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# Sunday School Lesson

## TOPIC:

## “Jesus: The Great High Priest”

Hebrews 4:14-5:10

VERSE DISCOVERY: Hebrews 4:14-5:10 (KJV, Public Domain)

## Prepare

- When I was a kid, I was offered the promise of \$10 if I stuck my hand in my sister's bird cage. Problem: I was terrified of birds. Long story short, I never got that \$10. Why do you think that is?

The children of Israel missed out on a great promise too because of fear and unbelief. The history behind this lesson is that God led them to the Promised Land, but they were too afraid to take it. They forfeited their promise and even when they wanted to, they were not allowed to enter in.

Fear and unbelief are robbers of many dreams and promises. But, Jesus, as our High Priest secured all we need to continue forward in our faith without wavering and without turning back. At the end of everything we face, we still have a promise to look forward to. We have a wonderful rest and reward if we don't give up.

- Read through Hebrews 3 to bring you up to speed with the current text covered in this lesson. Perhaps showing pictures of the event in the wilderness of not entering in (Numbers 13:26-14:38) would be helpful for younger students. Then, show a picture of Jesus. Point out that He is the way for every promise of God, and we can have complete confidence in Him because He is our great High Priest (which we will learn more about in the lesson).

## Explore – Full Lesson Available on pages 5-13

“**Let us therefore fear,**” are the opening words of warning found in Hebrews 4. It may sound harsh, but the alert has been sounded because there was a real danger of missing out on the greatest thing ever lurking on the horizon of those who turn back from their faith, for those who go back to their old practices of Judaism.

A stark reminder of “missing out” was easily found in their own history (as noted in the **Prepare** section). God brought the children of Israel, whom He delivered from the bondage of Egypt, to the edge of their Promised Land, but because of “unbelief” they refused to enter God's best, His “**rest**” for them (see Numbers 13:26-14:38).

With that, the writer of Hebrews is encouraging those who are in the faith to stay in the faith. Those who are now Christ followers to remain Christ followers.

He understood the persecution many were facing. And, he knows questioning and doubt are probably causing some to ponder their decision if leaving the world of Judaism, along with their comfortable set of traditions and rituals, was the right thing to do.

The writer assures them it will all be worth it in the end. Yes, times may be tumultuous, but if they hang on to their faith in Christ, they are hanging on the He that is greater than any who came before, including the high priests.

While the biblical high priests were set apart to perform outward rituals, Jesus came among us to sympathize with our plight in humanity. As our High Priest, He got to know us from the inside out. He knows what it's all about and how we feel about it.

He not only came to know what it was like, but He came to offer help and a solution to every ailment of this sin-sick state. Through Him, we have access to the **"throne of grace,"** (Hebrews 4:16) and He became the **"author of eternal salvation,"** (Hebrews 5:9).

As the begotten of God (Hebrews 5:5), He accomplished everything needed to overcome despair and sin without sinning Himself (Hebrews 4:15). He came and performed beyond the level of the other high priests who had to offer up offerings for sins for himself before he could offer it for others (Hebrews 5:1-4). Jesus Christ was that one and only **"great high priest, that is passed into the heavens,"** (Hebrews 4:14) ascending perfectly before us.

Called by God to this office, He experienced pain and tears. Called by God, He obeyed and suffered that others who **"obey him"** (Hebrews 5:9) might be saved.

Therefore, weary Christian, **"let us hold fast our profession,"** (Hebrews 4:14). Don't turn back, but turn toward Jesus, the great High Priest that you may not miss out on the best; on the rest He has secured for you.

## Activities

- In what ways do you stay encouraged in your faith? We all face difficult times in life. How do you overcome those times? How do you continue in what you believe? Use **Journal Pages** to share your thoughts (found on site). Or use **Blank Journal Pages** to express your own ideas about the lesson.
- Younger students can draw pictures of three things that help them to remember the lesson in the **Draw the Scene** section found on site.
- Alternate activity sheets available for those who just want to work with printed activities such as **Word Search, Crosswords, Coloring Page, and more** are available on site.

## Review

- Commit to memory the base verse from the lesson: ***“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,” (Hebrews 4:14).***
- Fill out the review sheet provided (page 14)

## Life

Throughout this week examine yourself. What areas do you need more confidence in? What are some things that you struggle with? Is fear or unbelief a hindrance in any of those areas? Take an honest assessment and bring your concerns to God in prayer and rest in Him and His promises. To help, you can write down your discoveries and bring them with you to the throne of grace as a visual reminder that you can commit these cares into God’s capable hands.

**TOPIC:**

## “Jesus: The Great High Priest”

**Hebrews 4:14-5:10**

### **VERSE DISCOVERY: Hebrews 4:14-5:10 (KJV, Public Domain)**

*If one allows something to occupy space and time in their lives and in their hearts, it shouldn't be mediocre or average; rather, it should be great. Jesus Christ is not only the greatest person in life, but He is the greatest inspiration whereby one should base their faith. Great always outranks all others.*

*For every reason, way of thinking, or possibility one would think to leave their faith in Jesus and return to the old order of things, the writer of Hebrews continues to show that Jesus Christ is greater than all, even the high priest. Let Him be your inspiration to hold on and believe through it all.*

### **JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST, KNOWS WHAT WE'RE GOING THROUGH**

**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.”

The writer of Hebrews, to which no one can surely claim authorship, opens his book with the exaltation of Christ as being over all, and declared that God “hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things,” (Hebrews 1:2).

“Therefore,” Hebrews 2:1 tells us, “we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

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Many believe the recipients of this letter are Jewish Christians whose faith has come under attack and they needed encouragement to hold on to the words of Christ; hold onto the gospel message lest they “let them slip.”

When one “slips” it is usually a backward path into old ways, and this is what was threatening their current faith. That was the fear plaguing the faith of these new converts. The old ways, the old religious system that came before Christ, were trying to prevail and draw people backward. The writer of Hebrews continues to explain that Christ is **greater** than the old way. He is **greater** than Moses and **greater** than the old religious system and priesthood, the angels, and all that came before Him. He is simply **greater** in every way.

I know old is comfortable to some, but he was trying to push them out of their comfort zone and step out on their new-found faith and believe that Christ is the greater choice.

Our rest, he states, is now found in the promises fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 3:18-4:3).

With that our lesson opens, stating, “**Seeing then that we have a great high priest.**” Back in Leviticus 8:12, we see Aaron being anointed as the first high priest. From then until Christ, the old religious system of sacrifices, ritual laws, and offerings was in place and the high priest stood as an intermediary between God and the people.

The fallacy in those who wanted to revert to this old system is that now “**we have a great high priest.**” Adding the word “**great**” showed the immensity of what Jesus would accomplish compared to the high priestly system to which they wanted to go back.

What made Jesus a “**great high priest?**” Not only did He fulfill the role of high priest on a natural level, but he is the only priest/prophet/King/sacrifice that fulfilled everything on a spiritual level.

Jesus stood in the gap where the common man cannot. Hebrews 2:17 tells us, “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” So, not only did He offer a sacrifice of Himself (John 10:18) (as the role of the high priest), but He Himself would “make reconciliation for the sins of the people,” by His own blood. Colossians 1:20 reaffirms this by telling us, “And having made peace through the blood

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of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.”

For the people, the danger of falling back into the old system would cause them to act in unbelief of what Christ accomplished on the cross. This, in turn, would cause them to forfeit the promise, as did their ancestors when they failed to believe God and enter their promise (see Hebrews 3:12, 18-19; 4:1-3, 9, 11).

Following Christ, the ultimate high priest is the only way to enter that “rest.”

Other high priests were only able to enter the most holy place after much sacrificing for their own sins. But Christ went even further. He **“passed into the heavens.”** As the **“Son of God,”** He was able to go above and beyond what any mere man or normal high priest could do. As a matter of fact, Hebrews 7:26 states that He, as high priest, was made “higher than the heavens.” Jesus is simply that AWESOME!

**“Let us hold fast our profession.”** Because of who Jesus is and His perfect work as the high priest for us, we have the responsibility to hold on to our faith and not let it slip away. Don’t be easily swayed this way and that with the moving of our circumstances and our emotions and just plain old life itself. Stay planted in your faith. Don’t be uprooted but hold on!

Repeatedly we are encouraged to take a stand for our faith and to continue therein (see Colossians 1:23 and 1 Peter 5:9). Later, the writer of Hebrews will reiterate the need to “hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, (for he is faithful that promised),” (Hebrews 10:23). “Wavering” is littered with doubt and unbelief. But the one that promised is faithful to keep what He promised if we would just remain in Him and believe.

**“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.”** Most parents know what it is to see a child reaching for something harmful and in a panic, yell, “stop,” or “no,” because we know *by experience* the outcome of what grabbing hold of that harmful thing may be.

Experience is a great teacher of life. Why is that? Because, unless you really have been there and done that and gone through this, you really don’t know on a personal level how it feels.

Christ, as our high priest, knows exactly how this life feels to us. Serving in humanity as a human also, He experienced what it was like to **“be touched with the feeling of our**

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**infirmities.”** He experienced **“in all points”** the frail nature of the human body with all its passions. In an article I previously wrote titled [Jesus Knows](#), I said:

*“Jesus knows what living in the flesh feels like. Walking up and down the shores of Galilee, He didn’t let His holiness withhold Himself from our infirmities. He hungered as we did. He wept when sadness invaded His heart. He justifiably angered at the thoughtlessness of men. He knows.*

*Jesus knows. He knows suffering. He knows temptation. He knows what it is to care when no one else does.*

*He knows what it is to be chased, used and despised. His ears have felt the sting of gossip and have heard the song of ridicule. He’s heard the taunting of the nay-sayers and the tsk- tsk- tsk- of the un-approving.*

*Aching limbs, sore feet and a thirsty tongue – He knows. Jesus knows disappointment at the carelessness of others. He knows desperation over the plight of the lost soul. He knows of the crown of thorns His life is leading Him to.*

*Jesus knows everything because He is divine. Jesus has experienced everything because of His humanity.” (Word For Life Says)*

Yet, even in His humanity, He overcame all temptation **“without sin.”** Even Pilate exclaimed during his own human inquisition of the Savior, “I find no fault in this man,” (Luke 23:4).

Other verses tell us, “For he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted,” (Hebrews 2:18). Because of what He experienced personally, He knows how to help each one of us, in each one of our situations, personally. No matter how hard it may appear to us, Jesus knows how to HELP!

Considering all that we have learned so far about our **“great high priest;”** the recipients of this letter and us are encouraged by these words: **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”**

Since Jesus personally knows, and since Jesus personally serves as our high priest, our connecting link to God, we can, with confidence, draw near to God through prayer to seek **“mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”**

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We have access to God. Don't hold back your privilege as a child of God of going before the Father to get some help. There are times of humbling; times of desperation when we all need to approach the throne of the King for a little more grace and mercy. No, we don't deserve it, but yes, He gives us access to come anyhow.

So, come boldly, with the confidence of the King's kid, to find that help you need. Jesus is there waiting, at the right hand of the Father interceding on our behalf. There's no reason not to go. He beckons, "Come and get some help!"

## JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST, DID WHAT OTHERS COULDN'T

**Hebrews 5:1-3 "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in all 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 job of the high priest was to take care of **"all things pertaining to God;"** meaning they had the charge and responsibility of all things in the service of God on behalf of the people, being **"ordained for men."** These tasks also included the giving of **"gifts"** and the offering up of **"sacrifices for sins."**

If you were to do a really good study, you may find that just dealing with the system and rituals and laws regarding sacrifices was quite the operation. There were burnt offerings, heave offerings, grain offerings, wave offerings, and peace offerings (each having its own specifications that had to be followed). There were rules to be followed for the animals involved and for the people involved. There were obligations that if not followed could disqualify one from the priesthood. THERE WAS A LOT INVOLVED and all to make sure the services of the holiness of God and **"all things pertaining to God,"** would go off the right way (this is just scratching the surface of all involved in their duties).

These men, who would play the crucial role by humbly standing, in their ordained station, between God and man, themselves, were **"compassed with infirmity... so also for himself, to offer for sins."** The human priesthood in place, with animal sacrifices, before Christ,

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served its temporary purpose. But, to supply eternal life on the level that Christ would offer in His priesthood, they were unqualified because they themselves suffered weaknesses and flaws of humanity and had to make sure their sins were taken care of as well (compare to Hebrews 9:6-7). That system was just a “shadow of good things to come” (Hebrews 10:1).

By the old system, “every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins,” (Hebrews 10:11). But with Jesus as high priest, doing what man or the blood of bulls and goats couldn’t do, became the “mediator of the new testament,” (read Hebrews 9:11-15); “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God,” (Hebrews 10:12) and it is from that place and position where He, as our great High Priest, remains today. Glory!

## JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST, WAS BEGOTTEN FOR THIS

**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.”

Aaron didn’t call himself to be a high priest and neither did Jesus. Regarding Aaron, God instructed Moses, “Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, *that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office...*,” (Exodus 28:1, emphasis mine). God selected Aaron to serve as “priest” and God is also the one who spoke the words confirming Jesus’ role, “**Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee,**” (see also Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33 and Matthew 3:17, just to name a few).

The old line of the priesthood was through Aaron (the tribe of Levi), but now the new was established in Jesus. The priesthood was changed (Heb. 7:12), by “the bringing in of a better hope... by the which we draw nigh unto God,” (Heb. 7:19).

Perfection could not be achieved through the Levitical priesthood and there was a need for something better (Hebrews 7:11). In comparison, the priesthood of Christ would be marked by the same characteristics of “**Melchisedec**” in that like Melchisedec, Jesus would serve as King and priest (see Genesis 14:18), and also like Melchisedec, His priesthood would be

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enduring and “for ever” (Heb. 7:17). There is no recorded beginning or ending for Melchisedec but “made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually,” (Heb. 7:3).

Jesus’ priesthood would be marked by the “power of an endless life,” (Heb. 7:16) which is in sharp contrast to the Levitical priesthood where they could not “continue by reason of death,” (Heb. 7:23). Thereby, Christ has an “unchangeable priesthood,” (Heb. 7:24), “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them,” (Heb. 7:25).

Jesus, in His priesthood, lives forever to save because He is the great High Priest. There is none better. None that came before Him could do what He did. That’s why this lesson is marked by the word “great” which implies strongly Jesus is “more than” in status, power, and glory. And, there is none after Him. He is it. He is the great High Priest whom the former was just a shadow of.

## JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST, SUFFERED FOR OUR SALVATION

**Hebrews 5:7-10 “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; 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.”**

Jesus “**suffered.**” Can we wrap our minds around that? There are some with a false supposition that Christ could endure all that He did because He was the Son of God. They make it sound like it was nothing for Him to go through what He went through. Boy, are they wrong! Jesus suffered *because He was the Son of God!* **“Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which *he suffered,*”** (emphasis mine).

Let’s go back to the Garden of Gethsemane. There Jesus prayed, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done,” (Luke 22:42). Sometimes I believe we hear this verse so much that we become desensitized to the agony behind the prayer.

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If you continue to read it states, “Being in *agony* he prayed more earnestly,” (Luke 22:44a; emphasis mine). He was already feeling the trauma of what was about to take place and it was wreaking havoc on Him. He was in agony! The pain was pressing on Him. He was tormented at the thought of what was soon going to come to pass. So much so, “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground,” (Luke 22:44b). Look at what His body was going through, and He wasn’t even on the cross yet. He **“suffered”** and **“he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death.”**

He didn’t have an easy time getting through the suffering because He was the Son; *rather He suffered harshly because He was the Son*. Even Isaiah prophesied of the pain of His suffering: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken,” (Is. 53:7-8).

Jesus would fulfill His role as our King and our priest, but it would be at the expense of His own battered, bruised, beaten, and dead body.

Because He reacted and responded in **“obedience,”** and endured the shame and the suffering of the cross, He **“became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him,”** thereby making Him the greater. Jesus became the “source” of our salvation and eternal life. When He obeyed unto death and entered the holy place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood, the Bible declares, He “obtained eternal redemption for us,” (Hebrews 9:12).

**“Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.”** Once again, the writer of Hebrews reiterates that this calling was not of His own doing; rather, He was **“called of God.”** God preordained this to be so. Psalm 110:4 says, “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” The word **“order”** gives the impression of one being in the same style. Once again, He would serve not only as King, but He would fulfill priestly duties as well. And, forever He did and does it greater!

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Turning to Jesus Christ is the best decision one can make in life. He is greater than anyone and anything, and faith in Him will not disappoint. He is the source of our salvation.

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**TOPIC:**

## “Jesus: The Great High Priest”

**Hebrews 4:14-5:10**

**Please Answer the Review Questions Below**

1. **T or F.** Jesus never experienced temptation. (Hebrews 4:15)
2. “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” (Hebrews 4:14)  
**A. Glory      B. Holy Place      C. Eternity      D. Heavens**
3. Where can we go for help in our time of need? Explain. (Hebrews 4:16)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What verse(s) in our lesson explains that Jesus knows what we’re going through?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was Jesus’ priesthood compared to? (Hebrews 5:6, 10)  
**A. Levites      B. Melchisedec      C. David      D. Psalmist**
6. **T or F.** Jesus Christ is the begotten of God.
7. “Though he were a \_\_\_\_\_, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,” (Hebrews 5:8).  
**A. Son      B. Savior      C. Servant      D. Redeemer**
8. “And being made \_\_\_\_\_, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him,” (Hebrews 5:9).  
**A. Whole      B. Perfect      C. Righteous      D. Holy**

