

“The Qualifications of the High Priest” ***Hebrews 5.1-4***

INTRO:

We learned about our ***“Great High Priest”*** who passed through the heavens to make propitiation for our sins in **Hebrews 4**. Because of what He did, we can come boldly into the very presence of the living God without fear. We will find there both mercy and grace to help in a timely manner.

Building on this introduction in **chapter 4**, our writer describes the qualification of God’s priests. From these points we can conclude that Jesus was uniquely qualified to be a priest even the ***“Great High Priest”*** who remains in the very presence of God for us. To lay a foundation, the writer began with the qualifications and the job description of a high priest; specifically with the Aaronic high priest. The High Priest has a specific purpose. The High Priest must exercise compassion; and The High Priest must have a divine call! So, the outline for our study is:

- I. The High Priest’s Purpose (v. 1)***
- II. The High Priest’s Compassion (v. 2-3)***
- III. The High Priest’s Call (v. 4)***

I. The High Priest’s Purpose (v. 1)

A. ***“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.”*** (Hebrews 5:1).

This verse tells us, first, a high priest must be a human being. He cannot be an angel or some other created thing.

“For every high priest taken from among humans is appointed for humans.”

B. The Lord Jesus had to become human in order to be our high priest. In **Hebrews 2:17**, the writer first introduces this thought.

“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

In God’s sovereign plan of redemption, the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s Son, became a man. He had to be made like His brethren.

C. The high priest is a man. Yet, he was a man with a specific purpose. The high priest was to stand on the behalf of humans before God. Specifically he was to offer ***“both gifts and sacrifices for sins.”*** The LORD spent the Old Testament teaching us that humans as they are cannot approach God directly. We can now go boldly into the very presence of God

because our High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ has gone before us. Apart from Him no one has access to God. Our Lord Jesus Himself said; **(John 14:6)**

“I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me.”

II. The High Priest's Compassion (v. 2-3)

A. The high priest must be human and he stands on the behalf of men, before God. His job is to offer the sacrifices to God on our behalf and for our sins. We learn he must also be a person who has compassion for the people. **(Hebrews 5:2-3)**

“He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.”

B. The high priest must be able to moderate his feelings toward those who are ignorant and going astray. A high priest must not be arrogant or condescending. He is someone who is patient with the people he serves and faithful to the God he serves.

1. Aaronic high priests was able to understand the weaknesses of others because he was literally ***“surrounded with weakness.”*** Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest also is compassionate because He too endured weakness.

2. We were told in **Hebrews 4:14-15**;

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one Who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Although our Lord Jesus was without sin, the Aaronic high priest, the shadow of our Great High Priest had to offer sacrifices not only for the people's sins, but also for his own sins.

III. The High Priest's Call (v. 4)

A. So far we have learned the high priest must be a human. He stands on the behalf of human beings, representing them to God and God to them. He also must offer the gifts and sacrifices to God for the people. The high priest must show compassion to God's people because he also is surrounded by weakness.

B. One more qualification is important to God. **(Hebrews 5:4)**

“And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.”

The Hebrews who received this epistle knew a lot about political high priests. Since the late intertestamental period, the high priesthood was no longer a hereditary office handed down by the sons of Aaron under the direction of God. Political powers appointed and removed the high priest. Immoral men frequently occupied the office for gain and not for the glory of

God. This may be why the writer took such pains to point out the proper high priest was appointed by God alone. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is the only God appointed high priest.

C. Some men in Israel's history did attempt to usurp the office. Do you remember when King Saul could not wait when the Philistines attacked Israel? God took the kingdom away from Saul because he took to himself a job that he was not called to do.

Uzziah was a godly king in Judah until he got too strong. He thought he could not only be king in Judah, but he could also be a priest. **2 Chronicles 26:16-19** records the story, ***“But when [Uzziah] was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God by entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the Lord—valiant men. And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, ‘It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the Lord God.’ Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the incense altar.”***

God had called Uzziah to be king, not priest. Therefore, God made Uzziah a leper the rest of his life.

C. The point of this survey is for us to understand that only the one that God has called could be the High Priest and offer acceptable sacrifices to God. The only God appointed high priest is our Lord Jesus Christ. He offered Himself as the only acceptable sacrifice for our sin. If we are to have salvation and the forgiveness of sins, we must have it through the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you know my Jesus? You must if you are to have life eternal. If we know Him, are we serving Him in the way that He has called us to serve?