

So Great a High Priest

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Internet Sources)

Introduction:

- A. Jew or Gentile, devout or worldly, believers in Jehovah or pagan to the core, Jesus can be trusted - Heb. 4:10-16
 - 1. Most of the Jews in the days of the apostle Paul were deeply disillusioned with Hellenized, politicized Judaism
 - 2. Especially the corrupt priesthood who loved money and power, and had increasingly distanced themselves from the common man
- B. The Hebrew writer presents Jesus Christ as the Divine epitome of a pure and sympathetic priest
 - 1. Salvation isn't just about escaping Hell; it is about gaining eternal life.
 - 2. It is about changing humankind's relationship with God to that of family and friends in blessed fellowship
 - 3. And at its foundation must be an arbitrator, a priest who can be trusted without reservation; Christ is that priest
 - 4. This text illuminates the characteristics that make Jesus worthy to be called our great High Priest.

I. OUR HIGH PRIEST IS SUPERIOR

- A. He is superior in His Person
 - 1. The ancient Jews depended on the high priest. He represented them to the Lord, interceded for them, offered the sacrifices that atoned for their sins, and was central to their worship and relationship with God.
 - 2. The problem with the Jewish high priests was that they were human, they were sinners, they needed forgiveness, and they were prone to failure, just like the people they represented.
 - 3. Our High Priest is superior because He is not just a human High Priest.
 - 4. He is the Son of God. He is sinless. He does not need forgiveness, for He is perfect.
- B. He is superior in His Performance
 - 1. Every year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest offered a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Before he could enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement, he had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins.
 - 2. Jesus is superior in His performance as High Priest because He had no sins when making atonement for our sins - 1Peter 2:22-24.
 - 3. He did not offer the blood of an animal; He offered His own - Heb. 13:12
 - 4. He does not have to repeat His sacrifice - Heb. 10:11-12.
 - 5. He offered His blood as eternal payment for our sin debt - Heb. 9:24-26
- C. He is superior in His People
 - 1. The Jews had become a fickle people. No matter how many times their priests made atonement, they were prone to quickly abandon their commitment to the Lord.
 - 2. Jesus' people hold fast to their profession. (seize or take hold of)

3. We all fall from time to time, but true believers do not walk away from Him - 2Cor. 5:17; 1John 2:1-2
4. Jesus is superior to an earthly high priest because His true followers are committed to Him and to His will

II. OUR HIGH PRIEST IS SYMPATHETIC

A. Because of His Human Identity

1. Jesus is “touched with the feelings of our infirmities.” A human priest is not omniscient and simply cannot know how others feel. His experiences are limited to himself. Jesus can.
2. The phrase “touched with the feeling” is *sumpatheo* - “to feel sympathy with, to commiserate, to have compassion, be touched with a feeling of, coupled with a desire to help.” It is a form of caring heart that reaches out to help the hurting.
3. How did Jesus prove to us this kind of heart? By coming here and living as a man - John 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:5-8.
4. In so doing, Jesus accomplished two things:
 - a. By living it literally, God the Son experienced something He could not do in heaven, qualifying Him to be High Priest Heb. 5:1-9
 - b. And gave He us the means by which we can be confident in Him as a sympathetic High Priest - Heb. 4:15

B. While He was here He knew:

1. Hunger - Matt. 4:2; 21:18
2. Thirst - John 4:7; 19:28
3. Fear - Luke 22:41-42
4. Weariness - Mark 4:38; John 4:6
5. Poverty - Matt. 8:20
6. Grief - John 11:33-35; Luke 19:41
7. Abandonment - Mark 14:50
8. Death - John 19:30
9. Pain - Isa. 52:14; 53:4-6
10. Anger - Mark 3:5
11. Hatred - Mark 11:18
12. Indignation - John 2:13-17; Mark 11:15-17
13. Need - Luke 8:3
14. Submission - Luke 2:52
15. Disappointment - Luke 22:61; Matt. 23:37
16. Misunderstanding - Mark 3:21; Matt. 11:18
17. Sadness - Isa. 53:3; Matt. 26:37-38
18. Betrayal - Mark 14:11
19. He Had Questions - Luke 2:46
20. He Grew In Wisdom - Luke 2:40
21. He Learned Obedience - Heb. 5:8
22. He Socialized - John 2:1-2
23. He Prayed - Mark 1:35; 6:46

- 24. He Was Tempted - Matt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15
- 25. Love - Mark 10:21; John 11:5
- 26. Friendship - Matt. 11:19; John 11:11; 15:13-15
- 27. Compassion - Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32
- 28. Joy - Heb. 12:2
- 29. Wonder - Matt. 8:10; Mark 6:6
- 30. Family - Mark 3:31-32; Matt. 13:56; John 19:25-27
- C. He knows our pain and pleasure. He understands our trials and triumphs. This should be a source of great comfort and confidence to us
- D. Because of His Heavenly Integrity
 - 1. Jesus was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. His temptation modeled that of Eve in Eden
 - a. Gen. 3:6; Matt. 4:1-11; 1John 2:16
 - 2. His temptations were tailored to fit Him; just as ours are made to fit us
 - 3. When Jesus was tempted, it was not to see whether or not He would sin; it was to prove to us that He would not sin, and in so doing become the perfect High Priest - 2Cor. 5:21; 1John 3:5.
 - 4. That Jesus did not sin does not change the fact that the temptations were real and the danger was genuine. The fact that He endured them and overcame them enabled Him to comfort us when we are tempted.

III. OUR HIGH PRIEST IS OUR SANCTUARY

- A. His Petition - "Come boldly unto the throne of grace" - Heb. 4:16
 - 1. In ancient times, a king could only be approached when he invited you to approach him - Esther 4:11. The Jews had that same idea of God.
 - 2. Under the Law, only the high priest could come before God on only one day each year, and only with the blood of an innocent sacrifice.
 - 3. Now, the throne of God is not a throne of judgment; it is a throne of grace. The saints of God can approach the Lord at anytime to seek help
- B. His Promise - "obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"
 - 1. Psalm 46:1, 63:7, 55:22; Matt. 11:28; 1Peter 5:7; Phil. 4:6-7

Conclusion:

- A. We have a great High Priest who is superior in every way, sympathetic in every need, and our sanctuary in every trial.
- B. Heb. 4:16 - "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."