

**Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV** Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. (15) For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are, yet* without sin. (16) Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

(**Hebrews 5:1 NKJV**) For **every high priest** taken **from among men** is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

The office of the High Priest (Kohane Gadol) was instituted by God back in the days of the Exodus (Ex 28). He had to be a Levite and an heir of Aaron. While all priests officiated at the managing of the tabernacle and then the Temple, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement, to offer blood for himself first and then for the nation of Israel.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, the High Priests were not required to be from the line of Aaron. And high government officials often appointed the High Priest to his position. This led to much corruption which was even recognized and recorded in Rabbinic writings of the day.

The High Priest also presided over the Sanhedrin. He was responsible for the religious affairs of the country and was often a civil judge as well.

**“Things pertaining to God”:** This is opposed to things pertaining to man, that is, government, civil management etc. The “God” things are religious instruction, temple service, sacrifices, interpreting the LAW, and even overseer, so to speak, of all worship, praise and prayers offered up to God.

**“Gifts and Sacrifices”** – the priest would offer blood sacrifices as well as “gifts”, for example, peace offerings, thanksgiving offering etc. They would also receive gifts from the people so that they could perform their duties in the tabernacle and later the Temple.

Most importantly, he was a mediator between man and God. This cannot be underestimated. A man, by design, cannot be his own Priest. He must go to a mediator appointed/ordained by God – Moses was such a man! And, then Aaron and all his descendants as prescribed in the LAW.

*And while we are called a “holy priesthood”, the sacrifices we make (spiritual sacrifices), are still made through Christ Jesus!*

**1 Peter 2:4-5 NKJV** Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, (5) you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God **through Jesus Christ.**

(Hebrews 5:2 NKJV) **He can have compassion** on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.

Being a man, he can have compassion because he himself is weak and subject to temptations!

(Hebrews 5:3 NKJV) Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins.

And he must make sacrifices for himself since he too is a sinner. Even on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest had to offer the blood of the sacrifice for himself first, then He could make atonement for the Children of Israel.

All the above is a general description of the High Priest and priesthood which came down the ages from Aaron.

All the Priestly duties apply to our High Priest, Jesus! There are, however, important differences exist.

(Hebrews 5:4 NKJV) **And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.** (Hebrews 5:5 NKJV) So also Christ **did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it** was He who **said** to Him: "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU."

This calling, in the OT times, was from God through the line of Aaron.

The writer knows that the Jews to whom he is writing are struggling with their Christianity, the concept (Truth) that Jesus was their High Priest was problematic. The Word said He had to be in the line of Aaron. And, that He could not declare himself to be High Priest. They saw in the Word that the priesthood and the sacrificial system was declared to be forever. How could this Man declare himself to be High Priest? And, how could He be a king and priest? Were not those offices kept completely separate in the LAW?

But Jesus did NOT glorify Himself to be the High Priest. But His Father declared it first by saying "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU."

The SON of GOD as God the Son AND as a Man certainly can be ordained by God Himself, just as Aaron was chosen of God (Exodus 28:1)

AND!

(Hebrews 5:6 NKJV) As *He* also *says* in another place: "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK";

**Psalms 110:4 NKJV The LORD has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."**

So, without much explanation, the writer reveals three great truths:

1. Jesus is the Son of God, that is, God the Son.
2. Jesus is of the order (not lineage) of Melchizedek.
3. Jesus is a priest forever

The person known as Melchizedek has been the subject of much discussion, writing, conjecture and heated debates. We read about him in Genesis 14, where little is said of him:

**Genesis 14:18-20 NKJV** Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he *was* **the** priest of God Most High. (19) And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; (20) And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

The name Melchizedek means "KING of RIGHTEOUSNESS". This king was also THE priest of God Most High (El Elyon).

The non-canonical book of Jasher (Yasher) also gives the same account but calls him by a different name. In Chapter 14 -

11 And Adonizedek king of Jerusalem, the same was Shem, went out with his men to meet Abram and his people, with bread and wine, and they remained together in the valley of Melech (Kings).

12. And Adonizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth from all that he had brought from the spoil of his enemies, for Adonizedek was a priest before God.

Adonizedek means THE LORD MY RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Either name has prompted many to believe that this was a Christophany. However, the **Book of Yasher** says that this was Shem, the son of Noah.

Now before you get too much heartburn because I'm quoting from a non-canonical book, know that I'm not the only one.

The Book of Yasher is quoted in Joshua 10:13

**Joshua 10: 13 So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. *Is* this not written in the**

**Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. (14)** And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.

And 2 Samuel 1:17-18

**2 Samuel 1:17-18 NKJV** Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, (18) and he told *them* to teach the children of Judah *the Song of the Bow*; indeed, *it is* written in the Book of Jasher:

I'm just offering up another source and another opinion. Just as clearly that this book was not included in the Bible, it was read and believed – even though there are issues with the text.

But was He an appearance of Jesus? Was he an angelic being sent by God? Was he just a man? Since there is so very little written of him in the bible, was this incident with Abraham offering tithes to this person just “tradition”?

This mysterious person is mentioned 9 times in Hebrews, two times in this chapter and seven times in Chapter 7. Since I raised the issue in my sermon title, I am of the **opinion** that he was a known (but perhaps mysterious) **man** who lived during the time of Abraham. But, I'm up for any mystery and what is spoken about him in Chapter 7 will either clarify or make the waters even muddier. Therefore, we will wait for Chapter 7 before I will make any hard and fast statement.

So, according to verse 6, there seems to be two different offices of High Priest –

1. From Melchizedek, call THE priest of God Most High (keep in mind that this Priest was also a king)
2. From Aaron appointed by God to be High Priest and the “father” of all High Priests.

So, how is Jesus a High Priest?

First, Jesus was born of a woman. He was a Man as Aaron and his sons were.

Second, the title/office of High Priest, did not come by His own will. But, as the Son of God was appointed by His Father as the Mediator between God and Man.

Third, During His life, did He not teach all things pertaining to God?

But as the perfect GOD:MAN, could Jesus truly understand those for whom He interceded and mediated with His Father?

(Hebrews 5:7 NKJV) who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, (Hebrews 5:8 NKJV) though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Jesus was a Man of prayer. I could not list all of the times and places where He prayed. But just a skimming of one of the Gospels will show this quite convincingly.

This verse also describes His prayers in Gethsemane. The translator chose the phrase "to save Him from death". But perhaps a better translation would be "to save Him out of death".

Jesus knew that He was sent to die, therefore, He was not asking His Father to spare Him from dying as some have believed. No, He prayed because He knew the Cup which His Father would have him drink would be unbearable and worse, He knew He would experience something He never experienced in His life on earth or in all eternity: His Father would forsake Him and turn from Him.

And while He prayed "if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me". He also was obedient to His Father by declaring "but not My will but Your will be done". And therefore, for His Father's Glory, He consented to experience all He had to. Agonizing death awaited Him. And He set His face like flint towards the Cross and clung to the Promises of God:

**Psalms 16:8-11 KJV** I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved. (9) Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: **my flesh also shall rest in hope.** (10) For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see **corruption.** (11) Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

Was there fear? YES! Did He not sweat blood? YES! Was there weakness? YES! In His cries and anguish! Was there obedience? Certainly!!! As God, the word obedience was never thought of or used. But as a Man, he learned obedience in all that He did by submit to His Father's will.

(Hebrews 5:9 NKJV) And having been perfected, He became the **author** of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

And this sums up in one grand thought His death and resurrection. In Luke 13:32, He prophesized His resurrection was stating "Go, tell that fox [*Herod*], 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, **and the third day I shall be perfected.**'"

The word in the Greek for perfection is *tel-i-o'-o*; to *complete*, that is, (literally) *accomplish*, or (figuratively) *consummate* (in character): - consecrate, finish, fulfil, (make) perfect.

Which well describes all that He was: Perfect and Consecrated; and in all that He did: Fulfilled and Finished!

By the way, the word "**author**", in the Greek, is best described as "Cause", that is, "**He became the Cause** of eternal salvation...". His Father was the Author (For God so Loved the World..." and by Jesus's obedience, his actions "caused" the fulfillment of His Father's plan.

I want to end here today with this passage from Philippians where Paul writes:

**Philippians 2:5-11 NKJV (5)** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, **(6)** who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, **(7)** but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. **(8)** And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.** **(9)** Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, **(10)** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, **(11)** and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When we think of Him, let us think of His Name "Jesus or Yeshua" which means salvation; let's think about His Title: The Christ which means Anointed One and let's think about who He is: LORD, Yahweh in Hebrew. Therefore, let's give glory to the Father just as Jesus ever lives to bring Him Glory.