

Hebrews

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[0 : 00] If you will look at your scripture sheet, we are going to spend a little bit of time in Hebrews chapter 5. We have dealt with this somewhat in the past, but that has been some time ago.

And I'd like to just, as Peter says, stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance and touch on a few of these things again. Really, if I had my preference, I would really prefer to take Hebrews 5, 6, and 7 all together in one sitting.

Simply because the connection and the continuity of all of the content is really obvious when you get into it. And it all has to do with the high priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his being after the order of Melchizedek.

But we cannot do that because time restrictions will not allow for that. So what I would like to do is cover as much of the content we can in simply reading the text, stopping a little bit for some explanation along the line.

And yet at the same time, I don't want to discourage any of you from offering comments or questions. So we'll just take it as it comes and return to 5a, if we may please, where he is talking about the high priest.

[1 : 21] And be reminded, if you will, the epistle to the Hebrews is written exclusively to, of all people, the Hebrews.

And that shouldn't be that difficult to grasp. But you would be surprised how many insist on Christianizing the letter to the Hebrews.

And yet, as you seriously read the content, you will readily understand that, yes, of course, there are a lot of principles and truths to be applied to believers that are across the board, just sensationally.

And they are truths to be imbibed into our being, whether they are Old Testament truths originating from that or New Testament.

So, there is, as the old saying goes, all of Scripture is for us, but not all of Scripture is to us.

[2 : 20] And that which is in the Hebrews is to the Hebrews, but it is for our learning, as is, of course, all of the Old Testament. And here he's talking about the institution of the high priest.

And, of course, this has to go back to Israel's high priest, the first one of whom was Aaron, brother of Moses. And out of Aaron came successive high priests that were in the line of Aaron all the way down until you get into the New Testament time.

So, Christ is here presented as a superior high priest, even though he is not after the order of Levi or of Aaron.

He is of the tribe of Judah, and his high priesthood originates with this mysterious man that surfaces in Genesis 14 by the name of Melchizedek.

So, let us just jump in here, if we may, and I'll read and reserve comment for a little later on in the text if we can. For every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.

[3 : 46] For that he himself, that is the high priest, also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof, he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

Now, the high priest that he's talking about here is the human high priest, as we mentioned, after the order of Levi. Levi, of course, became the priestly tribe, and Aaron was born after Levi, out of Levi.

So, the high priest that he's talking about here is one of those descendants. He's not here yet talking about Christ. That's coming a little bit later. He's going to contrast Christ as the high priest, the ultimate high priest, with the high priest of whom he is speaking in verse 1, when he says, every high priest taken from among men, because the high priest would be high priest for life.

Then when he died, his successor would be appointed. Usually, it would be his son who would become the next high priest because of the genealogy and the lineage.

So, what he is going to do here, as he writes this to the Hebrews, is remind them of how God installed the human high priest, which serves as a go-between between man and God.

[5 : 15] And that office is contrasted with the prophet, who serves as a go-between between God and man. So, the priest is from man to God.

The prophet is from God to man. So, the way of communication is complete. And we read in verse 4, And no man takes dishonor unto himself.

That is, no one could decide to be high priest just because he wanted to be high priest. But, there were some occasions where that actually happened.

The high priesthood, at one time in the history of Israel, had been so corrupted in the nation, and the politics involved, that the high priesthood could actually be bought, if you had enough money.

And this is what's going to be realized when the kingdom divides between the northern and the southern kingdom, and the priesthood remained in Jerusalem, and the sacrifices and the temple and everything in Jerusalem.

[6 : 28] But when the Samaritans, when they went into Samaria and became the lost, what's commonly referred to as the lost ten tribes, which really were never lost, but they became the northern kingdom, they didn't have a priesthood, and they didn't have a king.

They didn't have a throne. So, they installed one. But God had nothing to do with it. It was simply human effort that chose the high priest, and that chose the king.

And we know the first one, of course, was Jehoiakim, and he was a usurper. He did not have any right to the throne.

And the priesthood that was established didn't have any right to the priesthood at all, because that was out of Levi and Aaron. So, all of that became fake. And that was completely different.

In verse 4, what he is saying is that no man takes this honor unto himself. That is, no legitimate high priest fills that office just because he wants to, because he chooses it, but because he is ordained of God.

[7 : 38] And if we continue on the next page, some of the renditions render this, no one of his own accord assumes this honor.

Besides, no one appropriates the honor for himself, that is, of the priesthood. But, contrasted to that, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

And he, of course, was the first high priest. This is when Israel became established as a nation. They were led out of Israel. They were given the law, the commandments, etc.

And, remember Moses, who also was of the tribe of Levi. Moses complained to God that he wasn't up to the task, that he wasn't articulate, that he couldn't express himself, that he wasn't good with words.

And, the Lord did not accept that as an excuse. He said, okay, alright, I understand, Moses, and that's why I'm going to utilize your brother, Aaron.

[8 : 44] And he, Aaron, will be your prophet, your mouthpiece. And, obviously, Aaron was. So, this is the reference that he is giving here.

And, Aaron is going to be installed in that office. Then he says in verse 5, so also Christ, glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my son, today have I begotten thee.

And this, of course, is in reference to the incarnation and the birth of the Lord Jesus through the Virgin Mary. and he is referring to that, as he says, also in another place, thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Ordinarily, in the order of a priesthood, there would be multiple priests. I don't know how familiar you are. I know some of you are relatively familiar with Roman Catholicism.

and you can understand this, but in Roman Catholicism, there are several orders of priesthood. In fact, we're coming up on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, and the main guiding light of that, of course, was Martin Luther.

[10 : 17] And Martin Luther was a Roman Catholic priest after the order of Augustine. He was an Augustinian monk. And, of course, Augustine lived in the 4th century.

He established himself as a valuable contributor to Roman Catholicism. And an order was established in his name, and there are others, too.

There's Francis, the Franciscan order, and there's St. Benedict, the Benedictine order, and so on. So, that, too, in Roman Catholicism is actually patterned after that which was earlier established in Judaism.

And there are many aspects of Roman Catholicism that were actually carried over from and adopted from examples that were set forth in Judaism.

And the priesthood, of course, is just one of them. So, here he's talking about a different order. And, what is so striking about this is the order of Melchizedek consists of two priests.

[11 : 32] That's it. Just two. It is an order, but there are only two members in the order. One is Melchizedek, the original, and the other is Jesus Christ, and there aren't any others.

This is the only order that has two persons in it, and the first, Melchizedek, and then, after him, in that same order, our Lord Jesus Christ.

it still remains a mystery that I have not been able to come to any comfortable conclusion about as to exactly who this man Melchizedek was.

We know that he was the king of Salem, that is, of, actually, Jerusalem, king of peace. We know that he is referred to in Hebrews as having no father and no mother, and that leads some to believe that he was actually a Christophany, that this was a pre-incarnate, Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ because he is referred to as having no father and no mother.

However, there is another point of view, and some scholars are of the opinion that that simply means that Melchizedek's genealogy is not given.

[12 : 54] And we do not find anyone who is referred to as the father or the mother of Melchizedek. And very often when the Jews in their literature and in their way of expressing things, when they set forth a new name, they very often say, so and so, the son of.

But that's never mentioned with Melchizedek. And when we look at it in Hebrews a little later, it just says, without father and without mother, that doesn't necessarily mean he was an eternal being, thus had no parents.

It may well mean that his genealogy or his human origin is not listed. Frankly, we can't be dogmatic about it. We don't know which either is a possibility, I suppose.

So, we read on verse 7, who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, and of course he is talking about the person of Christ, with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death.

This is a reference to our Lord Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. When he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, and he prayed, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

[14 : 11] Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done. This is what the writer of Hebrews is referring to in the person of Christ, the strong crying and tears, and he pled to his Father that if there is any way possible that the goal can be accomplished of human redemption without me drinking this cup, cup of suffering and death, but the cup of separation that he knew he would have to undergo from his Father, if there is any way possible that the goal can be accomplished apart from that, that's my preference.

But nevertheless, not my will but yours be done. Those monumental words. And Christ served as our Redeemer because there was no other way.

and he was obedient unto death in that. And I am confident that it was a separation from the Father in a way that had never been experienced that he dreaded far more than the physical pain that he was going to undergo.

So we continue on, and he was heard in that he feared though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.

And that's not a terribly good translation. It's a little misleading. The idea is that Christ experienced obedience.

[15 : 52] He didn't learn obedience in the sense that he was coming from a position of disobedience that had to be corrected. So he learned obedience.

That is, of course, a far cry from who he is and who he was. We believe that Jesus Christ was impeccable. That means he was incapable of being corrupted or of corrupting.

The impeccability of Christ was demonstrated when he was tempted by Satan for 40 days and 40 nights. And I am persuaded that it was not to see whether or not he would sin and succumb to the temptation.

but it was carried out to demonstrate that he was above and beyond the possibility of sin and he emerged from that, of course, triumphant.

Because had he subjected himself to that, had he succumbed to the temptation, then, of course, he would have demonstrated his humanity in a way that we do which would have disqualified him from being our savior.

[17 : 01] So, he was tempted to demonstrate to provide credentials as to his impeccability that made him an eligible savior.

Do you have a question or comment? Yeah. In the Bible, when it said, he was tempted just as we are. And I know that he could not have sinned, but he had given up his, I mean, what you call it, his godly power, so to speak, when he came to earth.

So, he could have sinned, he just didn't. And that's the way it would be because he was able to, when he quoted what God had said, what the Father had said, because defeat Satan, that was kind of, to me, in a way like an example to us, we can defeat temptation, right?

But, we just can't, I mean, we don't sometimes. Yeah, you're certainly right about that. Well, I think that, I think that the impeccability of Christ, which means, literally, inability to be corrupted, or inability to sin, I think it goes back to the actual incarnation, because Mary, Mary did not contribute anything of her body to produce the Christ child.

What she did was provide the vehicle through which the seed grew and was delivered. In other words, what I am saying is, when the angel appeared to Mary and said, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

[18 : 57] And Mary's contribution was to provide the housing, the uterus, if you will, for the seed that had been supernaturally implanted by the Spirit of God, as the angel Gabriel said, and she simply provided the growth for it and the development for it.

Now, I know that there are Roman Catholics who disagree with that. And, by the way, in order to support their position that Mary actually contributed her body and that this is where Christ got his humanity, they have a real problem with that because that would require Mary to be holy.

And, in order for her to produce a holy child, she had to be holy. And, this is why and how the Roman Catholic Church came up with the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.

Now, we know that Christ was conceived in an Immaculate Way, but Mary, as far as we can determine, Mary was born of a mother and a father in a natural way just like anybody else.

But, in order for Catholic theology to have a sinless savior, there has to be a sinless mother. And, it was a council meeting of the Roman Catholic Church that simply voted on this, and they decreed, and this was like in the 1800s, I mean, it was, this is like 1857 or something like that, that they met and decided, well, Mary had to have been Immaculate also.

[21 : 03] So, they, just, the Pope just issued his bowl or his edict called the Immaculate Conception of Mary. And, that's something that is ingrained in Roman Catholic theology to this day.

It is not part of the Protestant understanding or what we see as a scripture. So, all I am saying is that in our view, and in what we think is a biblical view, is that this seed was from the Spirit of God implanted in the Virgin Mary, and she provided the nurture, the growth, and the delivery of the child.

So, there was an Immaculate Conception, and that was only in the person of Christ. So, that's an argument that Catholic and Protestant scholars are still debating, and of course, each holds their own position.

Yes, Roger? I'm sorry? She didn't supply the egg? No. No, she did not. She did not supply the egg. And of course, our Roman Catholic friends would say that she did.

But I think the scriptures make it quite clear that this was completely of God and not of Mary. And being made perfect or complete, the word complete is better there.

[22 : 42] I'm looking at Goodspeed says when he is fully qualified after he had proved himself perfect in his experience that Jesus became and so on. And this was the result of the temptation.

When it says that Christ was tempted in all points like as we, he was tempted regarding the world, the flesh, and the devil. And the world was all these kingdoms will I give you if you will fall down and worship me.

Well, he refused of course, and he passed the test in that. And the flesh was similar to that, and it had to do with if you are the son of God as you say you are, you have legitimate bodily needs, you've gone a long time without food, you have the ability, do you not, to turn these stones into bread to satisfy a legitimate hunger?

Why don't you do that? And that was the temptation, the demands of the flesh, the hunger of the body. And then the devil, all these kingdoms will I give you if you will fall down and worship me, and of course, he withstood that as well.

Yes, Pat? When Jesus' own strength at that time, he could not have resisted that temptation. He had to rely on God's strength or the Holy Spirit's strength, just like we do.

[24 : 10] Well, isn't that why he quoted what the scripture said? There is, yeah, there is a combination of working together of the human and the divine that is beyond my ability to understand.

But I am satisfied that it is active, and that even though our Lord Jesus was fully God and fully human as a theotropic person, this is so utterly unique.

There has never been another, never will be another, of that constitution. He alone is the God-man. And I do not understand how at times his divinity seemed to have been turned off.

And at times how his humanity seems to have been turned off. there were times when he evidenced that he had a wisdom and a knowledge that was supernatural.

And there were times when it appears that it was strictly his humanity speaking. And this is the only person who has ever lived who has functioned out of both roles, and often in ways that simply escape us.

[25 : 35] And one reason is because we don't have any pattern, we don't have any precedent, we don't have any example, he completely stands alone as regards this, so there's nothing that we can compare him to.

Like I said, there is no precedent and there is no after. So he is utterly, completely unique. He became then, verse 9, the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.

obedience consists of the obedience of faith. And as you look at the epistle to Romans, the apostle Paul opens Romans in the very first chapter talking about his calling from God was designed to bring the Gentiles to the obedience of faith.

And the obedience of faith simply refers to hearing the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, death, burial, and resurrection as our substitute, and exercising with your volition your belief, your trust, your faith, your confidence in him for who he is and what he did.

That is the obedience of faith. That's the obedience that faith demonstrates. Roger? Did the Jews have to have the works tied to that?

[27 : 08] Did the Jews have to have works tied to that? I know that there are some grace people who believe that, that they had to manifest their faith.

And all I can say is that grace, grace that has to have anything added to it, diminishes what grace is.

I know there are those who insist that belief was not enough, that they had to add something to that or demonstrate that belief. And I would rather take the position that where faith is genuine, demonstration will follow.

It doesn't have to, it will. It is a natural consequence. I don't believe it is possible for anyone to experience a connection with God or relationship with Jesus Christ and never be the same.

It just cannot happen. Because someone said that God accepts us just as we are.

[28 : 30] But he loves us too much to leave us that way. And once we become in Christ, then the work of regeneration really begins and is an ongoing process known as sanctification or becoming more and more Christ-like.

I do not believe it is possible for anyone to come to faith in Jesus Christ and not have a changed life. Our problem is we demand and expect people to make changes in ways that we approve of or that we agree or that we think are right and sometimes they don't.

And that leads us to question their faith and you can understand that. But that's a real conundrum. Yeah, Raj? I think you said explain James that a faith without works is a dead faith.

But they're still saved. James makes it very clear that faith without works is not real faith at all.

There is no such thing as a dead faith. There is only a living faith. Faith is a lie. And if faith is present, works will be there.

[29 : 52] To what degree, what kind, that's up to the individual and the Lord. But I don't think it's possible to have the faith without there being some works.

Because those whom God saves, He changes. And one thing that is changed is our eternal destiny. another thing has changed is our temporal life and lifestyle.

And no, our temporal life and lifestyle is not changed into any kind of perfection. But it is changed radically and provides the basis for our growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't grow in our position. We do grow in our sanctification. Joe and then Pat. One way of explaining is take a row of dominoes. You've got a row of dominoes.

And you push the first one, that's grace. That's accepting Jesus in favor. Push that first domino, all those others there are going to fall. But you don't have to push each one of those dominoes to make them fall.

[31 : 03] Good point. You don't have to do works to make them fall. Just that grace is all it takes and then those others will fall. And therefore you will do good works automatically.

You don't have to do one. That's a good illustration. I haven't heard of that one before. There is a natural consequence, an outgrowth of the faith.

And where there are no works, there's no faith. We are not saved by faith and works, but we are saved by faith that works.

Big difference. I believe that you can't fool God. So just because you say certain words that you think are going to save you does not work.

God knows your heart. And if you really are saved, then you have the gift of the Holy Spirit who provides you the want to do the works and whatever ends up being sanctification.

[32 : 05] It absolutely is part of the new nature in Christ. And we can't help it. It's just something that God does when we believe. We can help it from the standpoint of believing and exercising faith.

And that sets off a chain reaction. So coming to faith in Christ is a crisis. It's a crisis, but it is a crisis that sets in motion a whole series of after effects.

And those are the works that comes. That■■■