

Hebrews 4:14–5:10: OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

I. Introduction

Last week we were admonished to not harden our hearts to His voice “Today”. In the same spirit, our passage for today presents Jesus as the ultimate High Priest, bridging the gap between humanity's frailty and God's holiness. The passage begins by encouraging believers to hold firmly to their faith because they have a High Priest who is not distant or detached; rather, Jesus is uniquely qualified because He was tempted in every way as we yet remained without sin. This shared experience of suffering and temptation allows believers to approach the "throne of grace" with confidence, knowing they will receive mercy. The formal requirement of priesthood is that a priest must be appointed by God and possess the empathy to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward. By identifying Jesus with the mysterious order of Melchizedek, the author of Hebrews argues that Christ's priesthood is superior to the traditional Levitical system, as His "loud cries and tears" during His earthly life demonstrate a profound, obedient submission that ultimately made him the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

However, it is impossible to fully grasp the depth of the message being conveyed here without an understanding of the historical context to Melchizedek - King of Salem. Melchizedek was the first King-Priest, a prophetic foreshadowing of Jesus. Just like we now have the concept of separation of church and state, in the ancient world, the political role of the King was distinct and separate from the religious role of the Priest. Melchizedek shattered those notions. Secondly while he was the King of Salem (ancient Jerusalem) and a priest, his lineage was not recorded. This is a very important fact because to the Jewish audience, lineage was everything with legitimacy around royalty or priesthood. So, it begs the question of who was the source of his legitimacy? Also, he received a tithe from Abraham and blessed him, thus establishing that he was the greater.

So, Jesus did not need human legitimacy but rather divine authority. God called Him and made Him our high priest. However, glory be to God that Jesus was a perfect high priest who never had to sacrifice for His own sins. Also, He knew His kingdom was not earthly, so He never focused on political power. Just as Melchizedek brought bread and wine to a weary Abraham, Jesus brings grace to the weary. Jesus is also the Prince of Peace who brings us into His rest and declares victory for us over life's current struggles.

II. Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

III. Think Through the Following Questions:

1. The "Vibe Check"...Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus was tempted in *every* way that we are. If Jesus were a teenager in 2026, what specific modern temptations (social media, school pressure, etc.) do you think he would have faced, and how does knowing he "gets it" change how we pray?
2. Verse 4:16 tells us to approach God's throne with "confidence." What is the difference between being arrogant and being confident when we talk to God? Do you ever feel like you must "fix yourself up" before you pray?
3. In Hebrews 5:1–2, a priest is chosen from among the people so he can deal "gently" with others because he is also weak. Are leaders who admit their own struggles often more effective than those who pretend to be perfect?
4. Melchizedek had no recorded lineage or "resume." In our world where we focus so much on "who you know" or your "family name," how does it feel to know that God calls people based on His purpose rather than their background?
5. In the cancel culture environment, people often get "canceled" for their mistakes, Hebrews 5:2 says Jesus deals *gently* with the ignorant and wayward. How can we as a church model this "gentle dealing" instead of judging others online or in person?
6. Hebrews 5:7 mentions Jesus' "loud cries and tears." Does it surprise you to see the Son of God being that vulnerable? How does this change your image of what "strength" looks like in a Christian man or woman?
7. Verse 5:8 says Jesus "learned obedience from what he suffered." If even Jesus had to "learn" through hard times, how should we view the difficult seasons we are going through right now in our own lives or businesses?

IV. Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?

V. Application: How Do You think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?