

Christ, Our High Priest

Sunday, September 10th, 1989

Hebrews 4:14-16

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. (15) For we have not a 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. (16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Our subject today is: "Jesus Christ Our Great High Priest." I'll be reading from the Book of Hebrews Chapter 4: verses 14, 15, and 16. If you have a Bible, I would like very much for you to turn to Hebrews 4:14. I'm going to start with Hebrews 4 and then read several other passages from the Book of Hebrews. Listen carefully now to this passage of scripture.

The Bible is written to believers, mainly believers. Every promise in the Word of God in Christ is to the believer. Paul is saying here in Hebrews 4:14 (Paul is the author of Hebrews) to believers, to the children of God, "*Seeing then we have a High Priest (a great High Priest) that is passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ the Son of God. Let us then, hold fast our profession for we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but He was as in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore (now seeing that we have a great High Priest, let us therefore) come boldly come unto the throne of grace that we (believers, children of God), may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*"

My friend, every true believer, every child of God is a priest. Did you know that? That is true; every believer is a priest unto God. I am a priest and if you are a believer, you are a priest. The least believer and the oldest believer is a priest. That is what the scripture says, in Revelation 1: 5 and 6; "*Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us (those whom he washed in His own blood and those whom He loved), He hath made us kings and priests.*" We are kings and priests unto God, His Father.

In First Peter 2:5, the scripture says, "*You also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*" Those who are the spiritual temple or house of God are a holy priesthood to offer up sacrifices and spiritual sacrifices. We have sacrifices to offer also. "*We are a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*"

Now, in First Peter 2:9, listen to this, *“You are a chosen generation, a kingly royal priesthood. He hath made us kings and priests unto our God.”* So, we are a royal priesthood.

I could read many other scriptures. But, these and other scriptures teach that every believer knows God. Every believer, a child of God, believes God and is welcome into the very presence, the Holy presence of God. Daily, he comes into the presence of God as a priest of God to offer unto God spiritual sacrifices.

You may say, “What are some of these spiritual sacrifices?” There is praise, the sacrifice of praise. There is prayer and thanksgiving. These are all spiritual sacrifices. There is intercession, praying for one another, worship and reverence. These are spiritual sacrifices. As priests of God, we bring them and they are acceptable. They are well pleasing to God through Christ Jesus.

Listen to me carefully. Do you understand what I am saying? Every believer is a priest. Every believer is a saint. Somehow, these terms have fallen into bad company. They talk about a man being made a saint after he is dead and some miracle is done in his name or in his memory. He is even canonized by the church and later becomes a saint. It is not so! Every believer is a saint and is sanctified in Christ Jesus. Every believer is a priest.

Today, in many circles, they have special priesthods and special men who are ordained by the church to be priests. This is not so, not according to the Word of God. Every believer is a priest and that is what the scripture teaches. Every believer is a priest.

But, like Israel of old, every believer still has a great High Priest. While every believer is a priest, there is according to the Word of God and before God, a High Priest. Before God the Father there is a High Priest. *“Seeing therefore, we have a great High Priest before the Father who is Jesus Christ the Son of God.”* The scripture tells us who He is. We are all priests but there is only one great High Priest. We have a High Priest.

Let me show you that from the scripture. Do you have your Bible? If you don't, you can write these scriptures down. In Hebrews 2:17, it says, *“Wherefore, in all things, it behoved Him, Jesus Christ, to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful, faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God. To make reconciliation for the sins of His people.”* What am I saying? I am saying that every believer is a priest. That is what God says. There are kings and priests, a royal priesthood.

We have but one great High Priest and that is Jesus Christ the Son of God. I am showing you from the scriptures that we have that great High Priest. *“It behoved Him to come to*

this earth, to be made in the likeness of flesh, to take upon Himself the form of a servant, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. To be tempted in all points as we are that He might be unto us a faithful and merciful High Priest. Who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He was tested, tempted, and tried in all points as we are, yet without sin."

Listen to Hebrews 3:1; He is talking to believers. They are not holy because they don't have any sin but they are holy in Christ. They are holy brethren. The scripture says, *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the Holy calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Jesus Christ."* They have been called of God. He is the apostle of our profession and He is the High Priest, the High Priest, not (a) High Priest.

In Hebrews 4:14 it says, *"Seeing then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens (Jesus Christ the Son of God), let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we might find mercy and grace to help us in time of need."* Do you understand what the scripture is teaching here? Every believer, every child of God knows God, and can come into the Holy presence of God. He can confess his own sins and seek mercy, forgiveness and grace from God. He can offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ because every believer is a priest. We must have and do have; it hasn't changed from the beginning, a great High Priest and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

A friend of mine sometime ago, died in one of the local hospitals in this area. The family was in the waiting room and the nurse came in. The family was greatly grieved and broken hearted. The nurse said to the family, "Would you like to see a priest?" One member of the family, a son, looked at the nurse and replied, "No thank you, we wouldn't, we have a High Priest. We have a great High Priest, Jesus Christ." That is what the author is saying here; *"The Son of God who has passed into the heavens and having that High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near unto God before the throne of grace in full assurance of faith."* We have a High Priest.

Now, if you will take the Book of Hebrews and the Old Testament scriptures and you will study the High Priest of Israel, you will understand more the person and work of our Great High Priest. They were types of Christ and they were pictures of Christ Jesus. You will understand more of the blessings that we have in Him.

So, who was the High Priest? What was the High Priest? What were the duties of the High Priest in the Old Testament? Where did it come from? Who appointed it? What did He do?

First of all, the High Priest in the Old Testament was a man; that's right; he was a man. In Hebrews 5:1, it is quoted, "*For every high priest*" (without exception), "*is taken from among men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*". *Who can have compassion on the ignorant because he also is compassed with infirmity.*" He also is a man. So, every high priest throughout the Old Testament was a man taken from among men.

Jesus Christ, our great High Priest became a man. He was "*Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, made like His brethren. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, tempted in all points like as we are, made in the likeness of sinful flesh.*" He became a man. In that sense, the Old Testament high priest typified Jesus Christ our great High Priest. They were men and He's a man.

Secondly: In Hebrews 5 (where I am reading), a man was a high priest and he died. Someone else would take his place. But, the high priest was selected and ordained of God. In Hebrews 5:4, it says, "*No man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God.*" The high priest was anointed, appointed, selected, ordained and called of God to be the high priest.

So, Jesus Christ, "*Yea, the Son of God glorified not Himself to be made the High Priest.*" *But, He that said unto Him, "Thou art My Son," He made Him our great High Priest. Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.*" These fellows were pictures of Christ, but not perfect pictures by any means. They fell short in many areas. God made Jesus Christ our High Priest.

You might say, "Preacher, you say that everyone is a priest; where do you get that?" God said so. Why do you say that Jesus Christ is the great High Priest of every believer? God said so. God made Him the High Priest. "*He who said unto Him, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Sit Thee on My right hand til I make Your enemies Your footstool.*" He made Him! God ordained Him to be the High Priest.

Thirdly: The high priest of Old Testament days was ordained of God. Listen to this, this is so important; "*He was ordained of God for men in things pertaining to God.*" In other words, nobody came into the Holy of Holies but the high priest. No one offered the atoning sacrifice but the high priest. The high priest represented God to men and men to God.

1. The Tabernacle
2. A high priest
3. And blood, for a sin offering

The same thing is true today. The Tabernacle is Christ; *“He tabernacled among us. A body hast Thou prepared Me.”* He is the great High Priest. *“We have a High Priest, therefore, come boldly unto the presence of God.”* This blood was His own blood. So, this high priest of the Old Testament was ordained of God for men in everything pertaining to God. He represented all the people of God.

He appeared before God in their stead. They didn't all come. He came representing those people. He was the only one who could come into the Holy of Holies. He was the only one who sprinkled the blood on the Mercy Seat over the Ark. The high priest stood between a Holy God and sinful men. He stood there with something to offer. He stood there with the sin offering and the atonement. It was impossible to approach God except through the high priest.

In all of these things, we, though we are kings and priests unto God, *“We have a great High Priest over the House of God.”* He was ordained and appointed of God for us in everything pertaining to God. He was appointed over holiness, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. *“In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”*

In Galatians 4: 4 and 5, the scripture says, *“In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law.”* That is why God sent Him. He said, *“This is My Son; hear ye Him.”* And again, *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake to our fathers by the prophets hath in these last days, spoken to us by His Son.”* God sent Jesus Christ. God ordained and appointed and anointed Jesus Christ our Lord.

He represents us before God. God will not speak to or be spoken to by a sinner except through Christ. No man can know God or come to God except through Christ Jesus, our great High Priest. He said, *“I'm the way the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me.”* He said, *“No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten hath declared Him. No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”* They said, *“Well, show us the Father.”* He said, *“He that hath seen Me hath seen My Father.”*

My friends, I told you a moment ago that the Old Testament high priest *“Entered into the Holy of Holies once a year, not without blood.”* He was the only one who could come into the Shechinah glory of God and offer a sacrifice, an atonement in the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies. But Jesus Christ, listen to this, Hebrews 9: 11 and 12; *“He entered not into the Holy place made with hands but Christ verily entered into heaven itself before the throne of God Almighty, making an atonement for our sin.”*

That's the difference in this Old Testament priesthood and the Priesthood of Christ. There were many Old Testament high priests but Christ is one. There were many of them. Aaron was a high priest. There were many different ones after him.

Then, these Old Testament priests served for a brief time. They served a lifetime and then they died. *"Christ is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."* Do you remember Melchizedek who met Abraham out there in the wilderness? He gave him bread and wine and blessed him. He was called the Priest of God and the King of Salem, the great High Priest of God. That is a picture of Christ, *"Without father, without mother, without beginning of days, without end of days, being a priest of God forever and forever."* That's our High Priest.

Then, these Old Testament priests offered many sacrifices. Think how many times that Passover was served. Think how many times that atoning sacrifice was served. Think how many times it was made. *"Christ, our great High Priest, by one offering hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified."* There was one sacrifice. You may say, "How can one death, one sacrifice and one time shedding of blood, put away sins of so very, very many?" The reason is because of who He is.

These Old Testament priests offered animal blood. Christ gave Himself and His own blood. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

These Old Testament priests ministered in a tabernacle on this earth. *"Christ entered not a tabernacle made with hands; He entered into heaven itself. And, by one offering, He perfected forever, every believer. He obtained eternal redemption for us."* He put away sin. You see; the sacrifices of the Old Testament could not put away sin.

A lot of people have the idea that people were saved in different ways. Some thought they were saved under innocence, conscience, judges, law and grace. No, no, no! One has always redeemed men. They have been redeemed through the grace of God through faith in the blood of the Lamb.

This Old Testament animal sacrifice could not put away sin. All the blood of bulls and goats on Jewish altars slain, could never remove our guilt or cleanse our stain. But, the blood sacrifice will not put away human sin. Christ, being human and Divine. He could be a man and God. As God, He could satisfy. As man, He could suffer and die. He effectually put away all of our sin.

You will notice something about the tabernacle. There were no chairs in there. There were seven pieces of furniture but no chair. Do you know why? The reason is because their sacrifices, works, offerings and all these ceremonies were never finished. They could never put away sin. *“But He, after He had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down having finished His work.”*

Go to Hebrews 9: 11 and 12 again. Listen to this, *“But Christ being come a High Priest of good things to come.”* What are those good things? They are sanctification, justification, eternal life, good things to come *by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is not of this building* or that tabernacle in the wilderness or temple over there. *“He tabernacled among us. A body hast Thou prepared me,”* He said. *“The Word was made flesh and tabernacled or dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.”*

Read on. *“By a greater and more perfect tabernacle, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once.”* That is the reason we don’t celebrate mass; it’s because Christ doesn’t die but once. The blood is not shed over, and over and over again. The body of Christ is not broken over, and over again. *“By one offering He hath perfected forever. By His blood, He entered once into the holy place within the veil.”*

You see; when Christ died on the cross, the veil was rent in twain.” We don’t have any secret sanctuary. We don’t have any enter sanctums. We don’t have any place where someone is secret and goes behind a veil and does some hocus-pocus in religion. We don’t throw water either. That is all done away. The ceremony and sacrifice is over. *“The veil has been rent into.”* The Holy of Holies is open. Everyone that is a priest comes to God.

“But, we have a High Priest and He is Jesus Christ the Son of God.” Nobody else holds this office. *“Having obtained, He entered once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* He obtained it and that is (past tense). He obtained it! It is not being obtained; He obtained it and it is finished and done. *“The great transaction is done. I am My Lord’s and He is mine.”*

In Hebrews 9:15 says, *“For this cause He is the High Priest of good things to come,”* because, He died on the cross for our sins, because He wrought out a perfect righteousness. Because, He entered once into the Holy Place, because, He sat down at the right hand of God. *“For this cause, He only is the Mediator of the New Covenant.”* He only is the Mediator.

What is that new Covenant? It is the Covenant of grace. It is the opposite of the covenant of works. It is not a covenant of law, morality or good works. It is the Covenant of God's grace. It is the only place where a sinner can have any hope. It is the only place where you will have a prayer. It is the only place where you will have an opportunity to know God. He is the Mediator. There is no other.

You can't pray to a saint, dead man or a woman. You can only pray to God through Christ. He is the Mediator. He is the great High Priest. *"He has somewhat to offer."* These folks don't have anything to offer. First Timothy 2:5 says, *"There's one God and there's one Mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus. And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him and to all that believe Him."*

Now, do you understand a little better that scripture that I read at the beginning? Do you? Look at it again, in Hebrews 4:14; "Seeing then, (this is not an opinion, human thought or theory). "Seeing, (where did you see it)? You saw it in the Word of God and in the promise of God. You saw truth presented in God's Word. *"Seeing then, we have a High Priest."*

You know, the whole Old Testament tells us that someone is coming. *"He will be the seed of woman; He'll be the Son of God; He'll be the seed of Abraham; He'll be the root of Jesse, the Tribe of Judah, and the family of David. He'll be forever like Melchizedek, a King like David, and a prophet like Moses."*

The New Testament says, "He has come." He is here. He is the great High Priest. He is God. *"His name is Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. He is a High Priest. He is exalted above exaltation, our great High Priest."* That is where I want to go, to be with the High Priest *"That is passed into the heaven."*

He was on earth. He was raised from the grave and He is Jesus the Son of God. *"So, let's hold fast to our profession and let's come boldly into the presence of God. We will find mercy and grace to help in time of need."*