

A. **Introductory details.**

- A. 4:14 begins the 2nd section of Hebrews.
 - A. Here he develops the theme of the high priestly work of Christ.
 - B. He mentioned this theme briefly in the 1st section (2:17-18; 3:1) and he returns to this with the brief exhortation in the 3rd section. (13:10-13).
 - C. **Inclusio** 4:14-16 and 10:19-23:
 - A. The words “*having... a great high priest... let us hold fast the confession... let us draw near*” in 4:14-16 form an *inclusio* with 10:19-23, demarcating the central section of the homily.
 - B. This forms the outer frame to the 2nd section.
 - C. Within this outer frame, the author gives a lengthy description of the sacrifice of the high priest in the heavenly sanctuary (7:1-10:18).
 - D. **Symmetry**: there is a remarkable symmetry in the 1st and 3rd sections.
 - A. The author announces “God has spoken” (1:1-2; cf. 2:1-4; 12:24) and now summons the community to listen (2:1-4; 12:25) and endure faithfully on a pilgrimage, even when the destination is far away (3:1-4:13; 10:32-12:13).
 - B. Near the beginning and the end of Hebrews, the author presents Jesus as the model of faithful endurance and the pioneer (2:10-18; 12:1-3) who leads the way.
- B. **What is the relationship between the 2nd section and the 1st and 3rd section of Hebrews?**
 - A. The author **is continuing to elaborate** on God's Speaking in the Son.
 - A. **Tabernacle**: for his treatment of the tabernacle in 8:1-10:18 maintains the wilderness setting of parts 1 and 3 (cf. 2:1-4; 3:7-4:11; 12:18-29).
 - B. **Jesus**: when Jesus enters into the heavenly sanctuary (9:11-14) and opens the way for his people to “draw near” (4:16; 10:22), he is the pioneer (cf. 2:10) who leads his people into the promised rest (3:7-4:11).
 - C. We can understand that the Author is continuing to elaborate on how God Spoke in the Son, but using now sacrificial images.
 - B. **The theme of reflection on promises of God unite the sections.**
 - A. According to parts 1 and 3, faith involves waiting patiently on promises that have not been fulfilled (4:1; 6:12, 15, 17; 10:36; 11:9, 13, 17, 33).
 - B. **Oath which confirms**: in part 2, the author assures the community that the death and exaltation of Jesus is the oath of God that confirms the promise (6:16-20).
 - A. The entry of Jesus behind the curtain provides the hope that is the steadfast anchor of the soul (6:19; cf. 7:19).
 - B. As a result, Jesus is the “guarantor” of the better covenant (7:22), and those who are called receive the promise of an eternal inheritance (9:15).
 - C. **Basis for endurance**: thus, although the community cannot see the goal, the sacrifice of Christ is the guarantee of the future, providing the “full assurance of faith” (10:22) as the basis for their endurance as they wander through the wilderness.
 - A. Although the people have not yet received the promise, they may now follow the pioneer into the sanctuary, drawing near to God in worship.
 - C. **Purpose**: thus, as the outer frame of this section indicates, the purpose of 4:14-10:31 is to provide the community with the stable reality to which they may “hold firmly”.
 - A. As the preceding section indicates, the author faces the challenge of persuading his readers to hold fast to their confession of faith “until the end” (3:14) when they suffer alienation from the surrounding society and cannot see a reason to remain faithful.
 - B. The claim that the exalted Son is at God's right hand now seems remote to a community that

does not “see all things in subjection to him” (2:8).

B. 4:14-16 “Jesus, Transcendent and Human”

A. The author's appeal to the community to “hold fast to the confession” (4:14) and “draw near with boldness to the throne of grace” (4:16) elaborates on his earlier exhortation to faithfulness.

A. It suggests that to “hold fast” is equivalent to remaining faithful.

B. But these exhortations are ineffective unless the author restores their confidence in their Christian confession.

C. Thus he builds the “let us” clauses on the foundation of what the community has in 4:14-16 and elaborates on this theme in 5:1-10.

D. What the community has is a gift from God, so the exhortations to hold fast and to draw near are the community's response to God's saving work.

E. Thus in 4:14, the author provides the foundation for the exhortations.

F. Since then we have... let us:

A. a distinctive feature of Hebrews is the close link between “we have/having” and the exhortation “let us”. This appears for the first time here in 4:14-16.

B. Between the opening and closing words of this section (4:14-10:31), the author develops the theme of the heavenly priesthood of Christ (7:1-10:18) as the basis for his exhortation to the community.

C. Here the author describes what we “have” (4:14-15; 10:19) as the basis for the exhortation to the wavering community to be faithful to its original confession and “draw near”.

D. The author's pastoral purpose is evident in 4:14-5:10, for here we see him interweaving reflection on Christ's position, work, and solidarity with them, with exhortation.

G. Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens:

A. This builds on the previous argument.

B. He established that Jesus became a merciful high priest at the exaltation (2:17; 3:1), and now this high priest sits at the right hand of God.

A. *Thus the “transcendence” of Jesus is being emphasized.* He is above all, everything has been placed under his feet.

C. This reminds the the community which is suffering alienation from the community around them of their “heavenly calling”.

A. The fact that Christ has passed through the heavens, overcoming death, assures them of the reality which is beyond their own experience of suffering.

B. They have a possession to which they can “**hold fast**” (4:14b), even in times when they appear to be losing their grip.

A. This assurance is only part of the answer.

A. Even if the high priest is transcendent, he may be remote from the struggles of the community. (He might be high above all, but he's too high to help, or understand what we're going through).

B. The author's answer is that this high priest can “**sympathize**” with the community's suffering.

H. We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses (4:15a)

A. This indicates that the community in fact has a high priest who sympathizes with human weaknesses (2:8-10).

B. This sympathy is not only a subjective feeling but is the capacity to “share the pain of another”.

I. Tempted in every respect shows this.

A. He is not remote from the suffering they are enduring, he has shared it. He was tested with the same struggles which they now experience.

B. Just as the community's present suffering now tempts it to abandon the path toward the goal,

the exalted high priest was tempted to abandon his mission.

C. The author is not making some abstract claim about temptation.

A. He is addressing the specific temptations which they now face, declaring that the heavenly high priest is not remote but bears the marks of his testing even in his exaltation.

B. Before he was the exalted high priest he experienced the temptation to fall away and abandon his mission.

J. **Without sin** is focused on their specific temptation.

A. As in 2:10-18, the author recalls that Jesus shared the temptations now facing the listeners and that he did not surrender to the temptation to abandon his faithfulness to God.

B. Jesus faced the same temptation to fall away but was obedient unto death.

K. **Therefore (4:16)**

A. This indicates that the fact that Jesus has been tested and has passed through the heavens is the basis for the exhortation “**let us draw near with boldness to the throne of grace**”.

B. Even now, while the community can see only suffering and alienation, it has access to the “throne of grace”, for it can “draw near” because Jesus the pioneer has opened up the way (cf. 10:19) when he entered the heavenly world (cf. 6:19-20).

C. **How do they draw near?**

A. Commentators point to worship.

B. The community's worship is the occasion when they see beyond the sufferings of the moment and anticipate their entry into the promised land (4:3-11).

D. **How can they draw near with boldness?**

A. But Jesus has shared in their temptations but yet is without sin!

B. **Remember Martin!** - These verses helped and encouraged him to follow God even though he was struggling with shameful sin!

C. *Don't let your sin stop you from following God, boldly draw near to him and continue to fight against it! Jesus was able to overcome it, He knows what you're going through and can help you!*

L. **Q. What is gospel Motivation? How is it different from legalism?**

C. **5:1-10 “Jesus Qualified as High Priest”**

A. In 5:1-10, the author provides the supporting argument for the exhortation in 4:14-16, demonstrating that Jesus meets the qualifications for the high priesthood.

A. **A** The human high priest chosen from among men (5:1)

B. **B** The solidarity of the high priest with the people (5:2-3)

C. **C** The appointment of the Levitical high priest (5:4)

D. **C'** The appointment of Christ as high priest (5:5-6)

E. **B'** The solidarity of Christ with the people (5:7-8)

F. **A'** The exalted high priest designated by God (5:9-10).

B. **5:1-4.** The author mentions only 2 qualifications for the high priesthood:

A. (1) that the “high priest” be “called” (5:1,4) and

B. (2) that he demonstrate solidarity with the people (5:2-3).

A. (Solidarity refers to the ties in a society -social relations- that bind people to one another.)

C. **Every high priest** gives us the object of comparison.

D. **Appointed... called by God (4:1,4)** shows how he got the job, this is the 1st qualification, *being appointed by God*, and not taking it by yourself.

E. **Deal gently** has to do with curbing one's emotions.

A. Not to be indifferent, but not to be extreme in anger or grief.

B. The priests were to restrain any show of grief when making atonement for the sins of the people.

C. The reason why the priest is said to be able to deal gently or curb his emotions is because

he is also beset with weakness.

F. **Beset with weakness**, beset has 2 pictures.

A. 1) The crowd the surrounds a runner, and 2) also the clothing that someone wore.

B. Priests were clothed with the same weakness as the men that they made intercession for. On the day of Atonement, the high priest had to present a bull as a sin offering for himself to make atonement for himself. (Lev16:11).

A. **This is the 2nd qualification**, the priest in his weakness demonstrated *solidarity with the people*.

C. **Illustration:** In numbers 16, Korah and 250 men rebelled against Moses and Aaron. They did not think it was right that only Aaron and his family could do the work of the priest. The reason they gave was since all the congregation was holy. Moses told them all to get their censure and God would tell chose who was holy. They did and God chose Aaron. Korah and his 250men were killed. The next day the congregation grumbled against Moses and Aaron and a plague started. Moses told Aaron to get his censer and make atonement for the people. Aaron ran and did so but the plague had already started. He made atonement for the people and stood in between the dead and the living. 14,700 people died. ==> Aaron may have been angry at the people or perhaps not cared about the people since they rebelled against him yesterday, and are grumbling against him now, but he didn't let his emotions of anger or grief or indifference control him, he ran as fast as he could and made atonement for the people.

C. **Vs5-6**, the author shows how Jesus meets the 1st qualification, being called by God.

A. **Did not glorify himself to become high priest (5:5a)**

A. This shows that Jesus was appointed by God to be high priest.

B. The author quotes 2 psalms to show this. Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4

C. Both Psalms have been used in Hebrews to speak of Jesus' exaltation.

A. We do also see these similar words at Jesus baptism and his transfiguration.

A. When a Levite started priestly duties at the age of 30, he had to be ceremonially washed. Remember that John the Baptist was the son of a priest, a Levite, and he baptised/washed Jesus when Jesus was 30years old.

B. The implication can be that at His baptism, Jesus started His priestly ministry, being called by God.

C. The transfiguration was said to be a glimpse of the resurrection/ascension, a glimpse of Christ exaltation and glory after the cross.

B. Christ was declared God's eternal priest in His resurrection/ascension. In His baptism He started His earthly priestly ministry and was declared to be God's Son.

D. **Vs7-8**, the author shows how Jesus meets the 2nd qualification, demonstrating solidarity with the people.

A. Jesus not only meets the qualification for “dealing gently” or “moderating his emotions” (5:2), for he is able to show full sympathy by entering into the sufferings and temptations of the people. Beginning with their weakness and temptation, he develops the theme of the sympathetic high priest to assure them that they are not alone in their suffering.

B. In Greek vs7-10 is one complicated sentence, like the opening words of Hebrews (1:1-4), it summarises Jesus in terms of his incarnation, death, and exaltation.

A. But it is also a description of the community's present experience.

B. The author is merging the experience of Jesus with the community's own situation, demonstrating that Jesus their pioneer who has entered into their experience.

A. **The days of his flesh (5:7a)**,

A. Like the “little while” in 2:9, refer to the period between the Son's pre-existence and his appointment to office at the exaltation.

- B. The author describes Jesus earthly life as “days of his flesh” emphasising his solidarity in suffering with those who “share flesh and blood” and live in fear of death (2:14-15).
- B. Offered prayers and supplications**
- A. This refers to the intense entreaty of one who calls for help.
- B. It might be a contrast between the human Jesus and the Levitical high priest who offers gifts and sacrifices, but he is also signifying that Jesus has joined the vulnerable community in crying out to God.
- C. This indicates that Jesus sympathises with the community's helplessness as it calls on God in prayer.
- C. Cries and tears**
- A. Are also signs of prayer and distress.
- B. It reflects the full extent of his solidarity and the intensity of his prayers.
- C. This is because those who live in desperation cry to the Lord in prayer (Job 34:28; Ps 5:2).
- A. although the description brings up thoughts of Gethsemane, the author is not limiting it to this. His focus is on the fact that Jesus shared the same anguish that the community has faced.
- B. This description of prayer is common in the psalms, eg. Psalm 116:3-8, Psalm 31:22, Psalm 29:12, Psalm 5:2 and also in Job 40:27, Job 34:28.
- C. Thus this description of prayer is not limited to Gethsemane but encompasses all the “prayers and supplications” of Jesus that culminated in his death.
- A. In other words, Jesus is the suffering servant of the Psalms.
- D. The one who was able to save him from death**
- A. Points to God.
- B. This does not suggest that Jesus prayed that he might avoid death. It does not show his prayer, but who he prayed to.
- C. It shows his solidarity with the community in facing death.
- E. Was heard because of his reverence** indicates that God answered his prayer.
- A. But how did God answer his prayer?** Jesus died.
- A. Jesus was heard when he defeated the one who had the power of death (2:15), becoming victorious at the exaltation.
- B. He was heard when he was raised out of death. God delivered Him after death and not before it. God heard Jesus prayer and saved Him.
- C. Suffering and even dying did not mean God did not hear His prayer.
- B. Reverence** is a reverent fear or awe. It implies obedience. This word is used to describe the community's worship in 12:28.
- A. In His sympathy, therefore, Jesus is the one who cried out to God in anguish, just as the community now does.
- B. As a pioneer who goes before the community to the goal, he first shared the community's suffering.
- C. He thus exceeds the requirement that the high priest deal gently with sinners be he has demonstrated genuine sympathy, shared the pain, for his people in their time of testing.
- F. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered**
- A. It is actually an example of word-play in Greek. The author is expressing the idea that humans learn through suffering.
- B. The author indicates in 10:5-10 that Jesus exemplified obedience by coming to do God's will, offering his body as a sacrifice to God.
- C. This expression is similar to “became perfect through suffering”, and he “was tested by what he suffered”.
- D. Later the author is going to describe their own suffering as a learning experience, as “the

discipline (education) of the Lord”.

- E. **Vs9-10**, here the author shows the outcome of Jesus obedience in suffering.
- A. **Having been made perfect, he became... having been designated.** Before Jesus became the **source of eternal salvation** 2 things preceded it.
- A. 1. He was **made perfect** after he **learned obedience**.
- A. The author is not referring to moral perfection but to the completion of Jesus' work, when the outcome of his suffering was the exaltation. He was made perfect at the cross and exaltation, when he passed through the heavens.
- B. 2. **He was designated high priest after the order of Melchizedek** at the exaltation, fulfilling the requirement that the high priest be called (5:4).
- B. The final result of the path from suffering to exaltation is that he **became the source of eternal salvation**.
- A. Source is a parallel role to “pioneer” and “forerunner”.
- B. Source seems to mean “reason or cause”.
- C. Jesus is the reason or cause of eternal salvation. He is the source where eternal salvation came from.
- C. The author is getting ready for his argument later that Jesus provided what the earthly priests could not provide, because his work was “once and for all” (7:27; 9:12; 10:10).
- A. The sacrifices of the earthly tabernacle were unable to “perfect those who drew near” (10:1 cf. 7:11).
- B. In passing through the heavens to sit at God's right hand, Jesus was able to do what the gifts and sacrifices of the earthly high priest could not do.
- C. Because he had entered the heavenly sanctuary, he enabled his community to “draw near” to God.
- D. **Obey him** is a reference to Christians.
- A. The author does not separate faithfulness and obedience. Israel could not enter because of their unbelief, because of their disobedience. Later he will say that “Abraham by faith... obeyed to go out... to his inheritance” (11:8).
- B. He has placed the listeners into Jesus' story.
- A. Just like Jesus was made perfect after his obedience to the father, the author puts the listeners into the same situation, showing that their suffering in obedience now is not the end of the story, there is more to come.
- F. The author's purpose here is pastoral.
- A. He is retelling the story of Christ using words that speak to the experience of the listeners. Thus we have phrases like “tempted in every way as we are”, “learned obedience from what he suffered”...
- B. The author has merged the story of Jesus with the story of the community. He is showing them that they are part of a larger story (which includes the temptation to abandon faith, and the prayer to God in their fear of death). Later the author will say that they are learning through suffering (12:4-11).
- C. The author makes sense of their own suffering by indicating that it is one stage along the journey.
- G. Also, the imagery in 4:16 suggest that worship is the occasion when the community reaffirms their confession and draws near to the throne of grace.
- A. Worship is not limited to private prayer but includes the communal assemblies (10:25).
- B. Worship gives the community the opportunity to resist the temptation to fall away. This is because worship provides them with the chance to see the end of the journey.
- C. Worship is an expression of the Christian hope and an anticipation of ultimate salvation.
- D. The focus of worship is God, and people come into to worship in response to God's gracious

act.

- E. People can come with boldness to God “to whom they must give an account” and who is “a consuming fire” only because Jesus has gone before them and given them that right.