

Week 3 – Class Handout

Hebrews 1-2 – Supremacy of Christ (Jesus Like Us)

(1:1)...in these last days he [God] has spoken to us by his Son...the exact representation of his [God's] being.

(2:1) We must therefore pay more careful attention to what we have heard

(2:8) But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

(2:10) ...make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering

(2:14) Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death.

Heb 3:1-4:13 – Christian Hope for Rest (Jesus > Moses)

(3:1f) fix your thoughts on Jesus the apostle and high priest whom we confess...and we are his [God's] house IF we hold on to our *confidence* and the hope of which we boast.

(3:12) see to it brothers that none of you has a sinful, faith-lacking heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

(4:1) Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it...

(4:11) Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their [Israel's] example of disobedience.

HEB 4:14-7:28

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST & MELCHIZEDEK

Argument structure

(4:14-16) Intro / Overview → hold firm to confidence in God's grace and mercy because we have a permanent sympathetic high priest

(5:1-10) Jesus was appointed by God as a permanent priest who was perfectly human.

(5:11-6:20) Digression – Warning to those contemplating renouncing the faith. Hold on to the faithful promise

(7:1-28) Jesus is priest of new priestly order [Melchizedek] which is eternal, permanent, complete, made perfect

(4:14-16) Overview / Intro

- “Therefore” – links this section to the previous
- (4:14-16) Goal of section – “let us hold firmly to the faith we profess & approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”
- (v. 15) Jesus is FULLY sympathetic because he was FULLY human
- (v. 16) CONFIDENCE...that comes from Jesus as pioneer human

(5:1-10) Christ Served Faithfully as High Priest

- Background texts: Num 16, 18; Lev 8; Ps 2; Ps 8
- (5:1-3) Priests are appointed representatives who share the nature of those they represent
- (v. 2) “subject to weakness” means “subject to sin.” Jesus shared in the weakness of “flesh” (Paul's language, “sinful nature”-NIV) but not in submitting to that weakness.
- (5:4f) Christ was appointed by God, and performed the duties of a faithful priest

- (5:7f) [background of Gethsemane Mk 14:36; Lk 22:40f; Matt 26:36f] Christ had to trust that God would “save him from death”, submitted to death reverently, “learned obedience”, “suffered”, “made perfect” (i.e. completed / fully human through suffering)...he then became a source of salvation to others...permanently
- (5:7) “reverent submission” → in reverence, Jesus submitted to his fear of death and overcame it through trusting in God’s promise.
- (5:8) “learned obedience through what he suffered” → a play on words in Greek, and a popular proverb. Jesus “learned” in the sense that he “understood the meaning of” as it qualifies him to be High Priest...fully Human.
- (v. 8) “made perfect” → completed his course of human existence (fully human, he died)
- (v. 9) “source of salvation” → Jesus is the proto-new humanity, the pioneer...as human who passes thru death to life / salvation

(5:11- 6:12) Warning to the immature

- This insertion points to the focus of what the author wants the readers to get out of what he just said and what he is about to say....Jesus did it, you can too!
- Immature = those not acquainted with teaching on righteousness...who don’t understand the Melchizedek connection (v. 11 says “about this” or “about whom”)
- [Grow or Fall Away] – Growth is the only strategy for success. Those who moved on have “tasted the heavenly gift”, “shared in Holy Spirit”, “tasted the goodness of the Word of God”, “tasted of the powers of the coming age”....are expected to respond with fruit
- The readers need a better understanding of Christ, to “consider Jesus” and reflect on him → to mature.
- Impossible → renunciation is like confession...it happens once-for-all. Writer is warning them to NOT abandon their confession in the face of persecution thinking they will return later...he instead urges them to grow deeper and imitate Christ’s faithfulness when faced with the fear of death. This is not a point of doctrine so much as it is a point of his sermon.

(6:13-20) Certainty of Hope

- Background Gen 22:16, Abraham’s faithfulness facing the prospect of the sacrifice of Isaac
- (vv. 13-15) God made an oath / promise to Abraham...and Abraham received the promise by faith and patience

(7:1-10) Melchizedek – Melchizedek is superior priesthood

- Ref Gen 14:18f; Ps 110 (esp 110:4)
- Melchizedek – no parents, genealogy, beginning, or end...he is forever
- Melchizedek was priest for Abraham, because Abraham paid him 1/10th (following levitical priesthood)
- Levi (priesthood of Israel) paid 1/10th to Melchizedek through Levi being a descendent of Abraham

(7:11-28) Jesus like Melchizedek

- (vv. 11-16) Jesus is a priest of the order of Melchizedek...because he shares in the power of an indestructible life.
- (vv. 25-28) Meets our need for dealing with our sin...because although he is completely like us...he does not need to offer sacrifices continually for his own sin or the sins of others. He sacrificed himself, once for all, a permanent, perfect sacrifice