Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

1 March 2015 Message 4 of 12

NLT 40 Minutes

**Better than Aaron**

Title

***Hebrews 4:14–6:20***

**Topic:** Mediators

**Subject:** Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?

**Complement:** Following a lesser mediator than Jesus can lead to death.

**Purpose:** The listeners will follow only Jesus as their mediator.

**Song:** Before the Throne of God Above (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoPyLcY6Zv4 )

**Background:** (https://cbumgardner.wordpress.com/2008/05/08/before-the-throne-of-god-above-charitie-bancroft/)

# Introduction

### Interest: Third-party negotiations are a way of life for many of us—especially with God.

Mediation

#### Especially in Asia, when there is a conflict, someone who knows both parties and is respected by both can often help diffuse tension.

Piece

#### The same is true with God and us. How can sinful people like us approach a holy God? We need a mediator!

How approach?

Christ is mediator

### Need: At Mt. Sinai, the people cried out for Moses to be mediator. But do you seek a mediator besides Jesus?

Moses mediator

#### The world is full of “go-betweens” who claim to bridge the gap between God and man—Catholic priests, Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Mary the Mother of Jesus, leaders of Eastern religions, and even motivational speakers who teach us to tap into our hidden potential. Do they really help?

Mary Mediator

Catholic Priests

#### Are you your own mediator? Or…

Own mediator?

#### Do you trust a mediator to help you reconcile with God? Does this person do the job?

Mediator with God?

### Subject: Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?

Subject

### Background: The readers of today’s passage to the Hebrews were in a very precarious position, ready to dump Jesus as their mediator.

Letter

#### They were Jewish as seen in the many comparisons to the OT—as well as the title “To the Hebrews.”

Christians

Map

Jewish

#### The letter was probably sent from Rome to Israel.

#### The readers were Christians, as they were called “brothers and sisters.”

#### Sadly, these believers were tempted to chuck Jesus, so…

Go back?

#### The word “better” appears 13 times to show Jesus as better than Judaism.

BETTER

#### In fact, Hebrews has often been called the “Better” book

Better book

#### We have already seen Jesus is better in his *person*—to prophets, angels, Moses and Joshua.

Work   
(2 slides)

Person   
(2 slides)

#### Today we begin to see Jesus is better in his priestly work—first to Aaron, where we have a longer text today—over two chapters—beginning at Hebrews 4:14.

### Preview: Today we’ll see three reasons it is BETTER to follow Jesus as our mediator.

3 reasons

(Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?)

# I. Jesus is the Son of God who helps us draw near rather than drift away (4:14-16).

MP

[Christ as God is greater than Aaron, so we should hold firmly to what we believe.]

## Jesus ascended from earth to heaven while Aaron only passed between tabernacle rooms, so we should hold to our faith (4:14).

NAU  
• NLT

4:14

### The NAU “passed through the heavens” is more literal but unclear. The NLT clarifies this as Jesus entering heaven.

Ascension

### This refers to Christ ascending to God.

Curtain

### We know that the OT high priest passed through the curtain from the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies—and only once a year!

Rooms

### But, instead of simply passing through rooms, Jesus ascended to the throne of God and now sits at God’s right hand! Wow!

Contrast  
• Heaven

Son of God 4:14

### This proves that he is indeed the Son of God!

## As our great High Priest, Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses and tells us to boldly approach God’s throne of grace (4:15-16).

Privilege

No Greater Mediator

### Would you approach a lion? Not unless you were his cub!

Cub

### God is far greater than a lion, but he tells us to boldly approach him.

4:15-16

## No other religious leader is God’s own Son—so we should follow no other more.

Subj

(So we are answering this question: why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us? We have seen Jesus as the Son of God who helps us draw near rather than drift away. Why else follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?)

MPI

# II. Jesus is of a higher priesthood than Aaron so is more worthy to follow (5:1-10).

MP

[Christ’s qualifications are better than Judaism’s high priest.]

## The OT grants the high priest amazing privileges and responsibilities.

Scroll

Breastplate

Position

### He represented the people before Almighty God.

### This is seen in the 12 tribes over his heart on the breastplate.

Turban

### His turban was inscribed “Holy to the Lord’ in gold.

### He brought the people’s sins before God once a year (Lev. 16).

Ark of Covenant

## There were two basic qualifications of the Jewish high priest (5:1-4).

High Priest Requisites

### He needed to be a man with human weakness (5:1-3).

5:1-3

### He needed to be chosen by God (5:4).

Called by God

5:4

## Jesus fulfilled these qualifications even more than did Aaron (5:5-10).

Jesus

### God chose both Jesus and Aaron, but Jesus was of the higher Melchizedek priesthood since He was God’s Son (5:5-6).

5:6

• 5:5

Title

Title

Title

### Christ submitted himself to God more than any man, qualifying Him into the Melchizedek priesthood (5:7-10).

5:7-10

5Ws

(Remember how we have seen that there are five warning passages in Hebrews? We saw in the first that abandoning Jesus brings discipline. The second says we forfeit our future rule. But now, what happens when Christians seek another mediator between them and God other than Christ? This will also give us our third reason to follow Jesus as our mediator.)

W2

W1

# III. Rejecting Christ can lead believers to a premature physical death (5:11–6:20).

W3

[Christians who later reject Jesus can die before their time.]

## Third Warning: The danger of continued spiritual immaturity shown in a return to Judaism would lead to an irreversible apostasy and judgment in the fires of Jerusalem (5:11–6:8).

Grow Up

### These Christians should have been mature enough to be teachers, but in their apathy they needed to hear the basics about Christ rather than advanced doctrine in righteousness (5:11-14).

5:12b-13

5:11-12a

#### Some of us should be on meat by now…

5:14

#### But are you actually a BIG BABY?

BIG BABY

### This dangerous situation tempted them to wrongly emphasize the lifeless Old Testament rituals rather than mature doctrines (6:1-3).

6:1

#### What were the “instruction about baptisms” (NLT) or “washings” (NAU) or 6:2?

6:2-3

##### These were rituals of the old order that needed to be abandoned for the new and living way.

Qumran

Summing Up 4-8

##### Of particular importance are the "instructions about washings." This is not a reference to New Testament baptism since the plural form is never used of baptism and the word here (baptismo,ς, "ceremonial washings") is wholly different from the normal word for baptism (ba,ptisma, "baptism"). If the letter addressed converts from the Qumran Community, this reference would have particular significance in light of the many ablutions that were characteristic of this community.

Map of Qumran

#### All OT rituals actually looked to Jesus for their fulfillment.

OT Rituals

### Apostasy by dropping Christianity for the Law would be an irreversible decision where recommitment to Christ was impossible and physical death inevitable (6:4-8). Hebrews 6:4-8 is interpreted in several ways:

6:4-8

#### A Christian who loses his salvation?

1 Loss?

##### This first view is held by Arminians, who rightly understand that some Christians apostatize.

##### However, this must be rejected due to the clear scriptural testimony to eternal security as totally God's responsibility (cf. John 3:16; 10:28-29; Eph. 1:14; 1 John 5:11-13).

#### A hypothetical, impossible situation that could never happen?

• 2 Hypo?

##### This second view finds no support in the text in that a conditional element does not appear in the Greek (although many translations add "if…").

##### The writer speaks as if he knew of some examples.

#### A profession that really wasn’t genuine and thus results in hell?

• 3 Profession

##### This third view cannot be supported since this passage describes real Christians. Parallel passages always describe true believers (not professing believers who are actually non-Christians) in the phrases "enlightened" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-6), "tasted the heavenly gift" ("tasted" refers to full participation; cf. John 4:10; Rom. 6:23; James 1:17-18), and "who have shared in the Holy Spirit" (cf. 1:9; 3:1, 14).

• Death

##### As with the first view, this third view must be rejected due to the clear scriptural testimony to eternal security as totally God's responsibility (cf. John 3:16; 10:28-29; Eph. 1:14; 1 John 5:11-13).

##### This view also assumes that the penalty is hell, but the text does not say this.

#### A Christian who is disqualified for Christian service and will never again return to Christian commitment due to death has the best evidence:

##### The "falling away" refers to Christians defecting from the faith in apostasy.

##### These will be judged with fire (6:8; 10:27)—not eternal hellfire but the temporal fire of the Jewish revolt against the Romans.

Jerusalem (11 slides)

##### The result of such disobedience is that "it is impossible to renew them to repentance" (v. 6a). Note that the text says "repentance," not "it is impossible to renew them to *salvation*."

6:4-8

##### The issue here is a real one where Christians have drifted away from Christ not to eternal damnation, but to never being renewed to commitment to Christ and being judged by physical death.

## An encouragement to spiritual maturity shows confidence that the readers will not apostatize and be judged but they will show faithfulness to the end of their lives (6:9-20).

Subj

6:9-20  
(6 slides)

(Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?)

# Conclusion

MI

### Following a lesser mediator than Jesus can lead to death (Main Idea).

### So why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us (Main Points)?

JESUS

#### Jesus is the Son of God who helps us draw near rather than drift away (4:14-16).

MPI

#### Jesus is of a higher priesthood than Aaron so is more worthy to follow (5:1-10).

MPIII

MPII

#### Rejecting Christ can lead believers to a premature physical death (5:11–6:20).

### Exhortation: Don’t convince God to bring you to heaven early! You could do this by trusting a lesser mediator!

Don’t!

• Acts 5

#### Ananias and Sapphira were believers who went to heaven too early (Acts 5:1-11).

#### God took the lives of some Christians who abuse the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:30).

• 1 Cor 11

#### There is another sin that leads to physical death (1 John 5:16-17).

• 1 Jn 5

• 1 Cor 3

#### Don’t go to heaven “as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:15).

### Commit yourself to Him & Prayer

Commit

# Preliminary Questions

Pray

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### He has told us that Christ is superior to prophets, angels, and Moses.

### Even Joshua didn’t bring them rest.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### We trust the wrong mediators to help us get to God.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### The readers were doubting Jesus was a sufficient mediator.

# Questions

### What were the “instruction about baptisms” (NLT) or “washings” (NAU) or 6:2?

#### These were rituals of the old order that needed to be abandoned for the new and living way.

#### Of particular importance are the "instructions about washings." This is not a reference to New Testament baptism since the plural form is never used of baptism and the word here (baptismo,ς, "ceremonial washings") is wholly different from the normal word for baptism (ba,ptisma, "baptism"). If the letter addressed converts from the Qumran Community, this reference would have particular significance in light of the many ablutions that were characteristic of this community.

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##### This first view is held by Arminians, who rightly understand that some Christians apostatize.

##### However, this must be rejected due to the clear scriptural testimony to eternal security as totally God's responsibility (cf. John 3:16; 10:28-29; Eph. 1:14; 1 John 5:11-13).

#### A hypothetical, impossible situation which a Christian could never find himself

##### This second view finds no support in the text in that a conditional element does not appear in the Greek (although many translations add "if…").

##### The writer speaks as if he knew of some examples.

Title

Title

#### A profession which really was not genuine and thus results in eternal damnation

##### This third view cannot be supported since this passage describes real Christians. Parallel passages always describe true believers (not professing believers who are actually non-Christians) in the phrases "enlightened" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-6), "tasted the heavenly gift" ("tasted" refers to full participation; cf. John 4:10; Rom. 6:23; James 1:17-18), and "who have shared in the Holy Spirit" (cf. 1:9; 3:1, 14).

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#### A Christian who is disqualified for Christian service and will never again return to Christian commitment has the best evidence:

##### The "falling away" refers to Christians who have defected from the faith in apostasy.

##### These will be judged with fire (6:8; 10:27)–not eternal hellfire but the temporal fire of the Jewish revolt against the Romans.

##### The result of such disobedience is that "it is impossible to renew them to repentance" (v. 6a). Note that the text says "repentance," not "it is impossible to renew them to *salvation*."

##### The issue here is a real one where Christians have drifted away from Christ not to eternal damnation, but to never being renewed to commitment to Christ and being judged by physical death.

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Text

# Possible Illustrations

### Text

# Possible Applications

### Text

**Better than Aaron**

***Hebrews 4:14–6:20***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: Since Christ is *superior to Judaism’s high priest* in His position and qualifications the readers should follow Him (4:14–6:20).

# I. Jesus is greater than Aaron, so He encourages us to draw near rather than drift away (4:14-16).

## Jesus ascended from earth to heaven while Aaron only passed between tabernacle rooms, so we should hold to our faith (4:14).

## As our great High Priest, Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses and tells us to boldly approach God’s throne of grace (4:15-16).

# II. Jesus is of a higher priesthood than Aaron so is more worthy to follow (5:1-10).

## There were two basic qualifications of the Jewish high priest (5:1-4).

### He needed to be a man with human weakness (5:1-3).

### He needed to be chosen by God (5:4).

## Jesus fulfilled these qualifications even more than did Aaron (5:5-10).

### God chose both Jesus and Aaron, but Jesus was of the higher Melchizedek priesthood since He was God’s Son (5:5-6).

### Christ submitted himself to God more than any man, qualifying Him into the Melchizedek priesthood (5:7-10).

# III. Third Warning: Rejecting Christ would lead these believers to premature physical death (5:11–6:20).

## Third Warning: The danger of continued spiritual immaturity shown in a return to Judaism would lead to an irreversible apostasy and judgment in the fires of Jerusalem (5:11–6:8).

### These Christians should have been mature enough to be teachers, but their laziness to pursue Christ resulted in dullness of hearing so that they still needed to be taught the basics about Christ rather than advanced doctrine in righteousness (5:11-14).

### This dangerous situation caused them to be susceptible to wrongly emphasize the lifeless Old Testament rituals[[1]](#footnote-1) rather than mature doctrines (6:1-3).

### Apostasy by dropping Christianity for the Law would be an irreversible decision where recommitment to Christ was impossible and physical death inevitable (6:4-8).[[2]](#footnote-2)

## An encouragement to spiritual maturity shows confidence that the readers will not apostatize and be judged but they will show faithfulness to the end of their lives (6:9-20).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will follow only Jesus as their mediator.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Third-party negotiations are a way of life for many of us—especially with God.

### Need: Do you seek a mediator besides Jesus?

### Subject: Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?

### Background: The readers of today’s text were in a very precarious position, ready to dump Jesus as their mediator.

### Preview: Today we’ll see three reasons to follow Jesus as our mediator.

### Text: We have a longer text today—over two chapters—beginning at Hebrews 4:14.

(Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?)

# I. Jesus is the Son of God who helps us draw near rather than drift away (4:14-16).

## Jesus ascended from earth to heaven while Aaron only passed between tabernacle rooms, so we should hold to our faith (4:14).

## As our great High Priest, Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses and tells us to boldly approach God’s throne of grace (4:15-16).

## No other religious leader is God’s own Son—so we should follow no other more.

# II. Jesus is of a higher priesthood than Aaron so is more worthy to follow (5:1-10).

## There were two basic qualifications of the Jewish high priest (5:1-4).

### He needed to be a man with human weakness (5:1-3).

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## Jesus fulfilled these qualifications even more than did Aaron (5:5-10).

### God chose both Jesus and Aaron, but Jesus was of the higher Melchizedek priesthood since He was God’s Son (5:5-6).

### Christ submitted himself to God more than any man, qualifying Him into the Melchizedek priesthood (5:7-10).

# III. Rejecting Christ can lead believers to a premature physical death (5:11–6:20).

## Third Warning: The danger of continued spiritual immaturity shown in a return to Judaism would lead to an irreversible apostasy and judgment in the fires of Jerusalem (5:11–6:8).

### These Christians should have been mature enough to be teachers, but in their apathy they needed to hear the basics about Christ rather than advanced doctrine in righteousness (5:11-14).

### This dangerous situation tempted them to wrongly emphasize the lifeless Old Testament rituals rather than mature doctrines (6:1-3).

### Apostasy by dropping Christianity for the Law would be an irreversible decision where recommitment to Christ was impossible and physical death inevitable (6:4-8).

## An encouragement to spiritual maturity shows confidence that the readers will not apostatize and be judged but they will show faithfulness to the end of their lives (6:9-20).

(Why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us?)

# Conclusion

### Following a lesser mediator than Jesus can lead to death (Main Idea).

### So why follow Jesus as our mediator between God and us (Main Points)?

#### Jesus is the Son of God who helps us draw near rather than drift away (4:14-16).

#### Jesus is of a higher priesthood than Aaron so is more worthy to follow (5:1-10).

#### Rejecting Christ can lead believers to a premature physical death (5:11–6:20).

### Exhortation: Don’t convince God to bring you to heaven early! You could do this by trusting a lesser mediator!

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

1 March 2015

Message 4 of 12

**Better than Aaron**

***Hebrews 4:14–6:20***

# Introduction

### Third-party negotiations are a way of life for many of us—especially with God.

### Why follow Jesus as our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ between God and us?

# I. Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who helps us draw near rather than drift away (4:14-16).

## Jesus ascended from earth to heaven while Aaron only passed between tabernacle rooms, so we should hold to our faith (4:14).

## As our great High Priest, Christ sympathizes with our weaknesses and tells us to boldly approach God’s throne of grace (4:15-16).

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### These Christians should have been mature enough to be teachers, but in their apathy they needed to hear the basics about Christ rather than advanced doctrine in righteousness (5:11-14).

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## An encouragement to spiritual maturity shows confidence that the readers will not apostatize and be judged but they will show faithfulness to the end of their lives (6:9-20).

# Conclusion

### Following a lesser mediator than Jesus can lead to death (Main Idea).

### Don’t convince God to bring you to heaven early!

**Thought Questions**

1. Read the passage aloud. Contrast these two high priests:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Aaron** | **Jesus** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. Is the solution presented to 6:4-8 convincing to you? Why or why not?

Text

1. How does today’s message apply to your own Christian experience?

Text

1. These rituals of the old order needed to be abandoned for the new and living way. Of particular importance are the "instructions about washings." This is not a reference to New Testament baptism since the plural form is never used of baptism and the word here (baptismo,ς, "ceremonial washings") is wholly different from the normal word for baptism (ba,ptisma, "baptism"). If the letter addressed converts from the Qumran Community, the word would have particular significance in light of the many ablutions that were characteristic of this community. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hebrews 6:4-8 is interpreted in several ways: (1) a Christian who loses his salvation, (2) a hypothetical, impossible situation which a Christian could never find himself, (3) a profession which really was not genuine and thus results in eternal damnation, and (4) a Christian who is disqualified for Christian service and will never again return to Christian commitment. The first view must be rejected due to the clear scriptural testimony to eternal security as totally God's responsibility (cf. John 3:16; 10:28-29; Eph. 1:14; 1 John 5:11-13). The second view finds no support in the text in that a conditional element does not appear in the Greek (although many translations add "if…") and the writer speaks as if he did know some examples. The third view cannot be supported since true believers (not professing believers who are actually non-Christians) are always in view in parallel passages which use the phrases "enlightened" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3-6), "tasted the heavenly gift" ("tasted" refers to full participation; cf. John 4:10; Rom. 6:23; James 1:17-18), and "who have shared in the Holy Spirit" (cf. 1:9; 3:1, 14). The fourth view has the best evidence. The "falling away" refers to Christians who have defected from the faith in apostasy. These will be judged with fire (6:8; 10:27)–not eternal hellfire but the temporal fire of the Jewish revolt against the Romans (see occasion on page 257). The result of such disobedience is that "it is impossible to renew them to repentance" (v. 6a). Note that the text says "repentance," not "it is impossible to renew them to *salvation*." The issue here is a real one where Christians have drifted away from Christ not to eternal damnation, but to never being renewed to commitment to Christ and being judged by physical death. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)