

July 22

Scriptures: Read Hebrews 5

Key Verse: “But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil” (Hebrews 5:14) (NIV).

Overview

What is this “solid food” the author speaks of? In the context it’s verses 7-10: “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death, and He was heard because of his reverent submission. Although He was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek” (NIV). To help us understand these words, we need to remember something we’ve already read: “For this reason He had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people” (2:17, NIV).

This “perfecting” of Jesus (who as Son of God was already perfect) refers to His coming to terms with His human nature and with His priestly role. Like any other human, He had to “offer up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears.” Like any other human, He had to know the fear of dying and seek that God would “save Him from death”. Like any other human He had to come to grips with “submission” to the Father’s will — He had to “learn obedience”. He had to “suffer”.

Why? Because God the Father was preparing a “lamb” — a Lamb who, at the same time, would be Priest. He would be a perfect human offering in space and time whose blood would provide eternal salvation. In that sense, His ongoing atonement would provide an eternal priestly function. The High Priest of Old Testament days would slay the perfect lamb for the sins of the people. But here we have a Priest of a different order — a Priest who, in effect, would shed His own blood in space and time, yet live forever in eternity, mediating between God and man in Heaven. God was preparing a Priest “in the order of Melchizedek”.

Prayer

Lord God, please grant that today we may grow more in You so that with maturity we may be able to digest the “meat” of Your Holy Word into our souls and spirits.