

Fact Sheet for **“King and Priest”**
Hebrews 5:4-10

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The passage before us today is 5:4-10, but start by reading 4:14-5:10. This passage has a problem for the author, a problem for us, a call for those who are considering Christ, and a challenge for Christians.

A Problem for the Author

The author has identified Jesus as our high priest in 2:17; 3:1; 4:14, 15; and now in chapter five. But he has also identified Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, in 3:6, 14, and now in 5:5. Here's the problem. The Messiah, the king, had to be a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Judah. And under the Mosaic Law the high priest had to be a descendant of Aaron, who was a descendant of Levi. Therefore, under that Law no one person could be both king and high priest. So how could Jesus be both the Messiah and our high priest? The author of Hebrews answers this question by quoting from two Messianic Psalms.

ESV ⁴ And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵ 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";

This is a quote from Psalm 2:7, understood as a Messianic Psalm in both Jewish and Christian circles. It is widely understood as a royal Psalm speaking of the kingship of the Messiah. The author quoted this Psalm to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the king.

⁶ as he says also in another place, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER, AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

This is a quote from Psalm 110:4. Who was this Melchizedek? The story is in Genesis 14. Moses was still centuries away from being born, so there was as of yet no Mosaic Law. Melchizedek was a priest under a different system. By quoting Psalm 110:4, a verse about the Messiah, the author showed that Jesus could be both king and permanent high priest.

A Problem for Us

It's hard for us to think like one of the Hebrews the author is addressing. We think like English speaking Gentiles.

⁷ ¶ 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. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

It is easy to read verse 9, as an English speaking Gentile, and conclude that our salvation is based upon our obedience. But in 4:10 the author said that whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works. So how should we understand verse 9?

⁷ ¶ 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.

This is referring primarily to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knew He was about to be killed. At Caesarea Philippi He told His disciples about this (Matt. 16:21-23; Mk. 8:31-33; Lk. 9:22). Then at the Mt. of Transfiguration (possibly Mt. Meron) He spoke with Moses and Elijah about His departure, which He was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem (Matt. 17:1-9; Mk. 9:2-10; Lk. 9:28-36). Then in Galilee He again told His disciples about this (Matt. 17:22-23; Mk. 9:30-32; Lk. 9:43b-45). Then as they neared Jericho He again told His disciples about this, mentioning crucifixion (Matt. 20:17-19; Mk. 10:32-34; Lk. 18:31-34). Jesus knew what He was in for and prayed earnestly (Lk. 22:41-44).

⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

perfect – This can also be translated “complete” or “mature”.

source – KJV & NKJV “author” “Source” is actually a more literal translation, but “author” also conveys the sense very well. Another possible translation is “cause”. The meaning of this word “source” is not immediately obvious to us English speaking Gentiles.

Christ was obedient to the Father (verse 8) and we need to be obedient to Christ as the author of our salvation (verse 9). Be careful. Verse 9 does not *exactly* say that our obedience gives us eternal salvation. It says that Jesus became the author of salvation for those who obey Him.

⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, ¹⁰ being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

How would be understood by a Hebrew who was tracking with the author so far? Getting used to the idea that Jesus was both the Messiah and our permanent high priest was a stretch as it was. Then there was their culture. It's hard for us to imagine just how difficult it was for someone who grew up in the tradition of the Pharisees and the Mosaic Law to come to the realization that salvation is by grace through faith! Even after someone was saved there would be occasional doubts.

What did this obedience to Christ mean to the author of Hebrews? Read Jn. 3:16 and 14:6. Be obedient to Him by believing in Him, by placing your faith in Him as your high priest. The Apostle Paul would chime in with Eph. 2:8-9 and Romans 1:5.

A Call for those who Are Considering Christ

It's right here. Salvation is only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ! Don't wing it!

A Challenge for Christians

⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

The road to Christian maturity can be a tough one at times. The eternal Son of God “learned” obedience in His humanity through suffering. God often uses tough times to mature us (James 1:2-4). View tough time as opportunities to increase in faith and trust

This passage has a problem for the author that he solves, a problem for us, unless we keep the recipients in mind, a call for anyone considering Christ, to put their absolute faith in Him, and a challenge for Christians to trust God when suffering.