

Jesus, Our Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14-16

The Book of Hebrews is about the superiority of Jesus Christ. He is superior over angels (Hebrews 1-2), over Moses (Heb. 3), over Joshua (Heb. 4), and even over Aaron and the whole Old Testament levitical priesthood.

A high priest functions as the mediator between the people and God. Once a year (on the Day of Atonement), the high priest alone would go into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for all the sins of the nation. Hebrews 4:14-16 gives us four reasons why Jesus is greater than Aaron or any of the Old Testament high priests.

1. Because of Christ's _____

Jesus is our great high priest who has passed through the heavens (cf. Heb. 10:21). He is our great high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5:6). Rather than entering the Holy of Holies in the temple, He ascended into the very presence of God and sat down at the Father's right hand (Hebrews 1:3; 7:26; Ps. 110:1).

Jesus is also great in His person because He is God in human flesh (Heb. 2:17). He fully, totally and completely finished the work of redemption. He offered His blood as once for all atonement for man's sin (1 Peter 1:18-19; Hebrews 10:3-4; 10).

The previous high priests did not stay in the presence of God in the Holy of Holies after their sacrifice but Jesus Christ sat down at the right hand of God (Heb. 9:24; 10:12).

2. Because of Christ's _____

Jesus is our sympathetic high priest. He is not far removed from our daily struggles with our trials and temptations. We have a mediator who understands our problems. Since He became a man and suffered all that we experience, He sympathizes with our weaknesses. He was tempted in all things like we are and He suffered (Heb. 2:10, 18; Isaiah 53:3). He tasted the greatest and deepest pain – He was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21).

3. Because of Christ's _____

Jesus knew how it was to be tempted in every way, yet He did not sin (Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22). And because of that He understands what we are going through and He is able to come to our aid when we are tempted (2:18).

4. Because of Christ's _____

Heb. 4:16 calls us to draw near with confidence (cf. Heb. 7:25; 10:1; 11:6; 12:18, 22), to approach God's throne with a sincere heart and full assurance of faith. There no need to be afraid of coming before God because His throne is not a throne of judgment but a throne of *grace*, a throne where we find what we desperately need - God's mercy and grace. Mercy is characterized as God's tender compassion and grace is His goodness and love (2 Cor. 5:18). And Christ has made that access possible by His own precious blood (Eph. 3:12).

Since Jesus is our great high priest, the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens, we must hold fast our confession. And, since Jesus is a high priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses, we should draw near to the throne of grace for help in our times of need.