!

APP: Jesus better fulfills the personal requirements for a high priest because He is truly able to “deal gently” with us because He can “sympathize with our weaknesses,” yet “without sin.” He doesn't need to offer a sin sacrifice for Himself. He is sinless. Will you recognize Him as the only One who fulfills God's requirements on your behalf?

2. Because He has a superior priestly pedigree.

EXP: (5-6) The author returns to quoting the OT in order to explain why Christ is the greater high priest because He has a **superior pedigree**: He is the “Son” (5) (quoting Ps. 2:7) of God and He is “a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (6) (quoting Ps. 110:4).

“**Exalt Himself**” (5) (δοξάζω, *doxazō*) - to praise, extol, magnify, celebrate. Jesus does not glorify Himself or call Himself, God the Father appointed Him. As God “said to Him” (In Psa. 2:7)

Psalm 2:7 (ESV) The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”

A Greater Priest

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“Priest forever” (6) (αἰών, *aiōn*) - for ever, an unbroken age, perpetuity of time, eternity. Only One now.

Psalm 110:4 (ESV) The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

“Melchizedek” (6, 10) - "king of righteousness", the king of Salem and priest of the most high God, whom Abram paid a tithe. He only appears in 3 books Gen. 14, Psa.110, and Hebrews. Some see him as the preincarnate Christ. After Abram defeated Chedorlaomer (*Ka door la o mer*) and rescued his nephew Lot and the other captives of Sodom, Melchizedek appears to bless him:

Genesis 14:17-20 (ESV) ¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!” And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

ARG: **Jesus’ pedigree and ministry are superior to the old priesthood.**

Hebrews 8:6 (NLT) But now Jesus, our High Priest, has been given a ministry that is far superior to the old priesthood, for he is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God, based on better promises.

Jesus is the only “forever” priest and mediator.

1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV) For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

ILL: If you apply for a job, you have to turn in a resume. Some jobs require letters after your name, like BS or MD or PhD.

APP: Jesus has a superior priestly pedigree! He has six letters after His name: CHRIST! He is appointed and anointed by God! Will you recognize Him as the he only One who has the pedigree and credentials to represent you before the Father?

3. Because He offers a more perfect sacrifice.

EXP: (7-10) Look at v.9. Circle “perfect.” Christ offered a perfect sacrifice (Himself) and “became the source of eternal salvation.”

“Days of His flesh” (7) (σάρξ, *sarx*) - “When he appeared on earth as a man. Flesh is used to denote human nature, and especially human nature as susceptible of suffering. The Son of God still is united to human nature, but it is human nature glorified, for in his case, as in all others, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” (1 Cor.15:50. He has now a glorified body (Phil. 3:21), such as the redeemed will have in the future world; compare (Rev.1:13-17).” (Barnes Commentary)

“Prayers and supplications” (7) - This is the Garden of Gethsemane scene on display. Jesus prayed before God the Father to allow this cup to pass by, to allow the future sufferings to pass with **“Loud cries and tears.”** Was it dread of the suffering of the cross? Or of God’s wrath falling upon Him and the resulting separation from His Father? I think it was the latter.

“Reverence” (7) (εὐλάβεια, *eulabeia*) - reverence toward God, godly fear, piety. Closely related to submission. “Reverent submission” (NIV).

“Learned obedience” (8) (μανθάνω, *manthanō*) - to learn, to gain experience. “To say Jesus learned obedience is not to suggest at one time He was disobedient, rather it emphasizes Jesus experience as a human being who learned to obey God even in the midst of great suffering” (Kruger, 72)

“Suffered” (8) (πάσχω, *paschō*) - to be affected, to suffer. “Passion,” as in “Passion Week,” is in view.

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“**Made perfect**” (9) (τελειόω, *teleiōō*) - to make perfect, complete, to accomplish, finish, bring to an end.

“**Source of eternal salvation**” (9) (αἴτιος, *aitios*) - source, causative, the author, founder.

“**All who obey him**” (9) (ὑπακούω, *hupakouō*) - Lit. “to come under hearing.” To obey, to submit to.

“**Designated**” (10) (προσαγορεύω, *prosaagoreuō*) - to address, call by name, to give a name in public. It is a marketplace word having to do with setting the price or value of. God calls Christ our High Priest.

ARG: **Jesus offers a more perfect sacrifice because He offered Himself.**

Hebrews 2:10 (ESV) For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

John 10:17-19 (ESV) ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

ILL: On the cross, Jesus said, “It is finished.” Paid in full. Perfect can mean finished, complete. No further payment or sacrifice needed.

APP: Jesus offered a superior and more perfect sacrifice. For He willing offered Himself in our place. Will you recognize Him as the only One who has offered the perfect sacrifice for your sins and through Whom you might receive eternal salvation?

CONCLUSION: Jesus is our Great High Priest! There is none greater. He is our Mediator and Friend.

In 1876, a Baptist pastor named, Robert Lowry, wrote a hymn about the priestly and perfect sacrifice of Christ. For He offered not the blood of animals, but His own precious blood for our sins.

Nothing But the Blood of Jesus

What can wash away my sin?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

O precious is the flow
that makes me white as snow;
no other fount I know;
nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Will you recognize Jesus as ...

1. The only One who fulfills God’s requirements on your behalf?
2. The only One who has the pedigree and credentials to represent you before the Father?
3. The only One who has offered the perfect sacrifice for your sins and through Whom you might receive eternal salvation?

Let’s pray.