

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 307 – November 3<sup>rd</sup> – Hebrews 5:1-14**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on Hebrews**

Bruce, FF	<i>The Epistle to the Hebrews</i> , Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964
Guthrie, Donald	<i>Hebrews</i> (Tyndale Commentary), IVP, Leicester, 1983
Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe	<i>A Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews</i> , Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1977
Westcott, BF	<i>The Epistle to the Hebrews</i> , Macmillan, London, 1889

**Hebrews 5:1-10**

Starting from the Levitical priesthood, the author establishes three necessary qualifications for the office, humanity, compassion and divine appointment (vv.1-4). He then proves that Jesus was a high priest by showing that he had these three qualifications, taking them in reverse order (vv.5-10).

**Verse 1**

Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν,

"A High-priest being himself man can act for men." Westcott

καθίσταται Verb, pres pass indic, 3 s  
καθιστημι and καθιστανω put in charge, appoint

Cf. vv. 4-6.

τα προς τον θεον cf. 2:17.

προσφερω offer, present  
δωρον, ου n gift, offering  
τε, τε και see 4:12  
θυσια, ας f sacrifice

"The same offerings could be called, under different aspects, a 'gift' and a 'sacrifice'. But when 'gifts' and 'sacrifices' are distinguished the former mark the 'meal-offerings' and the latter the bloody offerings." Westcott

ἁμαρτια, ας f see 4:15

"Particularly important is the purpose of these gifts and sacrifices: they were offered, our author states, *for sins*. In saying this there is little doubt that he has especially in mind all that was done by the high priest on the Day of Atonement, specifically related as it was to the expiation of the sins of all the people (Lev 16)." Hughes.

**Verse 2**

μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσι καὶ πλανωμένοις ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικεῖται ἀσθένειαν,

μετριοπαθεω be gentle (with), have feeling (for)

δυναμαι see 4:15

ἀγνοεω not know, be ignorant, fail to understand

πλαναω lead astray, deceive

Refers to those who sin unwittingly as opposed to those who sin 'with a high hand'. Cf. Num 15:22-31.

ἐπει since, because, for

περικεμαι be surrounded, be beset with ἀσθενεια, ας f see 4:15

Westcott says, "It may ... be noticed that Christ, as High-priest, has no weakness, though he sympathises with weakness (7:28; 4:15)." Hughes, on the contrary, says that Christ did know *weakness*, including "the ultimate weakness of death," but that he did not know sin.

**Verse 3**

καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν.

δι' αὐτὴν 'for this reason' i.e. because of his own weakness.

ὀφειλω ought, must, be bound

λαος, ου m people, a people

οὕτως thus, in this way

προσφερω see v.1

Cf. 7:27 where it is declared that this was unnecessary for Christ. The writer seems particularly to have the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement in mind (see Lev. 16:6).

**Verse 4**

καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν, ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρῶν.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/her/itself  
τιμη, ης f honour

I.e. the office. "It is not a human institution but a divine vocation." Hughes.

καθὼς περ as, just as

See by way of illustration, the incident with Korah and his companions recorded in Num 16:32f.

**Verse 5**

Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γενεθῆναι ἄρχιερέα, ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτὸν· Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε·

The first quotation is from Ps 2:7. "Our author has to establish in connection with Jesus' high priesthood, that he is Son of God, for only a high priest who is Son of God can have his rightful place at God's right hand. Only the Son can fittingly minister in the heavenly sanctuary, and only the intercession of the Son can have full efficacy with God." Montifiore.

οὕτως see v.3

The definite article, 'the Christ' focuses on office.

δοξάζω praise, honour, glorify, exalt  
γενεθῆναι Verb, aor pass dep infin γινομαι  
λαλεω speak, talk  
σημερον today

This Psalm is also quoted in 1:5. Bruce says that in the mind of the writer 'this day' is the day of Christ's enthronement, "the day when the Most High gave public notice that he had exalted the crucified Jesus as 'both Lord and Christ' (Acts 2:36)."

γεγέννηκά Verb, perf act indic, 1 s γεννω  
be father of, bear

σε Pronoun, acc s συ

**Verse 6**

καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει· Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ,

ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different

Psalm 110:4. Westcott points out the similarities between the LXX translations of Ps 110:3 and the quotation from Ps 2 above.

Psalm 110 "describes the Divine Saviour under three aspects as: King (1-3); Priest (4); Conqueror (5-7)." Westcott.

"The royal and the sacerdotal offices are united in him. The author of our epistle is, in effect, emphasising the truth that there is but *one Messiah*, unique both in his sonship and in his priesthood. By contrast, the adherents of the Dead Sea Sect looked for the coming of *two* messianic figures, a lay, royal (Davidic) personage and a priestly (Aaronic) personage... Of course, under the Qumran scheme a descendant of David, who belonged to the tribe of Judah, and a descendant of Aaron, who belonged to the tribe of Levi, could hardly be expected to coincide in one person. It is especially significant, then, that in the one person and category of Melchizedek, who was both king of Salem and priest of God Most High (Gen 14:18; Ps 110:1,4; Heb 7:1), there is a union of the royal and priestly functions." Hughes.

ἱερευς, εως m priest

αιων, αιωνος m age, eternity

Christ has no successor.

ταξις, εως f order, division

"Two features in Melchizedek's priesthood appear to be specially present to the mind of the writer, 1. that it was connected with kingly office, and 2. that it was not made dependent on any fleshly descent or limited by condition of line ... He represents a non-Jewish, a universal priesthood. In relation to the Priesthood he occupies the position which Abraham occupies in relation to the Covenant." Westcott

**Verse 7**

ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσει τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σφῆξιν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρῶν προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας,

"Christ – the Son, the priest after the order of Melchizedek – has been shewn to have fulfilled one condition of true High-priesthood by his Divine appointment. He is now shewn to have fulfilled the other, as having learnt through actual experience the uttermost needs of human weakness." Westcott

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

Emphasises the condition of human weakness that was his during his earthly life.

δεησις, εως f prayer, plea

τε και and also

ἱκετηρια, ας f request, plea

δυναμαι be able to, be capable of

σωζω save, rescue

θανατος, ου m death

κραυγη, ης f shout, cry

ισχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful



For use of this term see 2:10; 7:11,14,28; 9:9,11. "This perfection was seen on the one side in the complete fulfilment of man's destiny by Christ through absolute self-sacrifice, and on the other in His exaltation to the right hand of God, which was in the divine order its due consequence." Westcott.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι ὑπακουω obey, be subject to

"Having learnt to obey, he saves those who obey." Spicq.

"Here again, then, they are being reminded, as previously they have more forcefully been reminded (cf. 2:3; 3:12ff.; 4:11), that this great salvation belongs only to those who persevere in obedience to Christ." Hughes.

αἴτιος, ου m cause, source  
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

"The perfection, then, of the Saviour's unstained manhood capacitated him to endure the ultimate suffering of the cross for us, who because of our own sin are stained and defeated and in need of salvation. It is thus, the perfection of his life leading up to the perfection of his death, that *he became the source of eternal salvation*. In this affirmation, too, the thought of Hebrews 2:10 is recapitulated, for the description of Christ here as 'the source of eternal salvation' corresponds to his designation there as 'the pioneer of our salvation.' He, and no one else, is the cause of man's redemption: it is from him that it flows to us." Hughes.

αἰωνιος, ου eternal, everlasting

It is eternal salvation "because it is based on the sacrifice of Christ, once for all accomplished, never to be repeated and permanently valid." Bruce

### Verse 10

προσαγορευθεις ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

προσαγορευθεις Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s  
προσαγορευω designate, name  
ταξιας, εως f see v.6

### Verse 11

Περὶ οὗ πολλὸς ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος καὶ δυσσεμήνευτος λέγειν, ἐπεὶ νωθοὶ γέγονατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς·

περι οὗ may be taken as:

- i) 'about which', namely the high-priestly nature of Christ.
- ii) 'about whom', namely Jesus.
- iii) 'about whom', namely Melchizedek.

Westcott says "it seems best to interpret the οὗ of Christ as typified by Melchizedek or of Melchizedek as a type of Christ."

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ gen πολλου, ης, ου much, many

The singular, ὁ λογος refers to the teaching or discourse which the writer wished to deliver.

δυσσεμήνευτος, ου hard to explain  
ἐπει since, because, for

Expresses the reason for the difficulty: it is not simply because of the complex nature of the subject but is due to the condition of the hearers.

νωθος, α, ου lazy, sluggish  
γεγονατε Verb, perf act indic γινομαι  
ἀκοη, ης f report, news, hearing

They have lazy ears – they are reluctant to listen to anything which requires mental effort or exercise of spiritual discernment. The perfect tense of γινομαι expresses very clearly that this is a state they have sunk into – something they *have become*.

### Verse 12

καὶ γὰρ ὀφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρεῖαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς τινὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ γέγονατε χρεῖαν ἔχοντες γάλακτος, οὐ στερεᾶς τροφῆς.

ὀφειλω ought  
εἶναι Verb, pres infin ειμι  
διδασκαλος, ου m teacher

Not here implying an official office but simply that maturity of faith that enables a person to share or convey that faith to others (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

χρονος, ου m time, period of time

δια χρονον 'by reason of time' i.e. 'by this time/ by now'.

παλιν again, once more  
χρεια, ας f need, want  
διδασκω teach

στοιχεια, ων n elements, basic principles  
ἀρχη, ης f beginning, first principle

They need to be taken back to the ABCs of the faith.

λογια, ων n oracles, words, messages

των λογίων του Θεου cf. Rom 3:2; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 7:38. "The phrase might refer to the new revelation given by Christ to His apostles (cf. 1:2); but it seems more natural to refer it to the collective writings of the O.T. which the Hebrew Christians failed to understand and so, through mistaken loyalty to the past, were in danger of apostasy." Westcott. Bruce also thinks it refers to teaching about the meaning of the O.T. Hughes says it is "the message and teaching of Christianity" cf. 6:1.

γεγόνατε Verb, perf act indic γινομαι  
γαλα, γαλακτος n milk  
στερεος, α, ον firm; solid (food)  
τροφη, ης f food, nourishment

Cf. 1 Cor 3:1ff.; 1 Peter 2:2.

### Verse 13

πᾶς γὰρ ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος ἄπειρος λόγου  
δικαιοσύνης, νήπιος γὰρ ἐστίν·

μετεχω share in, eat  
ἄπειρος, ον inexperienced in,  
unacquainted with  
δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

In the light of the following verse, Motifore understands this to mean 'inexperienced in moral truth'. Westcott thinks it refers to "teaching which deals at once with the source of righteousness in Christ, and the means by which man is enabled to be made partaker of it. The doctrine of Christ's priestly work is based on these conceptions." Hughes also favours this sense.

νηπιος, α, ον baby, infant, child

### Verse 14

τελείων δὲ ἐστὶν ἢ στερεὰ τροφή, τῶν διὰ τὴν  
ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων  
πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ.

τελειος, α, ον complete

The genitive here carries the force 'for mature people'.

ἔξις, εως f use, practice

δια ἔξιν by reason of, or on account of habit. Westcott says of ἔξις, which occurs here only in the NT, that it "expresses not the process but the result, the condition which has been produced by past exercise."

αἰσθητηριον, ου n power of discernment

Also here only in the NT. The faculties or senses of perception, "here used metaphorically of spiritual sensitivity." Hughes.

γεγυμνασμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc  
pl γυμναζω train, exercise; discipline

Cf. 12:11; 1 Tim 5:7. "Like the serious athlete who trains himself so that he is in the peak of condition for the contest, the mature Christian is equipped to face responsibly the demands and endure to the end the rigours of the conflict by the habitual exercise of his powers." Hughes.

διακρισις, εως f ability to discriminate  
καλος, η, ον good  
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong