

# The Great High Priest

Heb 4:11–5:10

SS Lesson for 10/16/2016

**Devotional Scripture:** Heb 7:1-28

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# Introduction

## Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson proclaims how Jesus is **The Great High Priest**. The study's aim is to recognize how Jesus as the Great High Priest is superior to human high priests and to understand Jesus' role as the Great High Priest who can help all believers. The study's application is to come to Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, in times of difficulty.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### Key Verse: Heb 4:14

*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession*

### Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Having completed his exposition of Psalm 95 and Israel's failure to enter rest, the writer brought this section of warning to a conclusion that is both sobering and comforting. God's Word is a solemn instrument of divine judgment, but His throne is both gracious and merciful.

**4:12.** The lesson he had just taught from the Old Testament Scriptures was not a mere historical tale. Instead, as had already been made clear by much he had said, it was powerfully relevant to his audience. **For the Word of God is living (*zōn*) and active (*energēs*).** Not only that, its penetrating power is greater **than any double-edged sword** and reaches the innermost being of a person so that **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart**. In doing this, it is able to discriminate successfully between what is spiritual in man and what is merely "soulish" or natural (**it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit**), and does so even when these often-contradictory inner elements are interwoven as closely as **joints and marrow**. The inner life of a Christian is often a strange mixture of motivations both genuinely spiritual and completely human. It takes a supernaturally discerning agent such as the Word of God to sort these out and to expose what is of the flesh. The readers might think that they were contemplating certain steps out of purely spiritual motivations when, as God's Word could show them, they were acting unfaithfully as did Israel of old.

**4:13.** Let them not suppose, therefore, that their motives would go undetected for **nothing is hidden from God's sight**. Instead, **everything is uncovered and laid bare before... Him**. In saying this, the readers were reminded that, like all Christians, they would someday stand before the judgment seat of Christ where they **must give account** to God for their lives (cf. Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10). If at that time their lives are seen to be marked by the kind of failure they have been warned against, the writer implied they will suffer loss of reward (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15). In this context the loss they suffer will be that of their inheritance-rest.

**4:14.** But this need not be so. On the contrary there is every reason to **hold firmly to the faith we profess** in view of the fact that the believers' **great High Priest... has gone through the heavens**. Only once previously (2:1-3:6) had the writer referred explicitly to the priesthood of Jesus, though it was implicit in 1:3, but now he was preparing to undertake an extensive consideration of that truth. But before doing so, he wished to suggest its practical relevance to his readers whom he exhorted to "hold firmly to the faith." They had to know that the priesthood of their Lord offered them all the resources they needed.

**4:15.** The One who served as **High Priest** on their behalf had been where they were and had **been tempted in every way, just as they were**. Though unlike them He **was without sin** (cf. 7:26; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 3:5), never responding wrongly to any of His temptations (nor could He, being God), yet as a man He could feel their reality (much as an immovable boulder can bear the brunt of a raging sea) and thus He is able to **sympathize** (*sympathēsai*, lit., "to feel or suffer with") **with their and our weaknesses**. It may indeed be argued, and has been, that only One who fully resists temptation can know the extent of its force. Thus the sinless One has a greater capacity for compassion than any sinner could have for a fellow sinner.

**4:16.** With such a High Priest, it follows that believers should **approach the throne of grace with confidence** (*parrēsias*; cf. 3:6; 10:19, 35). In a book filled with lovely and captivating turns of expression, few excel the memorable phrase "throne of grace." Such a conception of the presence of God into which beleaguered Christians may come at any time, suggests both the sovereignty of the One they approach (since they come to a "throne") and His benevolence. At a point of contact with God like this Christians can fully expect to **receive mercy and find grace to help... in... time of need**.

In the first major movement of the epistle (1:5-4:16), the author set forth two major truths: (1) the exalted position and destiny of Him who is uniquely God's King-Son and (2) the salvation-inheritance of those who cleave to Him by faith. Included in the consideration of these themes have been solemn warnings not to neglect or forfeit the inheritance that His exalted station makes so attainable. The Son's future kingship has been at the center of all this discussion. At the same time, it has been made clear that the King-Son is also a High Priest. The importance of this reality has already been briefly pointed out. Now, however, the Son's priestly role would be considered in detail. In doing so the writer as usual interspersed sections of exposition with passages of exhortation and warning. Before enlarging on the ramifications of the priesthood of Christ, the writer took the logical step of showing Christ's qualifications for that role. Though His priesthood has already been assumed, its validity must now be asserted if the admonitions based on it are to carry full weight.

**5:1.** If it be asked what a **high priest** really is, the answer is easily drawn from the Old Testament institution with which the readers were familiar. Such a person is one of mankind's own number: he **is selected from among men** and he is also their representative **in matters related to God**. These "matters" include the offering of both **gifts (*dōra*) and sacrifices (*thysias*) for sins** (cf. 8:3; 9:9).

**5:2-3.** The high priest must also be a man of compassion as the word *metriopathein*, which underlies the phrase **deal gently**, implies. This is the capacity to moderate one's feelings to avoid the extremes of cold indifference and uncontrolled sadness. For an ordinary high priest of the Old Testament, this sympathy grew out of an awareness that **he himself** was **subject to weakness**, prone to failures of his own. Hence in his sacrificial activities he must make the necessary offerings **for his own** and the peoples' **sins**. In this respect alone, as the author will show later (cf. 7:27), Christ did not exactly correspond to the characteristics described here, since He "was without sin" (4:15). But it is also possible that the writer thought of the compassion of the Son-Priest as being far richer than the moderate gentleness he ascribed to other high priests.

**5:4.** But one thing is certain. The high-priestly office was a divine appointment and could not simply be entered because one aspired to that **honor**. **Just as Aaron was**, this High Priest must also be **called by God**.

**5:5-6.** No one is to suppose, the author insisted, that Christ began His priestly functions without the appropriate call from **God**. On the contrary, the same One who declared **Christ** to be the King-Son, declared Him also to be **a Priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek**. In uniting as the author did here the text of Psalm 2:7, which he had quoted before (Heb. 1:5), and the text of Psalm 110:4, he skillfully joined the two great truths about the Messiah which lie at the heart of this epistle. The declaration of Psalm 2 had proclaimed Him the Davidic Heir whose destiny was to rule the nations (cf. Ps. 2:8). But Psalm 110 had also been earlier quoted to much the same effect (cf. Heb. 1:13). Now, however, a further statement of this latter psalm was cited to show that the future Conqueror is also a Priest of a special order. In this way the author united in the person of Christ the dual offices of Priest and King. In doing so the author was perhaps conscious of countering a sectarian position like that evidently current at Qumran, where both a lay, or kingly, Messiah and a priestly Messiah seem to have been anticipated. In any case the two quotations given here from Psalms 2:7 and 110:4 furnish the concentrated essence of the author's thought about the Lord Jesus Christ. It is likely enough that the writer assigned the proclamations of both psalms to the moment when the Son "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (Heb. 1:3).

**5:7.** But also in other respects Jesus is qualified for His priesthood. If it is a question of offerings (cf. v. 1), it can be pointed out that when Jesus was on earth **He offered up prayers and petitions**. In the expression "offered up" the writer employed the same verb (*prospheō*) he had used in verse 1. The added description, **with loud cries and tears to the One who could save Him from death**, has often been thought to refer to the experience of Gethsemane. But the Greek here seems to reflect the Septuagint rendering of Psalm 22:24. Since that psalm is messianic for this author (cf. Heb. 2:12), it is probable that he actually has the sufferings of the Cross in mind, as does the psalm. This would be appropriate since the cries of the Savior would then be linked directly with His sacrificial work. That these "cries and tears" were accepted by God is evidenced by the observation, **He was heard because of His reverent submission (*eulabeias*)**. To this also Psalm 22 bears reference in that its latter half are the words of One who has emerged from suffering in triumph and praises God for that (cf. Ps. 22:22-31). In fact the psalm's first note of triumph has already been quoted (i.e., Ps. 22:22 in Heb. 2:12). Thus the "reverent" Sufferer was indeed saved from death, and this by means of rising from the dead. Hence too the Resurrection furnishes the decisive proof of God's acceptance of **Jesus'** sacrificial activity.

**5:8-10.** The whole experience just referred to was a form of education for Jesus before He served His suffering people. His unique relation to God notwithstanding (**He was a Son**), He had to experience the

true meaning of obedience in terms of the suffering it entailed. Having done so, He was thereby **made perfect** for the role He would play as His people's Captain and High Priest. That there is an element of mystery in all this need not be denied, but it is no greater than that found in Luke's words: "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52). In a real sense not fully comprehensible, the Incarnation gave the already infinitely wise and perfect Son of God the experiential acquisition of knowledge about the human condition. Suffering thus became a reality that He tasted and from it He can sympathize deeply with His followers. (The Gr. has an interesting play on words in the verbs **He learned** [*emathen*] and **He suffered** [*epathen*].) This is what the writer had in mind when he affirmed that **He became the Source** (*aitios*) **of eternal salvation for all who obey Him**. The salvation here referred to cannot be distinguished from that which is termed an inheritance (Heb. 1:14). It is also to be identified with the "eternal inheritance" mentioned in 9:15. It should not be confused with the acquisition of eternal life which is conditioned not on obedience but on faith (cf. John 3:16, etc.). Once again the writer had in mind final deliverance from and victory over all enemies and the consequent enjoyment of the "glory" of the many sons and daughters. This kind of salvation is explicitly contingent on obedience and indeed on an obedience modeled after that of Jesus who also **suffered**. It is thus closely related to the saying of the Lord in which He declared, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:34-35). The High Priest has become the "Source" of this kind of salvation experience for those who are willing to live obediently. In describing Him this way, the author was chiefly thinking of all the resources that flow from Christ's priestly activities that make a Christian's life of obedience possible. Whatever one's suffering, the High Priest understands it, sympathizes, and makes available the "mercy" and "grace" which are needed to endure it successfully. As the writer will later say, "He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them" (Heb. 7:25). With precisely this end in view Christ **was designated by God to be High Priest in the order of Melchizedek**.

## ***Lesson Introduction and Background***

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Watch closely the next time you see video of a successful politician greeting voters. Even though politicians meet thousands, the best campaigners know how to connect with individuals one by one (or at least appear to do so). Meeting person after person, the candidate takes a moment to shake hands, make substantial eye contact, and listen. After such encounters, many voters will say, "I believe that candidate is listening to people like me and understands our problems." All of us crave a listening ear. When we are in pain, in need, or in trouble, we especially want to be heard. When someone has the power to help us, we desperately want that person to listen. Today's text reminds us of how God has given his listening ear for our deepest needs. If God in his glory seems distant, in Christ we have proof of something else. Christ, our divine high priest, has the power to meet our needs. Christ, the human who suffered like us, hears us as one who knows our problems firsthand.

As the letter to the Hebrews urges readers to continue in their faith in Jesus, it focuses heavily on the concept of the high priesthood. This ancient office plays a crucial role in today's lesson and in the letter as a whole. The Law of Moses decreed that a high priest preside over worship, both in the tabernacle and in the temple that superseded it. Aaron was the first high priest, and all members of Israel's priesthood were required to be descended from him (Exodus 28:1; 29:9; 40:12-15). Israel's high priest was one of many priests who offered sacrifices of various kinds on the sacred altar. But once a year, on the Day of Atonement, only the high priest officiated at the special sacrifices. Atonement translates a word meaning "covering over"; sacrifices were made on the Day of Atonement to cover over the sins of all Israel. On that occasion the high priest first offered the sacrifice of a bullock. That animal's life was offered as a substitute, taking the punishment in place of the lives of the high priest and his household for their sins (Leviticus 16:6). The high priest also cast lots to determine which of two goats would be sacrificed and which would be sent away (alive) as a scapegoat (16:7-10). The high priest sprinkled blood of the sacrificed bull and goat on "the atonement cover," which was the top of the Ark of the Covenant (16:2, 14, 15). This was located in the inner room, called "the Most Holy Place," of the tabernacle or temple (Exodus 26:34). Only on this one day of the year did anyone enter that room. The essence of the Day of Atonement therefore was that of substitutionary sacrifice: the lives of animals were given in place of the lives of human sinners. But equally important was God's ordaining the high priest to this ministry. Only the one who occupied the office that God created could preside over this sacred rite. As do other New Testament writers, the author of Hebrews explains Jesus' death as the fulfillment of Israel's system of sacrifices.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **A Sympathetic High Priest (Heb 4:14-5:3)**

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

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.

5:1 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.

2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.

3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.

### **A priest who deserves our confidence (14)**

*Deserves our confidence because He is faithful (Heb 3:6)*

6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

*Deserves our confidence because we are partakers in Him (Heb 3:14)*

14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

*Deserves our confidence because God is faithful (Heb 10:23)*

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

*Deserves our confidence because He has armor that will help us stand against Satan (Eph 6:10-13)*

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

### **A priest who understands us (15-16)**

*Understands because He was tempted (Luke 4:2)*

2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

*Understands because He was made like us (Heb 2:17-18)*

17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

*Understands because we are His sheep (John 10:14-15)*

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-and I lay down my life for the sheep.

*Understands because He knows His own (2 Tim 2:19)*

19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

*Understands because of love (1 Cor 8:3)*

3 But the man who loves God is known by God.

*Understands because He humbled Himself and was obedient (Phil 2:6-8)*

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!

### **A priest who is qualified (5:1-3)**

*Qualified because He was appointed*

***Appointed as Christ (Acts 3:19-20)***

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you-even Jesus.

***Appointed as judge (Acts 10:42)***

42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

***Appointed as head of everything for the Church (Eph 1:22)***

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

***Appointed as heir of all things (Heb 1:2)***

2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

***Appointed because of His faithfulness (Heb 3:1-2)***

3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. 2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house.

***Appointed by the oath of God (Heb 7:28)***

28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

*Qualified because He offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice*

***Offered Himself because of the love of God (John 3:16)***

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

***Offered Himself as a sacrifice of atonement (Rom 3:25)***

25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-

***Offered Himself once for all (Heb 9:26)***

26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

***Offered Himself to make us holy (Heb 10:10)***

10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

***Offered Himself for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2)***

2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

***A Specially Anointed High Priest (Heb 5:4-6)***

4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You."

6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek";

**The need for an anointed calling (4)**

*A calling because the Law required it (Num 18:5-7)*

6 I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD to do the work at the Tent of Meeting. 7 But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary must be put to death."

*A calling that God provided to Jesus (John 8:54)*

54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

*A calling to be like Melchizedek (Heb 7:14-16)*

14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. 15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.

*A calling that came from heaven (John 3:27)*

27 To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.

*Jesus' calling was a vocation to the work of the priest (Barnes Notes)*

Jesus was not ambitious; that he did not obtrude himself into the great office of high priest; he did not enter upon its duties without being regularly called to it. Paul claimed that Christ held that office; but, as he was not descended from Aaron, and as no one might perform its duties without being regularly called to it, it was incumbent on him to show that Jesus was not an intruder, but had a regular vocation to that work.

**The evidence of Jesus' anointed calling (5-6)**

*Evidenced by being God's Son*

***As acknowledged by God (Matt 3:16-17)***

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

***As proclaimed in the Psalms (Ps 2:7)***

7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

***As proclaimed in the gospel (Acts 13:32-33)***

32 "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: "'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.'

***A Son sent by God (Rom 8:3)***

3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man,

***A Son superior to angels (Heb 1:3-5)***

4 So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. 5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"?

***A Son, who if acknowledged, brings the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 John 4:15)***

15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

***A Son who provides the overcoming of the world (1 John 5:5)***

5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

***As acknowledged by Peter (Matt 16:16)***

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

*Evidenced by being a priest in the order of Melchizedek*

***A priest of God Most High (Gen 14:18-20)***

18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

***A priest forever (Ps 110:4)***

4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

***A priest designated by God (Heb 5:10)***

10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

***A priest who enters on our behalf (Heb 6:20)***

20 where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

***A Sacrificing High Priest (Heb 5:7-10)***

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,  
8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.  
9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,  
10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"

## **Sacrificial suffering (7-8)**

*Suffering prophesied in Scripture (Luke 24:45-46)*

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

*Suffering foretold by the prophets (Acts 3:18)*

18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

*Suffering by the author of our faith (Heb 12:2)*

2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*Suffering that make Jesus perfect (Heb 2:10)*

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

*Suffering that was predicted (1 Peter 1:10-11)*

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

*Suffering that Jesus gave as an example for us (1 Peter 2:20-21)*

20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

*Suffering in His body (1 Peter 4:1)*

1 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

## **Sacrificial saving work (9-10)**

*A salvation that God appointed through Jesus (1 Thess 5:9)*

9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*A salvation Jesus will bring with Him at His second coming (Heb 9:28)*

28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

*A salvation through justification by Jesus' blood (Rom 5:9)*

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

*A salvation that is gained through belief in Jesus (John 6:40)*

40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

*A salvation that brings eternal life (John 11:25)*

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

*A salvation that is hidden in Jesus (Col 3:3-4)*

3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### **Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh**

What does he mean when the author says that we have a “**great**” high priest? It means “mighty” or “powerful” as it does in Titus 2:13:

12 It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of **our great God and Savior**, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:12-13, emphasis mine).

Our high priest is great; that is, He has the power and the authority to get things done. That is what the author tells us in the remainder of verse 14. He is a high priest who is the Son of God, who has “**passed through the heavens.**” This calls our attention to the resurrection and ascension of our Lord to the right hand of God:

The Son is the radiance of his glory and the representation of his essence, and he sustains all things by his powerful word, and so when he had accomplished cleansing for sins, *he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high* (Hebrews 1:3).

As the Son of God, He sits enthroned at the Father’s right hand. What better, what closer, what more influential place for one whose task is to represent men before God (5:1)? When we draw near to Him, we draw near to God. When we draw near for help, we draw near to One who is able to help.

Beyond this, we draw near to One who desires to help, who understands our weakness and sympathizes with us (4:15). His incarnation has not only qualified the Son to represent men before God, it also gave Him great empathy with those who are weak. He can sympathize, not because he wrestled with sin and lost, but because He experienced temptation and prevailed. We all have our breaking point, but God is faithful and never tests us beyond the limits of what we could endure (if we turn to our High Priest for help):

No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The Son, however, was tested to the ultimate degree, far beyond what we could endure, and He did endure without failing. To whom should we flee? To one who failed when tested minimally, or to the One who was victorious when tested to the maximum? This is why we can hold fast to our confession and draw near to our High Priest – because He alone can keep us from falling.

24 Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence, 25 to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and now, and for all eternity. Amen (Jude 24-25).

### **“Let Us Confidently Approach the Throne of Grace” Hebrews 4:16**

Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help (Hebrews 4:16).

Why the emphasis here on approaching our High Priest confidently or boldly? I think there are two reasons. The first has already been disclosed in verses 14 and 15. We can approach Him confidently because He has the power and the authority to help us. We are confident in His ability to come to our aid. He is our “**great**” High Priest, the Son of God, who has passed through the heavens, and who sits at the Father’s right hand. He is able to help.

But there is another reason why men are reluctant to ask for help. We may be hesitant to ask for help because we may fear that God will rub our noses in our weakness and failure. We’ve all experienced this when dealing with men. We make the mistake of asking the wrong person for help and then they make us pay by berating and belittling us. When we approach the “**throne of grace,**”<sup>1</sup> we are assured of receiving *grace whenever we need help*. I am reminded of another text which assures us of God’s help, minus humiliation:

### **Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

Originally it was the responsibility of the head of the family to perform the priestly duties on behalf of his family (Gen. 8:20; 12:8; Job 1:5). This was God's established pattern until such time as He, through the Prophet Moses, anointed Aaron and Aaron's sons to fulfill the offices of priest and high priest (Exod 28:1). As ordained by God, the high priest's robes were to be a magnificent symbol of his position as mediator between a holy God and a sinful people. A part of the priestly clothing was the ephod, a two-piece sleeveless garment joined at the shoulders by straps. On each strap was an onyx stone. The names of the twelve tribes were engraved on the stones, six names on each stone (Exod 28:6-12). Over the ephod and attached to it with rings of gold was worn a garment called the "breastplate of judgment" (Exod 28:15). This was an ornamented linen vest set with twelve precious stones, each having the name of a tribe engraved thereon. The high priest wore this garment "upon his heart, when he [went] in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually" (vs. 29). Mornings and evenings were set times for public worship. At these times the high priest, clothed in these garments, would enter the holy place and burn incense on the altar of incense (Exod. 30:7-8). This was a beautiful symbol of the prayers of the people. On behalf of the congregation, the priest presented the offerings the people brought to him. When Joseph and Mary came to the temple to present the child Jesus "to the Lord" (Luke 2:22), Mary, as instructed by the law, brought two turtledoves to be "an atonement for her" so that she could be "cleansed from the issue of her blood" (Lev. 12:7). Once each year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered within the veil, the most holy place, and there offered blood "for himself, and for the errors of the people" (Heb. 9:7). Recognizing the importance of the office of high priest to those who had converted from Judaism to Christianity, the writer of Hebrews stressed the role of Jesus Christ as the great High Priest, who fulfills all that had been prefigured in that Aaronic high priestly office. The temple to which Jesus' parents took Him as an infant was a magnificent structure. Viewed from the Mount of Olives, it was like a jewel glistening in the sunlight with its stone walls inlaid with gold. The holy of holies, which was separated from the holy place by a veil, was a room of tremendous beauty. Our Saviour, the Son of man, being from the tribe of Judah, would not have been allowed to enter the earthly holy of holies. But He entered into one that was infinitely superior. He has entered heaven itself bearing an infinitely better sacrifice, His own precious blood. He is now "even at the right hand of God" and "maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34). As the high priest of old made a sacrifice of blood at the altar and then passed through the holy place into the holy of holies, so Jesus, having shed His blood on the cross, passed through the created heavens into the very dwelling place of God. Having such a High Priest as Him, surely we can "hold fast our profession."

### **Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary**

1. We know our High Priest can enter God's holy presence, for He is God (Heb. 4:14)
2. Our High Priest is able to relate to us because He has been tempted as we have (vs. 15)
3. Because of our High Priest, we can be confident that God will give us mercy and grace (vs. 16)
4. All other high priests in history have had to offer sacrifices for their own sins (5:1-3)
5. Jesus was appointed by God to be our High Priest forever in the order of Melchizedek (vss. 4-6)
6. Jesus was heard because of His reverence and obedience to the Father (vss. 7-10)