

Hebrews 5:6-8

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[0 : 00] Hebrews chapter 5, you can read two verses there, verse 6, as he saith also in another place, thou art a priest, forever after the order of Melchizedek. And then verse 10, called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek. I'm sure many of you are familiar with the scriptures and you know that in these verses of quotations, you have Psalms, Psalm 110. And the scriptures tell us that that is most likely one of the most quoted Psalms in the New Testament.

And certainly when we come to anything to do with the Lord Jesus Christ, it seems that this psalm appears to the thinking of the apostles as they look at that. We know for example that when Paul the Apostle is giving that splendid instruction concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ, reminding us of the hope that the believer can have because of Jesus' resurrection.

there again the apostle in the midst of that instruction makes a reference to the psalm. And he talks about Jesus giving up the kingdom to the Father. And then he says, he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet under his feet. Reference again to Psalm 110.

When we're thinking of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have many ways in which we are encouraged to think of it.

The words that the scripture uses are descriptive. And because they're descriptive, they allow our minds and our hearts to meditate on aspects of his character and of his ministry.

[3 : 04] And the more we are encouraged to reflect on these things, the more we find our faith enhanced and our souls enriched.

And one of the things that is said of Christ is that he is God's Messiah. He is the promised Messiah. A word which we as Christians are familiar with.

And yet the word is not a word that we find contained in the scriptures very often. I think in the Old Testament, in the authorized version, you would find the word used once or twice maybe in the book of Daniel.

But the word itself means the anointed one or the anointed king. I mention it because many who are intent on interpreting the scripture are determined to find Christ as much as possible within the scripture.

And sometimes, and sometimes, and sometimes, and sometimes, and sometimes, the language is used such as, we find Christ from Genesis to Revelation.

[4 : 30] We find mention of him from Genesis to Revelation. And that may be true as far as it goes that certainly the whole of the scripture is meant to inform us about our need of Christ and our dependence upon Christ.

And there's a multifaceted approach to the scripture where Christ must feature within these scriptures. But to insist that every verse of every chapter of every chapter of every book has Christ at its heart is an exaggeration, I think.

It's a multifaceted approach to the scripture that it's a multifaceted approach to the scripture that is a multifaceted person. But it nevertheless leads to that it's part of the whole that always focuses on the person of Jesus Christ, the need of the sinner of that Christ, and so on.

And when we remember that, we remember that we remember also that many people look at the scripture and they want to see passages that they consider messianic.

That is what Christ is featuring within these passages. So within the psalms, for example, as one book of the Bible, you have a variety of views concerning these psalms.

[6 : 04] Some people say that all of the psalms are messianic. That is from Psalm 1 to Psalm 150, there is something of Christ in each one of these psalms.

Some would say that none of the psalms are messianic. For whatever reason, they say that they insist that to suggest that the psalms are messianic, meaning Christ, the anointed of God being at

the heart of the psalms, needs to have a specific application.

So they would say, well, we can't really insist that all the psalms are messianic. Then you've got a broad spectrum of belief concerning that. That some psalms have some of Christ, some psalms have all of Christ, some psalms have none of Christ, and so on.

And I'm sure you yourselves will have an opinion concerning that. But when we think of the psalm that's quoted here, Psalm 110, we cannot, I don't think, dismiss this psalm as being anything other than a messianic psalm.

For the simple reason that what we understand by the word messianic is that the Messiah is God's anointed king.

[7 : 37] And in Psalm 110, what we are presented with is that a person who is anointed by Christ, by God, the Lord has anointed this person and endowed him with the scepter, which is an indication or a declaration of his king, the Lord.

So in that sense, the psalm can clearly be identified as a psalm that is at least alluding to, but more than likely directly informing us of something that has taken place within the realms of eternity, where God has endowed a particular individual with a role to be a king over a people, and that people being his people.

But the psalm also requires us to understand that the person who is the king is also a priest. And ordinarily, when we see the offices of a priest and the offices of a king, they are separate, they are distinct.

In fact, if we look at the scriptures, the scripture reminds us that God required this to be. Historically, the offices were kept separate, and the theologians will mention on this point that the teachings that came to shape and fashion the official structure of the religion of the Jew insisted that each role was fulfilled by an individual.

And also, Don Carson, somebody I was privileged to hear when I was in what was then the Free Church College, has written numerous books, mostly on the New Testament.

[9 : 46] But in one of the books he's written about the person of Christ in the Old Testament. He there makes reference to this fact that according to the law, a priest could not be a king, and a king could not be a priest.

And to use as the example that we are given of how Saul, king Saul, was judged by God because of the way that he usurped the priesthood by indulging himself and offering sacrifice when God nearly forbade it.

Well, I hope that that the Bible has introduced to you the focus of this verse.

It's a verse that we find quoted twice from a psalm in the Old Testament, which we believe to be messianic, which we believe to speak of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we believe it ought to be at the centre of our thinking today, as we do remember his death until he comes.

Now, I want us to frame our thoughts very simply, I hope, on the words of our text, without making it complicated, because I think the moment you mention Melchizedek, people throw up their arms in alarm because he's such a mysterious character.

[11 : 32] The more you mention, the more you mention, the more you mention, the more you mention the more you mention the priesthood of Christ, people again throw up their arms, it's a mystery to them, all the ordinances, all the various sacrifices and so on, it becomes a morass to them that clocks up our thinking.

But I want to look at these words in as simple way as possible, just to encourage our faith, if nothing else.

And there are three things I want us to think about concerning Christ as the priest of his people, the great high priest of his people.

First of all, first of all, we need to remind ourselves that this priest was provided by God. It might be obvious, it might be a truth that you're all familiar with, but we insist upon it nevertheless.

This great high priest was provided by God. Secondly, he is demonstrably a powerful high priest.

[12 : 48] His power is demonstrated in a variety of ways that is important to the believing people of God.

And thirdly, he is a priest who occupies the office of priests permanently.

This office has not been rescinded. He has not backed away from it once a part of his work was completed. This priesthood is ongoing.

So these three thoughts, you're already saying, I know all that already good. I'm glad. I don't mind reminding you of it today.

The importance of the provision of God should not be overlooked by any one of us. If you read back to the beginning of chapter 5, one thing the apostle insists on there is that the priesthood per se was something that God ordained.

[14:00] For every priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.

God is the one who is again and again identified as the one who informs us as to the need of a priesthood and who instructs the church in the earlier stages of its development and as that development progresses to establishing a forum and order in the worship God is insistent upon how things are done, what things are done, when they are done.

Whoever occupies the office of a priest needs to fill that office with honest stipulations of God as he has chosen to reveal them of self.

No man, he says, no man, he says, no man can take this office to himself. And that again and again is brought home to us. But we are also reminded that that was not just true of the priesthood per se. It was something that had to be true of the priesthood that Christ Jesus came to have fulfilled. No man take a dishonor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.

[15:43] So also, he says, Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, today have I begotten thee.

There is an obsession, as it were, an insistence, an requirement for us to understand that this role was a role occupied by Christ at God's insistence.

If you go on further, he was called of God as he was called of God as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

We already quoted that passage in chapter 7. There again focus falls upon this priesthood and the role occupied by Christ.

In chapter 7, verse 20. Inasmuch as not without an oath, he was made a priest. For those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swore and will not repent, though art a priest, forever after the order of Melchizedek.

[17:02] By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. Now, that statement, God provides for us a priest, a great high priest, is a statement that we need to take on board, because it reminds us, without even going into the nature of the priesthood, that God saw it of sufficient importance to insist on all the talents being fulfilled that apply to the office and the ministry that the office fulfilled.

the priesthood, namely the priesthood of Christ, ordained by God, provided by God, and whatever it was that needed to be done, as far as the active role of the priest was concerned, this was the one person that could fulfill it.

this was the solitary person that could fulfill it. Because there is a line drawn between the Aaronic priesthood and the priesthood that Christ seeks to fulfill, which is after the order of Melchizedek, that marks out this as a unique priesthood required by God, so that when we consider it, we see a royal king fulfilling the role of priest, giving giving impetus and uniqueness to what Christ was doing in this role.

and when we explore, as you are invited to do, what a priest does, and that the priest acted between God and man, a priest was responsible for coming between a fallen race and a holy God, and interceding with that holy God on behalf of those who have departed from the rule of law.

And when you compare the priesthood of Christ with the priesthood that was formerly in exercise, you see glaring faults with one and perfections on the part of the other.

[19:59] And when you compare the priesthood of Christ, there is a new order, and that new order is summed up in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

So if I were to perhaps, if we think about the role of a priest, or if we try and unravel the various details of what this person actually did, he was responsible for giving up in the priesthood of Christ, he was responsible for regulating the worship of God.

He was responsible for directing the hearts and minds to the corruption of their nature and their sinfulness, and the need that there was for that to be remedy at the hand of God.

But all of these things, I suppose, very simply, are the things that we are reminded of when we think of the priesthood. And God is saying to us, when he points us to Christ, the Messiah, the Son of

even in these few words of this unique position that Christ possesses.

[28 : 07] There's no question about his ability to fulfill the task entrusted to him by God because of his unique relationship to God but when the more you want to examine this you may be thinking well all of this is too too focused on the legal and too focused on the fine print that has to do with the official nature of his role but God is not a little simply to look at it like that. He reminds us of the simple fact that when I go back to the beginning of the chapter who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way for that he himself is also compassed with infirmity this was important for the priesthood this was important for the one occupying this office that he had this tenderness towards his fellow beings but who is as compassionate as

Christ who is as understanding as Christ who is as able to have fellow feeling with the sinners in this world and minister to them accordingly that's what your interest is in perhaps maybe you're not so interested in in the the official nature of his office and the the fine print of the detail concerning the role that he occupies but surely you are interested in this passion that God has appointed to be your priest to be the one who is able to to do for you what no other could do not only offer the sacrifice that was appropriate to you meet as a sinner but also deliver to you the benefits of that sacrifice as the great interediator the one who is the intercessor before God and the other side of that is this who knows

God better than he not one Aaron for all his gifts and graces and God should be indulged him to be the high priest of his faith and he fulfilled his role there we see in so many different ways in a way that commended his ministry but he had faults and he had failings and he had access to God that was limited by the fact that he was not divine Christ is not limited by that because his access to God is an access of God himself and when we again think of the power of Christ to minister to the church and minister to the believer surely these things are things that encourage us Hugh Martin speaks about these words from the psalmist and he says in the

Messiah kingship and priesthood are combined and because he is priest after the order of him whose name is king of righteousness and who by designation was king of Salem and is king of peace no less obvious is the harmony of divine attributes and divergent interests for mercy and truth are met righteousness and peace have embraced each other in a priest faithful and merciful who is at once king of righteousness and king of peace is that not the kind of priest that you need to be familiar with and acquainted with and looking to to minister to you that's the one that God has placed between you and him in this key role and the third thing that we have in these verses is simply this that he is again reminded again repeatedly that he is a priest forever according to the the the office the the example if you like of this special

Melchizedek maybe that's what's of interest to you the wanting this minister to stand up and tell you who Melchizedek was and I'm not going to because I don't know who Melchizedek was if you look at the scripture Melchizedek is mentioned in the book of Genesis to author of chapter 14 he is repeatedly mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews where reference was made to this Melchizedek who met with Abraham when he was returning from Bacha with the kings and some people are quite insistent that Melchizedek is simply Christ in another form that he is a Christophel which is explained

[34 : 10] I'm sure you've had it explained to me very often a theopony which is a natural phenomenon by which God reveals himself that God is a spirit and as a spirit it can't seem physically but there are occasions when he makes himself known in a physical way some people would argue that the burning bush is a theophany sometimes we see the angel of the Lord spoken of in the Old Testament the malech the messenger of God that is either a theophany or a Christophel the difference between the Jews is God revealing himself in a physical way and Christ revealing himself in a physical way prior to his incarnation prior to him being born of a woman into this world now some people say melchys a dick is a dystopian and

I'm not going to disagree with him I noticed that Don Carson was not going to disagree with him whenever I talk about Don Carson he made such an impression on me in the way that he spoke he's a Canadian and his form of speaking is when I read his books I can almost hear his voice saying let's unpack what this verse is saying as a favourite mode of expression talking about Melchysedek he's saying well I'm not going to disagree with the person who thinks Melchysedek was Christ but I don't I'm not I'm not going to agree with him either why well I'm not sure if I understood why because he's much more clever than I but one reason I find when we read this verse what we are told these verses we are told there was a priest forever after the order of

Melchizedek you sing to

Christ here you are a priest like Melchizedek was a priest when you use the word like to my way of thinking something that is like something is not the same as that something if I stand in front of a mirror I'm seeing a mirror image of myself I'm seeing myself in a mirror if you polish the car you're saying your car is like a mirror if it's nice and shiny it's like a mirror but it's a car not a mirror it may have elements that make it look like or behave like or show features that are mirror like but it is not a mirror it may have qualities that are similar to a mirror the scripture is saying to us about Melchizedek that there are certain things about

Melchizedek that are only fulfilled by Christ and they are only fulfilled by Christ in this priesthood and the things that are true about Melchizedek as far as we can glean from the scripture is that we do not know who he is and it's interesting when you look at the book of Genesis and you look at the insistence in that book it identifies who Abraham is who Abraham's father was who Abraham's sons were and who his grandchildren were there is an emphasis on genealogy who belongs to who where they came from and what became of them when it comes to Melchizedek there is silence and the silence is meant to typify the silence that marks out the origin of Christ's priesthood Christ's priesthood was not derived from any other source apart from

God he didn't occupy an office occupied by any other before and in that sense I believe the order of Melchizedek comes into play now I could be wrong but that's my best shot at understanding what is said if you go to chapter 7 again we're reminded of the priesthood such a high priest became us who is holy harmless undefiled separate from sinners made higher than the heavens it's indicative of the form of priesthood that Christ occupies but it also goes on to remind us of the ongoing nature of his priesthood and the permanence of it and the abiding power of it it's something that is bound into this oath of

[39 : 34] God in order that God is someone who has ordained his passion into an office by an oath which suggests that we are told the scripture itself interprets as follows that he is meant to continue in this office and how can we see that if his office was the office of someone offering a sacrifice well the office of a priest was also an office where the priest was someone who stood between men and God who interceded on behalf of men to God and Christ the great high priest of his people he ever liveth and continues in that office as intercessor of his people a pledge given by God of a guaranteed role being continued by him ongoing in the efficacy of processes and you know that how do you know it well you know it because when you pray and when I pray if our prayers were simply depending on our ability to be heard by God then our prayers would fall on deaf ears but because we have a living high priest a great high priest who has entered into the heavens and who sits at the right hand of

God and who continues to act on our behalf then we have every certainty that our prayers uttered offered in his name are heard by him and a high priest after the order of Melchizedek Melchizedek said a purpose I believe that that purpose was to highlight for us the mystery of the role of the origin of this soul because God ordained that Christ fulfilled this role before the world was before there was an Adam before the government of grace was entered into!

And John Owen you can finish off with his words the intercession of Christ he says is the great evidence of the continuance of his love and care pity and compassion for his church his ongoing intercession evidence and you and I know when we fall in sin and when we depart from the position we ought to fill as followers of Christ how often do we witness for ourselves and we see for ourselves tokens of his love tokens of his misery tokens of his continued care how is that possible and it's possible because we have a peace a great high peace after the order of the who ever liveth to make intercession for us and I hope

I have encouraged you to think more about this Christ Christ ordained by God couldn't put a better person in the job passion endowed by God with power to do what needs to be done no one could go for Christ wait but Christ if somebody could God would affirm one but he didn't he found the only passion that could stand where Christ stood and that!

is Christ is Christ is the only begotten and that Christ has not lost interest in his church he's not someone who has done my best let them get done with it that's not the same his interest in you and his interest in me to this day is unaffected if you are one of his that could be the waiters as long as we are in this world let's pray Lord God help us to appreciate this spirit