

# WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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HEBREWS 4:14-16 • TV176A

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By

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## **Hebrews 4:14-16**

*“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. 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. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

I have this morning, one of the most important subjects that I have used since I have been on this television program. I’m going to do more teaching today than preaching. But, I believe after all, good preaching is teaching.

The Scripture talks about Christ having left in the church, prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. The pastor is to be a teacher. If we are not teaching men then we are certainly not preaching much.

So, I want you to take your Bible and open it this morning to **the Book of Hebrews, chapter 4**. Here is my subject: **“WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST.”**

Here in **Hebrews 4:14 and 16**; listen to what the apostle says; *“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.”*

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Look at **verse 16**; *“Seeing that we have a great high priest, let us (sinners, guilty sons of Adam), let us come boldly, (confidently) unto the throne of grace, (into the very presence of God, into the very presence of the most high, majestic, holy, living God). Let us come boldly, (confidently) into the presence of God that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Now, there is another Scripture in **Hebrews 10**; look at **verses 21 and 22**, it says this; *“and having a high priest.”* You see, it is almost the same wording as **Hebrews 4:14**, *“seeing we have a great high priest.”*

In **Chapter 10:21**, Paul says; *“And having a high priest over the House of God; let us (guilty sinners) draw near into the presence of God in full assurance of faith.”*

First of all, when I read Scriptures like these I get two pictures in my mind that help me to understand what these Scriptures are teaching.

The first picture is when Israel, the people of God, stood before Mount Sinai. Here, Moses gave them in the words that God spoke, the Law of God. It says; *“He gave them the words of God”* and when the people heard the words of the Lord God, what was their reaction?

Well, it is found over there in the **Book of Exodus Chapter 20**. It says; *“The people stood before the mountain and they saw the thunderings and the lightnings.”*

They saw the mountain smoking and the noise of the trumpet and the Word of God says; *“when they saw it they moved back; they removed away from the presence of God.”* They stood afar off and they said to Moses; *“Speak to us and we will hear, but let not God speak to us lest we die.”*

In other words, when they saw the absolute, immaculate, infinite, unchangeable, holiness of God, the power and majesty and great glory of God, instead of rushing forward, instead of rushing familiarly into the presence of God, they just backed up; they just removed themselves away from that mountain and away from the presence of God, filled with fear.

They turned to Moses and said, “Be a mediator for us. Don’t let God deal directly with us and we will not attempt to deal directly with God, but you go to God and speak for us, and come to us and speak for God.”

Secondly: Now, here is the second picture that I get in my mind. When I read this Scripture, *“We have, (talking about us today) a high priest and because we have a high priest, Jesus Christ the Son of God, who has gone into the heavens, into the presence of God; (we have the privilege) to come boldly into God’s presence.”*

The second picture that I get is this; Israel was in the wilderness and God came to Moses and gave him specific instructions and design about building a tabernacle.

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He told him to build a courtyard and surround that courtyard with a fence, a white, linen fence. Build the fence eight feet high and inside that courtyard, build a tabernacle. The tabernacle was to be 15 feet wide and 45 feet long and 15 feet high.

Out here, at the Eastern Gate, as you enter into the wall of white linen, which represents the righteousness and holiness of God; the people were to stay out. No one was to come in that courtyard but the priest, the priest who went about the duties of sacrifice and the high priest.

But, as you came into that courtyard at the Eastern Gate, there was an altar where a lamb was slain. Then, as you proceeded toward the tabernacle there was a laver of water where the priest would wash his hands and wash his feet.

Then, he would go inside, and just inside that tabernacle was a place called the "*holy place.*" In that holy place were three pieces of furniture. On one side was the table of showbread. On the other side were the candlesticks, which is Christ the light of the world, and the bread is Christ the bread of life.

Then, as you proceed forward there is a huge veil, four or five inches thick from the top to the bottom, from one wall to the other. There is no door in the veil; there is no opening in the veil; it is all the way from the top of the tabernacle to the floor, from one side to the other.

Right in front of that veil was an altar of incense. On this altar of incense, the priests were to keep the incense burning for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. That represents the prayers of Christ, the intercession of Christ, for His people.

But, inside that veil was a place called "*the Holy of Holies.*" That is where God dwelt or at least a symbol of God's presence. God dwelt in the Holy of Holies. He revealed His presence in that place.

No one was ever allowed in that place, in the Holy of Holies, no one but the high priest, not the prophets, not anyone, not the king, or none of the people. They were not allowed in that Holy of Holies.

In that Holy of Holies was an Ark of the Covenant. It was a small box, 2 1/2 feet long and about 2 feet wide and so deep. Inside that Ark of the Covenant were the tables of stone, which God gave to Moses, the law, or the Ten Commandments.

Also, in that Ark of the Covenant was Aaron's rod that budded. There was also a small cup (or bowl) of the manna that God gave to feed the Israelites.

Over the top of the Ark of the Covenant was a mercy seat of solid gold. Over that mercy seat were two cherubims, which faced one another. In the middle of those cherubims was the Shekinah, the holy, the infinite glory of God revealed.

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This cubicle here, 15 feet wide by 15 feet high, by 15 feet long, was called the “Holy of Holies.” No one was ever allowed in there. Once a year, only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest, only the high priest, no one else, was allowed to come under that veil with a sensor, burning the incense, which represents the prayers of Christ. The smoke filled that place as the incense would burn.

He would bring the blood that had been shed from the lamb, once a year, called the Day of Atonement. He would come under that veil into that holy, awesome, fearful, Holy of Holies, and he would walk up to that mercy seat, one time a year, and he would pour that blood on the mercy seat. It would cover the broken law.

That is how the atonement was made. It was a typical atonement and it was an atonement, which was pictured; it was a picture of Christ’s atonement. This high priest represented the people and Himself. The blood was shed for their sins and for his sin. That blood was offered typically every year.

Now then; we have a high priest. God taught Israel exactly what He is teaching us today; it is the same thing; “*God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*”

Here, at Sinai, when He revealed His awesome, fearful, majestic, holy, presence and when the people backed away, here in the tabernacle in the wilderness, when God revealed His holy, awesome, fearful, presence, His righteous presence; He revealed unto them that no son of Adam can approach a living God without a suitable priest and a suitable sacrifice, never, never!

God taught Israel some things that you and I need to come to grips with and that right soon, because God is the same. He changes not nor does His way of grace ever change. Here is what I am saying; I am saying from the Scriptures, that the Lord God is eternally, unchangeably, infinitely, Holy.

The absolute, living God; (listen to me and understand what I am saying), is unapproachable by human flesh, unapproachable by sons of Adam. Now that is just so! As Martin Luther said, “I want nothing to do with an absolute God,” and neither do you.

Israel realized this and God taught them this in the wilderness; you want nothing to do with an absolute God; you want nothing to do with God as a guilty sinner. From the soul of your feet to the top of your head, “*is nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.*” With a deceitful heart, with a guilty spirit; you want nothing to do with that awesome presence of a holy God. He is the same; He hasn’t changed.

Thirdly: The next thing that God taught them was this; any man who approaches God, who seeks to have any communion with the most high, righteous, holy God, must come to Him through a suitable mediator, through a suitable high priest who has in his hands a suitable sacrifice.

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Now, today's familiarity with the living God is unknown and unheard of in the Scriptures. We have an example of a man who tried to do what men are trying to do today; his name was Uzziah. He was a notable, famous, and mighty king of Israel.

He reigned over Israel for some time. The Scripture says, "*His heart was lifted up with pride.*" You will find this in **2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 26**, beginning with verses **16 through verse 20**. This man, king Uzziah; "*his heart was lifted up with pride.*"

He went down to the temple, which was built just like the tabernacle. When the temporary tabernacle was done away with and Israel built the temple, the permanent temple, the same sacrifices, the same ceremonies, the same Feast Days, the same Day of Atonement, the same things were conducted.

You will remember that it said that when Christ died, "*the veil in the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom;*" that is the veil that was spoken of right here that I was talking about a moment ago, the veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies.

Uzziah went down to the temple and he took the sensor and put incense on it and was going into the Holy of Holies and the priest stopped him. The priest stopped him and there were 80 priests in that courtyard, around that temple.

They said to Uzziah; "*Don't go into the Holy of Holies; it appertaineth not to thee.*" "(We know that you are a king; we know that you are a mighty man; we know that you are a man of influence. We know that you are a man of pride; but no son of Adam approaches the living God except a suitable priest with a suitable sacrifice)."

Even the priests wouldn't go into the Holy of Holies without the blood, without the atonement, without the suitable sacrifice. When he did go in once a year, he was representing the people to God. He was a type of Christ.

This king got angry with the priest. King Uzziah got angry with them; he said, "Step aside." He walked into the Holy of Holies and the priest watched him and the leprosy started in his forehead and came all the way down his face.

Standing right in front of them, he became a snow white leper. The priest took him and cast him out of the temple. He was separated from the people and the Scripture says, "*God smote him and God cut him off.*" He was cut off and his son reigned in his stead.

I am saying this to you and I want to be understood loud and clear. If you ever learn anything; (you learn this and learn it well); God is holy; God is unapproachable by any son of Adam or by any mass of putrid, fallen, flesh.

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You cannot in your flesh; I don't care how sincere; I don't care how great; I don't care how moral; I don't care how ignorant; it doesn't matter what day or what generation; the presence of God is not open.

It doesn't matter what a preacher tells you; the presence of God is not open to a son of Adam apart from one thing and that is that he is represented by a suitable priest, a God-ordained, priest, a high priest, a great, high priest, who has in his hand a sacrifice that God's ordained, that God has instituted, and with which God will be pleased.

Now let me show you that in the New Testament: **In 1 Timothy 2:5** the Scripture says, "*There's one God, (one living Lord, one sovereign, majestic, Redeemer, one Almighty, eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords). One God, three persons, but one God and "there is one mediator between God and men, (one Mediator), and that is Christ Jesus.*"

Now, that is clear as a bell, one Mediator. It is not Aaron; he was a type. It's not a man here on this earth and it is not the pope in Rome. It's not Mary; "*there is one mediator between God and men and that is the man Christ Jesus.*"

Now let me read you what the Master says in **John 14:6**; "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.*" You are not welcomed; you are not invited to come into the presence of God except through a Mediator and that Mediator has been designated; He has been ordained; He has been appointed; He's been sent; and He's been commissioned by God himself and that is Jesus Christ.

Now, that makes my text clearer doesn't it? Let me read it again in **Hebrews 4:14**: "*Seeing then, that we have a great, high priest, (we, today in 1982) we have a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, Jesus Christ the Son of God. Let us then come boldly.*"

We can come as Uzziah attempted to come but he attempted to act as the priest himself. He attempted to bring his sacrifice himself. He attempted to burn incense himself and God smote him. God cut him off and God cast him out.

No man can look on God and live. The flesh cannot come into God's presence. We have a high priest. **Hebrews 10** says; "*And having a high priest over the house of God, Jesus Christ, then let us draw near.*"

"*Let us,*" you, and me, that is why the Gospel is good news. That is why what I'm preaching to you is the way of life, it is the way of mercy and it is the way to God and it is the way into the Holy of Holies. That is why it is good news.

Let me tell you a few things about our great high priest. If you will study the whole **Book of Hebrews**; this is what Hebrews is all about: Hebrews gives you the Gospel in type and the fulfillment of all those types by Christ. It certainly does!

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Here, in **Hebrews 3:1**; listen to what Paul says; *“Consider, wherefore, holy brethren; consider, (think, meditate upon) consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, who is none other than Christ Jesus.”*

Our great high priest is greater than the prophets. It says in **Hebrews 1:1**; *“God who at sundry times in divers manners spake to our fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken to us.”*

God speaks to us, but not directly. We don't speak to God directly. God does not speak to nor will He be spoken to by any fallen son of Adam. The way is not open to you. You can't come before God, not without Christ, Mediator, not without Christ, the Great High Priest.

*“God has spoken to us.”* He spoke through the prophets. He spoke through the priests in those olden days. *“He hath spoken to us by his Son.”*

Jesus Christ is our Mediator, (let me tell you who he is); *“Heir of all things. By whom God made the worlds.”*

You see; Paul is telling us to consider our High Priest. It is not Aaron; it's not the sons of Levi; it's one greater than the prophets and greater than the priest.

You see, our high priest is the one by whom He made the worlds. Jesus Christ is the brightness of His glory. *“He is the express image of his person who upholdeth all things by the word of his power (by whom He sustains and preserves all things)”*

He is seated at the right hand of God. He is greater than the prophets and the priests. He's greater than the angels. **Hebrews 1:4** says, *“Being so much better than the angels, to which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee?”*

But rather, he said; *“Let all of his angels worship him.”* They are His angels. He was from the beginning, anointed above his fellows and His throne is forever. And, He's greater than Moses. **Hebrews 3:3** says, *“This man, Jesus Christ, is counted worthy of more glory than Moses.”*

Who is he? He is Immanuel, God with us. Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, of our faith, our Mediator, and our way into the presence of God is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Secondly:** Now watch this! Consider who He is; He is Immanuel, He is *“God with us.”* He is God's only begotten and well-beloved Son.

Who ordained Him to be the high priest? Who ordained Him? Listen to **Hebrews 5:1**; listen to this: *“Every high priest is taken from among men”* and our Lord was. He became a man, He was born of a virgin, and He lived on this earth. He was bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He was taken from among men.

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He was ordained to offer sacrifice for sin. But listen; *“No man takes this honor on himself.”* Aaron didn’t volunteer for this priesthood. The sons of Levi didn’t volunteer for this task. *“No man taketh this honor upon himself but he who is appointed of God, (he who is chosen of God).”*

So also, listen to this; *“so also, Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my Son; today have I begotten thee.”* He said unto him; *“thou art a priest forever.”*

We’ve got self-made priests on this earth today. We have church-made priests. Let me tell you something; our great high priest is God-appointed and God-chosen. He said, *“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”*

He said, *“This is my Son; hear ye him.”* *“To the Son (he saith), thy throne O God is forever.”* So, who is our High Priest? He is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who appointed Him, the Father Himself, the one who said unto Him, *“thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee?”* He said unto him; *“Thou art a priest forever.”*

Thirdly: Consider His unchanging priesthood!

How long has He been a priest? How long will He be a priest? Now listen: In **Hebrews 5:6** it says this; *“Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”* You meet this name Melchisedec several times in the Bible. Take your concordance and look it up; it is there several times. In fact, in **Hebrews** it is there three times.

God said of Christ; *“Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.”* Who was Melchisedec? When Abraham was returning from the slaughter of the kings and the high priest of God met him, to whom he paid tithes.

I want you to listen how this high priest of God is identified and how He is described in **Hebrew 7**. His name is Melchisedec and the Scripture says that *“he is the priest of the most high God. He is the King of Salem and he is the King of righteousness.”*

*“He is without mother; he is without father; (He is without pedigree). He has neither beginning of days nor end of life. He abideth a priest forever.”* He blessed Abraham and he gave him bread and wine.

Who was this Melchisedec? My friends; He was none other than the Son of God himself, our great, High Priest. It says of him, *“He has an unchanging priesthood.”*

Every time that high priest of old went into the Holy of Holies he was representing the one who was already his priest. These were types and pictures of Christ until He comes to fulfill all things.

Just as He is the eternal Surety, just as He was a lamb slain before the foundation of the world, just as He is our Passover in Egypt, just as He is that rock in the wilderness, just as He is that



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brazen serpent, He is the eternal high priest of all God's children, of all generations, and of all ages.

We no longer have Aaron and the sons of Levi as our priests. We no longer have a human priest on this earth to go through, because Christ has fulfilled it all.

After He came there is no need for those anymore. We come directly to the throne of grace because our priest is on the throne of grace. He is sitting, seated at the right hand of the throne of grace.

You see; all of the Old Testament priests stood only as types and pictures of Christ. Their sacrifices were but pictures; they could never take away sin. Listen to **Hebrews 10:11**: "*And every priest stands daily. He offers the same sacrifices which can never take away sin.*"

Now, if you had any idea in your mind in the past when Aaron offered the sacrifice or the sons of Levi that it put away Israel's sins; erase it right now. "*The blood of bulls and goats cannot put away sin.*" The Bible tells us plainly, "*it can never take away sin.*"

*"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right hand of God: For by one offering he had perfected forever them that are sanctified."*

The Old Testament priests were many; there were thousands of them. They lived awhile, died, lived awhile and died, lived awhile and died; do you see that? They changed priests all the time. Christ is one Priest; He lives forever.

These Old Testament priests were only men; Christ is the God-man, perfect God, very God of very God, but a perfect man.

These Old Testament priests offered many sacrifices; Christ only offered one. These Old Testament priests offered animal blood; Christ offered his own blood. These Old Testament priests offered sacrifices for themselves because they were sinners and for the people. Christ had no sin.

Their sacrifices could never take away sin; they repeated them over, and over again. If their sacrifices could have taken away sin, then they would have ceased offering them, "*because the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.*"

That is the reason we don't offer sacrifices. Our sins are purged; they are put away. Christ has paid the debt, all of them.

*"He was made flesh, and dwelt among us,"* though He walked on the earth, it's not Christ who stood daily; they never sat down. Their work was never finished. Christ did His work and sat down; He finished his work.

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They appeared in an earthly tabernacle and that brings me to this. Where is His place of ministry? It is in heaven itself.

Listen to the Scripture: *“Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands which is a figure of the true, (a picture of the true), but into heaven itself; now to appear in the presence of God for us (as our representative, as our mediator, as our high priest).”*

Listen to **Hebrews 4:14**: *“We have a priest who is passed into the heavens.”* **Hebrews 10:12**: *“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin forever, sat down on the right hand of God.”*

My friends, our great High Priest appeared in the presence of God for us. He appeared on the earth to take away our sin and now He appears in the presence of God as our Mediator. He has offered that one sacrifice, that atonement has been made, the debt has been paid, it is cancelled; sin is forgiven, put away.

He makes us accepted in the eyes of God. *“He presents us holy, unblameable, unprovable, in God’s sight.”* He appears right now in God’s presence for us. He will appear one day without sin.

Let me ask you this question, who is your priest; who represents you before God? Where does he minister, on this earth, in a building down here or in heaven itself? What’s his sacrifice?”

Who is your priest? Where does he minister? What is his sacrifice? It better be Christ and His blood in heaven!