

Hebrews, Part 4

Key words: better (13x), perfect (14x in Greek), eternal

What Jesus gives us is **better** because it gives us **perfect** standing before Him, and because it is **eternal!**

In chapter one, Paul gives us several quotations back-to-back from the Old Testament, in order to prove that Jesus is BETTER than angels.

In chapter two, Paul shows us that Jesus was made “a little LOWER than the angels” – God took on a human nature that He had never possessed so we could take on a divine nature that we had never possessed!

In chapter three, to show these Jewish Christians that going back to the Law would be futile, Paul proves that Jesus is BETTER than Moses.

In chapter four, Paul warns us against hardening our hearts – if we do, we will miss the REST God has for us, just like Israel did in the OT.

It is possible to be “out of Egypt” but not “in Canaan” – and that is the problem of these Hebrew believers – they are “LOOKING BACK”

Hebrews 4:1-2 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Israel refused to receive God’s Word with faith, and so they lost the inheritance that God had already provided for them. **FAITH IS THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE WORD OF GOD OPERATES!**

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In chapter five, Paul sets out to prove that Jesus has an eternal priesthood that is BETTER than the earthly priesthood of Aaron.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

You would think that Jesus WOULDN’T sympathize with us because as God He is perfect. But that’s exactly why He became a man – so he COULD sympathize with us, because He has lived right where we live!

As a Man, Jesus ...		But as God, He ...	
Was born a baby	Luke 2:7	Existed from eternity	Micah 5:2 John 1:1-2
Grew mentally, physically, spiritually and socially	Luke 2:52	Never changes	Hebrews 13:8
Was tempted by the devil	Luke 4:2	Cast out devils	Matthew 12:28
Hungered	Matthew 4:2	Was the Bread of Life and miraculously fed crowds	John 6:35 Mark 6:38-44, 52
Thirsted	John 19:28	Gave living water	John 4:14
Grew weary	John 4:6	Gave rest	Matthew 11:28
Slept in a storm	Mark 4:38	Calmed the storm	Mark 4:39-41
Prayed	Luke 22:41	Answered prayer	John 14:14
Was scourged and beaten	John 19:1-3	Healed the sick	Matthew 8:16-17 1 Peter 2:24
Died	Mark 15:37	Raised His own body from the dead	John 2:19-21 John 20:9
Was a sacrifice for sin	Hebrews 10:10-12	Forgave sin	Mark 2:5-7
Did not know all things	Mark 13:32	Knew all things	John 21:17
Had no power	John 5:30	Had all power	Matthew 28:18 Colossians 2:10
Was inferior to God	John 14:28	Was equal to God; was God	John 5:18
Was a servant	Philippians 2:7-8	Was King of kings	Revelation 19:16

Jesus knows exactly how you feel because He was tempted “in all points” just like you are – “YET WITHOUT SIN.” That means two things: (1) He can sympathize, and (2) He can do something about it!

MERCY – God doesn’t give us what we deserve (this is what God did for His people in the OT, but it had to be repeated over and over again)

GRACE – God gives us what we do not deserve (this is what God does for His people in the NT, and it doesn’t have to be repeated over and over because grace is “enabling power” – God helps us do it!)

Hebrews 5:1-3 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: 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. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

The reason an OT high priest could identify with sinners is because he WAS a sinner! However, one sinner isn't always merciful with another sinner – but Jesus is always merciful precisely because He IS perfect!

Hebrews 5:4-6 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

No man could appoint himself as a priest, let alone a high priest!

King Saul assumed Samuel's place to make a burnt offering and God gave his kingdom to someone else (1 Samuel 13); Korah and his fellow rebels tried to appoint themselves as priests and God opened up the earth to swallow them alive (Numbers 16); King Uzziah entered the temple to burn incense and God smote him with leprosy (2 Chron. 26).

But Aaron was ordained by God (not himself) to be a High Priest.

In the same way, Jesus was "ordained" not by seizing for Himself the role of high priest, but by being appointed by God to redeem us.

Verse 5 quotes **Psalm 2:7** – "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

Paul explains that this is talking about Jesus' resurrection, not His birth.

Acts 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Revelation 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Verse 6 quotes **Psalm 110:4** – "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Jesus' priesthood is BETTER because it is eternal ("for ever") and because He belongs to a different order than Aaron. Aaron was just a priest, but Jesus (like Melchizedek) was BOTH a priest and a king.

We'll talk about Melchizedek in more detail when we get to **chapter 7**.

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was not praying to be delivered FROM death, He was praying to be delivered OUT OF death – and that prayer "was heard"! AND WE CAN PRAY THE SAME THING!

Hebrews 5:8-10 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

"OBEDIENCE" = "SUBMISSION"

"PERFECT" = "COMPLETE"

This is why Jesus lived on earth for 33 years before He was crucified for our sins! He wanted to have the same experience of "GROWING" that we do – learning to submit to suffering, and becoming complete in the process. In this way, He became not only a perfect and sympathetic High Priest but a perfect and saving Sacrifice as well.

Hebrews 5:11-14 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Growing OLD without growing UP is a tragedy! It is natural that babies should desire only milk, and we expect them to be deficient in their maturity. But if these things are still happening years later there is a serious problem (and this applies both physically and spiritually).

There is a time in every Christian life when we must graduate from MILK to MEAT (solid food). It is at this stage that we become more than just BELIEVERS – we take on the responsibility of becoming DISCIPLES.

Anything that refuses to grow and change will eventually die. In fact, a clinical definition of death is a body that does not change. If you are not moving forward in your Christian life, you are backsliding. **(This is what was wrong with the Jewish Christians addressed in Hebrews.)**

What does the Bible mean when it makes this comparison between MILK and MEAT?

In other words, what are the characteristics of mature Christians as taught in the Scriptures?

The ONLY reason this could happen is that they were not growing to maturity – and that is the ONLY reason you could ever be tempted to leave YOUR relationship with God because of something you face!

M I L K	M E A T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk is given to the child by the mother (the church) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat is hunted and prepared by oneself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk is a comfort food (meet MY needs!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat is an energy or strength food (what can I do to HELP?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk is a predigested food (Moses was the “voice of God” to Aaron) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat must be digested, so it takes more “work” by the individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk builds up the bones (the framework of spiritual life) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat builds up the muscles (the activity of spiritual life)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk is the truth of what Jesus did (salvation) • Gospels and Acts • We don’t throw out the milk once we start eating meat! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat is the truth of what Jesus is doing (sanctification) • Epistles, especially Hebrews • Milk can enhance the meat, giving us more nourishment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing has to die to produce milk! • Milk, eggs and bacon for breakfast – the cow and the chicken were involved, but the pig was committed! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something has to die to produce meat! • The real mark of a carnal (fleshly, worldly) Christian is that they will not permit their old man to die!

It is difficult to understand why these Christians would be tempted to go back to the religion of Judaism after having a relationship with Jesus, who was better than angels, better than Moses, and better than Aaron!