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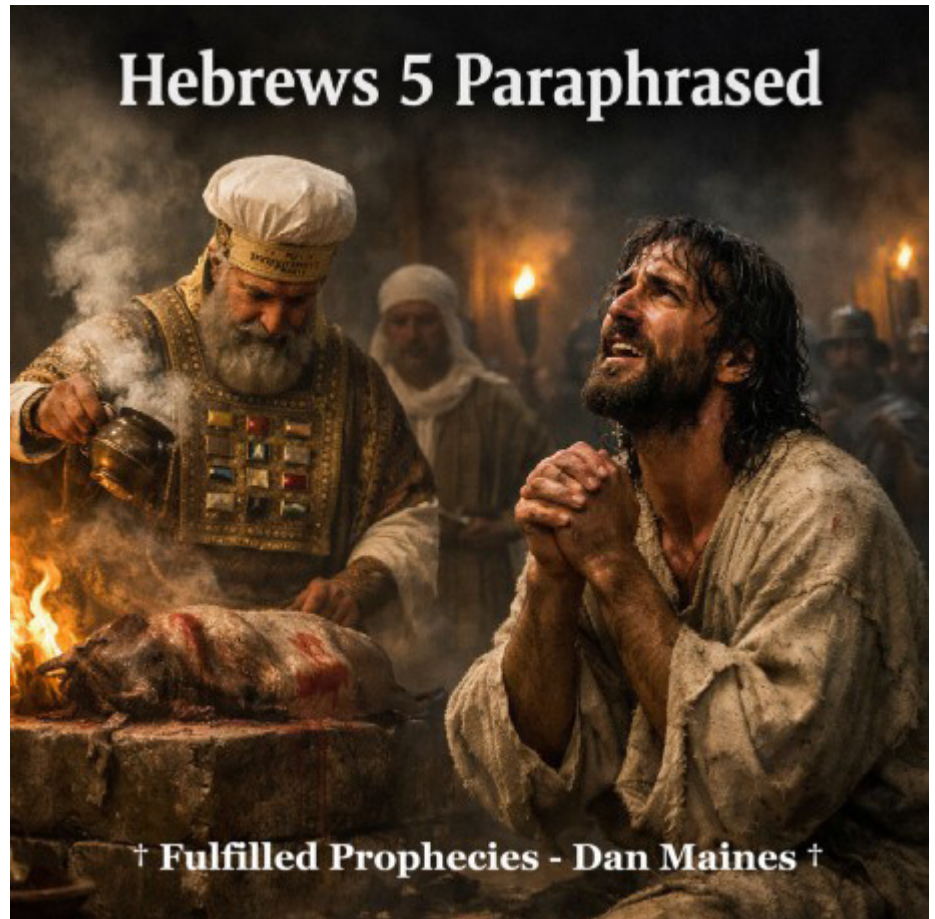
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Hebrews 5 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Hebrews 5 Paraphrased

Introduction

† The writer of Hebrews explains the role of the high priest and shows how Jesus fulfilled that role in a greater way. The priesthood under the Law served as a shadow that pointed forward to Christ. By the time this letter was written, the old priesthood was about to disappear with the coming destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

† The message also rebukes believers who should have

matured but were still spiritually immature. They needed to grow in understanding instead of remaining dependent on elementary teaching.

† Jesus was not only a priest, He was appointed by God as the eternal High Priest, fulfilling the pattern spoken of long before in the Scriptures.

Hebrews 5:1

Every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to represent people before God, offering gifts and sacrifices for sins.

† The high priest stood as a mediator between the people and God under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 16:32-34).

† His work involved presenting sacrifices on behalf of others because the people could not approach God directly in the old covenant system (Hebrews 9:7).

† This role pointed forward to Christ, who would become the true mediator between God and mankind (1 Timothy 2:5).

Hebrews 5:2

Because he is also surrounded by weakness himself, he is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and those who go astray.

† The earthly priests were not perfect, they were sinners themselves and understood human weakness (Hebrews 7:27).

† This weakness allowed them to show compassion toward others who struggled with sin (Numbers 15:27-28).

† Yet this also showed the limitation of the old priesthood, because the priest himself needed forgiveness.

Hebrews 5:3

For this reason he had to offer sacrifices not only for the sins of the people but also for his own sins.

† The Day of Atonement showed this clearly, because the high priest first made sacrifice for his own sin before he could intercede for the nation (Leviticus 16:6,11).

† This exposed the weakness of the Levitical priesthood since the priest himself was not sinless (Hebrews 7:28).

† Jesus was different because He had no sin and did not need to offer sacrifices for Himself (1 Peter 2:22).

Hebrews 5:4

No one takes this honor upon himself, he must be called by God just as Aaron was.

† The priesthood was not something a man could claim for himself, it required God's appointment (Exodus 28:1).

† Aaron was chosen by God to begin the priestly line in Israel (Numbers 18:7).

† This principle prepares the reader to understand that Jesus also received His priesthood by God's appointment.

Hebrews 5:5

In the same way, Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but the One who said to Him, You are My Son, today I have become Your Father.

† This references Psalm 2:7, a messianic prophecy pointing to the authority given to Christ.

† Jesus did not appoint Himself, the Father declared His role and authority (Matthew 3:17).

† The resurrection publicly confirmed His identity and authority as God's Son (Acts 13:33).

Hebrews 5:6

And in another place God says, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

† This comes from Psalm 110:4, which predicted a priesthood different from the Levitical system.

† Melchizedek was both king and priest, showing a greater pattern fulfilled in Christ (Genesis 14:18).

† Jesus' priesthood is eternal and does not depend on the lineage of Levi.

Hebrews 5:7

During the days of His life on earth, Jesus offered up prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence.

† This reflects Jesus' prayers in Gethsemane as He faced the suffering of the cross (Matthew 26:39).

† His prayers showed His complete submission to the Father even while facing suffering (Luke 22:44).

† Though He died, God answered His prayer by raising Him from the dead (Acts 2:24).

Hebrews 5:8

Although He was the Son, He learned obedience through the suffering He experienced.

† Jesus did not learn obedience because He was disobedient, but because He experienced human suffering firsthand (Philippians 2:8).

† His suffering demonstrated complete obedience to God's will (Isaiah 53:7).

† This prepared Him to become the perfect High Priest who understands human struggle.

Hebrews 5:9

After being made complete, He became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys Him.

† Christ's work was completed through His death and resurrection (John 19:30).

† Eternal salvation came through His finished sacrifice rather

than repeated temple offerings (Hebrews 10:12).

† Obedience here refers to faith and submission to Christ's authority (Romans 1:5).

Hebrews 5:10

And He was declared by God to be a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

† This confirms again that Jesus' priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:11).

† Melchizedek's priesthood existed before the Law and therefore was greater than the system that came through Moses.

† Christ's priesthood continues forever and does not pass from one generation to another.

Hebrews 5:11

We have much more to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you have become slow to understand.

† The writer rebukes the audience for spiritual dullness and lack of growth (Hebrews 6:1).

† They should have been ready for deeper teaching but were still struggling with basic truths.

† Spiritual immaturity often comes when believers stop studying and applying God's word.

Hebrews 5:12

By now you should already be teachers, but instead you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's message again. You need milk, not solid food.

† Milk represents the foundational teachings of the faith (1 Corinthians 3:1-2).

† Solid food represents deeper understanding and maturity in the word (Ephesians 4:13-14).

† The believers had stalled in their growth instead of

progressing toward maturity.

Hebrews 5:13

Anyone who lives only on milk is inexperienced with the message of righteousness because he is still like a child.

† Spiritual infancy keeps believers from understanding the deeper truths of God's kingdom (1 Corinthians 14:20).

† Growth in righteousness requires learning and applying the word of God (Psalm 119:105).

† The audience was being urged to grow beyond beginner-level understanding.

Hebrews 5:14

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have trained their senses through practice to recognize both good and evil.

† Spiritual maturity comes through consistent practice and discernment (Romans 12:2).

† Mature believers learn to test what is true and reject error (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

† This kind of discernment protects the church from false teaching.

Historical References

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that Christ is the true High Priest who fulfilled the priestly shadows of the Law.

† Justin Martyr explained that the sacrifices and priesthood of Israel were symbols pointing to Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.

† Eusebius recorded that early Christians understood the destruction of the temple in AD 70 as the end of the Levitical priesthood system.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We no longer depend on earthly priests because Jesus is our eternal High Priest (Hebrews 7:24-25).

† Believers are called to grow beyond basic teachings and become mature in understanding God's word (Hebrews 6:1).

† Spiritual growth comes through regular study, obedience, and applying the truth of Scripture.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did the old covenant need priests?

A: Because the people could not directly approach God under the Law. The priest served as mediator and offered sacrifices for sin (Hebrews 9:6-7).

Q: How is Jesus different from the Levitical priests?

A: Jesus was sinless and offered Himself once for all, while the Levitical priests offered repeated sacrifices (Hebrews 7:27).

Q: What does it mean to move from milk to solid food?

A: It means growing from basic teachings to deeper understanding and maturity in the word of God (Hebrews 5:12-14).

Q: Why does Hebrews connect Jesus to Melchizedek instead of Aaron?

A: Because Melchizedek's priesthood existed before the Law and did not depend on the tribe of Levi. This shows that Christ's priesthood is greater and eternal, not tied to the temporary system of the Law (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:11-17).

Q: What does it mean that Jesus learned obedience through suffering?

A: It means that during His life on earth He experienced real human suffering and remained perfectly faithful to God's will. His obedience was proven through what He endured (Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 2:17-18).

Q: Why does the writer rebuke the readers for still needing milk?

A: Because by that time they should have matured enough to teach others, but they were still dependent on the basic principles of the faith instead of growing deeper in understanding (Hebrews 5:12-13; 1 Corinthians 3:1-2).

Q: How do believers train themselves to discern good and evil?

A: Through constant exposure to God's word and by applying it in daily life. Mature believers grow in discernment as they practice righteousness and test everything against the truth of Scripture (Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Hebrews 5:1-14

† Leviticus 16:6-34; Psalm 2:7; Psalm 110:4; Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:44; Acts 2:24; Philippians 2:8

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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