

“Jesus, Our High Priest”

Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus Our High Priest

Hebrews 5:1-10

Rev. Jeff Stivason

May 18, 2018

Jeff: Our heavenly Father, we are thankful for many things. And most of all we are thankful for the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is Jesus who has exegeted the Godhead to us. He’s explained You to us, helped us to understand You as Father, and made known to us the wonderful gift that is the Holy Spirit who resides in us. He helps us to understand that this same Spirit cries out in us when we know not what to speak, and prompts us equally to say, “Abba, Father!” And yet, Father, it is Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who intercedes at Your right hand on our behalf. Father, for these things we are most thankful. And we have been made thankful because of Your grace.

Lord, as we gather this morning, we are mindful that it is Your word upon which we long to feed that will cause us to grow, will sustain us, and will be our great joy. Father, we pray that as we study the book of Hebrews, though there may be things that are unfamiliar, there are certainly things that are richly familiar, and that certainly is the gospel itself. And so as we read the book of Hebrews, as we study it, help us to contextualize what we don’t know in what we do know. And Father, help us to see the Lord Jesus Christ. Though we may have witnessed Him in other books with more clarity, because of our study help us to witness Him in this book, finding that the same Jesus is proclaimed in every book. But in this book He shines forth from the page as our High Priest and does so in a magnificent way by Your Spirit who inspired this Word.

Father, as we gather before you, we are also mindful that not only are we thankful for Your word, but we are also thankful for the fellowship one to another. We pray that You would use this time in our lives to bless us and to strengthen us in Your word, that we might grow thereby. Father, we need it. We are men who acknowledge our need and long for that which will help. And certainly that is Your word and Your Spirit. So help us, we pray.

But Father, we also pray not only for ourselves, but we pray for others. We pray for Jim as he recovers from his knee surgery. Bless him and keep him. And we pray for Rita as well. Strengthen her, watch over her and keep her.

And Father, we’re thankful for Bruce’s recovery and for the strides that he has been making. And in one sense, humanly speaking, none of us are surprised. We know his determination and his strength of will and character. And yet we also know that the One who is in him is greater than the one who is in the world. And so we are thankful for the progress that he has made, not because of his strength but because of Yours. And Father, we rejoice to know that he’s coming back next week and that he’s going to lead this study. And Lord, we pray that this is just the sign of more to come and better things yet. And so, Father, we ask and pray that Your hand would be upon him for good.

Lord, bless us now as we study together, for we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Well, it’s good to be here with you.

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Participant: We’re all curious about your accident.

Jeff: I know you’re all curious. So, contra our brother,--no, I’m just kidding.

(Laughter)

So I was traveling south on Perry Highway, taking my son to college for his finals.

Participant: Oh, okay.

Jeff: Yeah, I was bad. And I was approaching the light where Cumberland intersects with Perry Highway. And I was in the outside lane, and the light was green. And I was approaching it in the flow of traffic. There was a row of cars in the inside lane ready to turn left onto Cumberland. Somebody had left a gap in the cars. There was a guy on the inside northbound lane trying to cut across to Perry Vista Highway just before that intersection. And the person apparently waved him through the gap. Unwise because he shot the gap. And when he shot the gap we t-boned him. And so that was it. It was quite an event.

So we got down to the college a little bit late, but my son made it for his finals.

Participant: Oh, amen!

Jeff: Yeah. I’m not sure, though, you know? Actually, it’s one of those things where when you hit somebody that hard and you come to a stop that quickly, you know you tend to forget things that are normally kind of easy to remember.

Participant: That’s right.

Jeff: So anyway, thanks for your prayers. Well, let’s look today at Hebrews chapter 5 and verses 1-10. Could I get somebody to read that nice and loud for us today?

Participant: *“For every high priest taken from among men is appointed from men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this, he is required, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but it was He who said to Him, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’ As He also says in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.’, who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear. Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek.”*

Jeff: Okay. Well, let me mention one thing before we get into what we’re going to look at today. I had someone email me a question about the last text. And so let me just read to you what the question was, surrounding verse 15 of chapter 4. *“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”*

And the question was what does this mean? When it says that Jesus was tempted in every respect as we are, does that mean that He was tempted to commit adultery or tempted to commit sexual sin, or tempted to tell a lie, or tempted to commit any number of things? And I have a tendency to think that that’s not what that means. It means that

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He was susceptible to any sin and was tempted in many specific ways. But the susceptibility or the propensity to be tempted was there in Him, just as it is in us. So that’s how I take that. And does anybody have any follow-up questions about our last time together, or maybe even that particular question before we get started? Yes?

Participant: There’s a debate about when he took upon human nature, was it an un fallen human nature?

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: Or did He not sin with a fallen human nature? I tend to be on the former side. I think He had an unfallen nature. But Barth and others think He had a fallen human nature, but by the Holy Spirit He did not sin.

Jeff: Yes. And I think that the idea of that is also in Bonhoeffer as well. I think that when Paul talks in Romans 5 about that He was—

Participant: Without sin.

Jeff: He was without sin, but created like—I can’t think of the exact words,—

Participant: Like us in all things, but sinless.

Jeff: Yes. That has a tendency to drive us more in the other direction, where you are. And I think that when you think about the question of what happened to Christ, that sometimes is a mystery. I think the Westminster divines would have probably said that initially, at the moment of conception, that Christ in His human nature was cleansed of original sin.

Participant: Yes, that’s right.

Jeff: So there’s a sense in which, you know, that even the Westminster divines, somebody in the Reformed camp, if you will, is dealing with how it was that Christ had a fleshly body that was a real fleshly body and yet did not possess original sin. And the answer to that was that it was cleansed immediately at the moment of conception.

But that’s speculative in some ways. It’s an extension of thinking in some areas. But I agree with you, Bishop. I tend to view it that same way.

Participant: A little more down to earth.

Jeff: Uh-huh.

Participant: I found it interesting that you were squeamish about Jesus being tempted sexually.

Jeff: No I wasn’t, Ted. *(Laughter)* I was not squeamish! *(Laughter)*

Participant: And that’s correct. And that’s a false interpretation. I apologize. *(Laughter)* I overreached at that point. You seemed to imply that. Maybe He really wasn’t. But in the wilderness temptation of Christ, He was tempted to take on God, to compete with God in the spirit of the world. To me that sounds like a much more egregious sin than being sexually tempted.

Jeff: Yes. The only thing that I would say, and the only thing I meant to be squeamish about is that I wouldn’t want to say that He was tempted with every sin possibility, because I think that would be to overstate the text. I think the susceptibility to be tempted with every sin possibility is there. And He may have been tempted with any number of specifics. Yes?

Participant: But what does “*in all points*” mean, though?

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Jeff: Well, I think that when you think about all points, there is no temptation that is uncommon to man, right? Every temptation is common to man. But I would dare to say that my temptations are not the same temptations as every man in this room. But the temptations that you are faced with are certainly ones that I could be tempted by, put into the right context and scenario. But I may not be tempted in exactly the same ways as you are. But no temptation has seized any of us that is uncommon to man.

Participant: While, like you said, he was not susceptible to sexual sin, or maybe that wasn't for Him, I think we have to look at the fact that He became all things as we are so we could overcome those.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: Because, you know, the Bible says, “*In Him there is no sin.*” He was all man; He was all God. But I believe also that even though He might not have been tempted by some woman on the street, or someone like that, that by that overcoming power He was showing us the things that He went through.

Jeff: Yes?

Participant: I think your point is well taken. None of us is tempted in everything. When we are tempted, His was like ours, and it's all part of the same scene.

Jeff: Yes. And I know that when I was younger I thought to myself that there were things about which I knew others were tempted. And I thought, *I'd never be tempted by that.* How foolish I am! *(Laughter)* To have thought that about myself!

Participant: Anticipation.

Transcriber's Note: Trouble with the microphone.

Jeff: Yeah, right. *(Laughter)*

Participant: We've got to work with cheap equipment. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Our techno man. Throw this up against the wall. Don't do it! *(Laughter)* Let's get to the text today. I added one point; it's a very brief one, but I thought it was important. We're going to look at an introduction today. We're going to look at *grammar lessons*, and we're going to look at *graduate lessons*. And we're going to look at that final point, which is to *draw near to Him*.

Let's take some introductory lessons. I'm taking for granted that all of you, or at least maybe some of you, have read that great play *Macbeth*. I remember that I read it when I was in high school and didn't pay attention to one word of it. But I had the privilege of meeting my high school English teacher who terrified me to no end.

I think that maybe I told you about him. I was walking down through the mall, maybe a year or two after I graduated. No, it was after I was married. So it was about three or four years. But he was sitting in the middle of the mall on one of those benches. Did I tell you about this?

Participant: No.

Jeff: And I saw him out of the corner of my eye. And I immediately had fears that gripped me. *(Laughter)* And I thought, *If I just lock and keep my eyes forward, I'll avoid him at all cost.* And just as I thought that I was passing him without being noticed, he said, “Mr. Stivason!” *(Laughter)*

I froze in my tracks. And he went like this.

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Transcriber’s Note: Pointing a finger.

Jeff: If you put a lid on him in a reaper thing, he would have looked just like that. *(Laughter)* But anyway, he had that bony finger like Charles Dickens with Christmas future. *(Laughter)* And so I had to go over and sit down beside him.

So I did. And we struck up a lovely friendship. It turns out that he was a very funny man. He was a believer. And of all things, we had a Bible study in his home, and we had a wonderful relationship until he passed.

But we decided in the midst of that that we were going to read Shakespeare again, because he knew that I had not listened the first time. *(Laughter)* So we had the chance to read through some Shakespearean plays. And one of the things that we read through again was *Macbeth*.

Now *Macbeth* is a wonderful story. It’s a terrible story, but it’s a wonderful story mainly because it talks to us about human nature. And one of the things that you can really grab hold of is Lady Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth wants the kingship for her husband in the worst way. And so she convinces her husband that when Duncan comes to their home, their castle, that it would be best for him to eliminate him and thus be able to take the throne. Well it takes some convincing, and yet they plot it. They do it. And Duncan dies at their hand.

Now fast forward just a little bit. Macbeth leaves the castle. He’s not anywhere around. And Lady Macbeth begins to sleepwalk. And it’s interesting, because her maidservant realizes that something is wrong. But it’s not just the sleepwalking. If it were just the sleepwalking, then maybe she could have gotten away with it. In fact, even if she were just wringing her hands a bit, she would have gotten away with it. But she was doing a little bit more than just wringing her hands.

So she calls the doctor. And she and the doctor decide that they’re going to observe Lady Macbeth one evening while she sleepwalks. And she does. She gets up and she sleepwalks.

And this is what she says. She says in her sleep, *“Out spot, out! Will these hands never be clean? Who would have thought that the old man had so much blood?”*

And then this. *“Here’s the smell of blood still. All the perfumes in Arabia will not wash this little hand.”*

And so the doctor makes an assessment. And the doctor’s assessment is *“This disease is beyond my practice.”* In other words, he knows full well that what’s happening here is the result of a fractured conscience. He knows full well that something is plaguing her, and he has a pretty good idea of what that something is.

Now we’ve been through this. We know this to be true. When non-sinful stresses are upon us, we understand how this feels, don’t we? We understand this. There’s a common problem to this. Sin, especially when we’re younger, is going to manifest itself in some way or other. And oftentimes the younger we are, the more indirectly it will manifest itself.

I’ll never forget when I was going to seminary. My wife was pregnant with our son. He was having some problems in the womb. I was working at the same time and under a

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little stress. And all of a sudden, I started seeing double with no explanation. I thought I needed glasses. So I went to the eye doctor and he said, “What’s the problem?”

I said, “I’m seeing double.”

He says, “Well, let’s get you fixed up.”

So as he was looking at my eyes, I was talking to him about the problems that I was having. And he was bringing them out, drawing them out of me. And he finally sat back in his chair and he said, “You don’t need glasses.” He said, “You need less stress in your life,” because stress was manifesting itself in my double vision. I had fixation disparity; I couldn’t come to rest on the same thing.

Now there’s a common logic here that we all deal with. Lady, I want you to see this.

Transcriber’s Note: Referring to Lady Macbeth.

Jeff: We may deal with stress, non-sinful stress in some ways. But we certainly deal with sinful stress in the way that we see in this text, in this Macbeth text. Before, Lady Macbeth was saying this. *“A little water clears this deed, my husband.”* That’s the same thing she was saying. Not until later in her sleep did she say, *“All the perfume in Arabia will not wash this little hand.”* Her conscience was afflicting her.

Now we, like Lady Macbeth, have our spots. And we have our own means of dealing with those spots. But praise be to God, He is good. And Hebrews chapter 10, verse 22, tells us that our conscience is going to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now that’s a little difficult. We’re going to get to that text. And when we get there, we’ll talk a little bit more about it. But this particular text tells us how that comes about, how it is that this whole mechanism takes place and works itself out.

Now here’s what I want to say to you. Here’s how we’re going to look at this text. We need to look at this text in a way that basically says that there is individual growth in every believer. However, in that same way, the way in which there is individual growth, God treats His church as if it’s a child growing.

I particularly like—and you may not!—but I particularly like the way the Westminster Confession in its chapter on the Law talks about ancient Israel as it stretches up into the present. It talks about Israel as *“a church under age.”* In other words, it’s an infant church, an adolescent church, a church that’s in its childhood. And then, Post-Christ, it is an adult church.

Now that’s not saying that it’s perfect and that it’s mature. It’s most certainly not. We’re a part of it. We can bear witness to its trundling along. And yet, in the sense in which there is an unfolding plan of redemption, there is certainly the church in its infancy and then in its adolescence and in its adulthood, as Christ comes and brings the fruition of the covenant.

And that’s the way that I want us to look at the text in front of us. I want us to look at *the Old Testament church*. And that’s what we’ll call *the grammar school*. And then I want us to look at *the New Testament church*, post-Christ. And we’ll call that *the graduate school*. So that’s what I want us to look at in this particular text, divided into those two particular sections. So let’s get started, and if you have questions, you can certainly feel free to ask them. But let’s get started with this.

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The first thing that we need to remember is this. And we need to stretch back into our memory banks just a little bit to chapter 2. And remember that there we were told that the fear of death held everyone in captivity. All of life is bound up in our captivity to fear, and that is the fear of death. And all men fear that.

I love the stickers in the ‘90s that they had plastered all over every truck. You know what I mean? “No fear,” right? And to me that just screamed that this is a defense mechanism. I’m absolutely terrified! Please don’t confront me!, because I’m that afraid, you know?

This is the beauty of the Bible. The Bible tells us what every man wishes that no one else knew about him. And the fact that he says there’s no fear indicates every reason to believe that he’s a terrified individual. And so fear of death, to God, that’s really the reason. Everyone is at enmity with God. We fear death.

The question is how do we know? You know, you want to say, “Well, how do we know that everyone fears death?” And there’s one simple reason for that. It’s called *guilt*. People struggle with guilt! And they struggle with guilt because they fear death, because they know that upon death there’s an intuitiveness about punishment that they’ll face. And so they feel guilty about it, and they try to do everything they can to assuage their consciences. They try to get out from under the feeling of guilt by deflection or any number of other techniques. But they fear death, and this is a common problem to man.

Now because of that, we learn several lessons in the grammar school. And the first is *we need a priest*.

Now what is a priest? Well I realize that I’m in a mixed multitude here of men who may have a different idea of what that is. And you can feel free to correct me.

My understanding is that the word *priest* is a morphism from the word *presbyter*. Is that how you men understand it who would be in that tradition? Okay, good. So our understanding of the priesthood is that it’s something akin to a presbyter. And if you’re a Presbyterian and you’re an elder, you’re a presbyter. and there’s a sense in which there’s a commonality between the understanding of that word.

That’s not necessarily how we ought to understand the job description of the Old Testament. The job description of the Old Testament is in verse 1. And that verse says that we need a mediator. We need someone, or they in the Old Testament,--and I’ll confine it to that for a minute,--they needed someone to bring them to God. And so the job of a priest in the Old Testament was to bring people to God, to be a mediator, to act as a mediator to bring them to God.

Now I want you to think about this for a minute. When you think about the priesthood and its job description, one of the things that you realize is that had there not been a fall in the garden, there would not have been the need for a priest in this sense, right?

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: No fall, no priest, because Adam would have had access to God, and all his posterity as well.

The second problem is a human one. And this is really a problem. Not a problem with the Law per se. And when I say that I’m thinking about Romans chapter 7. Romans

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chapter 7 tells us that the Law as good and holy and just. So I’m not thinking about a problem with the Law per se. I’m thinking about a problem that we bring to the Law’s application, and in this case the problem that the person who is a priest brings to the Law’s application.

What do I mean by this? Well, think about it. The priest was a sinful man. He was right in the sense that he had to be like the people he represented. He had to be from among them. But that made him susceptible to weakness. And because of his own sinful nature it made him just as fallen and sinful as the people he represented.

Now that was a problem. You know how that is, right? You know how it is, as I know how it is. Think about it. If you were in ancient Israel, you wouldn’t have said, “Ah, Bobby, he’s our high priest. We all love Bobby. He’s our high priest, a wonderful man.” We would not have said that.

Some would have said this. “Do you know Bob? I know Bob. Let me tell you about Bob.” (*Laughter*) “You know, I want to tell you something! You know Larry? I saw Larry the other night?” You know, that sort of thing, right? “Rick, I saw him down at the pub the other night,” right? You know what I mean? That sort of thing, right?

That was a problem. Sympathy and compassion with our nature produces the common weakness that is in all of us.

Now what was the way around the problem? The way around the problem was that the priest offered the sin offering on his own behalf. That was the way around the problem. The problem seemed to be this. Here’s what we’re going to do. The Law says that the way is recognized. God says, “I recognize this problem. So the priest is going to offer sacrifices for himself before he offers them for the people.”

Now the problem is in chapter ten, verses 1 and 2. “*For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year after year, make perfect those who draw near.*”

So the bottom line is that even the sacrifice that the priest offered for himself was not good enough, not effectual enough for himself. Okay, so there’s an impossibility connected to Aaron’s priesthood. The impossibility is that we need a Mediator better than a human mediator that was in the old grammar system of the old Levitical priesthood, the Aaronic priesthood. Okay?

So that gets us to the graduate lesson. But before that, are there any thoughts or questions? That’s pretty straightforward. Yes?

Participant: The New Testament never uses the word *heirus* for *presbutero*, the word for *elder*. So I’ve always thought that the sacrificing priesthood was rather distinct from the eldership.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: It’s true that in the Anglican prayer book that we use the word *priest* as a foreshortening of the word *presbuteros*. But I don’t think that’s the practice of the Bible.

Jeff: Yes, it is interesting. I read some stuff recently where there has been an attempt to make the high priesthood representative of eldership and to make the Levitical priesthood representative of the diaconate. Have you read that?

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Participant: No.

Jeff: That kind of attempt to do a Biblical/theological sort of thing, to make everything sort of consistent, doesn't really appeal in that sense.

Participant: I think the high priest did special stuff. Only of Jesus and the martyred church as a whole is the word *heirus* used in the New Testament, never of anybody else.

Second Participant: Just for clarification, the church is using the Greek word for *priest*. And that is not used about any of the “clergy” in the New Testament.

First Participant: Only of Jesus.

Second Participant: Only of Jesus, and as John said, the church.

First Participant: And it was the church as a whole, never the clergy.

Second Participant: So the word for *priest* is *heirus*. And the root word for elder is *presbuteros*.

First Participant: And that had to be intentional. The most logical thing would have been for the early church to keep the Old Testament establishment. They didn't because Jesus and all that He did fulfills it all.

Jeff: Yes, absolutely.

Participant: And then, Bishop, it follows that it had to be a sacrifice that had no sin.

Bishop Rodgers: Right.

Participant: It had to be a sacrifice that had no sin.

Bishop Rodgers: Right.

Participant: And that's the reason why, as Ted just said, it was Jesus only, you know?

Bishop Rodgers: Also He was the Son of God.

Participant: Absolutely.

Jeff: Okay? Kirk?

Kirk: How would the Old Testament priest have understood? Would he have understood that the offerings were not sufficient? And if he did, how would he have pointed the people?

Jeff: What's the last part again?

Kirk: How would he have pointed the people to the correct One? If the Old Testament priesthood failed or came short, would he have known that himself? And how would he have pointed the people?

Jeff: Yes. I think he would have known that. And I think he would have known that because, when you think about the prophets coexisting with the priesthood, the prophets were always pointing beyond to that One who would come and fulfill these things, Jesus being foretold in Isaiah 53 or Micah 5 or Isaiah chapter 2, those kinds of things. And 1 Peter says of the prophets that they peered in to see what time and who it was that was coming. And they may not have known the exact Person. In fact, I'm sure they didn't, because you even find this expectation without this sort of knowledge even back with Lamech—not the bad Lamech, the good Lamech who gives birth to Noah. And they name him Noah because his name means *rest*. They say, “maybe this one will be the one who will give us rest from our sins,” right? The idea is that he'll give us rest from the curse. So there was an expectation without necessarily identifying him. And that was the problem of the prophets all along, right? Someone is coming. Whether we know exactly

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who it is or not, He’s coming. And we know He’s coming and needs to come because of these sacrifices. They point beyond them to this one. And you could have gotten that from going back to the Garden of Eden and the idea of the appointment of the sacrifices and the promise of the One who would come and destroy the serpent and that sort of thing. Bishop?

Bishop Rodgers: So the fact that they had to be repeated year after year after year never got the final job done.

Jeff: Absolutely. Sig?

Sig: That’s why Eve said, “Behold the man?” Or when Christ died, the centurion said, “*Behold the man.*” Like He’s the One. And Eve was hoping that her first son would be the one to redeem them?

Jeff: Yes. I mean, whether any of those things are overt, they are clearly there, however you frame them. I think I’m tracking with what you’re saying.

Sig: They’re all hoping. Like with Noah,. They’re hoping that he’s the one.

Jeff: Right, like Caiaphas identifies Him as the One who would die for the sins of the people, right? He seems to inadvertently do it, but he does it as the high priest. You know, that sort of thing. Yes?

Participant: Jim Boice in his commentary on Genesis points out that in Genesis chapter 4 that our translations say that Eve says, “*I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD.*” And he says that “*with the help of*” is not in the Hebrew. So he believed that Eve was looking to Cain as the man who would deliver them from the curse.

Jeff: I can’t comment on that. That’s interesting. I’ll have to look at that. Those women! (*Laughter*) What happens at the Brave Men stays with the Brave Men. (*Laughter*) And Frank, just because you’re in the kitchen doesn’t mean that you’re not here. (*Laughter*)

All right. Well there are several lessons that we need to learn from the graduate school. And the first is that *there is a step forward*. And the step forward indicates to us that there are similarities and differences between the Old—the grammar school—and the graduate school.

Let’s just talk about some of the similarities for a minute. Both priests (verse 10) are designated by God. Both priests needed to partake of flesh and blood.

So for instance, you know, Gerry is doing something he ought not to do. And somebody whispers into his ear. But the fact of the matter is that this person who is even complaining about Gerry about something he’s not supposed to be doing would not want a dog representing him, because he’s going to say, “A dog can’t represent me.” He needs to be represented by someone who shares in his own flesh.

So the problem that we pointed out last time is still there. The question is how is it going to be resolved? Both are susceptible to weakness.

Here’s the difference. The difference is that there was an Aaronic priesthood. And now Jesus is part of the Melchizedekian priesthood. Now we’re going to say more about the Melchizedekian priesthood, especially in chapter 7. So I’ll refrain from saying much now about it. But let me just note it as a difference. So there are similarities. The difference was the priesthood—Aaronic, Melchizedekian.

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The second lesson is this. And this is the one that I think is very valuable, and it’s interesting to us. Notice that *the same texts are used*.

You know, if you were studying law, and you went to college and you studied law there, and then you got into graduate school, and the professor at graduate school immediately said to you on your walking in the door, “You know all those texts that you used when you were in undergrad? Well burn them, because they have no bearing on what you’re going to study now. You went to a school that studied domestic law based on the Constitution. Well, guess what? This law is international law and it has nothing to do with that law at all.”

You would not be comforted by that, would you? You might even look for a new graduate school to attend, right? (*Laughter*) Well, the interesting thing is that the graduate school uses the same text of the grammar school. Look at verses 5 and 6 when he talks about the overlap in the priesthood. Despite the difference, the fact that there was an Aaronic priesthood in the Old and a Melchizedekian for Christ,—despite that difference, verses 5 and 6 draw from two texts of the Old Testament that bear upon this Priest. And this Priest from these old texts is identified as a Son and as a Priest.

Now here’s the thing about that. We would all look at that and say, “Of course! Jesus is the Son of God and He’s the Mediator now is a Priest.” We’d say, “Surely!” But what I want you to notice is not just those facts, but the way in which the book of Hebrews has been weaving those things together all along.

In chapter 1:2 and 3 what do we notice? This is worth reading—1:2 and 3. Look at this.

“But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the Heir of all things, through whom He also created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of His nature. And He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making” what? *“Purification for sins.”* He’s a Priest.

So He’s a Son and He’s a Priest. And the Preacher immediately clues us into that fact at the very outset. And so now, when he gets into talking about the Old Testament priesthood and the New Testament priesthood, which is Christ, He brings these back to us, saying that these things were foretold of old. In other words, what I said to you in verses 2 and 3 of chapter 1, guess where I’m getting that? Surprise! The same texts from the Old Testament—and remember, this is the point—that you want to return to. You want to return to Judaism, remember? That’s what the point is. And guess what? Those texts that represent the old form that you want to return to foretold the Son and His priesthood. Okay, that’s the idea.

So the plan has not changed. In other words, you’re just wanting to go back to a different part, a premature part of the plan, rather than to stretch forward into what is the new, what is the final exfoliation of the plan, the final unfolding of the plan.

So this is where I argue that yes, there are discontinuities between the old and the new, the Melchizedekian versus the Aaronic. But there are plenty, and I would argue far more, continuities between the Old Testament and the New Testament brought to fulfillment in Christ. And we would expect that and hope for that. We would not want God to set up a system whereby He builds on, for hundreds and even thousands of years, and then says,

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“Surprise! That’s all rubbish!” You know, we wouldn’t want that. We would want a continuity to build and to come to a climactic fulfillment. That’s what we’d hope for.

A third lesson is *that climactic fulfillment*. Jesus fulfills the shadows and the types of the old, and we would not be surprised at that.

Now there are a couple of things about this text that I just want to mention. When it says that He gave up loud cries, these are not the cries of a martyr. This is the cry of the Mediator who is about ready to drink from the cup of God’s wrath.

Now we would expect a holy God, if we really had here in our cognitive banks the idea of what holiness is, we would expect the Son of God in the garden of Gethsemane to recoil. “*Take this cup from Me*”—from a cup of wrath due for sin. We would expect that. We’d expect it.

This is not the martyr who is fearing in trepidation about approaching the steps to the scaffold. This is the holy God recoiling, offering up Christ because He knows that He is about ready to drink from the cup of the wrath of God.

What about the “learning obedience” thing? Well, I want you to think about it this way. This is from John Stott. John Stott says, “*His sufferings were the testing ground in which His obedience became full grown.*” In other words, just because Jesus the Mediator hadn’t yet experienced something does not mean imperfection. Jesus ontologically, as the Son of God in His very being, was perfect. But when He comes to be a Mediator, He grows into who He actually is supposed to be. In other words, just like Luke 2 tells us, He grows in grace and in favor with men. We’re being told that this is what He is doing as a Mediator. Well, in the same way, He is learning obedience as He reads the Law, as He obeys the Law, as He keeps it, as He is perfectly righteous. So He becomes a righteous sacrifice and thereby drinks from the cup of God’s wrath, taking upon Himself the consequence due our sins.

And so the idea of learning obedience should not be construed as He was imperfect and transitions into perfection. It shouldn’t be that way at all. It should be understood as this was the way in which His mediatorial aspect would enlarge as it fills out in the doing. Does that make sense? Yes?

Participant: Does that mean that Jesus had stuff to learn that He didn’t know?

Jeff: As a mediator, yes, because He’s human and divine in the Person of Jesus Christ. So yes, I’ll just leave it at that now. Yes?

Participant: Might He have experienced it? Experiencing it rather than learning it is the idea of experiencing it.

Jeff: Well, think about it. He says to His disciples, “The day and the hour I don’t know. Only the Father knows that.” So there is a learning aspect to it. And that’s what I’d say, that we have to remember that the human nature wasn’t divinitized by the divine nature. They were two separate natures. And so it would be perfectly acceptable for Jesus to say, “The day and the hour I don’t know.” The Holy Spirit has not revealed that as of yet, so that the Person of the Son can say, “Yes, I know the day and the hour.” Yes?

Participant: If you take His incarnation seriously, he had to actually, from the Scriptures, learn His identity, His mission, and all of the things according to His human nature, all of it.

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Jeff: Yes, and that’s a great point, because there—

Participant: Like other kids, knowing how to poop and eat. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: Great, great! *(Laughter)* You know, He would have been a great kid, right? *(Laughter)* I mean, there is the view that the Old Testament was written for Jesus.

Participant: Yes, that’s right.

Jeff: Yes, and I think that view needs to be taken seriously. It’s kind of a map of His incarnation. The other thing is that if you want to read a great essay, read B. B. Warfield’s *The Human Development of Jesus*. I mean, it may even rattle you, because he actually talks about Jesus being human, right? *(Laughter)* All right. And He’s the source of our salvation. He frees us from sin.

The last thing I’d say is to *draw near to Him*. I want to go back to chapter 3 verse 1 for a minute. There we were told that Jesus is “*the apostle and High Priest,*” right?

Now think about this for just a minute. When you think of an apostle, you think of one who is sent. Here is the One sent from heaven in order to what? Take us back to God. So it’s a beautiful picture in 3:1. Here is the sent One who takes us back up with Him. And so the idea of He came to us in order to bring us back to God is being explained now in chapter 5, and will be explained in greater detail certainly, as the text unfolds and goes along.

Okay. Well, that’s all I have. We’re over our time. Are there any last-minute questions before we close out? No? All right.

Well let me pray with you, and say that I’ll see you in two weeks, Lord willing. Heavenly Father, thank You for this day. And we pray, Lord, that You’ll bless to our understanding the priesthood of Christ, not just to bless it to our understanding, but cause us to love what we understand, because Lord, this is the way in which we were brought to You. So thank You, Father, for this aspect. Thank You for explaining it to us in Your word. And Lord, richly bless us through that understanding, for we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Men: Amen. *(Applause)*