

Session 12 A Priest For Ever

Before the Silence: A Study of Hebrews

Session 12 | Hebrews 5:5-10

The Son's Appointed And Completed Priesthood (Hebrews 5:5-10)

Session 11 ended with the rule governing priestly office: **“No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”** Hebrews now applies that rule to Christ. He did not seize priestly glory. The Father identified Him as the royal Son and declared Him a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The passage then shows how the Son's suffering, prayer, obedience, death, and resurrection brought His priestly work to its appointed completion. Verse 10 closes the unit by returning to God's declaration concerning the Melchisedec priesthood. Verse 11 will begin a new warning about the hearers' dullness.

Hebrews 5:5-6 - Declared Son And Priest

So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Exegesis

- **“So also Christ”** applies the principle of verse 4: legitimate priesthood depends upon God's appointment.
- **“Glorified not himself”** denies self-promotion. Christ did not seize priestly honor or create an office for Himself.
- **“Thou art my Son”** quotes Psalm 2:7 and identifies the appointed Priest as Israel's royal and Messianic Son.
- **“To day have I begotten thee”** uses genuine begetting language within Davidic royal appointment. Psalm 89:26-27 similarly calls the Davidic king God's **“firstborn”** and places him above the kings of the earth. The king did not begin to exist when made firstborn; the title describes his appointed rank and inheritance. Hebrews applies Psalm 2:7 to the public identification and installation of the already-existing Son as the royal Messiah, especially in connection with His resurrection and exaltation.
- **“To day”** is governed by the context of this quotation and need not identify the same occasion as **“To day”** in Hebrews 3-4.
- **“Thou art a priest for ever”** quotes Psalm 110:4. God's own word establishes both the office and its permanence.
- **“After the order of Melchisedec”** places Christ under an order different from Aaron's. Genesis presents Melchizedek as both king of Salem and priest of the most high God.
- Aaron's priesthood was perpetual as a hereditary office under the Mosaic sanctuary arrangement and continued through mortal successors. Christ does not establish a rival Aaronic line: Psalm 110, written long after Aaron's appointment, records God's sworn appointment of another kind of Priest who serves personally and permanently.
- Together, Psalms 2 and 110 unite kingship and priesthood in Messiah: the royal Son is also the eternal Priest.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Psalm 2:6-8** - God sets His Son as King upon Zion and gives Him the nations for an inheritance.
- **Psalm 89:26-27** - God makes the Davidic king His **“first-born, higher than the kings of the earth,”** describing appointed rank and royal supremacy rather than the king's biological beginning.
- **Psalm 110:1, 4** - The Messiah seated at God's right hand is also the sworn priest for ever after Melchizedek's order.
- **Exodus 29:9; Numbers 25:13** - Scripture calls Aaron's office **“a perpetual statute”** and gives Phinehas and his descendants **“a covenant of an everlasting priesthood,”** establishing the hereditary priesthood within the Mosaic order.
- **Genesis 14:18-20** - Melchizedek appears as king of Salem and priest of the most high God, blesses Abram, and receives tithes.
- **Hebrews 1:2, 10** - Hebrews has already identified the Son as the One through whom God made the worlds and as the Lord who laid the earth's foundation; Psalm 2:7 cannot mean He first existed or became divine on that day.
- **Hebrews 7:11-17, 23-25** - The priestly arrangement changes: Jesus, from Judah, serves **“after the power of an endless life.”** He provides permanent saving mediation rather than continuing through mortal successors.

Text And Translation Notes

- The KJV spelling **“Melchisedec”** represents the New Testament Greek form; **“Melchizedek”** is the familiar Old Testament spelling. Both identify the same figure.
- **“Order”** means an arrangement, rank, or ordered pattern. It is not the name of a modern denomination or religious society.
- **“For ever”** is essential. Christ's enduring priesthood contrasts with the succession of mortal Aaronic priests.
- The Qumran document **11QMelchizedek (11Q13)**, surviving in a manuscript generally dated about 50-25 BC, presents Melchizedek as an exalted end-time deliverer who proclaims liberty, brings release from iniquity, judges Belial's forces, and executes God's justice. It shows that some late Second

Temple Jews could expect an eschatological Melchizedek, but not that this belief was universal or that Hebrews depended directly upon the document.

Theological Insights

- Christ's priesthood is not a modified Levitical appointment. It belongs to a different order established by God's word and oath.
- The enthroned King and eternal Priest are the same Messiah, joining Israel's kingdom and priestly expectations.

What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** say Christ appointed Himself or descended from Aaron.

- It does **not** teach that Christ became the Son or began to exist when the Father said, **"To day have I begotten thee."**
- It does **not** require **"To day"** here to have exactly the same referent as **"To day"** in Hebrews 3-4.
- From this passage alone, it does **not** settle whether Melchisedec was Christ. **"After his order"** establishes a correspondence but does not by itself determine Melchisedec's identity.
- It does **not** authorize a modern succession of people claiming Melchisedec priesthood.
- It does **not** require the conclusion that Christ's permanent saving priesthood cancels every possible future earthly or national ministry assigned to Aaron's descendants.

Hebrews 5:7 - Prayers, Strong Crying, And Tears

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 from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Exegesis

- **"Who"** refers to the Son and Priest identified in verses 5-6.
- **"In the days of his flesh"** concerns Christ's incarnate earthly life, especially the suffering that culminated in His death. It does not imply that His resurrection body ceased to be genuinely human.
- **"Offered up"** is priestly language. His prayers are presented as an offering to the Father.
- **"Prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears"** demonstrate real human agony and dependence. Christ's humanity was neither detached nor theatrical.
- He prayed to the One **"able to save him from death."** Because Christ did die and was raised, the answer includes deliverance out of death by resurrection rather than avoidance of the cross.
- **"Was heard"** says the Father answered His prayer.
- **"In that he feared"** describes reverent submission and godly caution, not sinful dread, unbelief, or fear of punishment for personal sins.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Matthew 26:36-44** - In Gethsemane Jesus prays in deep sorrow that the cup might pass if possible, yet submits fully to the Father's will.

- **Luke 22:41-44** - Jesus prays in agony while yielding to the Father.
- **Psalm 22:19-24** - The suffering Messiah cries to God, and the psalm declares that God heard Him.
- **Acts 2:24-32** - God raises Jesus because death cannot hold Him, publicly demonstrating deliverance through death.

Text And Translation Notes

- **"Supplications"** translates a rare word for earnest appeal, used only here in the New Testament.
- **"Save him from death"** may carry the force of saving out of death. Being heard did not require exemption from dying.
- KJV **"in that he feared"** uses **fear** for reverence or godly caution. The same word family appears in **"godly fear"** at Hebrews 12:28.

Theological Insights

- Christ's priestly sympathy rests upon actual suffering, dependence, prayer, and tears.
- The Father answered not by cancelling the appointed sacrifice but by bringing the obedient Son through death in resurrection victory.

What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** say Jesus prayed in unbelieving panic or feared punishment for sins of His own.
- It does **not** say His prayer went unanswered because He died.
- It does **not** deny His deity; it displays the reality of His incarnation and obedient Sonship.

Hebrews 5:8-9 - Obedience And Completion

*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;
And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

Exegesis

- **"Though he were a Son"** makes the statement striking. Sonship did not exempt Christ from the suffering appointed during His earthly life.
- **"Learned he obedience"** displays the reality of Christ's hu-

man nature. The Son did not move from ignorance or rebellion to obedience, or from sin to holiness. In His genuine human experience, He learned obedience by enacting it under suffering, opposition, dependence, and death. He came to know obedience experientially by carrying it through to completion.

- The learner is the divine Son, who learned through the real human nature He assumed. His incarnation was not theatrical: He genuinely experienced human development, prayer, dependence, suffering, and costly obedience without ceasing to be divine or sinless.
- **“Being made perfect”** means being brought to the appointed end or goal. Christ did not achieve sinlessness through suffering; He was already without sin. Through obedient suffering, death, resurrection, and entrance into His enduring ministry, He completed His appointed course and became the fully accomplished High Priest.
- The progression is precise: He experienced and enacted obedience through suffering; He brought that obedient course to completion; having completed it, He became the cause of eternal salvation to those who obey Him.
- **“He became the author”** identifies Christ as the cause or source of eternal salvation—not simply its teacher or announcer.
- **“Unto all them that obey him”** uses the hearing-obedience word family. Those who come under the Son’s word receive the salvation caused by His completed work.
- Within Hebrews, salvation retains its kingdom, covenant, warning, and endurance setting. The wording should not be used to contradict Paul’s proclamation of justification by grace apart from works.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Philippians 2:6-8** - The divine Son takes servant form and becomes obedient unto the death of the cross.
- **Isaiah 50:4-6** - The Servant’s ear is opened, and He is not rebellious but gives His back to the smiters.
- **Hebrews 2:10** - The captain of Israel’s salvation is made perfect through sufferings, using the same completion idea.
- **Hebrews 7:28** - The Son is **“consecrated for evermore.”** The same perfection verb describes His completed and enduring priestly qualification, not moral improvement.
- **Hebrews 7:25** - The permanent Priest is able to save to the

utmost those who come unto God by Him.

Text And Translation Notes

- **“Obedience”** belongs to a word family picturing hearing under authority. The related verb is translated **“obey”** in verse 9.
- **“Learned”** is experiential here: the Son came to know enacted obedience in His genuine human life, not by acquiring holiness or correcting rebellion.
- **“Made perfect”** means completed or brought to the intended goal, not corrected from moral imperfection. The same verb is translated **“consecrated”** in Hebrews 7:28.
- **“Author”** here means cause or source. Christ’s completed work produces the salvation.
- **“Obey”** means to heed or come under hearing. It is stronger than exposure to a message but does not make salvation the wages of human merit.

Theological Insights

- Incarnation means the divine Son truly experienced human development, dependence, prayer, obedience, and suffering through the human nature He assumed, without ceasing to be divine.
- Experiential obedience in verse 8 leads to vocational completion in verse 9; the completed Son then becomes the source of eternal salvation.
- Christ’s completed work alone causes eternal salvation; the obedient hearer contributes no rival priesthood or sacrifice.

What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** mean Jesus had previously been disobedient, sinful, or morally imperfect.
- It does **not** mean the eternal Son lacked divine omniscience, or that His human nature acted and learned as a person separate from Him.
- It does **not** mean Christ became sinless or improved morally when He was **“made perfect.”** His appointed incarnate and priestly course reached its goal.
- It does **not** teach that suffering automatically makes every person holy.
- It does **not** teach salvation purchased by human moral performance.
- It does **not** erase the force of obedience: the Hebrew audience must heed the Son rather than turn from Him.

Hebrews 5:10 - Called Of God An High Priest

Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Exegesis

- Verse 10 completes the sentence begun in verse 9 and returns to the declaration quoted in verse 6.
- **“Called of God”** means formally designated or publicly addressed by God. Christ’s priestly title rests upon divine announcement.

- **“An high priest”** applies the office explicitly to the Son whose suffering and work have reached completion.
- **“After the order of Melchisedec”** repeats the central distinction: Christ’s priesthood is not Aaronic.
- The appointment and completed work belong together. Christ is not simply given a title; He accomplishes the offering and intercession required of the office.
- The verse forms a transition. The writer is ready to explain

Melchisedec but pauses in verse 11 because the hearers are dull.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Psalm 110:4** - God's sworn declaration supplies the words by which Christ is named Priest after Melchizedek's order.
- **Hebrews 5:5-6** - Christ did not glorify Himself but received the Father's scriptural appointment.
- **Hebrews 6:19-20** - After the warning, the writer returns to Jesus as High Priest for ever after Melchizedek's order.
- **Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17** - The exposition resumes by describing Melchizedek and applying the power of an endless life to Christ's priesthood.

Text And Translation Notes

- The word translated "**called**" here differs from the word used of Aaron in verse 4. Both involve divine authorization, but verse 10 especially emphasizes formal designation or address.
- The KJV's repeated English word "**called**" makes the connection with verse 4 clear while the underlying Greek verbs contribute different shades of meaning.

What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** say Christ's priestly title was invented by the writer of Hebrews; Psalm 110 records God's prior declaration.
- It does **not** make public divine designation equivalent to a private mystical feeling.
- It does **not** complete the explanation of Melchisedec. The fuller exposition resumes in chapter 7.

Teaching Summary

- Christ did not seize priestly honor; the Father identified Him as the royal Son and eternal Priest through Psalms 2 and 110.
- His priesthood belongs to the order of Melchisedec rather than to Aaron's mortal Levitical succession.
- In the days of His flesh, Christ offered prayers with strong crying and tears and was heard because of His reverent submission.
- The Father answered by bringing the obedient Son through death in resurrection victory.
- Christ learned obedience experientially through suffering without ever moving from sin to sinlessness.
- "**Made perfect**" means His priestly work reached its appointed completion.
- Christ became the cause of eternal salvation to those who come under His hearing.
- God publicly designated the completed Son as High Priest after the order of Melchisedec; verse 11 begins a new warning about dull hearing.