

Hebrews 2.17

Merciful and Faithful

Therefore - because God's intention was to save men rather than angels, it tells us something vital about the nature of the one who was to come. He HAD to be ONE OF US. For he would stand in our place. the job of the priest is to stand between man and God and represent man to God. In particular, the priest was the one who carried the sacrifices for atonement and pardon, and the petitions of the people to be heard. He was the representative human who stood before God on behalf of all the people of God. Because of all that - He who was God, had to be made like us in the aspect of our nature. So that, He might be merciful toward us, and faithful toward God

I. A MERCIFUL HIGH PRIEST

It would not do to have a high priest who does not feel the need of mercy on behalf of the ones for whom he pleads. Particularly when the job He came to do was not only to offer the sacrifice but to BE the sacrifice... this redoubles the need for the

willingness of the priest to perform the job faithfully.

a. If this is absent it leads to the duties being performed in a manner that is not consistent with God's command. We have a few OT examples of what this might look like.

i. The sons (and family) of Eli

1 Sam 2.12-17

1 Sam 2.27-31

ii. The unfaithful shepherds of Ezekiel's day

Ezekiel 34.1-10

b. But the fact is that God Himself sent Christ to be a merciful High Priest so that we would be cared for in all the ways needed

Ezekiel 34.11-14

c. He also will be sure that the sheep of His pasture treat each other with a spirit which is consistent with His own nature.

Ezekiel 34.17-19

d. He will thus establish this one good shepherd who will oversee the flock

Ezekiel 34.20-24

e. He will also establish a covenant of peace with them by this shepherd

Ezekiel 34.25-31

II. A FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST

In the things pertaining to God - this priest must see God as holy. He must rightly stand in front of God or He will face the wrath of God...

a. consider the sons of Aaron

Leviticus 10.1-4

- b. The priest must understand and support the rights of God to demand the sacrifice in the manner He demands it.
 - i. God has the right to make the rules
 - ii. We need Him to make laws that ARE actually good, that remind us of and constrain us to our real standing with God
 - iii. We need the priest to remind us of just how reasonable and perfect are all of God's laws
 - iv. We need Him to believe, to teach, to demonstrate that we are indeed bound under God's laws... and that to rebel is a serious matter

III. MAKING PROPITIATION

for the sins of the people – God has undertaken to deal with our sin problem once for all. There would be nothing for us to do, and none of us can “help” Him in it... It is His work and His work alone. He

chose to do this in the person of Christ acting as the final and great High Priest.

- a. He would offer the sacrifice of His own life and blood to actually atone for the sin of His people. Since this is the crux of what Jesus came to do, it is crucial that He fill the role perfectly. The power of the death of Christ comes from this fact.
- b. He perfectly fulfilled the duties of the priest.
 - i. He offered up the perfect sacrifice, the very lamb of God

John 1.29-34

- ii. He offered it up in the perfect manner - completely according to God's law and requirements

Hebrews 7.26-28

iii. He shed the blood of the innocent, on behalf of the guilty, with the pronouncement of the sin exchange invoked to the scapegoat

Leviticus 16.20-22

Is 53.6

Matthew 27.24-25

c. In the OT the sacrifice was a covering only, it would never take away the sins of the people, but in the death of Christ, there is true propitiation.

- He atoned for sin,
- He appeased the wrath of God.
- Sin has been once for all dealt with...

Which is why the absolute perfect obedience and nature of the priest, the sacrifice and the manner of its offering is required.

There can be no mistake, no margin of error, no manner of any questionable issue... all must be perfect from and for Him - because we are forever completely unable to aid in our own

salvation. If God does not do this perfectly for us, we are lost, we are damned.

But praise and thanks be to our God!! For our great High Priest, merciful and faithful has completely removed from us forever the terrible wrath of God. For it has fallen upon Him instead.