

“Our Triumphant High Priest” (Hebrews 4:15)

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Even though Jesus was very God, He identified Himself with us in all the things we experience and must go through as we live our earthly journey. He is the exalted One, yet humbled Himself to be one of us with us. He brings us the hope of living on a higher plane than that into which we were born. He is not only the atonement but is our access to the Father. As the text states, He is our High Priest.

The Function of a priest is to perform the work of mediator between God and humanity. The prophets spoke to the people for God. This is really the work of present day ministers, pastors and spiritual leaders. We can pray for people, but we cannot be their mediator in the sense of the OT priesthood. That was all fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Now He is the only adequate and effective mediator for all of humanity.

A priest is one who speaks to God for humanity. The priest can make offerings and intercedes for those whom s/he represents. Because of a consciousness of sin and failure, humanity through the ages had a need for somebody to speak to God on their behalf and obtain the favour of God for them. Reading the Book of Hebrews we discover the main driving point of the writer to be the fact that Jesus and Jesus alone is our High Priest. Hebrews confirms for the seeker that Jesus has all the necessary qualifications to be the High Priest.

First, He is one with us. In C5 we are told that *every high priest is taken from among men, and is ordained in things pertaining to God.* The priest needs to be one with whom s/he represents. Jesus was born of the Virgin, lived in the midst of humanity, shared the human walk, sufferings, temptations and even human death. Jesus became familiar with our infirmities. We must remember that while yet in earthly flesh He called on the Father with strong crying and tears for deliverance. From this we know He can sympathize perfectly with us whom He came to seek and to save.

Jesus was also without sin. In this one respect, He was not like us. He was tempted in all points as we are yet remained without sin. This is important because Sin is humanity’s greatest problem. This is what we need our greatest help with. Had Jesus been contaminated with sin, He could not have been the Saviour. This is why Scripture speaks of His oneness with us and yet separate from us.

The ordinary priest had to make an offering first for his own sin and then he had to make an offering for the sins of the people. But Jesus had no sins of his own for which He had to make an offering. This then put Him in a class by Himself. He is the exclusive and adequate High Priest. It is not Man, but Jesus Himself who is the mediator between God and human kind. He is the better priest because He is the heaven appointed One.

The Book of Hebrews tells us that every priest must be appointed of God. Some translations substitute the word, *appointed* with the word, *anointed*. No one dare to take this office on them self. Such a one has to be one with humanity and also one who is acceptable to God. Humanity, you and I, sometimes prove inadequate, inefficient or become delinquent. Jesus is and always will be able to take care of our interests at the throne of grace.

Hebrews teaches us that Christ is our abiding High Priest. He draws a contrast between the priesthood of Jesus and that of the sons of Aaron. His priesthood is abiding while theirs was transitory. With them it was a priesthood of succession. A son took over from his father by a birth rite. This was not so with Jesus. In this respect He was much like Melchizedek. Melchizedek appeared in the OT without a record of genealogy. He didn't belong to the order of priests. He came on the scene by divine appointment rather than by succession. This was also the way with Jesus. In a greater sense, he transcends Melchizedek because He conquered death and now lives at the Father's right hand making intercession for all His people.

There may be some among you who might want to ask, *Just what is the value of the priesthood of Christ to me? What does it do for me? What can I get out of it?* Such questions are not unusual, especially for people who do not have a firm commitment to Jesus Christ. These questions put in relation with things to come cannot be always answered satisfactorily. Paul taught that his preaching was foolishness to those who refused to believe. The truth is, what you get out of anything in this life and in this world that is not related to Jesus Christ or eternity, is going to be very little. What you get out of many things are heartaches, remorse, bitterness, brokenness, losses and regrets. *What can "I" get out of Christ as "my" High Priest;* my only answer is, *much in every way*. In fact when one thinks of it in terms of one's relationship to God, my only answer is, *it means everything!* It means we have a sufficient offering for sin. Hebrews informs us He is not only our priest, but also our offering for sin. In the OT, Aaron brought the blood of animals. Jesus brought His own blood for our sin. By doing this, He settled the problem of our sin in the sight of the Father. The animal blood in the OT was only a shadow of what was to come, all pointing to the cross of Christ's spilled blood. It was the death of Jesus, His offering on Calvary that had real and eternal value. His shed blood made possible the propitiation of our sins so that when we come to Him, we are conscious that the issue of our sin is settled once and forever. This is the crux of it all. Without Christ's blood spilled at Calvary, there would have been no redemption, only Hell and eternal loss. When we accept Jesus as the atonement for our sin and faithfully trust Him, it places us beyond the power of sin to destroy. As long as we keep His blood between our sin and us, and as long as we give diligence to make our calling and election sure, keeping ourselves in the love of God, we are forever safe.

Praise God that through Jesus giving Himself for us, the power of sin to damn us is destroyed. It is on this point that Hebrews warns against rejecting Jesus and His offering. To willingly do so is to reject salvation and to be eternally lost.

For any who accept Christ there comes the glorious assurance that the sin question is settled. Salvation becomes an indubitable reality. *We know in whom we have believed and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day.*

As we remember Easter and travel through Easter-tide, we come confident in the words of 1 Jn 1:9; *IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.*

**My invitation to you today is, come, be confident, for you have a High Priest. *For He is able to keep that which you've committed unto Him against that day.*
Amen.**