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This lesson begins a new five part series entitled "Challenges of the Christian Life" in the Smyth-Helwys Formations series. The first study focuses on submission, but picks out only a small segment of a larger natural unit of text material from Hebrews. Our study will zero in on that more natural unit of text material which emphasizes Jesus as the great high priest. For a detailed understanding of how this connects together see the Block Diagram and the Semantic Diagram of the Greek text and the Exegetical Outline based on these diagrams in the larger internet version of this study. The approach to the biblical text here will grow out of these analyses of the Greek text.

Hebrews is one of the more fascinating, but intriguing books in the New Testament. Currently, I am serving as issue editor for the Baptist theological journal Review and Expositor, and the focus of this issue is upon Hebrews. That volume should be released for publication sometime in late spring of 2006. All of this to say that this assignment has given me opportunity to dig back into the text of Hebrews in new and fresh ways, as I go over the material submitted by the six different writers of articles to be included in the journal. Hopefully, this will provide some helpful insight for this Bible study.

I. Context

Both the historical and literary context play important roles in understanding this passage. Here, both the external and internal histories of the text take on a special significance, since our Christian experience does not include the activity of a high priest functioning in a physical temple located in Jerusalem, as was the case of the first readers of this passage. Their familiarity with this Jewish system stands in contrast to our lack of familiarity with it. This gave them an immediate level of comprehension of the concepts of the high priesthood and how Christ relates to that, which we must struggle to grasp.

a. Historical

The Letter to the Hebrews has an interesting **external history**. It struggled to gain acceptance in the canon of the New Testament, in large part because of uncertainty over who wrote this document very early in the history of Christianity. This uncertainty is reflected by comments of church fathers indicating different views of authorship, as well as by different positions in the listing of the document in various canon lists during the first four Christian centuries. Eventually its association with Paul, due largely to the mentioning of Timothy in Heb. 13:23, led to its acceptance in the official lists of documents comprising our NT. Yet, this uncertainty remained strong with the result that by 368 AD it was listed after the Pauline letter section concluding with Philemon and before the General Letter section beginning with James. What can we know about the author from within the document? No name is mentioned in regard to authorship; thus the document remains an anonymous writing. The title, added much later, indicates the initially targeted readership "to the Hebrews." The broad nature of this provides no help in identifying its author. William Lane in his first volume on Hebrews in the *Word Biblical Commentary* lists several traits gleaned from

inside the document that help us understand more about the author, even though we can't attach a name to this person:

- * He possessed an architectural mind; he affirms a thesis and then develops it by way of analysis.
- * The writer's rhetorical skill is universally recognized.
- * The writer was evidently well educated by Hellenistic standards.
- * The writer may be characterized as an intensely religious man.
- * The writer, finally, was a pastoral theologian who adapted early Christian traditions to fashion an urgent appeal to a community in crisis

The dating of the writing seems to be during the 60s of the first century, as implied from a few historically oriented markers inside the document, particularly in regard to the anticipated near destruction of the temple. But even these indicators are not precise. The place of writing and the destination of the document are less clear. The later added title "To the Hebrews" most likely indicates at least a later belief that the document was written to Jewish Christians. The Conclusio section, 13:18-25, which is the only true letter aspect of the document, does strongly suggest a group of Christians in a specific location, rather than Jewish Christians everywhere like James 1:1 indicates. But no internal markers give clear indication of where that location might have been. The strong Hellenistic tones of the content of the document do suggest that these Christians were residing somewhere outside of Palestine.

In our passage of 4:14-5:10, the **internal history** concentrates primarily upon the Jewish idea of the high priesthood, along with that of the mysterious OT figure of Melchizedek. The beginnings of the high priest reach back to the role of [Aaron](#), Moses' brother who functioned as the priest during the Exodus in the worship practices of the Tabernacle. He is mentioned some 350 times in the Bible. The New Testament alludes to a high priest some 120 times with the [Greek word](#) ἀρχιερέυς (archiereus). Richard E. Averbeck in the [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) has a lengthy but helpful internet article on the Priesthood. The beginning of the Israelite priesthood with Aaron is an important marker. The reforms of Josiah marks an important transition point as [Averbeck](#) points out:

Second Kings 23:4-20 lists five categories of priests that existed in ancient Israel before Josiah's reformation, and arranges them according to their proximity to the Jerusalem temple: (1) the high priest (v. 4), (2) the second-order priests (v. 4), (3) the idolatrous priests in the cities of Judah and in the area surrounding Jerusalem (v. 5); (4) the priests of the high places in the cities of Judah from Geba to Beersheba (vv. 8-9); and (5) the priests of the high places in Samaria (i.e., the remnants of the priests of the former northern kingdom, v. 20). According to this passage, a significant feature of Josiah's religious reformation was his eradication of all priests (and their cultic accouterments) except those who functioned legitimately within Jerusalem temple. Therefore, only the first two categories of priests in 2 Kings 23 retained their office: the "high priest" (v. 4, here Hilkiah) and "the priests of the second order" (v. 4; i.e., other descendants of Aaron).

The high priest was given several unique responsibilities, as pointed out by [Averbeck](#):

There were special obligations for which the high priest alone was responsible. On any normal day any priest might perform atoning sacrificial procedures, but not on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). On this day, and only on this day, the high priest would enter alone into the Most Holy Place to purge it from the impurities of the priests (vv. 11-14) and the people (v. 15) by sprinkling sin offering blood on the mercy seat. After this he also purged the other parts of the sanctuary with blood (vv. 16-19), performed the scapegoat ritual (vv. 20-22), and offered his burnt offering, the burnt offering of the people, and the fat of the sin offerings on the burnt offering altar (vv. 23-27). Thus, the high priest would yearly cleanse (i.e., "purify") himself, the other priests, and all the people of the assembly (vv. 30, 33b) by purging (i.e., "atoning") the Most Holy Place, everything in the tent of meeting, and the burnt offering altar (v. 33a) on their behalf (vv. 30, 33b).

Furthermore, all the priests were under strict restrictions to avoid defilement by contact with a corpse (except for their immediate family), or by marriage to a divorced woman or former harlot (Lev 21:1-4,7). The high priest, however, could not defile himself even by attending to his dead father or mother, and marriage was restricted to a virgin (i.e., he could not marry a widow, much less a divorced woman or former harlot Lev 21:10-14). Moreover, he was responsible to function as the head of the priestly system at the festivals and was in charge of everything that happened in the tabernacle (see, e.g., Eli's supervision in 1 Sam 1:9, 12-17), including the actions of the other priests (see, e.g., the problem of Eli's rebellious priestly sons in 1 Sam 2:29). Finally, another well-known and exclusive function of the high priest was to possess and manipulate the Urim and Thummim housed in the "breastpiece of judgment," which was attached to the high priest's ephod (Exod 28:28-30). He used them to obtain oracular answers from the Lord regarding specific situations in Israel.

The history of the Jewish priesthood has many twists and turns. During the OT era a lot of changes and evolution of the idea occurs. It is during the intertestamental period that most of the changes take place that set the stage for the tension between Jesus and the temple priests, along with their opposition to the spread of Christianity by the apostles. Again, Averbeck has a helpful summation of that history:

High Priests, Chief Priests, and Priests. The Old Testament Aaronic and specifically Zadokite line of high priests continued down into the intertestamental period until about 172 b.c., when the Syrian (i.e., Seleucid) ruler of Palestine, Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), began to assign the office to whomever was in political and financial favor with him at any particular time (2 Macc. 4). Although they were not Zadokites, the Maccabeans (i.e., Hasmoneans) were a priestly family that successfully led a revolt against the Syrian rulers and eventually became not only the political leaders of the Jews but also assumed the role of high priest (i.e., beginning with Jonathan, ca. 152 b.c., 1 Macc 10:18-21). During this time the Qumran community prided itself on being the enclave of the legitimate Zadokite high priesthood over against the Hasmonean high priesthood in Jerusalem.

In 37 b.c. the rule of the Hasmoneans came to an end and the family of Herod the Great began the practice of appointing high priests from various priestly families (again, not necessarily Zadokites) from time to time, sometimes year by year (note John 18:13, "Caiaphas, the high priest that year"). This led to an oligarchy of a few privileged high priestly families who obtained their position through bribery. The New Testament refers often to the "chief priests," apparently referring to a group of priests who had the oversight of the cultus, many of whom belonged to these privileged families. This group seems to have included the current high priest (John 18:13), all those still alive who had previously held the position (Luke 3:2; John 18:19, 24), and those of high priestly descent (see esp. Acts 4:6, 23). Three New Testament high priests are specifically named: Annas (Luke 3:2; John 18:19, 24), Caiaphas (Luke 3:2; John 18:13b, 24), and Ananias (Acts 23:2; 24:1).

Of course, the priests (i.e., the high priests, chief priests, and regular priests) were the source of much opposition to Jesus and the apostolic spread of the gospel. Nevertheless, Paul confirmed his respect for the office of Ananias after unintentionally insulting him (Acts 23:2-5). Jesus refused the same to Annas (John 18:19-24), but during his ministry he sometimes affirmed the priests (see, e.g., Matt 8:4; the cleansing of the leper). Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest (Luke 1:8). Interestingly, the high priest Caiaphas unwittingly prophesied the substitutionary death of Jesus for Israel and for all believers even among the gentiles (John 11:47-53; 18:14). Moreover, it was not long before "a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

With this background in mind, one would wonder why the writer of Hebrews would choose the idea of a high priest as the model for Jesus. Certainly, the historical figure of the high priest during the first Christian century provided no example for anyone to follow. But this background does help us to see why the writer jumps over the historical figures to the idealized picture of the high priest as the model for Jesus.

The other internal historical issue pertains to the identity of Melchizedek who is mentioned in 5:10. He stands as the second of two priestly individuals named, Aaron (5:4) and [Melchizedek](#) (5:6, 10). Out of the ten times he is mentioned in the Bible, eight of them surface in Hebrews. The other two include [Gen. 14:18](#) where Abraham encountered him, and [Ps. 110:4](#), which is cited in Heb. 5:6b. L. Hicks in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* provides some helpful background on this individual:

1. Name. Traditionally interpreted "king of righteousness" (Heb. 7:2), this name actually represents a good, ancient Canaanite formation, parallel to OT ADONI-ZEDEK and ABIMELECH; Akkadian לַמֶּלֶךְ (cf. OT MALCHIEL) and מֶלֶךְ (cf. OT ELIMELECH); and Ugaritic מֶלֶךְ (cf. OT ABINOAM), מֶלֶךְ, and לֶמֶלֶךְ (cf. OT ZEDEKIAH). The proper translation is uncertain but is usually given as (a) "The (my) king is Zedek" (a deity), or (b) "Milki [a deity] is righteous" or "The (my) king is righteous(ness)."

2. In the OT. Historically Melchizedek was probably a Canaanite king of pre-Israelite Jerusalem (see below), as was ADONI-ZEDEK. He is mentioned in two OT passages. In Gen. 14:18-20 Melchizedek prepares a (cultic) meal for Abram (Abraham), blesses him in the name of God Most High, and receives his tithe. In Ps. 110:4 he is the representative priest in whose succession the Davidic king is ordained.

a. Gen. 14:1. Literarily the Melchizedek pericope (vss. 18-20) now lies embedded in two larger units, of which, however, it furnishes the high point. The larger includes the entire present chapter, which brings Abram into conflict with a league of powerful Eastern kings (see AMRAPHEL; ARIOCH); the smaller (vss. 17-24) leads the king of Sodom out to meet the victorious Abram (see ABRAHAM). What the setting and function of the ancient Melchizedek tradition may have been, is, accordingly, difficult to determine. Certainly it is odd to find the Canaanite cultus presented in so favorable a position vis-à-vis the religion of Israel. But Melchizedek's position gives the key; for the chapter, in its present form being late, is best seen against the background of the Israelite monarchy.

First, Melchizedek is recognized as "king of Salem" (מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם), which was identified with Jerusalem (as Ps. 76:2-3 and Targ. and Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon on Gen. 14:18 indicate; see SALEM; JERUSALEM § 1).

Second, he is "priest of God Most High" (אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיּוֹן); this is quite probably an appellation of the high god worshiped by the Canaanites in pre-Israelite Jerusalem (see GOD, OT VIEW OF). Clearly he is presented as the sacral king, exercising both royal and priestly authority in the city later to become Israel's holy capital. By virtue of his unique office Melchizedek towers over all the other important people in this crowded chapter. To him only, Abram submits himself (vs. 20b).

b. Ps. 110:1. The figure of Melchizedek as sacral king is here associated with the Davidic messiah. Now Melchizedek appears as a prototype of the Davidic king, who is also Yahweh's adopted son (Ps. 2:7) and anointed prince (Pss. 18:50--H 18:51; 132:17). As ideal king, the "son of David" establishes righteousness (צִדִּיק [same as צִדְקָה]) and peace (שָׁלוֹם [cognate with SALEM]; Pss. 72:1-7; 99:4). As ideal priest, he heads Israel's worship (II Sam. 6:11 Chr. 13:1; 15-16) and mediates between his people and God (I Kings 8:1; Ps. 132:9-10). Since this priesthood is eternal (Ps. 110:4a), it transcends the Aaronic (Levitical) order. See MESSIAH (JEWISH); PRIESTS AND LEVITITES §§ D2a-b.

3. In the NT. Melchizedek is mentioned only in Hebrews (5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1, 10-11, 15, 17). A major theme of this letter is the superiority of Christ above all creatures and the pre-eminence of his mediatorial office over all earthly ministries (see HEBREWS, LETTER TO THE, § 4b); and the OT Melchizedek tradition is offered as part of its scriptural proof. Christ is designated "high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (5:5-10; 6:20; cf. 7:21; Ps. 110:4). Being both king of righteousness and peace and a unique (without parents or kin) and eternal (without beginning or end) priest (though never "high priest"), Melchizedek resembles the Son of God (7:1-3). Since Melchizedek himself was greater than the patriarch Abraham (vss. 4-10) and the priest Aaron (vss. 11-17), he is the "type" of Christ, whose royal, holy high priesthood transcends all human orders (vss. 23-28; 8:1-10:18).

In addition to these references, the name Melchizedek surfaces in some of the documents of the Dead Sea Scrolls and provides additional insight into the NT references to him. Essentially they reinforce the idea of the superiority of his priesthood as a background to the superiority of that of Jesus, along with an eschatological function for Melchizedek somewhat like that of Jesus.

b. Literary

The literary setting for 4:14-5:10 is set forth in the [page on Hebrews](#) at Cranfordville.com. The outline of the major contents of this document are as follows:

1:1-4 Prologue

1.4-4.13, Jesus the Son of God

1.4-2.18 Superior to angels

3.1-4.13 Superior to Moses

4.14-10.18, Jesus the great high priest

4.14-7.28 Superior to the priesthood of Aaron

8.1-10.18 Superior ministry through the new covenant

10.19-13.17 Call to obedience

10.19-39 Draw near to God

11.1-40 Walk in the way of faith

12.1-13 Persevere in the example of Jesus

12.14-29 Live righteously

13.1-17 Miscellaneous admonitions

13:18-25, Conclusio

Our passage serves as the introductory section of the emphasis upon Jesus as the great high priest. Additionally, it is the beginning section of an effort (4:14-7:28) to detail this high priesthood with an assertion that the high priesthood of Jesus as superior to that of Aaron.

The nature of the writer's approach is fairly consistent with that found elsewhere in the document. Heavy use is made of OT scripture quotes followed up with interpretative comments. Sometimes in the first sections, chaps 1-10, admonitions will be inserted along with the theological declarations. Such is the case in our passage. See verses 14 and 16 for the admonitions.

II. Message

The origination of the material in 4:14-5:10, although complex, became relatively clear to me after a careful analysis of a very complicated Greek text. This understanding is reflected in the [Exegetical Outline](#) included in the larger internet version of this study. The core structure is fairly well defined in the Greek. The

two foundational admonitions in verses 14 and 16 are followed up with justifying exposition (v. 15 and 5:1-10). That is, the validity of the admonitions rests upon the subsequent rationale. In other words, the do something is followed by the why. The first admonition in 4:14 has a minimal defense in 4:16. But the second admonition in 4:16 rests upon a much broader defense in 5:1-10. This defense is itself split into two sections. 5:1-4 uses the model of the idealized OT high priest as a backdrop for the ministry of Jesus as high priest (5:5-10). The one distinctive is the argument of the superiority of Jesus ministry as high priest, since it reaches back to Melchizedek, thus having roots in a tradition that precedes Aaron.

GNT

4:14 Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας. 4:15 οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας.

NASB

14 Therefore, since 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 One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

NRSV

14 Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.

NLT

14 That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin.

a. We should hold fast, 4:14-15

Notes:

The first important word in this passage is “then” (NRSV), “therefore” (NASB), “That is why” (NLT) and οὖν (GNT). This inferential conjunction in the Greek functions to introduce something that should be understood by implication in what preceded. In this case, the preceding passage, 4:1-13, is what is in mind, especially 4:12-13. The penetrating scrutiny of the word of God, compared to a two edged sword, could discourage one from coming before Almighty God. But the writer moves on to 4:14-15 to stress that we should not fear coming before God because of Jesus as our great high priest.

The internal structure of these two verses is simple: admonition (v. 14) with a reason (v. 15). The admonition is couched in the present tense in the underlying Greek. This emphasizes the ongoing nature of our responsibility to “hold fast.” This verb, κρατέω, means to get a powerful grip on something in its [46 uses in the NT](#). In [Heb. 6:18](#) we are to grab hold of “our hope.” What we are to grab hold of and to not let go of is here defined as “our confession.” What is this? ἡ ὁμολογία is used [some six times](#) in the NT, with three of them in Hebrews: [3:1](#); [4:14](#); [10:23](#). In Heb. 3:1 we find: “Therefore, brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling, consider that Jesus, **the apostle and high priest of our confession**, 2 was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses also ‘was faithful in all God's house.’” Here Jesus as the “apostle and high priest” is the object of our confession. In Heb. 10:23 we find a slightly different emphasis: “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful” (NRSV). The “hold fast” admonition comes from the Greek verb κατέχω (katecho) which in [its 18 NT uses](#) shifts the idea to “take possession of”, a related but somewhat different idea from κρατέω (krateo) here. In 10:23 our confession is our confidence in the promises of God. We believe that God will do exactly what He has promised. Given the contextual influence of 4:14, our confession here focuses upon Jesus as a sympathetic high priest who provides us access to Almighty God.

The first aspect of Jesus as high priest is in the Greek causal participle in verse 14: “Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God,…” (Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ,). He is identified in three ways. First he is a “great high priest.” As Bill Lane (WBC) notes, “in the description of Jesus as ἀρχιερέα μέγαν, “a great high priest,” the term μέγαν is a qualification of excellence (cf. 1 Macc 13:42, “Simon the great high priest [ἀρχιερέως μεγάλου] and commander and leader of the Jews”; Philo, *On Dreams* 1.219).” The term [high priest](#) is used 17 times in He-

brews, but the adjective “great” is attached only once; see the [background study](#) for more details of general meaning in the Bible. The mediating role of the high priest in the temple sacrificial system stands in the background here. As high priest Jesus stands between us and God establishing a channel of communication and relationship. As such, he stands as “great” in that role, in contrast to the corrupt and unworthy high priests who ministered in the temple in Jerusalem until its destruction in AD 70.

Secondly, Jesus as high priest has “[who has passed through the heavens](#)” (διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοῦς). Thus having been resurrected and ascended to the throne of the Father, he serves before the throne of God in Heaven, not in the earthly temple in Jerusalem. This puts him in a much superior position to intercede for us.

Thirdly, he is identified as “[Jesus the Son of God](#)” (Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ). Not only is He a high priest mediating for us, He in reality is [God’s Son](#) standing before the Father’s throne in our behalf. This provides an even greater opportunity for Him to stand in our behalf. No wonder the writer called Him a “great high priest”!

What does all this imply about Jesus as a high priest? Verse 15 answers that question in detail: “[For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.](#)” The point of emphasis, which serves as the more detailed basis for the admonition; the “for” (γάρ) serves to introduce the reason, which elaborates upon the “since” in 14a.

We can understand only a small part of this emphasis. Had we have lived in Jesus’ day and have made several trips to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, these words would take on a much deeper meaning. The Sadducean heritage of the high priests during the first century meant that these three high priests, Annas, Caiaphas, and Annanias (see [section](#) on page 4 of background study), were arrogant individuals who had contempt for most Jews who came to worship in the temple. They were corrupt to the core, and concerned primarily with power and money. For Jewish pilgrims of the first century, these men served as the image of the high priest that they knew. Thus the writer of Hebrews needed to explain how Jesus differs from these men. Jesus stands as one who is approachable and sympathetic to us in large part because He has experienced our struggles as human beings. Being tested in every respect, He stands as the single one who did not succumb to the fleshy nature and its pressures. This has given Him a first hand understanding of our struggles that bring us seeking God’s help and forgiveness.

Thus we are admonished to grab hold of our confession of Jesus, since He stands as the exclusive way to approach God seeking help and forgiveness. To do anything else would be to commit spiritual suicide! The preceding passage of [4:1-13](#) has made it clear that Jesus is the only way to enter into God’s rest, an OT metaphor for salvation” with the climatic emphasis in 4:11: “[Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs](#) (i.e., the children of Israel in the exodus; cf. vv. 2-4).” Then comes the second warning about the word of God as sharper than any two bladed sword, vv. 12-13. In light of this, we must grab hold of and not let go of our confession of Jesus as our great high priest.

b. We should come before God, 4:16-5:10

GNT

4:16 προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὖρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν. 5:1 Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, 5:2 μετριοπαθεῖν δυνά-

NASB

16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. 5.1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2 he can

NRSV

16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. 5.1 Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with

NLT

16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it. 5.1 Now a high priest is a man chosen to represent other human beings in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers their sacrifices for sins. 2 And because he is human, he is able to

μενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθενεῖαν 5:3 καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ὀφείλει καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν. 5:4 καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρὼν. 5:5 Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε· 5:6 καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει, Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ, 5:7 ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἰκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας, 5:8 καί περ ὢν υἱὸς, ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν, 5:9 καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, 5:10 προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; 3 and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. 4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; 6 just as He says also in another passage, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." 7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; 3 and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. 4 And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

deal gently with the people, though they are ignorant and wayward. For he is subject to the same weaknesses they have. 3 That is why he has to offer sacrifices, both for their sins and for his own sins. 4 And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants such an honor. He has to be called by God for this work, just as Aaron was. 5 That is why Christ did not exalt himself to become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God, who said to him, "You are my Son. Today I have become your Father." 6 And in another passage God said to him, "You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek." 7 While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could deliver him out of death. And God heard his prayers because of his reverence for God. 8 So even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. 9 In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. 10 And God designated him to be a High Priest in the line of Melchizedek.

Notes:

This second admonition (4:16) with its longer rationale (5:1-10) is introduced by the same "then" (οὕτως) that we found in 4:14, and is functioning in the same role. The implication of holding fast to our confession of Jesus as the great high priest, who identifies with us, leads to the admonition to come boldly to God through that high priest. This necessitates a rationale (the 'for' or γὰρ in the Greek at 5:1), which defends Jesus as a high priest who is superior to those in the temple (5:1-10). First, the writer portrays the idealized high priest in verses 1-4 in relation to the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood. He then applies these traits to Jesus (vv. 5-10) whose roots reach back further than [Aaron](#), all the way back to [Melchizedek](#). There is an ingenious use of a literary device called [chiasmus](#) here. The two sections (vv. 1-4 and 5-10) are developed in an ABB'A' sequence. A=priest of the people (vv.1-3); B=priest chosen by God (v. 4); B'=Jesus chosen by

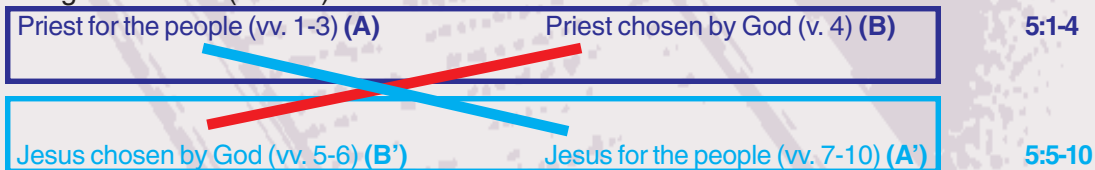
God (vv.5-6); A'=Jesus of the people (vv. 7-10).

First, **the admonition** (4:16). "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.). Once more, the admonition is stated in the present tense in the Greek, which implies that this coming before God is an ongoing thing, rather than a one time event. The logic of the admonition is simple: when we have firmly grabbed hold of our confession of Jesus as the great high priest, we then have confidence to come before Almighty God with confidence. The word παρρησία is sometimes translated as "boldness" (NRSV), "boldly" (NLT) or "confidence" (NASB). Out of the [31 uses](#) in the NT, 3 others show up in Hebrews: [3:6](#) "whose house we are, if we hold fast our **confidence** and the boast of our hope firm until the end."; [10:19](#) "Since therefore, brethren, we have **confidence** to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus"; [10:35](#) "Therefore, do not throw away your **confidence**, which has a great reward." The prepositional phrase "with confidence" (μετὰ παρρησίας) defines this as a manner or attitude characterizing our approach to God's throne. That throne itself is characterized as a place of grace. Through Jesus as our high priest we can expect to find God's grace rather than His wrath. The goal of our coming before God is to find mercy and grace. These blessings from God are targeted for times of need (εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν). One important aspect implied in this is that, unlike in the Jerusalem temple, we can stop what we're doing and reach out in prayer to approach God on His throne. This is true any time and anywhere. All this is possible when we come before God in prayer through Jesus our great high priest. For the initial Jewish readers of this document, such an idea was revolutionary and staggering. We should take it seriously and reverently.

Second, **the basis**, 5:1-10. The idea of Jesus as high priest lay at the foundation of this admonition. How He functioned as high priest became critical since He did not come from any of the priestly families that controlled the temple nor did he descend from Aaron -- both of which would have been crucial factors in the minds of most Jewish people in the first Christian century.

For the writer of Hebrews there was the challenge of establishing clearly how Jesus could function as a high priest, and especially as one superior to those of his day and even superior to Aaron himself. Thus, 5:1-10 begins a lengthy discourse answering this question. This discourse will continue through the end of chapter seven. In many respects 5:1-10 lays a foundation for this long discourse. Thus, it is critical in our study, if we want to understand Jesus as a legitimate high priest.

As noted in [the beginning](#) of this section, this material is carefully structured around an informal chiasmic thought structure (ABB'A):



Let's first look at the role of the idealized high priest in verses 1-4: "5.1 Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; 3 and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. 4 And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was." (A) His duty was to administer the gifts and sacrifices from humans to God because of human sinfulness. In the temple at Jerusalem, this was especially important on the Day of Atonement when the high priest alone went into the Holy of Holies, God's sole dwelling place on earth, to offer the sacrificial blood at the altar for both his sins and those of the chosen people of Israel for the past year. This realization of the need to offer sacrifice for his own sins should become the basis of sympathy toward the people who sinned out of ignorance of the divine laws. Such played an important role in the Levitical code, as Fred Craddock notes in the *New Interpreter's Bible* volume on Hebrews: "Sacrifices for sin were efficacious under circumstances of unwilling or unintentional errors and breaches of God's law due to ignorance (Lev 4:13; Ezek 45:20)." (B) The second point (v. 4) is that this individual should be chosen by God. He must not campaign for the job. Aaron stands as the model here. Such emphasis stood in sharp contrast to the bribing of Roman officials for the high priesthood by some Jewish aristocratic families in the first Christian century.

Now how does Jesus measure up to these standards? Verses 5-10 answer that question. The writer begins with the divine choice of Jesus as high priest (vv.5-6), making vv. 5-6 parallel to verse 4. As Aaron stood at the fountain head of the Levitical priesthood who ministered in the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus stands as the culmination of a priesthood with deeper roots. The argument could not be made successfully that Jesus stems from the Levitical priesthood. Thus the writer had to find a superior priesthood that Jesus was linked to in order to demonstrate the superiority of Jesus' priesthood.

(B') In verses 5 and 6, the divine chosenness of Jesus is supported by typical midrashic linking of two passages from [two royal Psalms](#). First, he reaches out to Ps. 2:7 in verse five: "So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'" (Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν, Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε). In this regard Christ reaches the idealized principle of the priest in verse 4, who "does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was." Additionally, the OT confirms this chosenness with its declaration "I will tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have begotten you'" from Ps. 2:7. This is the second use of this Psalm in Hebrews ([1:5](#)) and is consistent with Paul's speech usage of it in [Acts 13:33](#) before the synagogue members in Antioch in Pisidia on the first missionary journey. The second quote from [Psalm 110:4](#) in verse 6 is the zinger passage: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'". In the second of only two references to Melchizedek in the entire OT (see study on Melchizedek under [History section](#)), the writer links the authorization of Jesus' priesthood to an earlier and superior priesthood to that of Aaron; to that of Melchizedek to whom Abraham acknowledged by paying tithes to him in [Gen. 14:18](#). The Psalm also links up the lineage of David to Melchizedek. Thus Jesus meets the requirements of divine choice to the priesthood as demonstrated from the Hebrew Bible itself. And this priesthood is grounded in a scripture based priesthood superior to that of those who lead the temple in Jerusalem. To be sure this second point will need elaboration, which the writer will do later on in chapter seven. Here in 5:6 he merely asserts this connection as supporting his essential point of the superiority of the high priesthood of Jesus.

(A') Next (vv. 7-10) the priesthood of Jesus is connected to the people in ways that go beyond the people connection of the idealized high priest in 5:1-4. This superior connection of Jesus to the people is set forth as follows: "7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek." (5:7 ὅς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας, 5:8 καίπερ ὢν υἱὸς, ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν, 5:9 καὶ τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, 5:10 προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.). One needs to remember that verses 5-10 comprise but one sentence in the original Greek text; see the [Greek Diagram](#) of the text in the larger internet version of this study. Several points are made here about the people orientation of Jesus.

First in verse 7, Jesus' intercessory prayer ministry is affirmed. Fred Craddock (*New Interpreter's Bible*) has some helpful insight here:

The image of Jesus in fervent prayer, with loud cries and tears appealing to the One able to save him from death, brings to mind Jesus in Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46). However, the writer's familiarity with the synoptic accounts, as some have argued,⁵⁰ is not easily established. The author may be drawing on another tradition, or possibly summarizing the entire passion experience. The language of v. 7 carries echoes of Psalms 22; 39; 116; Isaiah 65:1; and Job 40:1, but clearly fits the context. For example, Jesus "offered up" prayers, a term used to describe the sacrificial activity of a priest (5:1, 3). That Jesus' prayers were heard and yet he still suffered poses no theological problem; rather, it locates Jesus more firmly among his brothers and sisters whose experiences are precisely the same. The posture of Jesus is that of one facing death. Even though the expression "from death" (v. 7) can be translated "out of" death, making his prayer a petition for resurrection, there is no reason not to take it in its plainest sense; like the rest of us, he cries out to God in the face of the immediate prospect of death. That he was heard because of "reverent submission" (v. 7) has generated many questions, not so much translational as christological. What is being said about Christ? That he was worshipful,

filled with awe, reverent, devout, in fear of God? When the word is an adjective describing a virtue in a person, it can be translated “devout” (as in Luke 2:25; Acts 2:5; 8:2; 22:12). However, here at 5:7 and at 12:28, the author’s only other use of the word, it is in a context of priestly service before God and, therefore, describes the attitude or behavior appropriate to that service: bowing in reverence.

Whether the writer is appealing to the Synoptic Gospels Gethsemane account -- at this stage still an oral tradition since Hebrews was written before Matthew, Mark and Luke -- or to another episode in Jesus’ life that is not recorded in these gospel accounts, the point remains the same: Jesus turned to God in intercessory ministry in behalf of sinful humanity, and found the Heavenly Father willing to hear his prayers because of Jesus’ faithfulness to carry out the Father’s will on earth (ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας). This represents a superior ministry to that of the high priest in the temple who had to first experience divine cleansing for himself before he could offer up intercession for the people.

The second point (v. 8) affirms his obedience growing out of his humanity: “Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered” (καίπερ ὢν υἱὸς, ἔμαθεν ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν). In spite of being God’s Son, he learned to obey the Father through his sufferings. No where in the Bible is the deity of Jesus used to minimize the humanity of Jesus. Heb. 2:10 first introduces the humanity of Jesus and its importance: “It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” The high priest should be able to understand the sins of the people through his own humanity (v. 2); Jesus as our high priest understands our situation better through his humanity.

The third point (vv. 9-10) is the logical climax of the first two points: “and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” (5:9 καὶ τελειωθεὶς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, 5:10 προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.). The main point is “he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.” Everything else is an elaboration of this core assertion. To those who render obedience to Him He becomes the source of eternal salvation.

This grows out of His becoming perfect. Again Craddock has some important insights. “The perfection of Christ is not a reference to moral achievement but to the ‘completion’ or to the ‘finishing’ of his preparation as high priest, and that was through testing, suffering, and death. No doubt the author is using the word ‘make perfect’ in its cultic sense, borrowing the term from its use in the LXX to describe the priest of Israel’s tabernacle. There the word is translated ‘consecrated’ or ‘ordained’ (Lev 4:5; 8:33; 16:32; 21:10; Num 3:3).” This is reflected in the NLT translation: “In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest,…”

Also his becoming the source of eternal salvation is the consequence of having been designated a high priest after to order of Melchizedek (v. 10). For the details see the [earlier study](#) on Melchizedek. This represents a superior and ultimately more important high priesthood than that stemming from Aaron. In 5:11 the writer will indicate his intention to discuss this in greater detail: “About this we have much to say that is hard to explain, since you have become dull in understanding.” And in chapter seven he keeps his promise.

In summary, what can we learn from all this? We don’t live in a religious culture where we see a high priest going into the inner sanctum of a temple to offer sacrifices to God in our behalf. Yet, we can profit much from the writer’s wise insights. First, we do need to get a firm grip on our confession of Jesus. He is God’s Son standing before God in our behalf. As such, He is the exclusive way to get to Almighty God, and thus our only hope of Heaven. Secondly, we should come before God’s throne with the confidence that Jesus, as our high priest interceding for us, can truly mediate God’s grace and mercy to us. It is these divine blessings that are our strength for living day by day, as well as our hope for eternity. No matter what other religions claim about access to God, Jesus stands as the true and exclusive way to finding authentic blessing from God. Thus, to be in Christ is to be a child of God. To not be in Christ means to stand outside God’s kingdom and family. As our high priest, Jesus stands in a superior position to have access to the Heavenly Father. Thus, we can be sure that in Him we have access to Almighty God. And this access is not time limited nor geographically limited. We have that access any time day or night and anywhere in this world by stopping to pray to our Lord.

This marvelous reality for believers should spark greater commitment and faithfulness to serve our Lord, as well as renewed confidence to come to our God with our petitions and struggles. May we avoid the spiritual shallowness that prompted the writer of Hebrews to tear into his initial readers right after this in [5:11-14](#).

GNT

4:14 Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς , Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας . 4:15 οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθῆσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν, πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ' ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας . 4:16 προσερχώμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος , ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν εὐρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.

5:1 Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν, 5:2 μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικεῖται ἀσθένειαν 5:3 καὶ δι' αὐτὴν ὀφείλει καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν. 5:4 καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρῶν.

5:5 Οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν,
Υἱός μου εἶ σύ,

ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε·

5:6 καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει,

Σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ,

5:7 ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἱκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας , 5:8 καίπερ ὢν υἱὸς , ἔμαθεν ἀφ' ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν, 5:9 καὶ τελειωθεὶς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, 5:10 προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

NASB

14 Therefore, since 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 One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

5.1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God, in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; 2 he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness; 3 and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. 4 And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU"; 6 just as He says also in another passage, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK." 7 In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, 10 being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

NRSV

14 Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

5.1 Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; 3 and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. 4 And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

NLT

14 That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.

5.1 Now a high priest is a man chosen to represent other human beings in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers their sacrifices for sins. 2 And because he is human, he is able to deal gently with the people, though they are ignorant and wayward. For he is subject to the same weaknesses they have. 3 That is why he has to offer sacrifices, both for their sins and for his own sins. 4 And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants such an honor. He has to be called by God for this work, just as Aaron was.

5 That is why Christ did not exalt himself to become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God, who said to him, "You are my Son. Today I have become your Father." 6 And in another passage God said to him, "You are a priest forever in the line of Melchizedek." 7 While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could deliver him out of death. And God heard his prayers because of his reverence for God. 8 So even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. 9 In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. 10 And God designated him to be a High Priest in the line of Melchizedek.

Block Diagram

4:14 οὖν
ἔχοντες ἀρχιερέα μέγαν
διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς,
Ἰησοῦν
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ,

1 **κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας.**

4:15 γὰρ
2 **οὐ ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα**
μὴ δυνάμενον συμπαθεῖσαι ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν,
δὲ
πεπειρασμένον
κατὰ πάντα
καθ' ὁμοιότητα
χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας.

4:16 οὖν
3 **προσερχόμεθα**
μετὰ παρρησίας
τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος,
ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος
καὶ
χάριν εὕρωμεν
εἰς εὐκαιρον βοήθειαν.

5:1 γὰρ
4 **Πᾶς ἀρχιερεὺς . . . καθίσταται τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν,**
ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά
τε καὶ

θυσίας
ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν,
5:2 μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος
τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν
καὶ
πλανωμένοις,
ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθένειαν

5:3 καὶ
δι' αὐτήν
5 **ὀφείλει . . . προσφέρειν**
καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν
οὕτως καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ

5:4 καὶ
6 **οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν**
ἀλλὰ
7 **(ἐστὶν) καλούμενος**
ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ
καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρών.

5:5 Οὕτως
καὶ
8 **ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν**

γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα

ἀλλ’

9 **ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν... (αὐτόν ἐδόξασεν),**
α *Υἱός μου εἶ σύ,*
β *ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε·*

10 5:6 *... (-----)*

καὶ
ἐν ἑτέρῳ
καθὼς... λέγει,

γ *Σὺ ἱερεὺς (εἶ)*
εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα
κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ,

5:7 ὅς... (προσηνεγκε)... δεήσεις
τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ

τε καὶ
ἱκετηρίας
πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σφῆζειν αὐτόν
ἐκ θανάτου

μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς
καὶ

δακρύων
προσενέγκας

καὶ
εἰσακουσθεὶς
ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας,

5:8 ὧν υἱός,
καίπερ... ἔμαθεν... τὴν ὑπακοήν
ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν

5:9 καὶ
τελειωθεὶς

11 **ἐγένετο . . . αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου,**

5:10 πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ
προσαγορευθεὶς... ἀρχιερεὺς
ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ
κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ.

Semantic Diagram

4:14			οὖν							Admon
I.	A.		1	Imper	Pres	Subj	1	Pl		
			γὰρ							Basis
4:15	B.		2	Dec	Pres	Ind	1	Pl		
4:16	A.		οὖν							Admon
5:1-2	B.		γὰρ							Basis
5:3			i.	Dec	Pres	Pass	3	S		Priesthood
		a)								
5:4			ii.	Dec	Pres	Act	3	S		
II.	1.									
			i.	Dec	Pres	Act	3	S	τις	
		b)								
			ii.	Dec	Pres	Act	3	S	---	
5:5	B.		οὕτως καὶ							Christ
		a)		Dec	Aor	Act	3	S	Χριστὸς	
			ἀλλ'							
			i.	Dec	Aor	Act	3	S	ὁ λαλήσας	
5:6-8	2.									
			ii.	Dec	Aor	Act	3	S	- - - - -	
5:9-10			καὶ							
		b)		Dec	Aor	Dep	3	S	(Χριστὸς)	

Exegetical Outline

- I. (1-2) Determined commitment rested upon the character of the highpriest (4:14-15)
 - A. (1) The readers were exhorted to remain strong in their confession (4:14)
 - B. (2) The basis for this was the nature of the high priest (4:15)
- II. (3-11) Confidence in coming to God was based upon Christ's high priesthood following the OT model (4:16-5:10)
 - A. (3) The readers were exhorted to bring their concerns to the throne of God (4:16)
 - B. (4-11) This because the OT high priestly ministry became the model for Christ's high priestly ministry (5:1-10)
 1. (4-7) The vital ministry of high priest is to be done sacrificially
 - a) (4-5) The ministry of high priests is ordained by God
 - i. (4) High priests are appointed by God to minister to the needs of people
 - ii. (5) High priest offer sacrifices for the sins of the people and for their own sins
 - b) (6-7) High priests are to minister without seeking personal glory
 - i. (6) High priests do not claim glory for themselves
 - ii. (7) High priests are called by God just like Aaron was
 2. (8-11) Christ in selfless high priestly ministry received God's glory as the source of salvation
 - a) (8) Christ did not glorify himself as a high priest
 - b) (9-10) Christ received glory and calling from God as recorded in scripture
 - i. (9) The one calling Him gave Him glory as recorded in Psalm 2:7
 - ii. (10) The one calling Him ordained Him a high priest like Melchisedek as in Ps. 110:4
 - c) (11) He thus became the source of eternal salvation