

**Text:** Hebrews 5:1-6

**Title:** Comparing the Priesthoods of Jesus and Aaron

**Date/Location:** December 5, 2010 at FBC

## **Introduction**

- A. We have seen the superiority of Christ to the OT prophets and their revelation; to the angels and their service to God; and to Moses and his leadership over Israel.
- B. Jesus has been called high priest a few times in the first four chapters of Hebrews, but now he will be directly compared and contrasted to Aaron and the Levitical priesthood.
- C. In verses 1-4, a brief overview of the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood is given. Then in verses 5-10, Christ's priesthood is examined. I have elected to split our study into two sermons, but to include verses 5-6 in both sermons.

## **I. Quick Comparison of Aaron and Jesus**

- A. Here are some similarities between Jesus and Aaron:
  - 1. Both Aaron and Jesus were priests taken from among men, v. 1, 2
  - 2. Both Aaron and Jesus were appointed "for" men, v. 1.
  - 3. Both Aaron and Jesus were ministering things pertaining to God, v. 1
  - 4. Both Aaron and Jesus have a ministry dealing with sacrifices for sins, v. 1, 3.
  - 5. Both Aaron and Jesus could have compassion on their fellow man since they share in their weakness (indwelling-sin-weakness excepted for Jesus), v. 2.
  - 6. Both Aaron and Jesus were appointed to their office of priest and did not take that privilege unto themselves, v. 4, 5.
- B. Jesus and Aaron are also quite different in some respects  
Most of these will be examined in detail in later parts of Hebrews. Here are the differences:
  - 1. Aaron had to offer sacrifices for himself, v. 3. Jesus did not (4:15).
  - 2. Jesus has a special "Son of God" relationship to God that Aaron did not enjoy, v. 5.
  - 3. Jesus was assigned an eternal priesthood. Aaron was not (Heb. 7:23).
  - 4. Jesus was called into the high priesthood of the order of Melchizedek, v. 6. Aaron was not (Heb. 7:11).

## **II. A More Detailed Examination of the Aaronic Priesthood**

- A. Taken from among men. God uses human beings in relating to other people.
- B. Appointed "for" men. The idea seems to be on their behalf. There is a representative function that the priest performs.
- C. Has to do with things pertaining to God. The priest was a beneficial thing for man in terms of the things of God—in establishing and maintaining a relationship to God.
- D. Offers gifts and sacrifices for sins.

I believe we have two categories: “gifts” is the first category, and offerings for sin is the second. Many of the offerings did have to do with sin but not all. The worshipper in the OT could offer a thank offering or some other free-will type of offering that did not particularly have to do with sin.

This issue is not one that people want to talk about—today and throughout history this has been a difficult topic. If you want to deal with God, you have to deal with the issue of sin.

- E. Has compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray because he shares their weakness.

This is a thought that I appreciate—the priest was one of the people. He was not above them, as if he could look down on their ignorance and going astray. He personally experienced the same kind of ignorance and going astray. This does not mean he did not mature and call his people to a higher standard, but he could understand where they are coming from.

This does not present a too-rosy view of humanity. There are those who are ignorant and those who are going astray. Too many are ignorant and too many are going astray!

- F. Offers sacrifices for sins for himself just like for the rest of the people. The weakness in the previous point includes sin. This was true in the cases of Melchizedek and Aaron and his sons. The historical priesthood was always “manned” by sinful men.
- G. Is called by God, not taking to himself the office of high priest.

### **III. An Upgraded Version of the Priesthood Has Been Introduced**

- A. Christ was similar to the historical priesthood in the respects mentioned above, namely #A-E, G. He was dissimilar in #F. The upgrade was that the priest himself was not a sinner, so he did not need to first deal with his own sins.
- B. There was also an upgrade in terms of the length of the priesthood—now the priesthood is eternal.
- C. There was also an upgrade in terms of the type of priesthood—a Melchizedekian version which was related by sonship to God.
- D. The bottom line is that in addition to all His other superiorities, Christ is also superior to Aaron and his descendants’ priestly ministry to God.

### **Conclusion**

- A. The Jewish person would readily understand this case about the high priest.
- B. By this point in Hebrews it should be obvious that the Bible is *dismantling* the entire Jewish system and showing that a new order of things is in force. OT Prophets? Angels? Moses? Aaron and the Levites? Nope, nope, nope, and nope. Today, Jesus is what it is all about.

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