

Heb — Study 4:14-5:10

Something to keep in mind

The audience of the book of Hebrews is not "outsiders." The writer is addressing those in Christ, specifically Hebrew Christians. Those who have some knowledge of the "old" law. When we come across passages that indicate the problems and character of his audience let's remember that he is speaking to Christians.

Keep that in mind when we come across passages that we use today for reaching out to outsiders. The original use was to those in Christ.

Also keep in mind that we are beginning our study in the middle of the book looking for clues to grow to maturity. Of necessity our texts will likely reference material in Hebrews that preceded our entry point. We will back fill information from previous chapters as necessary to understand the current discussion.

We will take a closer look at the texts as they are presented. We're not going to follow any particular rules of interpretation other than following what the Bible itself tells us about the passage, english language grammar rules and common sense.

We'll want to make note of (in no particular order)

- Any references to the old testament
- Any unexpected information & note what we expected
- Any information about the intended audience
- Make observations of the actual words used, cross referenced with multiple translations

For reference use:

NOTE

[Map of Hebrews 4:14 - 7:28-html](#) — [Map-pdf](#)

[Hebrews My Outline-html](#) — [Outline-pdf](#)

Now that we have our discussion of Hebrews 4:14 - 7:28 mapped out...

Let's Begin to Chew on Some Solid Food From Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Hebrews 4:14-16 - Jesus Our Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14

Hebrews 4:14 (WEB)

14 Having then a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold tightly to our confession.

- The writer concludes that we (Christians) have a "great high priest."
 - Interestingly, after the four gospels and the book of Acts,
 - there are 17+ occurrences of the term "high priest" in the New Testament.
 - **All occurrences are in the book of Hebrews.**
 - No other book after Acts except Hebrews uses the term.
 - The only other reference of Jesus (the Messiah) AS A PRIEST/HIGH PRIEST in the Bible (other than Hebrews) is:

Psalm 110:4 (WEB)

*4 Yahweh has sworn,
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever
in the order of Melchizedek."*

NOTE

By the way, does anyone see a problem with what Psalm 110:4 says about the Messiah?

hint: Psalm 89:3-4; Psalm 132:10-11; Isaiah 9:6-7

- The first mention in Hebrews of Jesus as a high priest is made twice in a four verse paragraph in Hebrews 2:17-3:2

Hebrews 2:17 - 3:2 (WEB)

*17 Therefore he was obligated in all things to be made like his brothers, that he might become a merciful and faithful **high priest** in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. 1 Therefore, holy brothers, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and **High Priest** of our confession, Jesus; 2 who was faithful to him (i.e. God) who appointed him, as also was Moses in all his house.*

- Hebrews 4:14 is the third time in the letter that "high priest" is mentioned. So there must be something about priests, high priests and specifically Jesus as our high priest that God wants us to know.
- This is prefaced with "Therefore, since-/seeing-/having- then"
 - Which indicates that what follows is related to the preceding verses. Hebrews 3:1-4:13 tell us about Moses and Joshua and is the writer's discussion before our current discussion. For context let's look at the last part of the previous discussion.

Hebrews 4:8-13 (WEB)

8 For if Joshua had given them rest,

- he (God) would not have spoken afterward of another day.

9 There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

- 10 For he who has entered into his rest has himself also rested from his works,
- as God did from his.

11 Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest,

- lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.
- 12 For the word of God
 - is living, and active,
 - and sharper than any two-edged sword,
 - and piercing even to the dividing
 - of soul and spirit,
 - of both joints and marrow,
 - and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

13 There is no creature that is hidden from his sight,

- but all things are naked and laid open
- before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

AGAIN, remember that the writer is speaking to Christians

- What might we guess about his audience from this passage?
- Verse 11 urges his audience
 - to "give diligence" to enter that rest.
diligence: careful and persistent work or effort
 - lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.
- What is the concern of the writer towards his audience?

What we need from the context at this moment is that the previous discussion is ending talking about the judgment. Those who enter the "rest" are the saved and those who don't, aren't. It is in the context of the judgment that we are told that the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword...

Then Hebrews 4:14 picks up with: Therefore, since then we have a great high priest...

- *WHO HAS PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS, JESUS, THE SON OF GOD*
 - We have a high priest who has already gone on before us (past tense)
 - and he knows the way (through the heavens).
- Let us hold tightly (fast) our confession.
 - Is that what you expected the writer to say about Jesus, our high priest who has passed through the heavens?
 - to hold fast our confession? To me it's an unexpected statement.

Again, perhaps I'm expecting a "faith" statement.

But, "Let us hold tightly our confession" is another expression of concern from the writer about his audience, is it not?

What is his concern? That they will let go of their confession... let go of their belief that *Jesus, is the Son of God*

Notice "our confession" is stated IN THE VERSE: *Jesus, the Son of God!*

Remember in Jim's class that Peter's confession that Jesus is the Son of God, is the *Rock* upon which Jesus will build His church? (Matthew 16:13-20) Jesus, the cornerstone (Acts 4:11, Ephesians 2:20) that is layed upon the Rock that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and the foundation of the elementary teachings are also layed on the Rock (the confession) aligned to Jesus the cornerstone.

Jesus-I Will Build My Church-Building Metaphor

The Hebrews writer is concerned that his audience is in danger of letting go of the Rock, their confession.

Hebrews 4:15

Hebrews 4:15 (WEB)

15 For we don't have a high priest who can't be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses/infirmities, but one who has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.

For - This is a continuation of the thought in 4:14...

- Why should we *hold fast our confession*... For/Because We do not have a high priest who cannot be touched...

This is a double negative statement. A double negative can actually be understood as a positive statement.

We do NOT have a high priest who can NOT be touched

Take out the two NOTs and you can read it like this

*We **have** a high priest who **can** be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses/infirmities...*

So, the writer says,

- in addition to Jesus going on to heaven before us on our behalf (as our high priest),
- another reason for us to hold tightly to our confession is that Jesus **can** be touched with the feeling of our weaknesses/infirmities
- and another reason is Jesus has been in all points tempted like we are, yet without sin.
- Implied in the verse
 - as giving in to temptation, (i.e. sin).
 - Since Jesus was tempted without sinning.
- **However**, it should be noted
 - That Jesus suffered in his temptations.
 - WHICH is why he is able to help those who are tempted!!

Hebrews 2:17,18 (WEB)

17 Therefore he was obligated in all things to be made like his brothers, that he might become a merciful and faithful **high priest** in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 **For in that he himself has suffered being tempted**, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Some other ideas

- The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. — Notice the separation of spiritual & physical is made in the context of temptation.
 - Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38; Both verses say the same thing verbatim

Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

- Do you know the context of these verses? Take a look.

He knows what it is like to be us!

NOTE

This should do away with the idea that we need to go through someone else, like Mary, to get access to Jesus. Or the idea that He would be more likely to empathize with us if His earthly mother petitioned Him for us. It is unnecessary because Jesus already has empathy for us through His own experience.

Hebrews 4:16

Hebrews 4:16 (WEB)

16 Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace for help in time of need.

- Approach/Draw near
- With confidence/boldness
- The throne of grace

That we may receive...

- mercy
- find grace
- for help
- in time of need

Word Associations The Throne - means the KING (Where both the Father and Son-Our Great High Priest, are present) Grace - std def: unmerited favor, I like: God's gift givingness, our God likes to give gifts

WE ARE GIVEN THIS GIFT and no merit on our part brought this about

We are given permission to draw near to God confidently with our High Priest present (and all that goes along with that) FOR THE PURPOSE of receiving mercy and grace in our time of need

see Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8

Strong's Dictionary

g3954. παρρησία parreῤῥsia; from 3956 and a derivative of 4483; all out-spokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication, assurance: — bold (x -ly, -ness, -ness of speech), confidence, x freely, x openly, x plainly(-ness).

AV (31) - **boldness** 8, **confidence** 6, openly 4, plainly 4, openly + g1722 2, boldly + g1722 1, misc 6;

NOTE

1. freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech
 - A. openly, frankly, i.e without concealment
 - B. without ambiguity or circumlocution
 - C. without the use of figures and comparisons
2. free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance
3. the deportment by which one becomes conspicuous or secures publicity

English Definitions

bold·ness | **ˈbɔldnəs** |

noun

1 willingness to take risks and act innovatively; confidence or courage: *the **boldness** and independence that characterized his leadership* | *a president who is showing incredible **boldness** in going after the cartels.*

con·fi·dence | **ˈkɒnfɪdəns** |

noun

the feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something; firm trust: *we had every **confidence** in the staff* | *he had gained the young man's **confidence**.*

Hebrews 5:1-4 - Every high priest is called by God

The writer pivots here having shown us our high priest to begin to tell us about the high priests appointed by law.

Hebrews 5:1

Hebrews 5:1 (WEB)

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

The qualifications & purpose of a high priest are

- Comes from among men
 - At the time Hebrews was written the law that defined the priesthood would be the Law of Moses, the priesthood would be the Levitical priesthood

- Though we saw also that it was necessary that Jesus too should share in our humanity, Hebrews 2:14,17-18.
- **Our first inclination is to think that:**
 - that is why Jesus "had to", was "obligated to" be made like his brothers, *Hebrews 2:17*
 - *But think about it, in actuality, that Jesus was going to be made flesh just like his brothers IS WHY the high priest had to come from among his brothers, that the mediator between man & God would be a man... and not some celestial being, an angel perhaps. Just a thought.*
- To be appointed
 - **"for"** (KJV, NKJV, WEB) means
 - to act on behalf of (ESV),
 - on behalf of (NASB),
 - to represent [the people] (NIV)
- In things pertaining to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

It is **the purpose** of the high priest to act on behalf of the people before God—to be the go-between.

Hebrews 5:2

Hebrews 5:2 (WEB)

2 The high priest can deal gently with those who are ignorant and going astray, because he himself is also surrounded with weakness.

The high priest can deal *gently*

This is specifically talking about the high priest here, but God wants us to deal "gently" with those who may need correction! see *Galatians 6:1, and others*

Wouldn't you rather that our high priest deal **gently** with us?

with those who are

ignorant and going astray

NOTE

ignorant

lacking knowledge or awareness in general; uneducated or unsophisticated

Again, look at the concern of the Hebrews writer, that his audience is lacking in knowledge and in danger of going astray.

Hebrews 5:3

Hebrews 5:3 (WEB)

3 Because of this, he must offer sacrifices for sins for the people, as well as for himself.

To perform his duties the high priest:

- is obligated to (ESV, NASB)
- has to (NIV)
- is required to (NKJV)
- ought to (KJV)
- must (WEB)

offer sacrifices for the people and for himself

It is the high priest's responsibility to make sacrifices for the people, to atone (make amends/compensate) for their sins.

One of the problems with the Levitical priesthood is that the high priest himself was a sinner and needed to make atonement. So before he can make sacrifices for the people he had to make a sacrifice of atonement for his own sins.

Hebrews 5:4

Hebrews 5:4 (WEB)

4 Nobody takes this honor on himself, but he is called by God, just like Aaron was.

Taking our cue from the Writer, let's look briefly at God calling Aaron to be his high priest

Exodus 28:1 (WEB) *God authorizing Aaron and sons as His priests through Moses*

"Bring Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, near to you from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Numbers 18:7 (WEB) *God speaking to Aaron about his priesthood*

You and your sons with you shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar, and for that within the veil; and you shall serve: I give you the priesthood as a service of gift: and the stranger who comes near shall be put to death.

The point here is that Aaron and his sons did not become priests by their own will or because of Moses, but because they were called by God to be His priests.

The Writer pivots back to Jesus as our high priest.

Hebrews 5:5

Hebrews 5:5 (WEB) (quoted from Psalm 2:7)

5 So also Christ didn't glorify himself to be made a high priest, but it was he who said to him, "You are my Son. Today I have become your father."

Psalms 2:7 (WEB)

7 I will tell of **the decree**. Yahweh said to me, "You are my son. Today I have become your father."

Here again is, to me, an unexpected statement.

- Not that Christ didn't glorify himself to be made a high priest
- But that the 1st supporting point is that Jesus is God's Son.
- He could have just gone to Psalm 110:4 that says the Messiah will be a priest
- But it is evidently important to the writer to emphasize that Jesus is the Son of God. He has been making this point through five chapters now.

God calls Jesus by first declaring Him to be His Son

He establishes a father/son relationship with Jesus

Psalm 2:7 says that the anointed, the Messiah, the Christ will be God's Son. And God will be the father of the Messiah. This idea originates in the Old Testament. It is not a New Testament imagination. When the Messiah comes he will of necessity be deity, that is, God.

Philippians 2:5-11 (WEB)

5 Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name; 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

John 5:17-18 (WEB)

17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, so I am working, too." 18 For this cause therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

John 10:32-36 (WEB)

32 Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?" 33 The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself God." 34 Jesus answered them, **"Isn't it written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?'** 35 **If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture can't be broken),** 36 **Do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'** (cited from Psalm 82:6)

Hebrews 5:6

Hebrews 5:6 (WEB) (quoted from Psalm 110:4)

*6 As he says also in another place,
"You are a priest forever,
After the order of Melchizedek."*

Psalms 110:4 (WEB)

*4 Yahweh has sworn,
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever
in the order of Melchizedek."*

This is the 1st of nine references to Melchizedek in Hebrews. There are only two other references to him in the entire Bible: Genesis 14:18 and Psalm 110:4.

Hebrews 5:7

Hebrews 5:7 (WEB)

7 He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear,

While Jesus was human on earth

- He prayed and petitioned God
- to "him who was able to save him from death,"
 - the implications of this statement are mind boggling!
 - Jesus prayed to God that he would be spared death on the cross
 - and here it states that God "was able to save him from death."
 - Of course, our salvation becomes non-existent if God does that.

- However, Jesus asking God to do that (three times) with strong crying and tears **IS POSSIBLY an immense testing of God.**
 - For God to answer that prayer positively is our doom
 - To answer no is the death of Jesus on the cross

Hebrews 5:8

Hebrews 5:8 (WEB)

8 though he was a Son, yet **learned** obedience by the things which he suffered.

- Though he was a Son (one would think he would be privileged), YET
- He **learned** OBEDIENCE by the things he suffered
 - He suffered when tempted, Hebrews 2:18
 - He suffered in death, Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 2:19-25
- Jesus had to learn!

Isaiah 7:14-16 (ESV)

*14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 He shall eat curds and honey **when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.** 16 For **before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good**, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.*

Hebrews 5:9

Hebrews 5:9 (WEB)

9 Having been made perfect, he became to all of those who obey him the author of eternal salvation,

- Since he became obedient through suffering he has been made perfect
 - What is the law able to do? Determine compliance to a standard (ie law)
- The reason Jesus had to be made just like us is so that he could be tempted in all ways like us.
 - What good is a sacrifice that can't be tempted?
 - That was the problem with animal sacrifices,
 - they can't be tempted in all ways like us.
 - Jesus also must have had the choice to obey or not
- Since he chose to obey, he became the author of eternal salvation for all those who... OBEY. Those that do the same thing that He did... OBEY.

Hebrews 5:10

Hebrews 5:10 (WEB)

10 named by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

ONCE PERFECTED JESUS THEN is appointed by God a high priest (mediator/intercessor) between God and Man... IN THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

The writer repeats a point he made in verses 5 & 6, that Jesus did not exalt himself to be high priest, but it was God who said... "You are a priest in the order..."

The writer is preparing to interrupt his discussion with his audience and has cemented a solid stopping point from which he can continue from (in Heb 7:1) after the interruption.