

Lesson Nine — The High Priesthood

Day One — A High Priest Taken from Among Men

Day Two — The Work of a High Priest

Day Three — According to the Order of...

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Day Five — Thus Far...

If you did last week's lesson diligently you will begin this week's lesson well. Familiarizing yourself with the mid section of the Book of Hebrews will help your understanding in the upcoming lessons. If you failed to be quite so diligent last week, you may want to stop and read Hebrews 4:12-10:23. Please do not allow yourself to become discouraged at this point. Keep working, and you will receive great blessing for all your hard work. Remember our goal always is to hear in that coming Day the commendation from our Savior, "Well done, My good and faithful servant!" Therefore, we must remain diligent in the work of understanding His Word and of rightly dividing His Word, so as to stand approved at the judgment seat (2 Tim. 2:15).

This week we are going to continue in what we began last week. Understanding this section of Hebrews helps us to understand what benefit we presently have in Christ as our Intercessor/High Priest.

Notice we are presently on a journey. We have left Egypt, and we are headed toward the Promised Land. We find ourselves being taught of Him at Mount Sinai. There are many pitfalls in our path. Provisions has been made for us when we fall, and knowing what these provisions are will help us to have strength for the journey. *Now, let us draw near with confidence to the Throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace in the time of need.* We have great need of grace and mercy to proceed. Please stop right now and pray for both — grace and mercy.

Day One — A High Priest Taken from Among Men

We'll begin by reading the first four verses in Hebrews chapter five.

Hebrews 5

1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; **2** he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; **3** and because of it he

is obligated to offer *sacrifices* for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. 4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

The author is speaking here of the high priest in Israel. Make a list of everything you learn about the high priest from this passage.

Today's exercise, falls into the category "FYI" (For Your Information). For now, it is "just so you know." But store it in your memory bank, for it will come in handy later.

Do you know very much about the roles of the Levitical priest and that of a high priest? Most Christians don't. Since our text here in Hebrews chapter five assumes the readers' knowledge of this subject, we need to gain a better understanding. Let's begin by looking at how Aaron was called to the priesthood along with his sons. Remember these events all took place *after* their redemption. A priest *never* ministers on behalf of people who have not been redeemed; he *only ever* ministers on behalf of people who have already been saved. This is a very important point in understanding the work of a high priest.

Leviticus 8

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering, and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread; 3 and assemble all the congregation at the doorway of the tent of meeting." 4 So Moses did just as the LORD commanded him. When the congregation was assembled at the doorway of the tent of meeting, 5 Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded to do." 6 Then Moses had Aaron and his sons come near, and washed them with water. 7 And he put the tunic on him and girded him with the sash, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the artistic band of the ephod, with which he tied it to him. 8 He then placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. 9 He also placed the turban on his head, and on the turban, at its front, he placed the golden plate, the holy crown, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10 Moses then took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. 11 And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them. 12 Then he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him. 13 Next Moses had Aaron's sons come near and clothed them with tunics, and girded them with sashes, and bound caps on them, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Three times this Scripture mentions that Moses did as the Lord commanded him. Circle those phrases in vv. 4, 9, and 13. Relate this to what the author of Hebrews mentions in Hebrews 5:4.

One more thing to notice in v. 6. Underline this verse as you note that it was Moses who washed the ones being inducted into the Levitical priesthood. This type of washing took place only one time, it was a complete washing; it was done to them by someone else; and it was never repeated for an individual. Later though, at

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different points in their ministry, we will see that the priests had need to wash themselves regularly, as they came to do service before the Lord.

A list of some of the rules and regulations of the priesthood is given in Leviticus chapter twenty-one. Distinctions are made for the priests and the high priest. Verses 1-9 speak of the priests. Verses 10-15 tells the distinguishing rules and regulations for the high priest. Draw a line across the sheet between vv. 9 and 10, and note the distinctions.

Leviticus 21

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, ‘No one shall defile himself for a *dead* person among his people, 2 except for his relatives who are nearest to him, his mother and his father and his son and his daughter and his brother, 3 also for his virgin sister, who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may defile himself. 4 He shall not defile himself as a relative by marriage among his people, and so profane himself. 5 They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh. 6 They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the bread of their God; so they shall be holy.

7 ‘They shall not take a woman who is profaned by harlotry, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God. 8 You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the bread of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the LORD, who sanctifies you, am holy. 9 Also the daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by harlotry, she profanes her father; she shall be burned with fire.

10 ‘And the priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured, and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor tear his clothes; 11 nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself *even* for his father or his mother; 12 nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him: I am the LORD. 13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity. 14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is profaned by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people; 15 that he may not profane his offspring among his people: for I am the LORD who sanctifies him.’“

Let’s make sure we see the comparisons here. A high priest must follow all the rules for the priests, but two rules must be followed more stringently. List the comparisons between priests and high priest on the chart below:

Priest

High Priest

Dead people:

Marriage:

Then there is one other difference — that of the anointing with oil. Notice what v. 10 says. Write it in your own words:

As you go about your day today, ask the Lord to help you meditate on these things, and ask the Holy Spirit to bring understanding your way. Have a good day!

Day Two — The Work of the High Priest

Be sure to begin your time today in prayer. Even as I begin to write this day's lesson, I ask the Lord to help me write it. These things may be difficult to grasp, but once grasped, this information will go a long way in helping us understand what Jesus is presently doing in the heavenlies on our behalf. What a blessing it is to know He is doing what He is doing. And it is all with a view to that coming Day. Lord, help us to understand these things.

Don't forget where we have been in Hebrews so far. It is all tied together. So stop now and pray for continual and further understanding.

Before we go on in our text in Hebrews chapter five, we need to have a better grasp of the role of the high priest in Israel. The reason for this is the benefit we receive in knowing what Christ is presently doing on our behalf in the heavenlies. The text concerning the priesthood of Christ in the New Testament is scattered throughout this mid-section of Hebrews (4:12-10:23). But for us to understand what all of this is referring to, we need to see a couple more things about the priesthood in the Old Testament.

Without going into a whole lot of detail, understand that God gave Moses the command to build a replica of items literally found in heaven. Moses was to take this pattern (a sort of blueprint, if you will) and build an exact replica of it on earth. Exodus chapters twenty-five through twenty-seven explain the detail given to Moses so that he might construct the tabernacle, duplicating the Tabernacle which exists in heaven. Moses and the people whom God suited for building, sewing, or smithing completed the tabernacle and all its furnishings and all the priestly garments, exactly as God had commanded. Though we are covering this subject in short order, it was no small thing for Moses, nor was it small in the eyes of God. Its completion meant that God would make His dwelling place among His people. It was an awesome command, an awesome feat, and it was for an awesome purpose.

Think about that for a moment! God was planning to dwell among His people!

The symbolism found in the priestly garments, the furnishings, the covering, and the veils, etc., etc., is beyond what we can fathom at this point, even to the smallest detail.

We'll look a little closer at the tabernacle when we get to Hebrews chapters eight and nine, but for now we will concentrate in part on the responsibilities of the high priest.

As part of the high priest's responsibility, once a year he was to perform a certain rite, a feast, for himself and for the people of Israel. It is called the Feast of Atonement. In order to understand it more fully, you will want to pull out of the Appendix the sheet entitled *The Tabernacle*. It has a drawing of the tabernacle which may help you to be able to visualize this better.

On this feast day (on one specific day each year), the high priest would sacrifice an animal, collect the blood of the animal and go into the most Holy Place, placing the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat as a covering for the sins committed by God's people during that year. Although daily sacrifices were offered for sin, this was the time afforded by God, when the sins of the people, having been confessed, were covered by the blood, so that He would cleanse them and remember their sin no more. It was a very solemn day, and one of great import **for the people of God**.

Notice that the feast was *for the people of God*. This feast day was not to be celebrated by anyone *but the people of God*. The high priest **never, ever** acted on behalf of anyone except God's own people — an already redeemed people. Therefore it is important to note that even now Jesus Christ is acting as High Priest on behalf of God's people — not on behalf of unsaved people. So what about the unsaved, you ask? The means of redemption for Israel was the blood of the passover lamb. The means of redemption for the unsaved today is the same. *Jesus, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed*. Faith in Christ's **finished work** on the cross as Passover Lamb is what saves people. Then His **present work**, that of officiating as *high priest* in the heavenlies with His own blood on the Mercy Seat is the means by which *God's people* can be cleansed from sin committed *after* they have been saved. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (I John 1:9).

With this in mind we will now look at the detail of the Feast of the Atonement. The high priest had need to make a sacrifice for himself first, then for the people. As you read the passage, write down the steps the high priest had to do in the respective columns.

Leviticus 16

1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. 2 And the LORD said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. 3 Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash, and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on.

5 "And he shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. 7 And he shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat. 11 Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. 12 And he shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring it inside the veil. 13 And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony, lest he die. 14 Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

15 "Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. 16 And he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions, in regard to all

their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. 17 When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. 18 Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. 19 And with his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times, and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it.

Steps the high priest made for —

Himself and his family

The people

The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus goes on to explain what is done with the second goat which was not sacrificed but remains alive.

Leviticus 16

20 “When he finishes atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. 21 Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel, and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who *stands* in readiness. 22 And the goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

This pictures the *completeness* of the work of God in dealing with the confessed, blood-covered sin of His redeemed people. He *takes the sin away*, to a place where it can never re-visit the camp of Israel again. The scape-goat represented to the people that God took their confessed, blood-covered sin far away from them. (Later we’ll see how this fits for us, too, in the person of Jesus Christ.) *The blood of bulls and goats* cannot take away sin; blood of animals can only *cover over* sin. Therefore, God provided a means — a live goat — whereby the sin can be *taken away* from the confessors.

The next several verses in Leviticus sixteen explain the finishing detail of the cleansing and how it must take place. We won't take the time to cover that now, but if you'd like, feel free to read it on your own (Lev. 16:23-28).

Then the last few verses of the chapter re-iterates to the people what this feast was to mean to them.

Leviticus 16

29 “And *this* shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls, and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; 30 for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute.

32 So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place shall make atonement: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, 33 and make atonement for the holy sanctuary; and he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34 Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year.” And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, *so* he did.

A couple of things to note here. God tells them this feast is to be a permanent statute for them, one they should continue to perform yearly (v. 29a). Then He speaks of the heart attitude with which the worshippers must come to the Lord their God on this day (v. 29b). What should be their heart attitude?

Then it speaks of the reason for such an assembly (v. 30). What reason is given?

Then it speaks of the fact that they were not to do any work on that day because it is particular kind of rest. What kind of rest was it to be for them (v. 31)?

Before we close today, I would like for you to see one more passage concerning this Day of Atonement. This passage is a little different than the above passage in that it shows us what the common person in the camp of Israel was expected to do on this day. The above passages mostly had to do with the work of the high priest. The following passage deals mostly with the lay people, so to speak. It also gives the story of what happened to people who did not comply with the commandments God gave through Moses.

Leviticus 23

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 27 “On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. 28 Neither shall you do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. 29 If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. 30 As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 32 It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath.”

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Again, what were the people to do on this day? What was to be their heart attitude?

If they did not do it, what would happen to them?

The humility which is expected of the part of the people on this day, would reflect their *confession of sin* throughout the previous year by way the ongoing sacrifices which they continuously brought to the priest.. You may want to look up the following verses to see the act of confession on the part of the people who committed sin.

Leviticus 5:5

Leviticus 26:40

Leviticus 16:21

Numbers 5:7

As you go today, remember to ask the Lord to help you meditate on these things. I know we have covered a lot today.

Day Three — According to the Order of...

Be sure to open your study time with prayer.

After studying about the work of the high priest yesterday, we come now in our text to Hebrews 5:5-6. It is helpful to see this passage almost as a parenthetical thought within the text of chapter five. While the Holy Spirit wants us to know about the high priesthood of Aaron, *it is not* that in itself upon which He desires to focus our attention. In other words, while there is much for us to gain in understanding about the role of Christ officiating as High Priest *according to the Aaronic priesthood*, there is even more for us to gain in going beyond that to an understanding of the role of Christ in His coming office — that of *High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek*. And it seems that the Holy Spirit desires to move us to this greater understanding. It is almost as if the author took one big deep breath, so to speak, and wrote a ‘run-on’ sentence from 5:5 through 6:9, then grabbed a breath then went on. From your sheets in the Appendix, read this portion of the text and see what you think.

Remember last week I had you do the lists of comparisons? You must come to see that comparisons are made throughout the mid-section of Hebrews for a purpose. The purpose is to keep moving us on...to goad us onto maturity. If we only concentrate on Christ’s role as the *High Priest according to the order of Aaron* (which is important enough!), but miss His going on to become a *priest according to the order of Melchizedek*, we will

miss the intended focus which the Holy Spirit desires us to grasp. And it seems, according to the text, that having this grasp is the way in which the Holy Spirit moves us on to maturity (5:14-6:3).

With that in mind, re-read Hebrews 5:1-6:9. Then YOU take a breath! (You may wonder why I have you read the text in Hebrews over and over again. It is most beneficial to keep reading portions of Hebrews many times over, allowing the connections in the text to be made more obvious. In this way you can see how interconnected things are in the book.

Notice there are phrases printed in caps in Hebrews 5:1-6. This indicates that the phrases in caps are quotes from the Old Testament. We have previously seen the quote found in v. 5, 6. Remember that it is the Father who is speaking to the Son in these verses.

The Holy Spirit is telling us that Christ did not become High Priest of His own will, but the Father appointed Him as High Priest. (An appointment by God was necessary for anyone to become a high priest according to the passages we read from the Old Testament on Day One.) Then the Holy Sprit takes us beyond seeing that Christ was appointed by God to be High Priest *according to the order of Aaron*. In fact, He reminds us of something which He has already pointed out to us in the first chapter of this epistle. The Father begot the Son *for the purpose of seating Him on the Throne upon Mt. Zion*. It was *for that day*, He begot Him (Psalm Two). If need be, you could do a refresher on this, by skimming Day Four of Lesson One of our study, beginning on page 9. It was a long day of study, but a key to the mind of God.

It is important to see that God did in fact appoint Jesus to be High Priest *according to the order of Aaron* for the present time, but that He did so with a future purpose in mind. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son was begotten for the expressed purpose of *being seated on the Throne* in that coming day, then — at this point in time — He would exercise the office of High Priest *according to the order of Melchizedek*, the King-Priest of the Most High God. Catch the connection. Re-read Hebrews 5:5-6, and write down the connection between the two Old Testament passages.

God *appointed* Jesus to be High Priest. Hebrews chapter three calls us to *consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession*. Then the passage goes on to say that Jesus *was faithful to Him who appointed Him*. Today we are going to see one facet of His faithfulness to His Father's appointment.

With this in mind, let's look at the next section of chapter five.

Hebrews 5

7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Write out what you think this passage means:

With just a cursory glance at this passage, one might get some wrong impressions. A cursory glance may allow one to think that Jesus cried to the Father asking Him to prevent Him from going to His death. It also may look as though, Jesus had the need to *learn to be obedient*. Further, it may look like a person who wants to receive

eternal salvation must do so through obedience, just as Christ was obedient. But is that what this passage is saying?

Remember, you must keep what you are reading within the context of the specific portion of the epistle. Let me ask you a few questions for you to consider.

Did Jesus want to be saved *from* death? To answer this question, look at what Jesus said six days prior to His death. (Pay close attention to the end of v. 27.)

John 12

24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit... 27 Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

Again, the question — Did Jesus want to be saved *from* death? What does this passage say about what He knew of His impending death?

The English word *from* is translated from the Greek word *ek* and can be translated *out of*. Jesus knew the Father could (and would) save Him *out of* death. He knew His body would not see decay. He knew the resurrection was indispensable in accomplishing that which He was sent to do. So His prayers and supplication with loud crying and tears was to the One Who had the power to raise Him *up out of* death.

So why the loud crying and strong tears? In considering the words — *loud crying* and *strong tears*, one can easily see that Jesus felt the weaknesses of the flesh as strongly as anyone, yet without sin. He wept at Lazarus’ death (John 11:35); He cried out in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36ff); He cried out to the Father on the cross (Mt. 26:27, 50). Jesus had so completely entered into the likeness of man that He intensely felt the desperation and need of mankind for God. He felt it so intensely that he cried aloud with groans and utterances which were sometimes without words. And in the midst of His humanity, the author of Hebrews writes that in all that He did, Jesus displayed piety — He feared God. Jesus, being the very nature of God, humbled Himself and took on the flesh of man (Heb. 1:3; Phil. 2:6-8), and in so doing, had need for much prayer and communion with the Father. If the Son had such a need, then how much more we? Think about it.

We’ll pick it up here tomorrow. Maybe you could spend a few minutes in humble adoration of our Father.

Day Four — Aaron or Melchizedek

Begin in prayer today.

Yesterday we looked at Hebrews 5:7-10. If you would glance back over yesterday’s material, we could jump right in where we left off.

What about His *learning obedience through suffering*? Did God the Son have need to *learn obedience*? May it never be! How could One with no sinful nature have the need to *learn* to obey, as if He wouldn’t naturally (according to His very nature) obey? The phrase we see here in the text implies that He *experienced* obedience

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through what he suffered. And because of these experiences — that of accomplishing all the suffering we had need of Him to suffer — He has *become source of eternal salvation* for those who likewise obey God.

Some have thought that this passage refers to salvation by grace through faith — our free gift. It does not. Look at the passage more closely. “*And having been made perfect, He became to all those who **obey Him** the source of eternal <166> salvation, being designated by God as a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.*”

Jesus was not *made perfect* in the sense that He was at some point in time not perfect, and finally became perfect through some act He performed. No, Jesus is eternally perfect — without flaw, without sin, spotless and unblemished. The word *perfect* simply means that *He competed what God called Him to do*. The Greek root word for the English word *perfect* is from the same root word as used in the statement He cried out a moment before He died, having completed the work that the Father had given Him to do. He cried out, “It is finished!” (John 19:30).

The words used in both texts — translated *perfect* in Hebrews 5:9, and *finished* in John 9:30 — is from the Greek root word found below. Read the definitions so you will get the sense of the way it is used within these texts:

5056 telos

1) end

1a) termination, the limit at which a thing ceases to be (always of the end of some act or state, but not of the end of a period of time)

1b) the end

1b1) the last in any succession or series

1b2) eternal

1c) that by which a thing is finished, its close, issue

1d) the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose

So we see that Jesus, in experiencing obedience, even to the point of death, has completed what God called Him to do while on earth, and due to that *has been made perfect*. And in this perfect state, Jesus has become, to those who obey Him, the source of all that we need to do in order to accomplish our goal, our end — the salvation which has to do with the coming age.

Again this passage is *not dealing with the salvation which has to do with eternity*. Look at the Greek word used here.

166 aionios (adjective)

from 165; perpetual (also used of past time, or past and future as well):--eternal, for ever, everlasting, world (began). An age, eternal. Taken from Greek 165 (aion). See below —

165 aion (noun)

properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):--age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more), (n-)ever

There are several ways in which we can know that the salvation mentioned in Hebrews 5:9 is dealing with *the coming age*, and not eternity. First, the central theme of the whole Book of Hebrews is the Messianic Era, which will last for one complete age. Additionally, Hebrews chapters three and four (which lead into chapter five) deal with *the rest* out ahead (the Sabbath Rest, the seventh day) and the inheritance (inherited salvation [1:14-2:3]) connected with this future day. So the salvation mentioned in Hebrews chapter five would be the same salvation that the entire book up this point has dealt with. Nothing in the context of Hebrews leading up to

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this passage would indicate in any way that the writer has switched focus and would now be dealing with the free gift of eternal salvation. Besides that, the writer is dealing with the idea of *obedience* — a *work* as a result of faith, not the simple act of believing in Christ's finished work.

Another way in which we can know for certain that this salvation has to do with the coming age and not eternity is that the priesthood of Christ *according to the order of Melchizedek* has only to do with the Messianic Era (an age), when He comes as the king/priest over the world (see Heb. 2:5; *cf.* Ps. 110).

Now notice v. 10 in chapter five. It concludes the sentence, which began in v. 9.

As we will study in the coming weeks, the priesthood of Christ *according to the order of Melchizedek* is Messianic in nature (Ps. 110). Beyond the Messianic Era — which will only last one thousand years — is eternity, comprising a new order of things. The following passages may help in our understanding this. This first passage speaks of Christ's resurrection, and our subsequent resurrection, without which our faith would be *in vain*, or without a purpose. Here we have need to compare Scripture with Scripture. This makes for the best commentary of Scripture in the world! (Scripture is its own best commentary.) We'll read I Corinthians first.

1 Corinthians 15

20 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, 24 then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death. 27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. 28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.

When comes the end, mentioned in v. 24? You will find two references to the *when* in this passage. Write out both of them below:

Then comes the end, when...(v. 24a)

when...(v. 24b)

Now look at how v. 25 begins. What word does it begin with?

Really, the thought in v. 25 chronologically could be interjected between vv. 23 and 24. What does it say that Christ will accomplish during the time span during this period of His rule?

Now follow this carefully. Prophetically speaking, between vv. 23 and 24 in the above passage, there is one thousand years of time. You can see the specific length of time mentioned several times in Revelation chapter

twenty. As you read through Rev. 20, underline the phrase *one thousand years* every time it is mentioned in the passage —

Revelation 20

1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **2** And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, **3** and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time. **4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. **5** The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years. **7** And when the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, **8** and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. **9** And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. **10** And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

How many times did you find the phrase *one thousand years*?

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, one should easily see that the passage in Revelation 20 explicitly states the length of time it will take for the last and final enemy to put under His feet.

Now look back at 1 Corinthians 15:24, 28. *What does Christ do when the end comes?*

And He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, so that...(see the end of v. 28) *God may be all in all*.

This phrase *that God may be all in all* describes the state of being at the beginning of eternity future and onward. In Revelation 20, we see that **after** the thousand years are complete, Satan is released from the abyss and is given a brief time on earth, wherein he tries once again to deceive the nations, bringing as many people as possible against Jerusalem. But judgment immediately falls upon him and upon all those whom he was able to deceive and coerce in bringing them against the earthly city. They are altogether cast into the Lake of Fire for all of eternity.

After the thousand years, after the heaven and earth pass away, a Great White Throne is revealed, with the Judge sitting upon it. Heaven and earth flee away from the presence of the Judge. The rest of all the dead will be raised for judgment, and all whose names are not found in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire, wherein the beast and the false prophet had already been cast prior to the one thousand years (Rev. 20:11-15).

Understanding Hebrews — Pressing Toward Maturity

Lesson Nine The High Priesthood

With the old heavens and earth having fled from the presence of the Judge, Revelation chapter twenty-one opens with a picture of the new heavens and new earth. This chapter describes the new earth as having no need for the sun, as the very presence of God Himself is the Light for it. In continuing the description of the heavenly city prepared for eternity, we see in Revelation 22:1 *the throne of God and of the Lamb* present there, now a joint throne. Jesus had offered His kingdom to the God and Father, for Him to be all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28). This joint Throne is mentioned again in chapter twenty-two, where the text mentions His bond-servants serving Him *forever and ever* (Rev. 22:1-5). There was a loud voice emanating from the throne saying,

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” 5 And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new” (Rev. 21:3-5a).

The Messianic Era will have come to a close, and the eternal ages will have begun. Jesus is *the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last, the beginning and the end* (Rev. 22:13). He is the *root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star* (Rev. 22:16).

With all of this in mind, now read again what it says of Christ in Hebrews chapter five:

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from [lit., out of] death, and He was heard because of His piety. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal [lit., age-lasting] salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

It is the salvation *out ahead* — the salvation during the Messianic Era — about which this passage deals. The time when Christ will be acting as High Priest *according to the order of Melchizedek*, during a 1,000 year period.

And **this is the very thing** about which the author would like to speak with them much (Heb. 5:11), but cannot because they have become dull of hearing. If it were the salvation we presently possess — the free gift — why would it be difficult for Paul to speak to them about it? Think about it, and...

Have a good day.

Day Five — Thus far...

The next section of Hebrews is the beginning of the third warning. We will wait until next week to begin delving into this portion. But there is something very beneficial which you could do today. It would be beneficial for you to go back over the first five chapters of Book of Hebrews. Read through these chapters a couple of times. I will say again, I have found it extremely enlightening to read through the text over and over again. Each time through seems to solidify what I have been learning. I think the same will be true for you. ☺

If you are doing commentary work here is your assignment according to which book you are reading:

Arlen Chitwood’s book Let Us Go On, read chapter two *Author of Eternal Salvation*, and chapter three *From Milk to Meat*.

Philip Mauro’s book God’s Pilgrim, read chapter ten *Judgment Beginning at the House of God*.