

Sunday September 11<sup>th</sup> 2011  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Sixteen

1). Heb 5:1 ¶ *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. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 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." 6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek";*

a). We had seen last week how those who were to be high priest in the tabernacle were ‘taken from among men’, that they were to ‘offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins’ and that, because of his own weakness he could ‘have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray’.

b). And we also saw that this appointment was not an honor that anyone would take to himself, but was rather a position to which he was ‘called by God’.

c). These details are significant for us as we are told in v5 that ‘Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest’ – but that it was God the Father who had said to Him, ‘You are my Son today [for this Day] I have begotten You’ and ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’.

d). And what we saw here is the connection between Christ’s ‘Sonship’ and His Priesthood – both of which, according to our scripture, being the purpose behind the Lord being begotten.

e). And so, our Lord being begotten, going through the natural process of childbirth, being born of a woman - Ga 4:4 *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,*

f). This then results in Him coming into the realm of men in the form of a man - Php 2:7 *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.*

g). And it is while in the form of a man that the Lord suffers the struggle and anguish that comes from enduring temptation, striving against sin and practicing

obedience to the point of physical death – all in preparation for His role as High Priest.

h). Through the completion of the this process, which is outlined for us in v7-8 – Heb 5:7 *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, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.*

We see that He is then taken from among men and called of God to be High Priest, and because of His experiences in relation to resisting sin He is then able to have sympathy with our weaknesses - Heb 4:15 *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.*

i). And so having created the criteria for high priesthood within the tabernacle in the wilderness – taken from among men, the ability to have compassion, called of God – we can see how Christ’s incarnation makes it possible for Him to be a High Priest after the same criteria in the Heavenly Tabernacle not made by hands; How we can see the former as a temporal shadow of that which was to come.

2). Now according to the scripture the high priest in the tabernacle in the wilderness would have to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins for both himself and those on behalf of whom he ministers and these gifts and sacrifices would have to be made over and over again.

a). Christ of course has no need to sacrifice for Himself as He is without sin, but rather than offering a sacrifice for Himself, He is Himself the sacrifice that was offered and accepted - 1Co 5:7 ¶ *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

b). We can also see Him as a gift for sin as He freely gave Himself to be the sacrifice - Isa 53:7 *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.*

c). And of course the shedding of His blood, the blood of God, does not have to be repeated as was the animal sacrifices – it is a onetime sacrifice that was completed in the past and continues to exist in its completed form on into the future - Heb 9:11 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13*

*For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 ¶ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

3). Our scripture from Chapter 5 then goes on to say - Heb 5:9 *And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 ¶ called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*

a). As a result of going through the preparation process which led to His being called of God as High Priest, Christ was brought to a place of completion with respect to the purpose for His incarnation; becoming ‘the author’ – the initiator, the provider – ‘of eternal [age lasting] salvation to all who obey Him’.

b). Christ then has set for us the road we are to travel if we are desiring to experience the salvation of our soul in the age to come, but not only that, but as well as providing the road, He has also provided for us through His sacrifice and His present ministry as our High Priest, all that is necessary for us to be successful in our journey – He has prepared the way and travelled before us to show us the way - Lu 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

c). Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

d). And so, if we are to be ‘called of God’ as kings and priests for the age to come, we will also experience the same process to completion as that which we have seen with respect to our Lord - Heb 12:5 *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

e). 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

f). 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

g). We might remember that the word ‘called’ refers to making a public declaration and therefore God the Father has declared publicly that His Christ is a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

h). We might recall that this declaration is first recorded in Psalm 110, a declaration made even before Christ’s incarnation.

i). And then with respect to ourselves we might recall that which we read in - Heb 2:11 *For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

4). Our scripture in Chapter 5:11 continues - *11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*

a). Now we should be clear that according to the structure of the original language the ‘of whom’ here is not in fact referring to Melchizedek per se, but rather to Christ as the High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek. It is then Christ as High Priest of whom our writer has much to say.

b). And this should be of some encouragement to us as the scriptures tell us very little about the person Melchizedek, because of which he remains an enigmatic character, but the scriptures do have a great deal to say about Christ as High Priest in the present and King/Priest in the Kingdom Age.

c). Perhaps we can just point out here that the word ‘order’ when used with regards to the ‘order of Melchizedek’ has a significant meaning.

d). Order = Greek – ‘taxis’, *tax'-is* = from 5021; regular arrangement, i.e. (in time) fixed succession (of rank or character), official dignity:--order.

See Greek 5021 (*tasso*)

e). So Christ’s Priesthood is in succession to that of Melchizedek’s and this follows an orderly arrangement.

f). Christ could not be a High Priest after the order of Aaron because there was no line of succession to Aaron except from the tribe of Levi; the Lord of course coming from the tribe of Judah. This is that which is spoken of in – Heb 7:13 *For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but*

*according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."*

g). It is then as we have seen, the Priesthood of Christ, about which our writer has much to say, but he cannot explain it to those to whom he is writing because they have become dull of hearing.

h). We should note that the things concerning Christ's Priesthood are not of themselves 'hard to explain' – it is not that the writer would have problems in putting them into words, rather the hardness to explain rests with the hearers who have lost the ability to 'hear' spiritual truth.

i). And as we have noted from a previous study the recipients of this letter were not always 'dull of hearing', their dullness is not then a natural inherent weakness, but rather this is a condition that they have brought upon themselves through their neglect of a proper engagement with the Word, a condition for which they are entirely responsible.

j). Dull = Greek – 'nothros', *no-thros'* = from a derivative of 3541; sluggish, i.e. (literally) lazy, or (figuratively) stupid:--dull, slothful.  
[3541 – nothos = of uncertain affinity; a spurious or illegitimate son]

k). This is a word made up of 2 Greek words, one meaning 'no' and the other 'to push', therefore meaning 'no push' hence sluggish and slothful – it is used in secular Greek of the numbed limbs of a sick lion.

l). And the reason for this condition can be easily explained by reference to the first two warnings that we have seen, a few verses of which will suffice to jog our memories - Heb 2:1 ¶ *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*

Heb 3:14 *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

m). They have then drifted away from the truth concerning Christ's Priesthood and the age to come through not giving the more earnest heed to the things they had heard as a result of hardening their hearts. Now there may be a variety of reasons that initiated this regression, but whatever the reasons the result is clear – unbelief.

n). No doubt we get the picture here with regards to ourselves –

Heb 6:11 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

o). I know all too well just how busy our lives can become and how difficult it is to juggle all the stuff that gets thrown in our direction, but I can't give myself or any of us a pass on this – there is no excuse. It is incumbent upon us to keep the proper perspective and the proper focus in the midst of it all. This is what patient endurance is all about – patiently enduring.

p). Lu 12:23 *"Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.*

q). Mt 4:4 *But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

r). Ga 6:9 *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

5). Heb 5:12 *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

a). As we continue reading in Chapter 5 we find that having chosen a course that has led them to be dull of hearing has resulted in a number of tragic consequences.

b). The word 'time' here speaks of a length of time and the idea is that having themselves spent so much time under the instruction of teachers of Kingdom truth they ought to be teaching the same.

c). The use of the word 'ought' – 'you ought to be teachers' makes this statement somewhat less comfortable – we might remember last week that we had seen that the high priest, and by extension Christ as our High Priest, was required to offer both gifts and sacrifices and that the word 'required' told us that it was a moral obligation, a duty that this be done because if what is at stake. Well the word translated 'required' and the word translated 'ought' are exactly the same Greek word – 'opheilo'.

d). Therefore we can understand this as because of the length of time they had themselves been taught, they had a moral obligation, a duty to be teachers, and again because of what is at stake.

e). But rather than being teachers because of the length of time they had been taught, as a result of their becoming 'dull of hearing', they were again needing someone to teach them – and that which they needed to be taught were 'the first principles of the oracles of God'.

f). So what we may conclude is that their choices that led to them being ‘dull of hearing’ not only meant that they were now not able to comprehend spiritual truth concerning Christ’s Melchizedek Priesthood, but that they had in fact regressed to the point where they again needed to be taught that which they should already have known – back to a point where that which they knew at one time they knew no more, thereby being incapable of teaching others.

g). They had regressed from eating ‘solid food’, because they were not always dull of hearing, to a point where they could only assimilate milk, they could not handle anything else. They required then only a spiritually liquid diet. And this liquid diet, that which constitutes the first principles of the oracles of God – would probably take us back to the place where we all began – salvation by grace through faith. They were not able to assimilate much beyond ‘Jesus loves me this I know’.

h). *13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.*

i). Those who have an exclusive diet of milk are described as being ‘a babe’ and the word babe has to do with spiritual maturity not with the length of time someone has been a Christian. Those who are only recently saved we might refer to as babes, but this is not our word here. Spiritual maturity has nothing to do with just the passing of time, but with choices to obedience - 1Co 3:1 ¶ *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.*

j). Those then who have an exclusive diet of milk will remain spiritually immature and as a result must of necessity be unskilled, literally inexperienced, in the word of righteousness. They are not able to put into practice through faith that which God has said in His word because the deeper truths concerning The Faith remain beyond their comprehension. Not only that but they remain susceptible to receiving error because they are not sufficiently grounded in that which is true. Immaturity allows for being blown to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

k). However, as we continue - *14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

l). The distinction is made between the immature, those who partake only of milk and those who are of full age, who are spiritually mature, who partake of solid food. So we may know then that ‘solid food’, the deeper levels of truth contained in the scriptures with regards to the Christ and His Kingdom is the province of the spiritually mature – those who have not hardened their hearts, who have not drifted away, but have given the more earnest heed to the things they have heard who have chosen to lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and have received with meekness the implanted word which is able to save their soul.

m). The word ‘use’ here in v14 is translated from a Greek word which refers to a habit of the mind or body, and its use here speaks of the habitual use of the

senses which are being vigorously exercised and this within the context of receiving 'solid food'. That then which is taught concerning the faith, patient endurance, faithful obedience, longsuffering with joy is put into practice as a matter, not just of habit, but of continual deliberate intention – thus producing acts of faith that are stored in the currency of righteousness awaiting withdrawal at the Judgment Seat of Christ - Php 3:8 *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 ¶ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;*

n). Keeping in mind that which we read in - Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

o). Not only this, but just as those who are immature spiritually are susceptible to scriptural error, so those who are spiritually mature can more readily distinguish between that which is scriptural truth and that which is the wisdom of man passed off as scriptural truth.

p). And needless to say, it is those who are spiritually mature who will continue to make the journey between the Brazen Altar and the Bronze Laver in anticipation of being in the light as He is in the light in the age to come.

q). And for those in the process to spiritual maturity all this works together concurrently hopefully producing a steadfastness that is immovable - Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight-- 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

6). And so as we close out Chapter 5 and move into Chapter 6 we move into the realm of our third major warning, a warning that builds upon the 2 that have preceded it. So to close this week we will set out the warning in preparation for our study next week - Heb 5:10 ¶ *called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. 6:1 ¶ Therefore, leaving the*

*discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. 9 ¶ But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

7). Next week then, if the Lord is willing.