

January 06, 2019 -

Hebrews 4:5:11 - Jesus, our Superior High Priest

Introduction

April 23, 1985 is a day that will live in infamy in the marketing world. The Coca-Cola Company intended to re-energize its brand with “New Coke”. By June of 1985, the Coca-Cola Company was getting over 1,500 calls a day on its consumer hotline compared with 200-400 a day before the change. People seemed to hold any Coca Cola employee from security officers at their headquarters to their neighbors who worked for Coke personally responsible for the change. That firestorm ended with the return of the original formula the real thing, now called Coca-Cola classic, a few months later. The return of their original formula on July 11, 1985, put the cap on 79 days that revolutionized the soft-drink industry. It transformed the Coca-Cola Company and stands today as testimony to never substitute anything for the “real thing”. Today’s passage was a challenge to the Hebrew people that Jesus Christ is the “real thing” he is better than Aarons’ priesthood and never to be changed.

We have studied that the writer of Hebrews has spoken of Jesus as higher than angels, higher than Moses and higher than the High Priests. In fact, he stated — Jesus is the Great High Priest. That theme is going to be repeated throughout the next few chapters.

I Jesus is our Humble High Priest vv. 5 -7

1. Hebrews states here in verse #5 that Jesus was appointed by God in the same way that God had appointed the priesthood of Aaron. We see from Philippians 2 the same humility of Jesus, who even though He was equal with God, He did not take divine authority upon Himself, although entitled, but humbled Himself, even to the point of dying on the cross. This same humility is clearly on display here. Even though He was the Son, he submitted Himself to suffering, and even to learn by suffering. This idea of submission is important. Jesus, the Divine Son of God, declared king by the Father’s decree as well as made High Priest was humble in His earthly affairs and completely submissive to the will of His Father.

2. The Jews however could not understand how Jesus could be appointed high priest because only Levites who are descendants of Aaron could be the high priest. The high priest had an important role. It was he who took the sacrifices of the people and offered them before God. He pleaded forgiveness for their ignorance and sins. The high priest also had to be chosen by God to do this task. He had to be qualified as Aaron, the first high priest, was. Aaron was chosen by God for this purpose. But Jesus is a High Priest called of God after the order of Melchizedek 5:6 &10). *Today I have begotten You...* refers to Jesus' resurrection from the dead. At that time He fully assumed His role as our great High Priest, *having been perfected* (Hebrews 5:9).

3. The concept of this priesthood is somewhat hard to grasp. We do know that Melchizedek lived during the time of Abraham. He was the king of Salem. He also was the priest of the "most-high God" (Gen. 14:18). Salem was a former name for Jerusalem, (the city of peace).

Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, thus indicating that he paid allegiance to him. David prophesied about a coming descendant who would be a ruler as well as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

4. This mysterious person appears out of nowhere in Genesis 14 after Abram defeated the coalition of five kings that had taken his nephew Lot captive. He came and shared wine and bread. His name means “Prince of Righteousness” and He was the prince of Salem or “Prince of Peace.” Many scholars think he was from what would become Jerusalem, and was therefore king of that city before the time of David. He conquered the city from the Jebusites hundreds of years later. Melchizedek was also called a priest unto El-Elyon or (Most high God). So this person was both priest and king as Jesus was.

5. We will find out later in Hebrews a little more about this mysterious person, but this is enough for now. Hebrews reminds us that Jesus who was from Judah could not be called after the order of the Levitical priests as he belonged to a different tribe. So he had to be a priest of a different order than Levi. He was also to be high priest “for-ever” which means his priesthood would not be ended by death. This becomes part of the later argument about the superiority of Jesus’ priesthood over the high priests who descended from Levi. For now, it must also be noted that Melchizedek was from an earlier time in history than Levi.

6. In addition to His divine selection as both King and Priest, Jesus is superior to all other high priests because He can relate to His people, Jesus lived on earth as a human so He could offer up prayers and supplications (verse 7) with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death. God heard Jesus' prayers because He feared God (5:7). This refers primarily to what our Lord did in the Garden of Gethsemane in the early morning of the day He was crucified. In agony and praying earnestly, what happens as He prays.

The life, of Jesus provides the model for our prayer lives. God is seeking to mold us into the image of His Son (Col. 1:27, 28). If we are to act like Christ, our prayer lives must be conformed to His.

Application:

Many Christians are unwilling to pay the price that Jesus paid when it comes to interceding with God. Jesus' prayers came with passionate cries and tears and, "because of His godly fear," He was heard by the Father. ---- For our salvation the Father refuse His request.

II. Jesus is our Saving High Priest (5: 8 -11).

1. Though Jesus was God's Son, He learned obedience by the things which he suffered (5:8). Becoming human, Jesus learned through experience how difficult it can sometimes to fully obey God's will. Therefore, He understands how difficult it can be for us to live for God.

2. Has God said NO to one of your requests recently? Have you been learning obedience through what you have been suffering (Heb. 5:8)? If you have, God can make you a source of salvation to others even as He did with His Son. Have you ever been totally overwhelmed

with a problem? When you are, Jesus knows how you feel and He understands. He also teaches us by example what to pray - Luke 22:42..

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

3. God made it clear, however, that Christ was not a priest after the order of Aaron; rather, He was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, a man who was both high priest and king. Here was a High Priest whose heart broke when He prayed to the Father. This High Priest was not just conducting a ritual sacrifice. He was sensitive to the needs of hurting humanity and had the answers in His perfect sacrifice on the cross.

Here we also see Jesus' total dependence on His heavenly Father in all things. God heard His prayers because He had a reverent relationship with Him. Even though He was the Son of God, He still had to learn obedience and yes he too suffered.

Application:

There is a positive aspect to suffering. We all endure suffering to some degree, but the good news is that through - it we can become like Jesus.

There are some things that God can build into your life only through suffering. Even Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was complete only after He had endured the suffering His Father had set before Him. Once

He had suffered and He was the complete, mature, and perfect Savior through whom an entire world could find salvation. If you become bitter over your hardships, you close some parts of your life from God. If you do this, you will never be complete. Don't resent the suffering God allows in your life.

Conclusion:

Jesus has given us an example to follow. In the same way that He sought to do the will of God, not His own will ... the same way that He lived His life in reverent submission to God, making prayer and fellowship with God a top priority ... the same way He learned obedience through suffering ... we are called to follow in His footsteps. Don't make all your decisions and invest everything you have into avoiding hardship. God did not spare His own Son. How can we expect Him to spare us? We all need to learn obedience even when it hurts!

Communion:

Melchizedek served Abram bread and wine. Perhaps he even served them in a manner looking forward to our redeeming sacrifice, as the bread and wine of Passover and the Lord's table look at our redeeming sacrifice, Jesus Christ.