

CHRIST IS THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST (PART II): THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A TRUE PRIEST HEBREWS 05:01–10

Introduction

Jesus Christ is the great High Priest. He meets every qualification required by both man and God to be the Supreme High Priest.

God is perfect and man is imperfect and sinful. Therefore, if man is ever to become acceptable to God, some perfect Person has to stand between God and man. Why? Because the ideal perfection of that Person must cover man, and man must believe and trust in the Person's ideal perfection for it to cover him. This is the glorious message of this great passage. Jesus Christ meets all the qualifications of the perfect Person. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest who stands between God and man. He meets all the qualifications of a true high priest, and He differs from all other priests in one critical area: He is perfect. He perfectly meets all the qualifications. He is not just a high priest; He is the great High Priest of God and man.

- I. The qualifications for a man to be a high priest (vv. 1-4).
- II. The qualifications to be the great High Priest were met by Christ (vv. 5-10).

I. *Hebrews 05:01–04 Qualifications of a High Priest*

There were five qualifications for a man to be a high priest. Note how clearly they are spelled out, and note that these qualifications are applied to all priests who are “selected from among men.” They are applicable to every generation of men. Every person who serves God in the ministry needs to heed these qualifications.

1. The high priest must be appointed by God to represent men before God. That is his function, the very reason he serves as high priest.
 - => He is selected from among men. He is a man himself who knows and understands what it is to be a man. Because of this he knows how to present man's case before God.
 - => He represents man in the things of God. He leads men in prayer, worship, righteousness, morality, witnessing and in the study of spiritual things.
 - => He is ordained or appointed by God. He does not choose the priesthood as a means of livelihood or of social and benevolent service. He is a priest because God called him to serve people in the things of God.
 2. The high priest must offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He leads the people to make gifts or offerings to the Lord, the offering of their lives and possessions. But he has one significant function: to offer sacrifice for sins. Unless man's sins are forgiven, he can never be acceptable to God, for no man can erase his sins. Therefore, there has
-

to be a substitution, some sacrifice made that can take the sinner's place and bear the judgment of sin for him. This, of course, refers to the animals which were sacrificed for sin in the Old Testament. The animal sacrifice is also a type or symbol that pictured what Jesus Christ was to do for us: become the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for our sins. The point is this: the high priest was the person who offered the sacrifice for man's sins.

3. The high priest must be able to deal with men in compassion. Note that men are placed into one of two classifications:

=> The ignorant: those who have sinned and did not know it; those who are guilty of sinning in ignorance.

=> Those who are going astray: those who wilfully sin, knowing that they are sinning.

The high priest must remember that he himself is also guilty of infirmities, weaknesses and failures. Therefore, he is to deal gently with all men, no matter their sin and shortcoming. For he is as they are: a mere man, ever so frail and short of God's perfect goodness.

4. The high priest must offer sacrifices for his own sins. He is just as guilty of sin and short of God's glory as the people are. Therefore, he must first make sacrifice for his own sin before he can make sacrifice for the people's sins.
5. The high priest must be God-appointed and not self-appointed. No man is to take the honour of being a priest upon himself; he is to be a priest only if God has called and appointed him to be a priest. No person is to enter the priestly ministry because he chooses it as a profession, as a means to earn a livelihood, or as a means to serve mankind. God and God alone calls those who are to serve Him. Only those who are called by God can serve Him in truth and fulfil the true functions of the priesthood.

John 15:16 *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."*

Acts 9:15 *But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel."*

Acts 26:16 *'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.'*

2 Cor 5:20 *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

1 Tim 1:12 *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service.*

Isa 6:8 *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*

II. *Hebrews 05:05–10 Jesus Christ, the High Priest*

The qualifications to be the great High Priest were met by Christ. Note that the same five qualifications listed for the high priest are now listed for Christ, but in reverse order. Jesus Christ fulfils all the qualifications of the high priest, but there is one significant difference: Jesus Christ fulfils the qualifications perfectly. He is the great High Priest who stands in perfection before God and men.

1. Christ was from the Father, or born as a Man: He was appointed and sent into the world by God (v. 5-6). There are two proofs that Jesus Christ was appointed by God.
 - a. Proof one is God’s Word or prophecy. Hundreds of years before Christ ever came into the world, God foretold that He was going to send His Son into the world. God was going to cause His Son to be born into the world. He was to enter the world as man so that He could perfectly identify with man and go through all the experiences of man; therefore, God had to send Him into the world as a man.

“You are my Son, today I have become your Father.” (v. 5; cp. Psa. 2:7)

- b. Proof two is God’s irrevocable oath that His Son was to be a priest. And note: He was not to be priest like man, that is, like Aaron’s priesthood; He was to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek. What does this mean? Melchizedek’s priesthood is said to have been *without human genealogy*, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. That is, he is said to be eternal (cp. Heb.7:3; see Heb. 7:1-10). Therefore, God gave an irrevocable promise to man: He would send His Son into the world to be the great High Priest, the *eternal representative* of man before God.

The point is this: God appointed Jesus Christ to be the great High Priest; Christ did not seek to glorify Himself — did not seek the glory of the priesthood. He was appointed to be a priest by God. Therefore, He has fulfilled the first qualification of the priesthood, the qualification of being appointed by God.

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

Heb 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

Heb 5:5 So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

2. Christ sacrificed Himself; He suffered bitterly as Man (v. 7). No high priest has ever suffered or been aware of the trials and sufferings that Jesus Christ bore and knew. He suffered beyond what any person ever has to suffer. He suffered every human trial and experience that men can suffer — bitterly suffered them — and He suffered them so

that He can succour us through all the trials of this world (see note, pt. 4, Heb. 2:17-18 for a list of the experiences that Jesus suffered as Man).

Note this verse:

Heb 5:7 *During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.*

This is probably a picture of Gethsemane. Because of the terrible trials Christ bore, He is bound to have offered up prayers and wept bitterly throughout His life — often. Any person would be crushed under the weight of what He bore. (Again, see note, pt. 4, Heb. 2:17-18 for a list of the terrible trials that Jesus suffered throughout His life. Also see Lk. 2:40.)

However, there was one experience that Jesus went through that far supersedes all others. That was the experience of death for the sins of the world. This is the reason the author of Hebrews refers to Gethsemane as the experience that shows how Christ identifies with man. Christ experienced death even as men experience death. Therefore, Christ can feel and sympathize and help and strengthen man when he faces death. In fact, note what the verse says: God saved Christ from death. This means that God raised Him up from the dead and that He lives forever with God, being exalted to God's right hand. This is the glorious gospel, the supreme sympathy: Jesus Christ can deliver us from death and carry us into the presence of God forever. As our great High Priest, He is able to save us to the uttermost. He is able to save us from death and to escort us into the eternal presence of God to live forever and ever.

Mark 15:34 *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" — which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*

Luke 22:44 *And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

Heb 2:10 *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

Heb 13:12 *And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

Isa 50:6 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

Isa 50:6 *I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.*

Isa 53:5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

3. Christ willingly sacrificed Himself and suffered for man (v. 8). Jesus Christ was the Son of God; therefore, He did not have to come to earth to save man. But it was God's will, and the only way Christ could obey God was to humble Himself and come and suffer as Man. He obeyed God — *experienced* obedience — by suffering as Man. He learned what it is to obey God as a Man; He learned it by becoming Man and by suffering as Man.

The point is this: Christ willingly came to earth to suffer for man. He did it because it was God's will, and He loves His Father. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest. He has fulfilled every qualification for the Priesthood — fulfilled them perfectly.

John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."*

John 10:15 *"Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep."*

John 10:17-18 *"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. (No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."*

Gal 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.*

Eph 5:2 *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

1 John 3:16 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

Rev 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

4. Christ was made perfect: He became the Source of eternal salvation (v. 9). Jesus Christ had to come to earth and suffer as Man. Why? In order to secure perfect obedience to God. Obedience — the perfect and ideal obedience to God — is the same thing as righteousness. Perfect obedience means perfect righteousness, and perfect righteousness means perfect obedience. If a person obeys God, he is righteous, and if a person is righteous, he is obedient. They are one and the same. Therefore, Christ secured (learned) obedience and righteousness by living upon earth as Man and by suffering through all the experiences of man — without sin.

The phrase “without sin” is critical to note. It means that Jesus Christ Himself became the perfect and ideal righteousness for man. Therefore, His righteousness can cover man. He is the Author and Source of perfection and righteousness. He is the Author and Source of eternal salvation. Note: the salvation of Christ is eternal: Jesus Christ saves us now — delivers us through all the trials of life and delivers us into eternal life, that is, into heaven where life goes on forever and ever in the presence of God.

If a person obeys Christ — believes and follows Him — then the perfect righteousness of Christ covers that person. If a person approaches God through Christ — trusts and lives for Christ — then the righteousness of Christ saves and keeps him safe, both now and forever.

John 8:46 *“Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me?”*

2 Cor 4:15 *All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Heb 2:10 *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

Heb 5:9 *And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*

Heb 7:26 *Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

1 Pet 1:19 *But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

1 Pet 2:22 *“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”*

5. Christ was appointed High Priest by God. Salvation is of God. The High Priesthood of Christ with all that it means is of God. God is the One who appointed and sent Christ into the world. And He did it after the eternal order of Melchizedek, not after the human and dying order of Aaron. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest, the High Priest who can represent and present us perfectly before God.

Heb 2:17-18 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Heb 4:14-15 *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do*

not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin.

Heb 6:20 *Where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.*

Heb 7:26 *Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

Heb 8:1 *The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.*

Heb 10:21-22 *And since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ■*

HEBREWS 05: 09 FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

*And, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. **Hebrews 05:09***

Eternal salvation is given to all those who obey Christ. In the Bible, to obey Christ means to believe Christ, and to believe Christ means to obey Christ.

=> No person will obey Christ unless he believes Christ, truly believes Him. A person is going to live like he wants, not like Christ says, unless he truly believes in Christ. Therefore, the person who obeys Christ is the person who believes Christ.

=> No person believes in Christ unless he obeys Christ. The person who truly believes in Christ will obey Christ. If he truly believes that Christ is the Saviour of the world, then he will follow Christ. He does what Christ says: he obeys Christ.

The point is this: believing Christ and obeying Christ mean the same thing. To obey and to believe are the same act. Therefore, Scripture emphatically declares that Christ is the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. (See *Faith*, Jn. 2:24.) □