

Hebrews 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The high priest can 'deal gently' (Greek 'metriopathein' - moderate passions) with the ignorant and wayward because he himself is 'beset with weakness.' This shared humanity produces compassion. Yet this also meant Aaronic priests needed sacrifices for their own sins (5:3). Christ surpasses this - He sympathizes with our weakness (4:15) but without sin, thus needing no personal atonement. His sinless yet sympathetic priesthood perfectly meets our need.

Historical Context

Leviticus 4-5 prescribed sacrifices for unintentional sins. The high priest's own weakness meant he could identify with fellow sinners, but it also limited his effectiveness compared to the sinless Christ.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's ability to sympathize without sinning provide better help than mere human compassion?
2. In what ways do your own weaknesses help you minister compassionately to others?

Interlinear Text

μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ

have compassion

G3356

Who can

G1410

G3588

on the ignorant

G50

also

G2532

πλανωμένοις ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περίκειται

on them that are out of the way for also himself is compassed

G4105

G1893

G2532

G846

G4029

ἀσθένειαν

with infirmity

G769

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:15 (Parallel theme): 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.

Hebrews 2:18 (Parallel theme): For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Hebrews 7:28 (Parallel theme): For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

Hebrews 12:13 (Parallel theme): And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

2 Corinthians 12:5 (Parallel theme): Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

Galatians 4:13 (Parallel theme): Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

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