

## **deSilva, Hebrews, Session 5, Resources from Notebooklm**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of deSilva, Hebrews, Session 5, Hebrews 4:14-5:10: A Great High Priest, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. deSilva's lecture analyzes Hebrews 4:14-5:10, focusing on Jesus as the great high priest. He examines the qualities of a high priest, emphasizing Jesus' sympathy, divine appointment, and obedience learned through suffering. The lecture highlights the importance of prayer and perseverance for believers, contrasting fear with confidence in God's help. Furthermore, it explores the concept of confession as an active witness and the believers' shift from societal margins to a cosmic center through faith. Finally, it emphasizes the ongoing need for obedience to Jesus to receive eternal salvation.

**2. 17-minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. deSilva's, Hebrews, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → General Epistles → Hebrews).**



**deSilva\_Hebrews\_Session05\_Hebrews\_4**

### 3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided source, "DeSilva\_Hebrews\_EN\_Session05.pdf":

#### Briefing Document: Hebrews 4:14-5:10 - Jesus, Our Great High Priest

##### I. Introduction

This document analyzes the key themes and arguments presented in Dr. David A. deSilva's lecture on Hebrews 4:14-5:10, focusing on the author's development of the concept of Jesus as the "great high priest." This passage marks a pivotal point in the sermon, shifting from warnings and appeals to fear to a focus on the confidence and access believers have through Jesus's priesthood.

##### II. Key Themes and Ideas

- **Shift from Fear to Confidence:** The author of Hebrews contrasts the fear induced by the prospect of faithlessness (4:12-13) with the confidence believers can have in approaching God because of Jesus (4:14-16). This sets the stage for understanding Jesus' role as a sympathetic mediator. As deSilva notes, "Hebrews 4:12 to 13 had appealed in effect to the emotion of fear... 4, 14 to 16, by stark contrast, speaks of the confidence with which the hearers may approach God."
- **Jesus, the Great High Priest:** The central focus of this section is establishing Jesus as the ultimate high priest. He is not just a human priest or angel but the Son of God, who has "crossed through the heavens." This emphasizes His unique status and authority.
- **Jesus' Sympathy and Identification:** A crucial aspect of Jesus' priesthood is his ability to sympathize with human weaknesses. The text emphasizes that He was "tested in every way as we are, though without sinning" (4:15). This shared human experience, coupled with his sinlessness, allows Him to be a more effective mediator.
- **Bold Access to God:** Because of Jesus' priesthood, believers have boldness to "draw near with boldness to the throne of favor" (4:16). This access to God is not a privilege but a gift from the work of Jesus.
- **A Core Appeal and Reiteration:** The themes in 4:14-16 (great high priest, holding fast to confession, drawing near) are echoed later in 10:19-23, which brackets a

lengthy discourse. This structure emphasizes the importance of these core concepts.

- **Heavenly Focus:** The sermon encourages the hearers to shift their focus from earthly losses to the eternal gains they have in Christ. They have "an anchor for their souls," "better and lasting possessions," and access to the heavenly sanctuary. DeSilva states, "Given what the audience may have lost... it is not surprising to find the author emphasizing what the converts have gained as a result of this alignment."
- **Confession as a Lived Act:** Confession is not just internal belief but an outward expression, a "spoken and lived witness." This involves boldness and a willingness to acknowledge God's goodness even in the face of opposition. The author will later urge them to make a "sacrifice of praise, namely the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (13:15).
- **Priestly Functions & Qualities:** The author provides a general definition of priests as mediators, who "offer gifts and sacrifice on behalf of sins." A key quality is their sympathy, rooted in their own weakness and experience of sin. However, Jesus' sympathy is rooted in his shared human experience, yet he is without sin.
- **Divine Appointment:** Jesus' priesthood was not self-appointed but divinely ordained by God. This is shown by quotations from Psalm 2 ("You are my Son, today I have begotten you") and Psalm 110 ("You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"). The author uses the example of Aaron as a precedent: "no one takes this honor upon himself but is called by God, just as also Aaron was called" (5:4). This is the foundation of his legitimacy as priest.
- **Melchizedek's Priesthood:** The reference to the "order of Melchizedek" hints at a priesthood that is superior to the Levitical priesthood and is key to Jesus' priesthood. Melchizedek's priesthood was established outside of the Levitical tribe.
- **Preparation through Suffering:** Jesus' qualifications for priesthood were not only in his appointment but also his experience of suffering. He "learned obedience from the things which he suffered" (5:8). This learning, particularly through heartfelt prayer and dependence on God, was an essential part of his preparation. DeSilva points out, "the real spine of this sentence is the fact that Christ learned obedience from the things which he suffered and became the source of eternal deliverance for all who obey him."

- **Perfected through Ascension:** Jesus' "perfection" (5:9) is not about eliminating personal faults but being brought to his goal, his *telos*. His ascension and session at the right hand of God signify the completion of his journey and the fulfillment of his role as high priest.
- **Obedience to Jesus as Key to Salvation:** Salvation comes through obedience to Jesus and his teachings, underscoring the necessity of an active, committed faith.
- **Cosmic Perspective:** The author challenges the audience to adopt a cosmic view of their situation, where their marginalization in society is actually a move closer to the center of the cosmos: the throne of God.

### III. Rhetorical and Ideological Strategies

- **Alternating Appeals:** The preacher uses contrasting appeals to fear and confidence as a recurring rhetorical strategy. This aims to associate defection with fear and remaining steadfast with confidence.
- **Reassurance:** The author consistently emphasizes what the hearers have gained in Christ, rather than what they have lost, as they navigate challenging circumstances.
- **Shift in Perspective:** The sermon reorients the hearer's perspective, encouraging them to see their struggles not as a descent into the margins of society but as an ascent toward the center of the cosmos.

### IV. Practical Implications for Today

- **The Importance of Prayer:** The passage emphasizes the ongoing need for believers to pray, drawing on the access to God won through Jesus. Prayer is not a last resort but a primary means for finding help in times of testing.
- **Sympathy and Grace:** Those who minister in Christ's name are called to show sympathy and understanding toward those who are ignorant and erring. This sympathy comes from recognizing one's own weaknesses.
- **Suffering and Obedience:** Hardships arising from commitment to God can be opportunities to learn obedience and deepen one's faith. It is not to sanctify all suffering, but hardship in alignment with Christ.
- **Prioritizing God's Will:** Following Jesus and obeying God's will should be paramount, even when it leads to hardship and opposition.

### V. Conclusion

Hebrews 4:14-5:10 presents a powerful affirmation of Jesus as the great high priest. This passage provides assurance to believers through their access to God via Jesus and emphasizes the importance of maintaining their confession, understanding the legitimacy of Jesus's priesthood and their access to God, and the benefits of that relationship. The passage is not only an explanation but also a call to action, urging the audience towards faith, obedience, and perseverance.

## 4. Hebrews Study Guide: 5, Hebrews 4:14-5:10, A Great High Priest

### Hebrews 4:14-5:10 Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does the author of Hebrews contrast the tone of 4:12-13 with that of 4:14-16?
2. According to 4:14, what qualification does Jesus have that makes him an effective high priest?
3. What does it mean to "hold fast to our confession," according to the author?
4. Why does the author describe the visible heavens as temporary?
5. What is the role of the priest as outlined in 5:1?
6. Why does the typical high priest have sympathy for those they mediate for, according to 5:2?
7. Why is it important that Jesus was "appointed" to his role as high priest?
8. How is Psalm 110 used to support the idea of Jesus as a high priest?
9. What key experience in Jesus' life does the author describe in 5:7-8 to demonstrate Jesus' preparation for his role as high priest?
10. How does the author use the idea of "perfection" in regards to Jesus (5:9)?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The author contrasts 4:12-13, which appeals to fear of God, with 4:14-16, which speaks of confidence in approaching God. This shift from fear to confidence creates a sense of assurance for the audience.
2. Jesus is qualified as a great high priest because he has "crossed through the heavens" and is the Son of God. He is also able to sympathize with human weaknesses, having been tested in every way, yet without sin.
3. Holding fast to our confession means not just remembering beliefs but also actively and boldly living as witnesses to the good things received through Jesus, not shrinking back in the face of opposition.

4. The author describes the visible heavens as temporary because he sees all of the material, visible realm as transient and destined to fail. The permanent and abiding reality is beyond the material creation in the eternal realm where Jesus has ascended.
5. The role of a priest is to serve as a mediator or broker between humans and God, offering gifts and sacrifices to secure divine benefits for humanity and remove obstacles caused by human sin.
6. Typical high priests are sympathetic because they are also subject to their own weaknesses and sin, making them aware of the need for mediation and the struggle against sin.
7. Jesus' appointment is important to establish his legitimacy as a high priest. Just as Aaron was chosen by God, so too was Jesus. God's selection authorizes his role and ensures his authenticity as high priest.
8. Psalm 110, particularly verse 4, is used to show Jesus was divinely appointed as a priest after the order of Melchizedek, highlighting a non-Levitical priesthood that aligns with Jesus' eternal life.
9. The author highlights Jesus' prayers and intercessions during his mortal life, specifically referencing his fervent and emotional piety as a key preparation for his role, showing he was heard by God and demonstrating his faithfulness.
10. The author uses "perfection" not to denote a lack of flaws, but to describe Jesus being brought to his final state or goal, which occurs after his ascension, allowing him to serve as a source of eternal salvation.

### **Essay Questions**

1. Analyze the rhetorical strategy of the author in Hebrews 4:12-16, focusing on the use of contrast and its effect on the audience. How does this strategy advance the author's purpose in the sermon?
2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' "appointment" as high priest in Hebrews 5:4-6. How does the author use scriptural references to establish Jesus' legitimacy, and what are the implications for the audience?
3. Compare and contrast the qualifications and roles of typical Levitical priests with those of Jesus as described in Hebrews 5:1-10. In what ways is Jesus a better high priest, and why does this matter for the readers?

4. Examine the portrayal of Jesus' piety and suffering in Hebrews 5:7-8. How does the author use these aspects to highlight Jesus' obedience and preparation for his priestly role, and how do they function as a model for the audience?
5. Explore the concept of "perfection" in Hebrews 5:9. How does the author define this term in the context of Jesus' life, death, and ascension, and what impact does Jesus' perfection have on the possibility of salvation for believers?

### **Glossary of Key Terms**

**High Priest:** A religious leader who mediates between God and people, offering sacrifices and prayers on their behalf.

**Confession:** A spoken and lived witness to the good things received from God through Jesus. **Parrhesia:** An act of boldness, openly and fearlessly declaring one's faith.

**Throne of Favor (Throne of Grace):** The symbolic seat of God's authority and mercy, where believers can confidently seek help.

**Levitical Priests:** Priests from the tribe of Levi, who were authorized to conduct religious services in the Jewish temple.

**Melchizedek:** A mysterious figure in the Old Testament, a priest-king whose priesthood is considered superior and an archetype for Jesus' priesthood.

**Piety:** Deep religious devotion and commitment. **Obedience:** The act of faithfully adhering to God's will and commandments.

**Perfection (Telos):** The state of being brought to its goal or fulfillment, not the absence of flaws.

**Eternal Salvation:** Deliverance from the power of sin and death, and the promise of a life with God beyond this world.



## 5. FAQs on DeSilva, Hebrews, Session 5, Hebrews 4:14-5:10, A Great High Priest, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on Hebrews 4:14-5:10

1. **How does Hebrews 4:14-16 contrast with the preceding verses (4:12-13)?** Hebrews 4:12-13 invokes fear about encountering God if one proves faithless. Conversely, 4:14-16 speaks of confidence and boldness in approaching God through Jesus, our High Priest. It moves from fear of judgment to confidence in accessing divine mercy and grace. This contrast is a rhetorical strategy the author uses throughout Hebrews, pairing fear with confidence to encourage steadfastness in faith and discourage defection.
2. **What is the significance of Jesus being a "great high priest who has passed through the heavens"?** Jesus, as the great high priest who has passed through the heavens, is portrayed as having ascended beyond the material, visible creation to the eternal realm of God. This imagery emphasizes his unique position and access to the divine presence, highlighting that he is not just a human priest or an angel but the very Son of God who has bridged the gap between the earthly and the divine. This places him as the perfect mediator who can effectively intercede on our behalf. It also contrasts the temporariness of earthly things with the enduring reality of the heavenly realm where believers should focus their hopes.
3. **What does it mean to "hold fast to our confession" according to the author of Hebrews?** Holding fast to our confession is not just about maintaining a body of beliefs but is an active, lived witness to the good things received from God through Jesus. It involves a boldness (parrhesia) to continue declaring our allegiance to God even when faced with opposition or disapproval. It's about

refusing to shrink back from publicly acknowledging the benefits and patronage from God, even in the face of hostility. It is a demonstration of faith and a lived expression of loyalty to God.

4. **How is Jesus described as a sympathetic high priest, and why is this important?** Jesus is described as a sympathetic high priest because he was tested in every way that humans are, yet remained without sin. This shared experience of human struggles, coupled with his sinless nature, means he has a profound understanding of our weaknesses and is able to empathize with our challenges. This makes him uniquely qualified to mediate between God and humanity because his shared humanity allows him to understand and his sinless nature enables him to effectively approach the Holy God.
5. **What is the general function and quality of priests, according to Hebrews 5:1-3?** According to Hebrews 5:1-3, priests are brokers who stand between humans and God, offering gifts and sacrifices on behalf of sins. They must be able to sympathize with those they represent. This sympathy arises from their own weaknesses and vulnerability to sin. This vulnerability means they are not without error themselves, which allows them to relate to and be understanding toward those who are in error or have sinned. They mediate for those who sin in ignorance or accidentally but not for those who willfully sin against God.
6. **How does the author argue for Jesus' appointment as high priest?** The author argues that Jesus was appointed by God, not self-appointed, drawing parallels to Aaron's divine selection. He cites Psalm 2:7 ("You are my Son, today I have begotten you") and Psalm 110:4 ("You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek"). The latter highlights a non-Levitical priesthood,

showing that Jesus, through his divine appointment, is qualified as a priest outside of the Levitical lineage. Furthermore, the affirmation of Jesus' priesthood being "forever" is underscored by his resurrection to an indestructible life, establishing the permanency of his office.

7. **How did Jesus' suffering contribute to his preparation for the high priesthood, as described in Hebrews 5:7-10?** Jesus' suffering wasn't a failure but a vital part of his preparation to be a high priest. He offered prayers and petitions with deep emotion and was heard because of his piety. Through his suffering, Jesus learned obedience, and this experience brought him to perfection—not in the sense of eliminating flaws, but rather being brought to his goal or *telos*. This included the full cycle of his life journey - his incarnation, suffering, death, and ultimately ascension to the right hand of God. Having reached this place, he has become the source of eternal deliverance for all who obey him, highlighting that his sufferings and obedience qualified him for his priestly role.
8. **What practical encouragement does Hebrews 4:14-5:10 offer to believers, both then and now?** This passage urges believers to pray, emphasizing the access to God that Jesus has provided as a primary benefit of his work. It reminds believers that God's help is readily available for those who persevere in faith. It highlights the importance of a sympathetic approach to those in need. Finally, this passage urges believers to view suffering as opportunities to deepen their obedience to God. This is not a blanket acceptance of all suffering but specifically suffering that results from following Christ and doing God's will, and that these experiences can shape them to reflect the virtues of Christ.