

Hebrews 5:1-4

Chapter five begins a section (through chapter 7) that will show how Jesus is a BETTER High Priest than the High Priests of the Levitical priesthood. The first four verses of chapter five tell us the qualifications of the high priest. There are as many as six criteria in the first four verses that are mentioned to qualify as a priest.

- Taken from men (vs. 1.)
- Appointed for men (vs. 1)
- Occupied with things pertaining to God (vs. 1)
- Bears gently with the ignorant and erring (vs. 2)
- Offers gifts and sacrifices for sins (vs. 1,3)
- Must be called of God (vs. 4)

These criteria are also applicable to each believer since we are "priests." 1 Peter 2:5-9

- 5 *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*
- 6 *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*
- 7 *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,*
- 8 *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.*
- 9 *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

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

- ***Taken from among men*** - Numbers 3:5-13 (vss. 44-48, *pidyon haben*)

3:5 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

6 *Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.*

11 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,*

12 *And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;*

It was necessary that the high priest have the nature and understanding of a man.

Believers - God ordained that he would use men, not angels as priests - 1 Peter 2:5-9.
Believer's have two main responsibilities according to the 1 Peter 2 passage:

- 1) Offer spiritual sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2)
- 2) Bring praise and glory to Him who has saved us.

See Hebrews 13:15-16; Philippians 4:18; and Romans 15:16

13:15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

16 *But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

4:18 *But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*

15:16 *That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.*

■ **Ordained for men**

The specific function of a priest was to represent man before God and lead in the worship of God.

DUTIES OF THE PRIEST

Teach the people. (Leviticus 10:8-11)

- 8 *And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying,*
9 *Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:*
10 *And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;*
11 *And that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.*

Serve as judges to resolve controversy. (Deut. 21:5)

Offer sacrifices. (Exodus 29:38-42)

Assess impurity. (Leviticus 13-15)

Burn incense. (Exodus 30:7-8)

Bless the people. (Numbers 6:22-27)

Bless God. (Deuteronomy 10:8)

Keep the tabernacle. (Numbers 3:38; 4:16)

Take care of the altar (Leviticus 6:8-13), the lamps, and the showbread (Leviticus 24:1-9)

Prepare the holy things for each days journey. (Num. 4:5-15)

Continue the sacred fire. (Leviticus 6;12-13)

Blow the trumpets. (Numbers 10:1-10)

Believers - God has chosen us to minister his truth to men - 1 Corinthians 1:21

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

■ Occupied with **things pertaining to God** - Deuteronomy 18:1-8

- 5 *For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.*

Believers - God asks us to be 100% committed to him

Colossians 3:1-2

- 1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*
2 *Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."*

Romans 12:1-2

- 1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*
2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

■ **Compassion** ("Bears or deals gently") **on the ignorant and them that are out of the way**

Two groups are generally identified in Scripture. The ignorant and the rebellious.

Numbers 15:28 (Ignorantly sins) *"And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him."*

Numbers 15:30-31 (Knowingly sins) *"But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him."*

Compassion μετριοπαθεω metriopatheo - met-ree-op-ath-eh'-o

Meaning: to be moderate in passion, i.e. gentle (to treat indulgently):--have compassion.

Ignorant αγνοεω agnoeo - ag-no-eh'-o

Meaning: not to know (through lack of information or intelligence)

This does not mean we excuse sin but realize that sinful people do sinful things and have no spiritual capacity to understand or change their ways until they are saved. The meaning of this would include not taking extreme positions. Taking a middle position. For example, it is not being either too sympathetic or too apathetic. It is caring enough to get involved but not becoming completely emotionally involved with an individual that you lose perspective and judgment. It is realizing that we have the propensity toward the same kind of failures.

Wuest Word Studies *Metriopatheo* means to be moderate or tender in judgment toward another's errors. It speaks of a state of feeling toward the ignorant and the erring which is neither too severe nor too tolerant. The high priest must be careful lest he become irritated at sin and ignorance. He must also take care that he does not become weakly indulgent. The high priest must be able to be moderate and tender toward the ignorant.

"Them that are out of the way"

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary: not deliberately and altogether wilfully erring, but deluded through the fraud of Satan and their own carnal frailty and thoughtlessness.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: Highhanded sinners, willing sinners, those who, in the Hebrew phrase, sin "with upraised hand" (Numbers 15:30; Deuteronomy 17:12), cannot always be treated with compassionate tenderness (Hebrews 10:26); but the ignorant and the erring (1 Timothy 1:13)—those who sin "inadvertently," "involuntarily" (Leviticus 4:2; Leviticus 4:13, & c.)—and even those who under sudden stress of passion and temptation sin wilfully—need pity (Leviticus 5:1; Leviticus 19:20-22)

Two groups of people are excluded from this command to "bear or deal gently":

1) Heretics - Titus 3:10-11

10 *A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;*

11 *Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*

Heretic αιρετικος hairetikos {hahee-ret-ee-kos'}

Meaning: 1) fitted or able to take or choose a thing 2) schismatic, factious, a follower of a false doctrine

Benson Commentary

"A man that is a heretic — Greek, αιρετικος, a party or schism-maker, namely, in the church, among the true, genuine people of God; or one that causes divisions among those that are united in Christian fellowship; see on Romans 16:17; after the first and second admonition — From thee and the elders of the church, given with proper solemnity; reject — Avoid, and declare him unfit to be any longer looked upon as a member of your community. This is the only place in the whole Scripture where this word heretic occurs; and here it evidently means a man that obstinately persists in contending about foolish questions, and thereby occasions strifes and animosities, schisms and parties, among the faithful. This, and this alone, is a heretic in the Scripture sense. And his punishment likewise is here fixed. Shun, avoid, leave him to himself, have no fellowship with him."

Matthew 18:

- 15 *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*
- 16 *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*
- 17 *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

2) Willfully sinning believers - 2 Thessalonians 3:6 (Matthew 18:15-17)

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Believers - God wants us to be compassionate and caring with those who are ignorant and erring. God also wants us to reject heretics and willfully sinning believers. Many Christians have a difficult time in obeying this command concerning willfully sinning believers but it should be obeyed for the health of the body of Christ and the best interests of the sinning believer.

3 **And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.**

■ Offers sacrifices for sins - The offering for sins was a vital function of the priesthood. This was done daily, monthly and yearly for the people - Leviticus 16. The High Priest, himself, was in need of an offering for his sins.

Believers - Believers today certainly don't operate in the same way the High Priest did. But we are to regularly remind people that God's Lamb made the acceptable offering for our sins, 1 John 2:1-2, and that believers have an ongoing offering for sins for our fellowship with God, 1 John 1:7-9.

- 1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*
- 2 *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*
- 7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*
- 8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*
- 9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

4 **And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.**

■ Must be called of God - Deuteronomy 18:5

For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

Priests were called by God to serve Him in the Tabernacle/Temple.

Believers - We are called of God to serve Him - John 15:16; Ephesians 1:4

15:16 *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."*

1:4 *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"*

It is an honor to serve God!