

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Hebrews: Jesus the Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14-5:3



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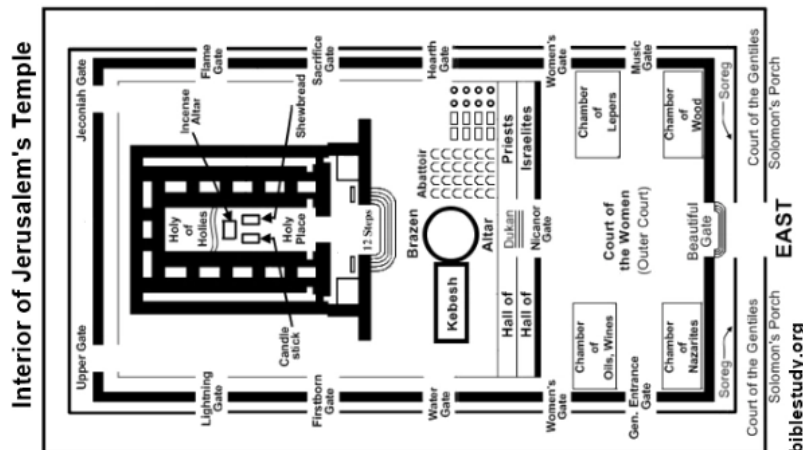
SERMON NOTES

VS 14 – *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.*

I know some of you are doing a year long bible plan in Leviticus. But I don't expect most of us to have an immediate connection to what the Hebrew writer means by high priest. What's a high priest? The high priest was a religious leader, from the line of Aaron (Moses's brother) amongst the Israelites that was held very high amongst the people. The high priest, as we see in Leviticus 4:3 "if it is the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt on the people, then he shall offer for the sin that he has committed a bull from the herd without blemish to the Lord for a sin offering." Notice here, his role was to stand in the gap between God and sinful man to offer sacrifices for the entire congregation, but ALSO for himself. This is very important!

The Day of Atonement: The 10th day of the 7th month of the year, The high priest conducted the service of the Day of Atonement.

Image of the Temple:



Significance: The High Priest was the only one allowed to enter The Holy of Holies behind the veil. Remember, his duty was to make a sacrifice for the people and himself because he was a sinner as well.

Exodus 30:10. Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year. With the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord.

Jesus the Great High Priest. The Hebrew writer, rightfully so, calls Jesus the Great High Priest.

He is the ultimate and only Mediator between a Holy God and sinful man. And He didn't do so by offering the blood of animals, but at the expense of His own blood. He offered Himself as the sacrifice!

So for Gentiles, like myself and the mass majority of this room who were once far off in the temple in this photo, have been reconciled, and brought near to the presence and promises of God. A Great High Priest who has passed through the heavens. Don't think this is a mere spatial claim. Sure, we know Christ has resurrected and ascended into Heaven and is now seated at the right hand of the Father. But in the context the Hebrew writer is continuing His comparison between the Levitical high priest and the Great high Priest. The high priest, again, was the only one able to enter into the Holy of Holies. He passed through to enter the Holy of Holies once a year providing a sacrifice for the sake of sinners.

Christ did this further and completely because He entered in permanently. The high priest made a sacrifice and got out of there. Christ, became the sacrifice and ascended to the right hand of the Father. And would be through His entering, His death, resurrection and ascension, that we know have access. Christ is reigning, ruling, and interceding for us.

Jesus - Yeshua - The deliverer, rescuer, Savior "The Lord IS Salvation" The human servant of God who was sent to save by dying and defeated death and sin. The Son of God - the beloved and eternal Son of God, equal in essence and nature. The only one who can reconcile us to God. The Godman. The Priest of Priests.

Since then you have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens... Let us hold fast our confession. Downstream from seeing this, should lead to a holding fast our confession. Our confession is our hope and faith that Christ has saved us and that He is interceding for us. A confession that is manifested in our lives.

Immediate Context: The implication here is that there was a temptation to let go. A temptation to return to Judaism because that was the easiest thing to do since persecution was heavy. Notice what you're holding onto; your confession. Our salvation doesn't waver, but what usually does is our convictions and testimony.

Our Context: What gives you the confidence to hold fast to your confession today?

In the midst of...

- Weariness of doing good
- Exposure to worldviews
- Temptations
- Doubts
- Guilt and shame
- Suffering

You can't do this out of the flesh. Pay close attention to the tone and message of the Hebrew writer. You must claw your way back to truth. Remember the sacrifice and seat of Christ. The sacrifice that has drawn you near to be justified. The seat that draws you near to be sanctified. This is why theology matters so much. Because your success of holding fast to your confession hangs on what you know about Christ!

The Hebrew writer is getting ready to contrast the difference between the high priest and Christ, the Great high priest to encourage and command us to find comfort in drawing near to God.

VS 15 – *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

Notice the Hebrew writer spoke highly of the transcendence and superiority of Christ in the previous verse. He has passed through the Heavens. Now the Hebrew writer wants us to see the imminence of Christ. This same Christ who accomplished our salvation and reigns, also sympathizes with our weakness. Sympathize means to suffer along with.

Application: Avoid falling into practical deism. He was greatly tempted. Jesus, truly God, was still truly man.

He suffered along with us externally.

Temptations: After the devastation in the Garden of Eden, here we are again with Sequel. Christ, the Second Adam, and the subtle hiss of deceptive Serpent with his empty promises that would lead to death. Jesus is led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit TO be tempted. Satan promises Him 3 things that you can make an argument would serve as constant temptations to Christ through His earthly life:

1. Gratification of the flesh
2. Pride
3. Abandoning the Father's Will

He suffered along with us internally.

- Needed refuge at birth from Herod
- Mocked, cursed, unjustly accused of being demonic
- Lost of loved ones
- Wept over the city
- He was sorrowful and troubled knowing He was to enter under God's wrath
- Flesh torn like a wild animal from strong men
- Absorbed the full wrath of God for sake of undeserving sinners

The God who reigns is the God who sympathizes. He's not only a High Priest who is relatable, He's a high priest who is merciful and faithful. He was successful in His temptations as we see He remained sinless.

Doctrine: Recapitulation

St. Irenaeus of Lyons - AD 130-202

A student of Polycarp and later a student of Justin Martyr. He stood against a lot of heresies. He's best known for his take on the doctrine of recapitulation. Gnosticism was running rampant at this time. Gnostics believed that the human body was evil and the spirit was good. So they would claim that Jesus wasn't truly human but perhaps only appeared to be human.

Recapitulation: Christ is the Second or Last Adam, who undoes the curse of Adam because he succeeded where Adam failed.

The life of Christ recapitulated the stages of human life. Adam was tempted and rebelled. Christ was tempted, remained sinless, actively and passively obeying the Father and that is all credited to His people.

VS 16 – Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace

Lev. 9:5-6 – “And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. And Moses said, “This is the thing that the Lord commanded you to do, that the glory of the Lord may appear to you.”

There is a posture the Hebrew writer wants us to have here in light of what we just read. This would have been massive. Judaism would imply a list of things they would have to do in order to just feel right with God. In this text it says because of what Christ has done, we can, not cowardly, not hesitantly, but confidently, with heads held high beholding your righteousness and your plea, draw near!

Thomas Watson said Christ went more willingly to the cross than we go to the throne of grace. Interesting. When have you ever heard in Scripture connected with grace. Throne screams judgment, holiness, hierarchy, kingship. If anyone were to approach a throne, it was not a confident thing.

But since we have the Great High Priest who has passed through the Heavens after taking judgment in our place and presenting us holy, blameless, and fit to draw near, we only have grace, God's

unmerited, eternal, all-sufficient favor reserved for us to help us in the time of need because the God you need is the God you have.

Remember His sacrifice. Remember His seat. Remember your legal right to draw near with confidence. That we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. In that nearness here is what you will find and find it abundantly: Grace and help in the time of need. Does anyone need grace and help this morning? Yeah? Amen? Well your need for grace and help is met with a powerful, faithful, and merciful Savior that says come to Me.

“Our sins should humble us, but they should never discourage us from coming to Christ.” - Thomas Watson

VS 1 – For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

The great contrast.

VS 2-3 – He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

Other priests gave sacrifice for the sake of the nation and their own sins but Christ became the sacrifice for the sake of His bride by becoming their sin! Let's put the photo of the temple back on the screen. If you were to ask a Jew if they could enter into the presence of God, beyond the veil, think about how reverent of an answer you would have gotten. “No, no no. We can't go in there. We are unworthy. We are unfit. That is a place for the high priest once a year and even he is a sinner! It is not a pretty sight in there. It's bloody. It's humbling. It's terrifying.” They would be right to answer in such a way.

What if you would ask a Gentile... “You kidding me? We belong out here. Can't go in there. We don't have the same access. We don't have the same promises.” The justice of God must be satisfied. He delights in executing His righteous judgment and also His loving-kindness. Therefore, God has ordained in the old covenant that there will be a man to stand in the place, as a mediator between God and His people to offer sacrifices. But that high priest was never the sufficient one. He could only offer bulls and goats. But the blood bulls and goats cannot bring forgiveness of sins. He instead pointed to the Great High Priest. Who was the sinless Man. That would mediate in a way that no other man could. Because as He stood before God He had no bull or goat. He was sent to BE the offering. The spotless lamb who was tempted in every way just as we are, YET WITHOUT SIN!

“You stand before God as if you were Christ, because Christ stood before God as if he were you.”
Charles Spurgeon

Those who have been brought near by the blood of Christ have been given permission to draw near to the throne of grace. Draw near!



- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you grow in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you go to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?



- **REVIEW**

- Read **Hebrews 4:14-5:3** and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
- What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
- Additional Scripture:
 - Exodus 30:10
 - Ephesians 2:3
 - Galatians 3:28
 - Leviticus 9:5-6
 - Matthew 27:51
 - Ephesians 2:13

- **REFLECT**

- What is recapitulation?
- How did Christ suffer?
- How does Christ's suffering allow him to sympathize with us?

- **RESPOND**

- How can you draw near to the throne of God?

- **MEDITATE**

- Hebrews 4:15 – For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- **MEMORIZE**

- John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

LOOK AHEAD



- **FOLLOW:** How will you follow Jesus this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **FISH:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story, your story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER**
 - Pray over any request from your group members.
 - Staff – **Hunter Christian**
 - Ministry – **Young Adult Director**
 - **Pray for our long-term units on the field:**
 - The Wilsons
 - The Grays
 - The Starks
 - **Pray for our short-term teams**
 - London Team departing June 30
 - Asian Pacific Rim Team #2 departing August 16
 - Central Asia Team #2 departing on September 27
 - **Pray for the lost.** Want to keep up with Unreached People Groups? Download the Unreached of the Day App <https://joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/app>