

Subject: *Christ Is Our High Priest*

Scripture: *Hebrews 4:14-5:10*

The Bible says that there is one Mediator between God and men, and that is Christ Jesus. A mediator is someone who stands between two parties to represent them and reconcile them. Christ stands between holy God and sinful men.

In the Old Testament there were three kinds of mediators. Each was selected by God for a specific task and each was anointed by the Spirit of God to fulfill their task. These three kinds of mediators were prophets, priests, and kings. Christ is unique because He fulfilled all three of these roles by Himself. As prophet, He spoke on behalf of God. As priest, He made sacrifice to God. As king, He rules on behalf of God.

In this message we are going to look at Christ's role as high priest. The priest had a different job than the prophet. Unlike the OT prophets who faced the people and spoke for God, the OT priests faced God and spoke for the people. Like the prophet, the priest was a spokesman, but he spoke FOR the people rather than TO the people. He made intercession for them and offered sacrifices for them. The most special day of the year was the Day of Atonement when the high priest offered a sacrifice for the sins of the nation of Israel. But before the high priest did that, he first offered a sacrifice for himself and his own sins. Jesus didn't need to do that because He had no sin of his own.

During this pandemic we have heard about the spread of the corona virus and the need for social distancing. There's a much greater problem that all of us face. We could call it spiritual distancing: it is the problem of our sin and the spiritual distance between us and a holy God. The Book of Hebrews has a lot to tell us about Christ as our high priest.

1. He is exalted to the highest possible position

Hebrews 4:14 *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.*

Hebrews 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

He has ascended to heaven and is seated at the Father's right hand. We say that someone has friends in high places. We have a friend in the highest possible place.

Romans 8:33-34³³ *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* ³⁴ *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

1 John 2:1 *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

2. He is sympathetic to us and our needs

He knows our struggles and weaknesses because He became a man and lived on earth.

Hebrews 4:15 *For we have not an 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.*

Hebrews 2:17-18 ¹⁷ *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* ¹⁸ *For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour (help) them that are tempted.*

3. He is appointed and called by God

Hebrews 3:1-2 ¹ *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;* ² *Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.*

He did not take the office of high priest on His own, but the Father chose Him. He was to be a different kind of priest, not from the normal priestly tribe of Levi, but a unique kind of priest. In one of the Messianic psalms, King David revealed that Christ would be the priest of a new order, the order of Melchizedek.

Psalms 110:4 *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

That takes us back to Genesis 14:18 to this mysterious man who appeared to Abraham. The Bible says he was both a king and a priest. He was King of Salem, an early name for Jerusalem, and He was priest of the most high God, in other words, the one true God.

Genesis 14:18 *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.*

Hebrews 5:4-6 ⁴ *And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* ⁵ *So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* ⁶ *As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Christ was superior to Aaron and all the priests who came from the tribe of Levi. The Lord confirmed Christ in His priesthood with a solemn oath.

Hebrews 7:21 *(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)*

4. He is the unchangeable and eternal high priest

Aaron and his sons and all the other priests served during their lifetime and they all died. Christ is different because He is alive and will serve as our priest for eternity.

Hebrews 7:23-25 ²³ *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: ²⁴ But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵ Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

5. He is the perfect and sinless high priest

Under the Old Testament law God's people were blessed because they had a priest to represent them to the holy God. But all those priests were sinners just like the people they represented. On the Day of Atonement, the most holy day of the year, the high priest offered a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people. But first, he had to offer a sacrifice to atone for his own sins.

Hebrews 7:26-28 ²⁶ *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; ²⁷ Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

6. He ministers in the heavenly sanctuary

Hebrews 8:1-2 ¹ *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ² A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

All other priests went into the earthly sanctuary. First, there was the tabernacle and then the temple. Both of these were holy places that represented the presence of God on earth, but they were temporary. As our great high priest, Christ went into the heavenly sanctuary to appear in the very presence of God on our behalf.

Hebrews 9:11-12 ¹¹ *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; ¹² Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Hebrews 9:24-26 ²⁴ *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: ²⁵ Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; ²⁶ For then must he often have suffered*

since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

7. He offered His own blood for our sins

All other priests offered the blood of animals, but Christ offered Himself. He is our high priest and also the Lamb of God that takes away our sin.

Hebrews 10:11-14 ¹¹ *And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:* ¹² *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;* ¹³ *From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.* ¹⁴ *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

The Jewish priests would go into the tabernacle and temple to minister, and they never sat down because their work was never finished. Christ sat down because His sacrifice paid the price once for all.

We need a priest in heaven because we are bound to earth. We need a priest without sin because we are sinners. We need a priest who offered an acceptable sacrifice because we have nothing to offer God to atone for our sins. We need a priest just like Jesus.

- A priest who is exalted to the highest possible position
- A priest who is sympathetic to us and our needs
- A priest who is appointed and called by God
- A priest who is unchangeable and eternal
- A priest who is perfect and sinless
- A priest who ministers in the heavenly sanctuary
- A priest who offered His own blood for our sins

Since we have such a great high priest what should we do? The writer of Hebrews tells us what God expects us to do.

Hebrews 10:19-25 ¹⁹ *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,* ²⁰ *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;* ²¹ *And having an high priest over the house of God;* ²² *Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* ²³ *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)* ²⁴ *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:* ²⁵ *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*