

Hebrews Chapter Five (vv.11-14)

Both **Aaron and Melchizedek** were needed to foreshadow the priestly office of the Lord Jesus. His priestly work is performed in two distinct stages: one in the days of His humiliation (Aaron), and the other during the present time of His exaltation (Melchizedek). Christ has fulfilled that which Aaron typified (5.1-4) and following His resurrection was saluted as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (5.10). In **death**, Christ fulfilled the Aaronic type, making full and perfect propitiation for the sins of the people (2.17). In **resurrection**, Christ assumes the character of Melchizedek's priesthood, that of a royal priest (Matthew 28.18, Hebrews 9.24, Zechariah 6.13).

Hebrews 5.1-10 speaks of the **call** (v.1, 4) and **capacity** (vv.2-3) of the Aaronic priesthood and the way in which the Lord Jesus has fulfilled this type in His **call** (vv.5-6, 10) and **capacity** (vv.7-9).

7 *Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him (out) from death, and was heard in that he feared;*

The 'days of his flesh' refer to the time the Lord Jesus was on earth; He became a **real** Man of 'blood and flesh' (2.14). This is a very important statement in relation to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus. As a Man He was capable of dying (2.14), could make propitiation for the sins of the people by offering Himself (2.17) and be a 'merciful and faithful' high priest, having suffered through temptation (2.18) and sympathised with our sorrows and weaknesses (4.15). Through these experiences, He is able to have 'compassion on the ignorant' and those that 'err' (5.2). As Aaron offered up 'gifts and sacrifices for sins', so the Lord Jesus 'offered up prayers and supplications'. 'Prayers' are really 'supplications' and signify a 'special prayer for a special need'. 'Supplications' is a unique word in the NT and indicates a 'humble or earnest plea'. These prayers were accompanied by 'strong crying', a powerful or loud verbal noise and silent 'tears'. This indicates the intensity of the sufferings He endured both in body and soul, particularly with reference to Gethsemane and Calvary (see Isaiah 53.11, Matthew 26.38, 27.46, Luke 22.44). *Psalm 22.1-2: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.* The Lord Jesus did not request that He might be saved from dying, but, as the dependent Man, delivered out from death, both physical (body) and spiritual (soul). See Psalm 22.19-21, 69.1-2, 15, 116.3-4. *Note. Psalm 22 can be divided as follows: vv.1-13: Spiritual sufferings at the hands of God (vv.1-6) and men (vv.7-13); vv.14-18: Physical sufferings; vv. 19-21: Prayer for resurrection; vv.22-31: Thanksgiving for answered prayer.*

The prayers of the Lord Jesus to be delivered out from death were heard on account of His godly fear (see Psalm 22.23), that is, His personal perfections made His petition acceptable. Godly fear is devotion and humble submission to the will of God. His prayers were not fully answered until His resurrection (Psalm 22.24). *Philippians 2.8-9: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.* *D Newell: Are our prayers, like His, marked by multiplicity (Acts 2.42), intensity (Acts 4.24-31), efficacy (John 14.14, 1 John 5.14) and piety (Psalm 66.18, 1 Timothy 2.8).*

8 *Though he were a Son, Son though He was (by nature), yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

By nature, the Lord Jesus is the Son of God (v.5), yet He 'learned obedience by the things which He suffered'. It is not that He had to learn to be obedient (Psalm 40.8, John 4.24, 8.29), but rather He came to 'understand' experimentally what it is to 'obey' or 'subject His will to that of Another'. As a Man the Lord Jesus submitted His will to His Father's. The Son has become Servant and Sufferer. The means by which He learned obedience was through 'suffering'. We learn to be obedient because of the unpleasant circumstances which follow disobedience. Not Him! **FF Bruce: He followed the path of obedience and learned by the sufferings which came His way in consequence, just what obedience to God involved in practice in the conditions of human life on earth. His suffering was part and parcel of His obedience.**

How relevant then the old Greek proverb: '*Learning comes by suffering*'. Note the experiences of the children of Israel in Elim, Marah and Rephidim (Exodus 15, 17). What encouragement this would have been to the Hebrew believers. Suffering is the lot of those who are fully submissive and obedience to the will of God (2 Timothy 3.12).

9 *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

The writer has expressed similar thoughts in 2.10. **There**, His experience of suffering from the manger to the cross has perfectly equipped Him to act as the Captain of our salvation, leading many sons to glory. **Here**, His obedience and consequent suffering has perfectly equipped Him in His office as our **Saviour and High Priest**. He was 'made perfect', not with regard to His Person, but by being brought to the 'goal determined by God'; namely His resurrection from the dead (v.7, Luke 13.32). On this basis He has become the 'author of eternal salvation'. As the Author, He is the 'active

cause' of our salvation; He is Salvation itself, e.g. Noah's ark and the brazen serpent. This salvation is 'eternal', a contrast to the temporal atonement (one year) made on the Day of Atonement. In addition, the sacrifice of an infinite Person must of necessity produce an infinite salvation. *Eternal because based on the sacrifice of Christ, once for all accomplished, never to be repeated and permanently valid.* Salvation is available to 'all them that **obey** Him'. How appropriate. *Salvation was procured by the obedience of the Redeemer. It is now made available through the obedience of the redeemed.* This is the obedience of faith (Romans 16.26), faith which bows to Christ as Lord and Saviour. However, the **initial** act of obedience is proved by **continual** obedience. Salvation is dependent upon receiving Jesus as Lord (Romans 10.9). Is He Lord of our lives? Have we yielded ourselves to Him in continual obedience?

10 *Called (saluted) of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

So, following the 'perfecting' of the Lord Jesus in resurrection and ascension (see context of Psalm 110), God publically saluted or addressed Him as high priest *after* the order of Melchizedek. This is God's greeting of the glorious Conqueror over sin and death. Melchizedek appeared after Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. He owned Abraham's triumph. So God has greeted the mighty Victor.

Chapter 5.11 to 6.20

This section records the third warning passage of the Apostle. It comprises: **rebuke** (5.11-14), **exhortation** (6.1-3), **warning** (6.4-8) and **encouragement** (6.9-20). This digression would hopefully prepare the readers to give full attention to the teaching to follow concerning Melchizedek.

11 *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are (become) dull of hearing.*

The writer had many truths to teach concerning Melchizedek which would be of great value and benefit to them but they were difficult to explain. The difficulty lay, not with the writer, but with the readers. They were 'dull of hearing' or 'slow', 'sluggish' (Luke 24.25) and in 'a settled state of spiritual stupidity'. This was due to their reluctance to hear. Do we prepare to listen to God's word? How sad to see that they had **become** like this. They had regressed from an initial interest in things of God. *If we do not go on, we shall go back.*

12 *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

Given the fact these believers had been Christians for approximately 25-30 years, they should have been teaching others. Instead they needed to be taught again the 'first principles of the oracles of God' or the basic Christian ABCs. It is quite possible their lack of spiritual progress was occupation with the law and ceremonies of Judaism, rather than Christ (see Acts 21.20). The simplest and most basic facts were not clear to them. Perhaps they needed reminding of salvation through faith, not works; the deity, incarnation, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; His ascension to the highest glory of heaven and all that it entailed. They seemed to be more concerned with traditions and shadows of the law rather than the Person to whom they were all pointing. They were still tied to the apron strings of the old dispensation. They had not developed the habit of occupation with Christ in glory! As such they were in a state of Christian infancy and in need of milk rather than strong meat.

13 *For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

14 *But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

We should thirst after the word of God as a new-born baby does for **milk** (1 Peter 2.2). However, milk is not always used in such a positive light. The Corinthians were carnal (fleshly), as evidenced by the envying, strife and divisions amongst them (1 Corinthians 3.1-3). As such they were spiritually immature and could only handle milk. Here, those who are on an exclusive diet of milk ('useth milk') will not develop into fully grown mature adults as they should. They will be 'unskilful' or 'without experience and knowledge' of the word of God which is righteous in character and teaching (Psalm 119.7, 62, 106, 123). Those who feed upon 'strong meat' (e.g. the priesthood of Christ in relation to Melchizedek!) are of 'full age' or 'spiritually mature'. This constant exercise in the word of God has made them sensitive to be able to discern truth from error. This is moral discernment and a spiritual ability to make mature, wise and godly decisions.