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By Dan Maines

## Hebrews 5

### Hebrews 5:1

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of people in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

† The role of the high priest was to represent the people before God. He offered gifts and sacrifices to deal with sin. The writer begins by describing the earthly priesthood to prepare for the contrast with Christ.

† Josephus (Antiquities 3.9.7) described the high priest as chosen to intercede for the nation, showing how this office was understood in first-century Judaism.

† The Mishnah (Yoma 1.3) details how the high priest was carefully appointed and prepared for the Day of Atonement, highlighting the weight of his role.

### **Hebrews 5:2**

He can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is clothed in weakness.

† The earthly high priest understood human weakness because he shared in it. His ministry required compassion, not harshness.

† Philo (On Dreams 1.215) said the high priest must sympathize with those under him because he himself is subject to passions and weakness.

### **Hebrews 5:3**

And because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins for himself, as well as for the people.

† Unlike Christ, earthly priests needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins. This showed their imperfection and limitation.

† Philo (On the Special Laws 1.97) emphasized that the high priest, being human, needed to atone for his own sins before interceding for others.

† The Talmud (Yoma 7b) records that the high priest confessed his own sins first on the Day of Atonement before he could intercede for Israel.

### **Hebrews 5:4**

And no one takes the honor for himself, but receives it when he is called by God, just as Aaron also was.

† The high priesthood was not a self-appointed role but a divine calling. Aaron was chosen by God as the first high priest.

† Josephus (Antiquities 20.10.1) notes that later political appointments of high priests by Rome corrupted this calling, contrasting it with the true divine appointment of Christ.

### **Hebrews 5:5**

So too Christ did not glorify Himself in becoming a high priest, but it was He who said to Him, "You are My Son, today I have fathered You."

† Christ did not take the office Himself. God appointed Him, fulfilling Psalm 2:7. His sonship was the foundation of His priesthood.

† Justin Martyr (Dialogue with Trypho 33) explained that Psalm 2 applied to Christ as God's appointed Son, not to earthly rulers.

### **Hebrews 5:6**

Just as He also says in another passage, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

† Christ's priesthood was not according to Aaron but Melchizedek. This was a higher, eternal order, predating the Law itself.

† The Qumran community (11QMelchizedek) described Melchizedek as a heavenly deliverer who would proclaim liberty, showing how Jews expected a greater priestly figure.

† Origen (Homilies on Genesis 16) wrote that Melchizedek prefigured Christ's eternal priesthood, greater than the Levitical priesthood.

### **Hebrews 5:7**

In the days of His humanity, He offered up both prayers and pleas with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His devout behavior.

† Jesus, in His humanity, prayed with deep emotion. His suffering was real, and He relied completely on the Father. This

points to Gethsemane and His submission to God's will.

† Ignatius (Letter to the Ephesians 18) spoke of Christ's prayers and tears as proof of His real humanity, against those who denied it.

† The Gospel accounts (Matthew 26:36-44; Luke 22:44) record His agony in Gethsemane, confirming Hebrews' description.

### **Hebrews 5:8**

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

† Christ's sonship did not exempt Him from suffering. Through His suffering, He fully demonstrated obedience. This made Him the perfect example and mediator.

† Seneca (On Providence 2.6) argued that suffering perfects character, a truth mirrored perfectly in Christ.

### **Hebrews 5:9**

And having been perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him.

† Christ's suffering perfected His mission, completing the work of redemption. As the obedient Son, He became the source of eternal salvation.

† Irenaeus (Against Heresies 3.18.7) taught that Christ's obedience even unto death was the foundation of salvation for all believers.

† Tertullian (On the Flesh of Christ 17) stressed that salvation depends on Christ's real suffering and death, not an illusion.

### **Hebrews 5:10**

Being designated by God as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

† Christ was officially appointed as high priest in the Melchizedek order, eternal and unchangeable. His priesthood did not end like Aaron's line but remains forever.

† The Babylonian Talmud (Nedarim 32b) linked Melchizedek with priesthood and blessing, an expectation Hebrews applies directly to Christ.

### **Hebrews 5:11**

Concerning him we have much to say, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become poor listeners.

† The writer pauses, noting that his audience had become spiritually dull. The deeper truths of Christ's Melchizedek priesthood were hard to teach to an unresponsive audience.

† Clement of Alexandria (Paedagogus 1.6) criticized believers who refused to advance in knowledge, echoing this warning.

### **Hebrews 5:12**

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the actual words of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

† Instead of maturing, the audience had regressed. They needed basics again instead of advancing to maturity. This was a rebuke, urging them to grow.

† Clement of Alexandria (Stromata 1.1) wrote that many Christians remained on "milk" and did not progress to deeper knowledge, echoing Hebrews' concern.

† Origen (Homilies on Hebrews 7) saw "milk" as the literal teaching, and "solid food" as the spiritual depth in Christ.

### **Hebrews 5:13**

For everyone who partakes only of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

† Immaturity in faith leaves one unskilled in righteousness. The audience was being challenged to grow beyond infancy.

† Seneca (Letters 94.7) warned that those who never advance in philosophy remain children in understanding, a parallel to

Hebrews' rebuke.

### **Hebrews 5:14**

But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to distinguish between good and evil.

† The mature are trained by constant practice to discern right from wrong. Growth in faith requires discipline and application, not just knowledge.

† Origen (Homilies on Hebrews 6) noted that solid food represents the deeper mysteries of Christ, which only the mature can grasp.

† The Wisdom of Solomon 8:7 described wisdom training the senses to discern justice, courage, and righteousness, echoing Hebrews' view of maturity.

### **Application For Us Today**

† Hebrews 5 shows the superiority of Christ's priesthood. Unlike Aaronic priests, He was sinless, eternal, and directly appointed by God.

† The example of Melchizedek reminds us that Christ's priesthood is universal and everlasting, not tied to the temple system that perished in AD 70.

† Christ's suffering teaches us obedience. He did not avoid suffering but embraced it, showing that true faith is proven in trials.

† The rebuke about immaturity applies strongly today. Many believers remain on "milk," clinging to basics, while neglecting to grow in the depth of fulfilled truth.

† Just as the original audience risked dullness, modern futurism reflects the same immaturity, refusing to move on from shadows

to the reality of Christ's finished work.

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

### Source Index

† Psalm 2:7 - You are My Son

† Psalm 110:4 - You are a priest forever after Melchizedek

† Genesis 14:18 - Melchizedek blessing Abraham

† Josephus, Antiquities 3.9.7 - high priest interceding for the nation

† Josephus, Antiquities 20.10.1 - corruption of high priest appointments under Rome

† Philo, On the Special Laws 1.97 - high priest atoning for his own sins

† Philo, On Dreams 1.215 - high priest as sympathetic to the weak

† Dead Sea Scrolls, 11QMelchizedek - Melchizedek as heavenly deliverer

† Mishnah, Yoma 1.3 - appointment and preparation of high priest

† Talmud, Yoma 7b - high priest confessing his sins first

† Talmud, Nedarim 32b - Melchizedek linked with priesthood and blessing

† Ignatius, Letter to the Ephesians 18 - Christ's prayers and tears prove His humanity

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.18.7 - salvation grounded in Christ's obedience

† Tertullian, On the Flesh of Christ 17 - salvation depends on Christ's real suffering

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 1.1 - believers stuck on milk

† Clement of Alexandria, Paedagogus 1.6 - refusal to advance in knowledge

† Origen, Homilies on Hebrews 6-7 - milk vs. solid food as spiritual maturity

† Origen, Homilies on Genesis 16 - Melchizedek prefiguring Christ

† Chrysostom, Homilies on Hebrews 7 - confidence through Christ's priesthood

† Seneca, On Providence 2.6 - suffering perfects character

† Seneca, Letters 94.7 - immaturity in knowledge keeps one as a child

† Wisdom of Solomon 8:7 - wisdom training the senses

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