

1. No man could appoint himself as a priest, let alone as high priest.
2. Saul took it upon himself to offer sacrifices and lost his kingdom (1 Sam. 13). Korah and his followers tried to make themselves priests, and God judged them (Num. 16). Uzziah tried to enter the temple and burn incense and God smote him with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16–21).
3. Aaron was chosen by God to be the high priest, and he was duly ordained and installed in that office (Ex. 28). He was chosen from men to minister for men.
4. His main task was at the altar: to offer the sacrifices God had appointed. Unless the sacrifices were offered in the right place, by the right person, they were not accepted by God.
5. The subject of ordination stated in Hebrews 5:1 is further developed in Hebrews 5:5–6. Jesus Christ did not appoint Himself as High Priest. He was appointed by God the Father.
6. The quotation in Hebrews 5:5 is from Psalm 2:7. This psalm was already quoted in Hebrews 1:5 to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The emphasis in Hebrews 5:5 is on the priesthood of Jesus Christ, not on His deity.
7. Acts 13:33–34 gives us more insight into this passage. The Apostle Paul quoted Psalm 2:7 and explained what it means. The phrase, “Today have I begotten Thee,” does not refer to the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, but to His resurrection from the dead.
8. The Son of God was “begotten” into a glorious new life in His resurrection. He ascended to heaven in a glorified body to become our High Priest at the throne of grace.
9. When Aaron was ordained to the priesthood, he offered the sacrifices of animals. But Jesus Christ, to become our High Priest, offered the sacrifice of Himself—and then arose from the dead.
10. God the Father not only said, “Thou art My Son” in Psalm 2:7; He also said, “Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:6, quoted from Ps. 110:4).
11. Note: this psalm was also quoted earlier in Hebrews (1:13) to affirm Jesus Christ’s final victory over all His enemies.
12. When Aaron was ordained, God did not speak directly to him and declare his priesthood. But the Father did make this special declaration concerning His Son.
13. There are 2 important factors that made Christ’s priesthood unique and, therefore, His ordination greater.

First, He is a High Priest forever. No Old Testament priest ministered forever because each priest died and relinquished the office to his successor. The word “forever” is an important one in this epistle. At least six times the writer affirms that Christ’s high priesthood is

forever (Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28). And, since He is a Priest forever, He gives His people salvation forever (Heb. 7:23–28).

The second factor that makes Christ's ordination unique is that He belongs to a different order from the Old Testament priests. They belonged to the order of Aaron; He belongs to the order of Melchizedek. This is a key concept in Hebrews.

14. Melchizedek is mentioned in only two places in the entire Old Testament—Genesis 14:17–24 and Psalm 110:4. His name means “King of Righteousness,” and he was also “King of Salem [peace].”
15. But the fascinating thing about Melchizedek is that he was both a priest and a king. Only in Jesus Christ and in pre-Law Melchizedek were these two offices combined. Jesus Christ is a High Priest on a throne.
16. The reason Jesus Christ can be “a Priest forever” is that He belongs to the “order of Melchizedek.”
17. But Melchizedek also pictures our Lord as a heavenly High Priest. Jesus Christ could never have served as a priest when He was on earth because He did not belong to the tribe of Levi.
18. Jesus was born of the seed of David, the tribe of Judah. He became the sacrifice on earth that He might become the High Priest in heaven. All of these truths will be developed in Hebrews 7–10.
19. Our Lord was prepared for His high priestly ministry during His days of ministry on earth (Heb. 5:7–8).
20. The phrase, “In the days of His flesh,” means, “In the days when He was on earth in a human body.” From birth to death, our Lord experienced the sinless infirmities of human nature.
21. He knew what it was to grow and mature (Luke 2:52). He experienced hunger and thirst, as well as weariness (John 4:6–8, 31). He also faced temptations to sin (Matt. 4:1–11) and persecutions from the hands of sinful men.
22. How could the Son of God “learn obedience”? In the same way that a son must learn obedience: by the experiences of life. We must remember that our Lord, in His earthly walk, lived by faith in the Father's will.
23. This preparation also involved the experience of death. The writer of Hebrews (5:7) focuses on our Lord's experience in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36–46).
24. As He faced the Cross, it was not the physical suffering that burdened Jesus, but the fact that He would be made sin and separated from His Father.
25. No matter what trials we meet, Jesus Christ is able to understand our needs and help us. We need never doubt His ability to sympathize and strengthen.