

The Source of Eternal Salvation

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[0 : 00] If you are in Hebrews chapter 5, would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together.

Again, reading verses 1-10. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself is beset with weakness.

Because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifices for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

And no one takes this honor for himself, but only one called by God just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, You are my son. Today I have begotten you.

As he says also in another place, You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death.

[1 : 17] And he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? Typically when an employer looks to fill a position, they establish a list of qualifications.

Those qualifications set the standard for the training and experience a person must have to be considered for the position. Some jobs require a certain level of education or certifications.

Some jobs require a certain level of experience. Some jobs require a certain level of ability. Most jobs require the applicant to provide a list of references to establish a certain level of character.

But some jobs can't be applied for. Instead of receiving resumes for higher level positions, an organization will search for someone who maybe already has a job and has proven successful in that field of work and will look to them to fill their position.

[2 : 52] For example, in sports, when a prestigious team that has had a lot of success, like the Kansas City Chiefs, looks to hire a coach, they will go after someone with a proven track record of success.

Somebody who probably already has a job in the hopes that they will come to their organization and they will continue to succeed. When that person is hired, they will likely say something about their feeling honored to be chosen for the position.

In the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, the position of high priest came with great honor and great responsibility. The high priest was not a position that just anyone could apply for.

There were qualifications that had to be met. And even when those qualifications were met, the person chosen to be a high priest wasn't elected by anyone else, but was chosen by God.

Under the Mosaic law, the Old Covenant priesthood belonged to Aaron and his sons. God himself appointed Aaron and his lineage to serve as high priests in Exodus 29.

[4 : 08] And while there were many priests in the Old Covenant religious system, there was only one high priest. The chief responsibility of the high priest was to bring the blood of the atonement into the holy place, into the holy of holies, once a year to cover, to atone for the sins of God's people.

By the time of King David and King Solomon, God established the high priestly line through Zadok, a descendant of Aaron. However, during the intertestamental period, the 400 years between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament, many men began to claim the

honor of high priests for themselves.

Amid the Maccabean revolt in the 160s B.C., it became common for the Hasmoneans, who ruled Judea for a time, and later the Herodians, client kings of the Romans, to appoint a high priest to the position who was outside the line of Aaron, outside the line of Zadok.

Between the time of Herod the Great's ascension in 37 B.C. to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, 28 different men held the office of high priest.

The book of Hebrews was written between A.D. 67 and 69, two or three years before the temple was destroyed, the place where the high priest interceded on behalf of the people to God.

[5 : 47] Many in the original audience who received this book were tempted to drift away from Jesus and the confession that they had once made about Him.

They thought or they were tempted to believe that returning to the Old Covenant system and sacrifices administered by high priests who were appointed by God would be better in their minds than following Jesus.

They had wondered how Jesus could serve as a high priest since His earthly ancestry established that His lineage was not through the line of Aaron, whom God originally appointed to serve as high priest of Israel.

In these verses, the writer of Hebrews makes the case, and he stresses the point that Jesus is a superior high priest, because unlike the high priest of their recent history, Jesus is the Son of God and was appointed by God to serve in this role, having established a new and a superior covenant and an eternal salvation to all who believe and obey Him.

We don't need another intercessor. We don't need another sacrifice. We don't need another high priest because we have the perfect intercessor, the perfect sacrifice, and the perfect high priest in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God who saves His people eternally.

[7 : 19] And that's the main idea of Hebrews 5, verses 1-10, that Jesus is our high priest who is the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

In my 18 years or so serving in ministry, one question that I'm asked more often than others, that's phrased in many different ways, but it basically boils down to this question, how can I know if I'm truly saved?

That's an important question. And the people who usually ask it, I believe, are saved more often than not because it's people who realize they are sinners, who realize how holy God is, who struggle with the thought that God would be so gracious to save them.

They are tempted to trust in their feelings more than what God says in His Word. Our text today says that Jesus is the source of eternal life.

He is the eternal Word of God who came to earth. In His incarnation, He became human, truly God, truly man, Emmanuel, God with us.

[8 : 37] He came on a mission. He had a purpose which He was intentional about fulfilling. Even at a young age, Jesus knew that He must be about His Father's business.

In the last days of His life on earth, Jesus set His face to Jerusalem knowing that He would soon be crucified, knowing that that's why He came. In Luke chapter 19, verse 10, Jesus had been criticized for going to the house of Zacchaeus, a tax collector and a known sinner.

Jesus, in that moment, affirms His mission after Zacchaeus repents of his sin and demonstrates the fruit of repentance by paying back four times what He had stolen.

Luke 19, 8 through 10 record that moment. And Zacchaeus stood and he said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.

And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house since He also is a son of Abraham.

[9 : 44] For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. In His earthly life, Jesus didn't avoid sinful people. He came to save them.

He sought them out. Jesus was also criticized for eating with another tax collector, Matthew, who became one of His 12 disciples. Let's read that in Matthew 9, 9 through 13.

As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth and He said to him, Follow me. And He rose and followed Him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples.

And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? But when Jesus heard it, He said, Those who are well have no need of a

physician, but those who are sick.

Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. All throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus calling sinners to repentance.

[10:58] We see how their salvation results in transformation. There is fruit. There is evidence in their obedience to follow Jesus as a result of their salvation.

Those whom God has been gracious to save know that they are a sinner. They understand that Jesus is the only hope that they have for salvation, and they turn away from a life of sin to a new life in Christ with new desires to live in obedience to Jesus, the source of eternal salvation.

A Christian doesn't obey the Lord to be saved. They obey the Lord because they are saved. If that is your desire, to put sin to death, to obey God and become more like Jesus, if there is fruit, if there is evidence of that in your life, then rest assured that Jesus has saved you, and His salvation is eternal.

He keeps you. You don't need another intercessor. You don't need another sacrifice. You don't need to add anything to your salvation. You're not saved based upon your qualifications, but the qualifications of Jesus, who is your Lord, your Savior, your superior high priest.

Hebrews 5 continues the line of thought which the writer began in chapter 4, verse 14. There he said, Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens.

[12:24] Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. In Hebrews chapter 4, where Jesus is presented as a superior high priest in his ability to sympathize with us in our weaknesses.

Now in chapter 5, the writer focuses on Jesus' superior qualifications in his appointment by God as the Son of God to serve as the high priest in making one sacrifice for all time by dying and rising again, passing through the heavens where he sits at the right hand of the Father and he continues at this moment to make intercession for us and he is the source of eternal salvation.

To make this point, the writer of Hebrews does two things here in chapter 5, verses 1 through 10. First, he lists the qualifications that had to be met for a high priest who served under the Old Covenant as recorded in the Old Testament.

And then he lists the superior qualifications of Jesus and the superiority of the New Covenant that he has established in his blood which secures eternal salvation for those whom he's been gracious to save.

Jesus' death on the cross made the need for the temple and the priesthood unnecessary. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple which barred access to the Holy of Holies to everyone but the high priest and only he could enter one time a year was torn from the top to the bottom.

[14:00] An action done by God to visibly portray the reality that in Christ the Son we have full access to God the Father.

In one act, Jesus accomplished with thousands upon thousands of sacrifices and multitudes upon multitudes of priests were doing for centuries.

He opened the way permanently to God so that anyone in Christ at any time can come to the throne of God and receive grace and mercy in their time of need.

In our text this morning, God's Word reminds us what we have in Jesus by helping us understand what it means to have Him serve as our superior high priest. To understand how Jesus is superior, the writer first addresses the qualifications of the high priest in the Old Testament.

So first we see the standard qualifications of the Old Testament high priest, the standard qualifications. Verse 1 again says, For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

[15:16] The first qualification is that a high priest under the Old Covenant in the Old Testament was a man appointed on behalf of men.

God didn't choose an angel to serve as high priest because angels do not have a human nature. They don't know what it's like to be human. The holy angels of God are not subject to temptation like we are nor do they experience the kind of suffering that we do.

This may not be a good illustration but this makes me think of those times when you call a company that provides some kind of service to you and you have a problem and so you call them and you talk to or you call customer service and a robot answers.

And it tells you what to say. What is your problem? Let me see if I can help you. And you talk to this robot but you can't really converse with it and after a while of it not being able to help you it will ask would you like to speak with a representative?

Yes. Yes, I would like to talk to another human being who I can converse with and who will understand my problem.

[16:32] The high priest represented the people to God. He understood their problem. He understood their need for help. So the high priest had to be a man.

The original audience of Hebrews understood this but what they would have struggled with was the thought of God becoming a man. They knew from their scriptures that God is holy that He is other and that we are created in His image but we are sinful and He is sinless.

He is not like us in that very important way which creates a separation between us. It wasn't always like this. Before sin entered the world God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden but after the fall after Adam and Eve sinned God drove them out of the Garden and mankind no longer enjoyed the kind of access to God that they once had.

even after the covenant got established with Abraham and Moses God could not be approached in the way that He was before sin entered the world.

In the wilderness God's people were warned not to come to near Mount Sinai where God chose to manifest His presence to Moses in the tabernacle and in the temple God's presence was veiled only again once a year on the day of atonement was the high priest one man permitted to enter God's presence with the blood of the sacrifice to atone for the people's sins.

[18:11] When the eternal word of God added a human nature to His divine nature Jesus the Son of God entered into the human world and felt everything humans feel.

He offered a better gift a better sacrifice because His sacrifice completely atoned for our sins we don't need another sacrifice. But a high priest couldn't just be any man he had to be a man chosen by God again it wasn't an office that just anyone could apply for.

When God first established the priesthood He gave very specific instructions about this in Exodus chapters 28 through 30 Aaron in his lineage would serve as priests they served as Israel's representatives to God on behalf of the people the high priest represented the people as he ministered in the Holy of Holies.

When I go to conventions for our denomination whether that's nationally or on the state level I go as a messenger I go as a representative of our church I have a name tag with our church's name written on it also I'm one man acting on behalf of our church I represent you I vote and I conduct myself in ways that I believe will benefit our church will benefit you in a very small way that's what the high priest did when he entered God's presence in the Holy of Holies he was one man representing all of God's people he served on their behalf verse 2 adds he can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself has beset with weaknesses the high priest knew the people he was representing he was acquainted with them in their weaknesses he lived among them he knew their need the Greek word translated as deal gently can also mean to treat mildly or moderately it carries the idea of being in the middle of things or taking the middle ground between two parties who are in conflict in Jesus' sermon on the mount one of the beatitudes in Matthew 5 9 is blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God while it's not the same Greek word it carries the same idea a peacemaker is a person who deals gently with others is able to balance irritation and apathy towards sinful people on the one hand they don't say or think God these people don't get it they won't stop sinning I just want to let them have it on the other hand they don't act as if sin isn't a big deal and that sin isn't something that God cares about the high priest wouldn't just go into the holy place and approach the holy of holies and swipe the curtain out of the way like get this thing out of my way I gotta go in here and he wouldn't just take the blood and sprinkle it all over the place until it was gone as if this whole thing wasn't very important he was gentle with the sinner but didn't excuse the sin he was gentle with the sinner but didn't take their side over God's side he wasn't overly sympathetic or overly apathetic

[21:47] John MacArthur said a person who is either too sympathetic or apathetic cannot help someone in trouble the one who is too sympathetic will himself be engulfed by the problem becoming too grief stricken or too scared to be of help on the other hand the one who is apathetic will possibly not recognize a problem someone else is having and will not be concerned about helping them in the middle is the person the metriopitheo deal gently that word describes he can fully identify with the person having the problem without losing his perspective or judgment a true high priest needed this characteristic he had to experience the extremes of human emotions and temptations while being stronger than them thereby he would be able to deal gently with those whom he ministered and without becoming victim of their misery the high priest served as this kind

of peacemaker but he wasn't perfect as verses 3 and 4 tell us because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for the people and no one takes this honor for himself but only when called by God just as Aaron was and while this passage ultimately applies to

Jesus as a superior high priest as we'll soon go on to see I think there's some helpful applications for us to make here first the Bible teaches us that all believers in Christ are members of a holy and royal priesthood 1 Peter 2 9 says but you speaking of believers are a chosen race a royal priesthood a holy nation a people for his own possession that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light like Old Testament priests believers are chosen by God not self appointed and they are chosen by God for a purpose to serve God with their lives offering up living sacrifices in Christ we have the privilege to enter God's presence and we offer sacrifices not to be saved but again because we are saved and those sacrifices are our obedience our lives which glorify the Lord our actions our words that glorify

Jesus and who he is and what he's done to save us we serve as peacemakers when we share the gospel with unbelievers we share as peacemakers when we seek to resolve conflict with other believers in this we deal gently with one another the goal is restoration the goal is peace between God and man between brothers and sisters in Christ in Christ we have this privileged status serving as his ambassadors serving as his peacemakers another application we can make here is for leaders in the church qualification of an elder is that he be gentle and not quarrelsome elders will give an account for how they shepherded the Lord's sheep sometimes an elder can be tempted to rule with absolute authority sometimes the shepherd will use his staff to beat sheep instead of guide sheep they aren't gentle but quarrelsome I think

I've shared this story with you before but I remember in my Hebrew class in seminary we were taking a test and two of my classmates who were seated at the very front of the classroom started yelling at each other in the middle of this test one was shaking his knee under the table and was bumping the desk and the other told him to stop it and the one shaking his knee said no I'm not going to stop it their voices got louder our teacher stepped in and he calmly but firmly! said gentlemen this is a seminary you are being trained to serve in the church you're disrupting your classmates resolve your issue finish your test or leave and take an F I don't know what my classmates were thinking for a moment there I felt like I was back in elementary school even middle school this was crazy but I remember thinking I feel really bad for the churches who are going to have these men serve as their pastors the standards God sets are important the qualifications for a high priest mattered we don't need a priest today because we have the best one in Jesus but we need to make sure that we live in obedience to the standard he's commanded for us in his church and now we move superior qualifications of Jesus as high priest beginning in verse 5 the writer of [26 : 50] Hebrews shifts his focus from the human high priest to the God man Jesus Christ the son of God as he demonstrates Jesus superior qualifications as high priest beginning in verses 5 and 6 so also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest but was appointed by him who said to him you are my son today I have begotten you as he says also in another place you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek so here we see the writer of Hebrews telling us Jesus did not demand this position for himself he lived in pursuit of his father's will and sought his father's glory at all times he told the Jewish leaders who questioned God the father invested Jesus the son with authority as high priest now might come the objection especially from some of the original

Hebrew audience who received this letter but Jesus is from the tribe of Judah they might have thought not the tribe of Levi Jesus is a descendant of David so he can't be a high priest in verse 6 the writer of Hebrews answers that objection in making the point that Jesus is a superior high priest in the order and likeness of a mysterious figure who first appears in Genesis chapter 14

Melchizedek is discussed in greater detail in Hebrews chapter 7 but a brief comment at this point is necessary Melchizedek was a king priest something Israel never had he was the king of Salem or Jerusalem which means peace he met Abraham after a major victory and he presented bread and wine to him and his weary men and he praised God for giving Abraham victory then he disappears and he reappears later in

Psalms 110 in a reference to the Messiah which the writer of Hebrews quotes here Melchizedek was a priest long before the high priesthood was established by God through Aaron there are other mysterious things about Melchizedek which I'll save for later when we get to chapter 7 sorry for those of you who that may disappoint but I will give you this for now I'll tell you I don't think that his appearing in the Old Testament was a pre-incarnate visit of Christ I believe he was a type he was a

foreshadowing a symbol of who Jesus would be and what Jesus would do and that's really the point we need to consider and understand here the writer of Hebrews is demonstrating that Jesus in fulfillment of Psalm 110 is a superior high priest as foreshadowed by Melchizedek because Jesus is a king Aaron was not a king Jesus priesthood is perpetual

Aaron priesthood was temporary therefore Melchizedek's priesthood is a better picture of Jesus than Aaron that's the point verse 7 says in the days of his flesh Jesus offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to him who was able to save him from death and he was heard because of his reverence and I believe this is in reference to the garden of Gethsemane in the days of his flesh in the days of his life on earth as he was approaching the cross Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane in agony he prayed for the cup of God's wrath towards sin to pass if there was another way there was another way for people to be saved however Jesus then said that he was committed to do his father's will not my will be done but your will be done what he had always known in his omniscience he experienced in a new way in his flesh he grieved he agonized he cried he sweat drops of blood he had never known sin but now he was going to be crushed on the cross for it he would be treated as a sinner on the cross so that sinners can be forgiven by God and treated as his sons when the writer of Hebrews said he prayed to him who was able to save him from death he isn't saying that Jesus prayed to avoid death but to be raised from death and he was heard because his will was always to do the father's will and rising again he would defeat death and rejoin his father in heaven to serve as our superior and perfect high priest verses 8 through 10 say again although he was a son he learned!

[32 : 03] through what he salvation to all who obey him being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek now we can read these verses and wonder how can Jesus learn anything when he's God and he's omniscient how can Jesus be made perfect when he already is perfect to say that Jesus learned obedience doesn't mean that he was disobedient what is being emphasized here is his experience in his flesh to learn what it was like to obey God and suffer for it Jesus' experience set an example for us to follow when obedience brings suffering we can draw near to God confidently in prayer asking for his help in our time of need knowing that in

Jesus we have a God who knows who understands who's experienced suffering Jesus was made perfect not in the sense that he sinned but in the sense that in his humanity his obedience and what he suffered as a result of that were essential for him to be our perfect high priest his righteousness his obedience his faithfulness his sinlessness are what is credited to us when we trust in him for salvation he takes our sin we receive his righteousness so whenever you read the gospels when you see Jesus his obedience when you see him obeying and suffering remember that it's in those moments that he was winning salvation for you every time he obeyed he was achieving redemption for you this could change the way that you read the bible especially the gospels you read those accounts where Jesus is being lied about where Jesus is being bitten spit on rejected by men and enduring it you read those accounts and you should just stop and pray

Jesus thank you thank you for enduring thank you for suffering thank you for obeying thank you for what you did for me Jesus stayed the course he obeyed the father's will he suffered for you to save you becoming your perfect high priest if you're here this morning and you have not trusted in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior friend there is no other high priest there is no other sacrifice there is no other way for you to be forgiven by God your creator who is holy Jesus came because that was the only way that we could be saved from our sins and he doesn't call you to go on some kind of journey to go on some kind of mission to do a whole bunch of good things in order that you are worthy to come to him to ask for his forgiveness it's not the way it works you could never do enough so that's why it was essential that Jesus came and he came to live the sinless life that we are incapable of living he obeyed he suffered he endured he died on the third day he rose again as proof that he is who he said that he was the son of God he did what he came to do to seek and to save the lost and he keeps them eternally because he is the only source of salvation and that is eternal salvation and he's calling you today to hear this gospel to hear this good news and to turn to him to repent of your sins and to trust in him and he will save you and he will keep you and he will never let you go and you will know a hope and you will know a joy that in your hardest times Jesus is there that he's prepared a place for you and that he keeps you and that he loves you and he walks with you through this life as the good shepherd who brings us to the green pastures and the still waters in his eternal kingdom for those of you who God has been gracious to save I think one way we adjust our lives to what we've heard from God's word is to submit your life to Jesus

surrender your life to Jesus obey Jesus this means to live sacrificially you obey him you do hard things you say uncomfortable things in order to be a peacemaker whatever you do whether that's in your home at work you go to Walmart when you call customer service and a robot answers the phone you always are trying to give glory to

Jesus and you're living your life for him is a testimony to the transformation that only Jesus can bring praise God in the good times seek him in the bad times give him the glory in the hard times and he will bless you because he keeps you let God's word have the last word here in Romans chapter 12 verses 1 through 2 I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship do not be conformed by this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that by testing you may discern what is the will of

[38 : 56] God what is good and acceptable and perfect you bow your heads with me and let's pray Lord we thank you for this time that you blessed us with to gather together as your church in this place and to sing your praises to worship you to pray for others and God to have your word proclaimed to us Lord we're thankful for the message that we've heard that you are our high priest that we don't need another intercessor we don't need another sacrifice we don't need to go on some kind of pilgrimage Lord because you and your goodness and your love for us you took the journey you did what we could not do and you died in our place and you suffered for our sins Lord there's nothing else for us to do there's nothing for us to add but what you command us to do is to live our lives as living sacrifices to obey you because you're good and because you're worthy of our obedience because we want to because we know what you've done for us we know what you have prepared for us

God we can live in this life no matter what we endure knowing that death has been defeated that you've been gracious to save and that you keep us eternally you are the one and only source of eternal life Lord we thank you for what you did for us and God we pray that you would help us to keep that at the forefront of our minds and all that we do in our lives wherever you would have us go that we would seek to give you the glory in that place and to those people that you surround us with God we pray that you would be pleased with the lives that we live as living sacrifices for you that your name would be praised and that more would hear the goodness of Jesus Christ you are Lord and our

Savior in whose name we pray amen