

Hebrews

Lesson 4

Chapter 4:14-7:28

Leader Guide

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Lesson 4
Hebrews 4:14-7:28
Jesus, Our Great High Priest

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are —yet was without sin. Hebrews 4:15

Prayers

Introduction

Early Jewish Christians needed to choose between the religion of Abraham, Moses, and the Law or a new faith in Jesus Christ. In this section, the writer focuses on how Jesus is our Great High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek. Never heard of Melchizedek? Melchizedek is referenced in only three verses, Genesis 14:18-20 and Psalm 110:4, but three chapters are devoted to him in Hebrews! In this lesson, we will review the benefits of Jesus as our High Priest and what it means for him to be of the Order of Melchizedek.

Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10

Heb 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are —yet was without sin.

Heb 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Heb 5:1 Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ^{Heb 5:2} He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. ³ This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. ⁴ No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was.

Heb 5:5 So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

Heb 5:6 And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

Heb 5:7 During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

Heb 5:8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

1. Verse 4:14. Why is Jesus the great high priest, unlike any other priest, so that we are confident the Father hears our prayers?

Jesus came through the heavens – meaning he descended from heaven and was born a man and rose from his death to ascend into heaven.

2. Verse 4:15, 16. Why can we be confident that we will receive God's grace and mercy?

We are confident because Jesus was tempted and suffered and understands our weaknesses.

3. Verse 16. The grace and mercy that flow from God on his throne are similar blessings but also denote some differences. Fill in the blanks in the following definitions:

- a. Grace is receiving a **gift or pardon/blessing** for what we don't deserve.
- b. Mercy is not receiving a **punishment** for what we deserve.

4. Verse 5:1-3. What did the high priest do? Also 5:7

- a. **Represent people in matters related to God**
- b. **Make sacrifices for their sins**
- c. **Deal gently with people who are going astray**
- d. **Offer prayers and petitions**

5. Hebrews 9:7 and Leviticus 16:11-16 describe the sacrifice for atonement the high priest made for himself and Israel in the Holy of Holies. How was this system different from Christ as our high priest? Heb 9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood [of a bull], which he offered for himself and for the sins the people [he offered the blood of a goat] had committed in ignorance.

The high priest offered a blood sacrifice for himself and the people once a year in God's temple in the Holy of Holies. The people, set apart by their sin, remained outside the tent or temple while the priest entered. The setting was much like Moses receiving the Law on Mt Sinai with the people at the base of the mountain. This offering was the shadow of what was to come through Christ. Jesus, as the high priest, received people with open arms, blessing children, healing with his touch – completely approachable in his humanity. Jesus' sacrifice was public, also with arms wide open; one perfect sacrifice for all time for all humanity.

6. Verses 1-5. How was Jesus' appointment different from other high priests?

The high priest's appointment was passed down from his father through the tribe of Levi. Jesus' appointment was from his Father, God.

7. Verse 7 What did Jesus do on earth that he continues to do in heaven?

Jesus offered prayers and petitions for his people. He is our intercessor who speaks to his Father on our behalf.

8. Verse 5:8-10 says Jesus is the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. How do you feel when you read your salvation is conditional on obedience? What is important to remember

You probably feel conviction, guilt, and insecurity. Remember the starting point of the lesson:

Heb 4:16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

God is quick to forgive all our sins when we come to Him in repentance and faith in Jesus Christ

9. In verses 4:14–5:10, the writer of Hebrews shows five ways Jesus is superior to the Jewish high priests;

1. he is from heaven and has ascended to heaven,
2. His authority is from God,
3. he was a man who was tempted in every way but was without sin, yet he sympathizes with our weaknesses,
4. he suffered and died for us,
5. he is the source of our eternal salvation.

Which aspects of Jesus' ministry as our great High Priest give you the most comfort?

Discussion varies.

Read about Melchizedek in Genesis 14:17-20

Ge 14:17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

Ge 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,¹⁹ and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth."²⁰ And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

10. What's in a Name?

- a. **Salem** – Salem is from Shalom, meaning peace, so Salem is the City of Peace.
- b. **Shalom** – means peace, but it is meant to convey wholeness; complete peace in all aspects of your life – with God, family, and all your endeavors. As a greeting or goodbye, it is a wish for the full blessing of God on a person.
- c. **Jerusalem** – City of Peace (shalom). Jerusalem is a compound word of Jeru (God uplifts) and Shalom (God's blessing of wholeness and peace in your life). Jerusalem is the city God uplifts as his place of wholeness and peace.
- d. **Melchizedek** –king of righteousness/justice (zedek)

11. What is unusual about Melchizedek?

- a. His authority? **His authority was from God, not through the line of Abraham**
- b. His position as King and Priest, see 2 Chronicles 26:16-18 (King Uzziah):

^{2Ch 26:16} But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

^{2Ch 26:17} Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in.

^{2Ch 26:18} They confronted him and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God."

Melchizedek was both king and priest, which was forbidden under the law (the law had not yet been given to Moses).

- c. How did Abraham honor Melchizedek?

He gave him a tithe. Hebrew word is 1/10th from the best.

- d. His lineage (Hebrews 7:1-6, we will skip this section)

Read Hebrews 5:5-10 and 7:11-28, Jesus Like Melchizedek

^{Heb 5:8} Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ¹⁰ and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

^{Heb 7:11} If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come —one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? [Psalm 110]

Heb 7:12 For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.

Heb 7:13 He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar.

Heb 7:14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. Heb 7:15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, ¹⁶ one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is declared: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

Heb 7:18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. Heb 7:20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, ²¹ but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind:

“You are a priest forever.” [Psalm 110:4]

²² Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Heb 7:23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; ²⁴ but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them —one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever [a restatement of verses 5:8-10].

12. Verses 7:11-18 The author tells the Hebrews why David prophesied in Psalm 110 about a new High priest who was to come in the Order of Melchizedek.

- a. Verse 11 What did the Levitical priesthood lack?

Perfection

- b. Verse 12 What would a new order of priesthood bring?

A change in the law

- c. Verses 13-14 Why is the Order of Melchizedek not through Aaron and Levi?

The order would be of God’s choosing – through Judah

- d. Verses 15-16. What qualification, if not ancestry, would the High Priest have who was from the Order of Melchizedek?

Indestructible – eternal life

- e. Verse 18 Why would the new covenant be better than the old?

The new covenant brought the Hope of drawing near to God – lacking the Old Covenant. Again, the separation between God and his people

13. Verses 22-28 summarize why Jesus is the Great High Priest of a new and better covenant. What are some reasons the author gives the Hebrews to encourage their new faith in Jesus?
- a. Verse 24 **Jesus lives forever**
 - b. Verse 25 **Jesus saves completely and always intercedes for us.**
 - c. Verse 25 **Jesus is holy and blameless**
 - d. Verse 25 **Jesus is exalted above the heavens – [he reigns over his creation]**
 - e. Verse 27 **He made one perfect sacrifice for all time by offering himself – a perfect sacrifice**
 - f. Verse 28 **He is God's Son who was made perfect [through his perfect life, sacrifice, and resurrection.**

Closing Prayer