Friends, don't get me wrong. By no means do I count myself as an expert in all of this, but I've got my eyes on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I am off and running, and I'm not turning back.
Philippians 3:13-14

Prayer Study # 515

Hebrews 5

First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

HEBREWS 5 AMPLIFIED BIBLE (AMP)

The Perfect High Priest:

The Definition of a Priest

5 *For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed [to act] on behalf of men in things relating to God, so that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.* ***2*** *He is able to deal gently with the spiritually ignorant and misguided, since he is also subject to human weakness;* ***3*** *and because of this [human weakness] he is required to offer sacrifices for sins, for himself as well as for the people.*
4 *And besides, one does not appropriate for himself the honor [of being high priest], but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.*
5 *So too Christ did not glorify Himself so as to be made a high priest, but He [was exalted and appointed by the One] who said to Him,*
"You are My Son,
Today I have begotten (fathered) You [declared Your authority and rule over the nations]";
6 *just as He also says in another place,*

“You are a priest [appointed] forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”
7 *In the days of His earthly life, Jesus offered up both [specific] petitions and [urgent] supplications [for that which He needed] with fervent crying and tears to the One who was [always] able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverent submission toward God [His sinlessness and His unfailing determination to do the Father’s will].*
8 *Although He was a Son [who had never been disobedient to the Father], He learned [active, special] obedience through what He suffered.*
9 *And having been made perfect [uniquely equipped and prepared as Savior and retaining His integrity amid opposition], He became the source of eternal salvation [an eternal inheritance] to all those who obey Him,*
10 *being designated by God as High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.*

This section of scripture primarily deals with Jesus in His priestly office. To understand this fully, however, we need to know the three offices which Jesus fulfilled: PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING. There were others who also functioned in these three offices, although as forerunners and never to the fullness of Jesus Christ. These include Moses and David, among several others.

As a PROPHET, Jesus revealed God, spoke for God and communicated TRUTH that the Father wanted communicated to His children. Moses spoke of both the prophetic office and the coming Messiah in Deuteronomy 18:14-: *"For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not appointed such for you. The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear."* Peter noted the fulfillment of this in Acts 3:22-24. Jesus numerous times referred to Himself or implied that He was a Prophet. Luke 13:33 is one example: ***"Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem".***

Hebrews deals mainly with His priestly office. PRIESTS offer sacrifices to God in order to cleanse sin. Not only was Christ the Priest, He was also the sacrifice: Ephesians 5:2: *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.* And 1st John 1:7: *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.* The priestly office also involves being the mediator or go-

between between God and man. *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* (1st Timothy 2:5).

A priest must have compassion to be able to really serve us. Jesus not only functions for us, but he also feels for us. Also, Christ had to be chosen by the Father God for the priestly office. In Biblical days only descendants of Aaron could be priests. Jesus was not descended from Aaron so the Jews would not accept Him. The writer of Hebrews, however, tells the Jews something they had long forgot. He reminds them of Melchizedek who was chosen by God centuries before Aaron was born and also chosen by God. Melchizedek was considered the greatest of the priests, ever in Jewish history.

Melchizedek is probably the most mysterious man in the Old Testament. He appears out of nowhere in Genesis 11 and disappears as mysteriously. The Hebrew writer is saying that Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. As such, he has the legal right to be considered a priest. Is Melchizedek a pre-incarnate Jesus in the flesh? Books have been written about this, and we really don't know. Whoever he is, he is the king of peace and righteousness, two qualities best known in scripture in Jesus.

Finally, Jesus also occupies the office of

KING. Kings have authority to rule and reign over a group of people. From the beginning wise men recognized that the little baby born in a manger was in reality a king: *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him"* Matthew 2:1-2). Matthew 27:11 says, *"Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him,* ***"It is as you say."***

Furthermore, you cannot have a kingdom without a king, by the very definition of *kingdom.* The Word is full or references to the *Kingdom of God* and the culmination of the coming Kingdom on earth where Jesus will rule and reign and which most charismatic believers believe could happen in this generation. John the Baptist opens up the New Testament narrative with these words: ***"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel."*** Indeed, the very prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray includes the words, ***"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"*** (Matthew 6:10).

Was God's original purpose for every human to be a prophet, priest and king? Luis Berkhof says, "Man, as he was created by God, was intended to function as a prophet, priest and king. Hence, he was endowed with knowledge and understanding [referring to his prophetic role], with righteousness and holiness [referring to his priesthood] and with dominion over lower creation [referring to kingship]. The scriptures seem to back up Berkhof's opinion:

PROPHET-Joel 2:28-29: *And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh: Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.* (Also see Numbers 11:29, Acts 2:16-21, 1st John 2:20 & 27, Colossians 3:16, Romans 15:14, and Hebrews 3:13).

PRIEST-Hebrews 13:15-16: *Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* (See also Romans 12:1-2 & Hebrews 13:15-16).

KING-Revelation 1:4-6: *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.* (See also 1st Peter 2:9).

Verse 5:7 speaks of Jesus weeping with strong crying. We know of three places in scripture where He wept. First, he wept at the tomb of Lazarus, not because of Lazarus' death, because He knew Lazarus was about to be resurrected, but because of His compassion for His friends, Mary and Martha, who were broken-hearted. Today, in our society, we need a fresh dose of empathy for the broken-hearted.

Jesus also wept over the city of Jerusalem because they had rejected the only One who could have saved them. Finally, He wept in the Garden. I think we have misinterpreted Luke 22:42, where Jesus asks that this cup, i.e. death, pass from Him if it be the Father's will.

Perhaps He was praying that the Father not let him die in the Garden Of Gethsemane. He knew the prophecies concerning the Cross, and He wanted to be sure that he did not die in the Garden or on the way to the Cross, but on the Cross. The devil wanted to keep Him from the Cross, and the devil knew the words of John 3:14-15: **"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.**

The Perils of Dull Hearing

11 *Concerning this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull and sluggish in [your spiritual] hearing and disinclined to listen.* ***12*** *For though by this time you ought to be teachers [because of the time you have had to learn these truths], you actually need someone to teach you again the elementary principles of God's word [from the beginning], and you have come to be continually in need of milk, not solid food.* ***13*** *For everyone who lives on milk is [doctrinally inexperienced and] unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a spiritual infant.* ***14*** *But solid food is for the [spiritually] mature, whose senses are trained by practice to distinguish between what is*

morally good and what is evil.

In our generation so many people come to church to see a performance and to be entertained. People today also want teaching to be short and sweet. Few have time to labor an hour in prayer or to sit under an hour teaching. Their spiritual hearing is dull, and it is difficult for men of God to convey with passion the truths the Holy Spirit has revealed to them because the people really are not interested.

The writer is especially concerned about people in the Body of Christ who should be moving on and out into the deeper things of God but have remained babies in the faith. They have not matured, and frankly and sadly the church is full of these people, especially in the American Church which thinks that church is about them and their comforts. The problem can be summarized in Verse 13: The milk drinkers are immature because they do not know the Word of God. You cannot grow apart from the Word of God.

Paul address this theme of not growing in the faith in 1st Corinthians 3:1-2: *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to*

bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”