The Supremacy of The Son of God

Studies in Hebrews

21)Superior high priest (part 1) Heb. 5:1-10

**Hebrews 5:1-10** For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him:

“You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.”

6 As He also says in another place:

“You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek”;

7 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, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,”

Outlines:

A. Christ is **Superior to the Prophets** (1:1-3)

B. Christ is **Superior to the Angels** (1:4–2:18)

C. Christ is **Superior to Moses** (3:1–4:16)

            D. Christ is **Superior to Aaron** (5:1-10:18)

1. **Superior High Priest** (5:1-7-28)

a. The Priesthood of Aaron vs Christ (5:1-10)

Third Warning: Don’t Degenerate (5:11–6:20)

c. The Priesthood of Melchizedek (7:1-28)

2. **Superior Priesthood** (8:1-10:18)

It is commonly stated that the purpose of 4:15–5:10 is to demonstrate that the conditions required of any high priest were satisfied by Christ.

In 5:1–4, two conditions are set forth: (1) he must be able to sympathize with the frailty of those he serves (vv 1–3), and (2) he must be called by God (v 4).

In a second paragraph (5:5–10) it is shown on the grounds of Scripture and the gospel tradition that Jesus fulfilled these conditions: (1) he was called by God (vv 5–6); and (2) after he had been exposed to the full range of human emotion and testing, he was installed as high priest (vv 7–10). The direction of the flow of thought is from Aaron to Christ531.

**5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.**

“for” After the author of Hebrews told us that our high priest can sympathize with all our weakness (4:15), now he is expanding on this idea by telling us that this is the way “every high priest” also was under the levitical priesthood.

By an effective use of prepositional phrases the writer is able to insist on the solidarity of the Levitical high priest with those whom he represents. He is selected ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, “from among men,” and is appointed ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων, “on behalf of men,” to represent them before God.532

“gifts” (i.e., peace and cereal offerings), and θυσίαι, “sacrifices” (i.e., the sin and trespass offerings), in later statements in the OT all sacrifices pertain to the procuring of atonement and the removal of sin (cf. Ezek 45:15–17)533.

**2 He can have compassion (deal gently) on those who are ignorant and going astray since he himself is also subject to weakness.**

This verse brings back to mind 4:15 “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”.

The two verses, however, are not parallel. In 4:15, the writer stresses the high priest’s relationship to the source of transgression, i.e., human frailty. Jesus is able to feel the weaknesses of others because he was exposed to testing even as they are. In 5:2 the accent is placed on the relationship of the Levitical high priest to transgressors; he is able to show forbearance and compassion because he knows his own limitations (cf. 7:28, “the law appoints as high priest men who are weak”).

The verbs συμπαθῆσαι sympathize (4:15) and μετριοπαθεῖν deal gently (5:2) are not synonymous534. We have seen that the Greek word here is συμπαθέω sympatheō "to suffer with another (sun, 'with,' pascho, 'to suffer’). The Greek word for “deal gently” (metrios, "moderate," and pascho, "to suffer”)535. “Deal gently” μετριοπαθεῖν means to restrain or moderate one’s feelings, and so to deal gently and considerately with other.536 The High priest couldn’t make a fitting expiation for sins which filled him, while filled with feeling of indignation against those who were guilty of them537.

**“those who are ignorant and going astray”** could be understood as “those who go astray through ignorance” The OT sacrifices was for those who sinned because of ignorance (Numbers 18:28) and not for deliberate law-breakers538.

**3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.**

The OT high priest is able to have compassion/deal gently with sinners because he himself is a sinner. As demonstrated in the ritual of the day of atonement, where the levitical high priest offers a sacrifice 1st for his own sins then for the sins of the people.

**v4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God**

Aaron, the first of Israel's high priests, occupied his office by divine appointment (Ex. 28:1ff.; Lev. 8:1ff.; Num. 16:5; 17:5; 18:1ff.; Ps. 105:26), and so did his heirs and successors (Num. 20:23ff.; 25:10ff.).539

**v4-5 “Just as Aaron was….so was Christ”**

The stress falls initially on the continuity between Aaron and Jesus, who did not elevate themselves to the office of high priest but were appointed by God. The parallel is established by means of consecutive comparative clauses: καθώσπερ καὶ Ἀαρών … οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός, “just as Aaron also was … so also the Christ” (vv 4b–5a). The writer then asserts implicitly the discontinuity and the superiority of Christ to Aaron with the citation of Ps 110:4, although he defers the interpretation of the text until 7:1–25.540

**v 5-6 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” 6 As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek”**

The author of Hebrews quoted and linked 2 different scriptures from the book of Psalms to support his argument that Christ was also appointed as our high priest.

in v 5, he quoted **Psalm 2:7** “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

in v 6, he quoted **Psalm 110:4** The LORD has sworn And will not relent, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

Psalm 2:7 is a declaration of appointment541. We have seen the author of Hebrews usage of Psalm 2:7 before in **1:5** to emphasize the superiority of the son over the angels because Jesus inhered, was declared, and was appointed the “functional” name “son of God” at his resurrection.

Psalm 110:4 is also a declaration of appointment. We see Jesus was installed in the office of the high priest and invested with power542. No other Christian writer of this period drew attention to Ps 110:4, but in Hebrews there are more references to Ps 110:4 than to any other biblical text. In addition to three direct quotations of the passage (5:6; 7:17, 21), there are eight allusions to it in chaps. 5, 6, and 7, and each of the allusions is distinctive in form and function.543

By linking Psalm 2:7, and 110:4, the author of Hebrews is emphasizing 2 main points:

a- That Jesus to have been acclaimed as divine Son and priest concurrently at his ascension544.

b- Sonship is the foundation of priesthood545. The author of hebrews has emphasized the correlation between son and priest before:

* In 1:3 when the priestly function of making “purification for sins” is ascribed to the transcendent Son (1:3)546.
* It was the one who inhered the name “Son of God” 1:5 who was made lower than the angels 2:9 to be a merciful and faithful high priest 2:17
* The link is explicitly mentioned in 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, …

**7 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,**

In verses 5-6, the author of Hebrews argues that Jesus, like Aaron, was appointed by God as our high priest. In verses 7-9, the author of Hebrews argues that Jesus, like Aaron, can relate to our weaknesses. In verse 7, the author of Hebrews probably references Jesus’ prayer in Gethsemane as an example of how our high priest can relate to us.

He speaks of "**the days of his flesh,**" which NIV renders” Jesus' life on earth.” But the use of the word” flesh"(sari) is probably meant to draw attention to the weakness that characterizes this life547. It is required of a high priest that he be human (“taken from among men”) 5:1. We can see that Christ was truly human in the phrase “in the days of His flesh” (v. 7) and in the human emotions and actions ascribed to Him in verses 7-8548.

**“Offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears.”**

This expression shows the tensity of Jesus’ prayers and that he himself experienced the desperate need for God to intervene. The "loud cries and tears” are not mentioned in the Gethsemane accounts, though there is no reason for thinking that they had no part in the incident549.

**“Was heard”**

It is difficult to understand the precise intention of the author of Hebrews here. The simplest way to understand it, though, is that Jesus cried out to “him who was able to save him from death,” and he was saved from death through the resurrection.

**“heard for his godly fear”**

The Greek word eulabeia εὐλάβεια used only two times in the NT: here and in 12:28. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

The idea here is of reverence. At no point can the objection be voiced that because he was the Son of God it was different, or easier, for him. He, who would not have recourse to miraculous means to relieve his hunger in the wilderness, refused to summon angelic forces to rescue him from his enemies. He recognized the path of the Father's will and followed it to the end; herein lay his "godly fear"550

**8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.**

We should take these words in the sense of "son though he was” rather than” although he was a son.” It is the quality of sonship that is emphasized.551 (cf. 1:2)

The decision to relate the concessive clause καίπερ ὢν υἱός, “although he was the Son,” to what follows has significant bearing upon the interpretation of v 8. It indicates that the discussion of the obedience of Christ is qualified by the affirmation that Jesus is inherently and intrinsically the Son of God, whose essential sonship is a fact wholly apart from his experience of suffering.552

**“by the things which he suffered”**

The crucial consideration is that in Hebrews the verb πάσχειν, which ordinarily means “to suffer,” is used only of the passion of Jesus and takes on the nuance of “to die.”553

**2:9**  But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

**2:10** For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

**9:26**  He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

**13:12** Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

**“He learned obedience”**

Our author does not say that Christ learned to obey as if He learned through trial and error, through disobedience and punishment. That is the way we learn. Being sinless, however, He did not learn that way. Yet “He learned.” In His sufferings, He learned what obedience to God involved in practice. He did it in the only way possible, namely, by submitting to the revealed will of God554.

The new element in the application of a pregnant pun to Jesus is not the learning of obedience, but its nature and manner as denoted by the expression ἀφʼ ὧν ἔπαθεν, “from what he suffered.” The accent in the proverbial saying falls on ἔπαθεν, “he suffered [death].” Consequently, the introductory clause καίπερ ὢν υἱός, “although he was Son,” is to be understood in the light of the paradox that the transcendent Son was ordained to suffer death. He does not cling to the privileged status that his unique sonship implies but receives it from the Father only after he has suffered the humiliation of death on the cross (cf. 12:2). Jesus learned experientially what obedience entails through his passion in order to achieve salvation and to become fully qualified for his office as eternal high priest (2:10; 5:9–10)555.

Again, the thought here runs parallel to Philippians 2:6-8 “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” Again, here we see that Jesus demonstrated obedience to the Father in his incarnation and in his acceptance of the death of cross.

**v 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,**

**“having been perfected”**

That takes us back to what the author of Hebrews already said in 2:10 “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

As we discussed before, the idea here is that if Jesus wouldn’t have suffered as our substitute of the cross, he, as divine as he is, would haven’t been qualified to be our savior; the caption of our salvation.

Notice that after “having been perfected,” he has “become” “the author of eternal salvation.” The opposite is also true. Jesus would have never become “the author of eternal salvation” if he hadn’t suffer the death of the cross.

**“the author of eternal salvation**556”

Hebrews 6:2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

**“those who obey him”**

The description of the community of faith as those who obey Jesus is appropriate to the stress on the radical obedience of Jesus in v 8557.

**Notice: 8 …He learned obedience… 9 …all who obey Him**

**v 10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,”**

The primary function of the allusion to Ps 110:4 in v 10 is to reaffirm God’s appointment of Jesus as high priest (vv 5–6). But the allusion also serves to connect Jesus’ priesthood with his saving work558.