OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

**DATE: 11/13/2013 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 4:14-16**

**INTRODUCTION**

As we continue to study the Book of Hebrews we are reminded again of its theme

The Superiority of Christ, the Key word is ***“Better”***

This word is used 8 times thru-out the Book

He is ...

- Better than Angels – **Heb. 1:4**

Also the Prophets, Moses, Joshua (Chps. 2-4)

And tonight we will see He is Better than the High Priest

- A Better Hope – **Heb. 7:19**

- A Better Covenant – **Heb. 7:22**

- A Better Promise – **Heb.8:6**

- A Better Sacrifice – **Heb. 9:23**

- A Better Resurrection – **Heb. 11:35**

- A Better Country – **Heb. 11:16**

- A Better Blood – **Heb. 12:24**

Remember who the writer is talking to here

Hebrew Christians

He is Demonstrating the Superiority of Christ to the Old System

He is helping these folks make the transition from the Old to the New

**Ephesians 2 …** Jew & Gentile are now one, the Church

In the world of the Jew (of the OT) there was no greater or a more exalted position than that of the High Priest

It was a place of Sovereign Appointment

The most significant task of the High Priest took place on the Day of Atonement

It was on this day that the High Priest would enter into the most holy place of the Temple and offer the blood sacrifice for the sins of the nation

The writer gives us reasons why we should ***“hold fast to our profession”*** in these vs.

In **Hebrews 2:17** Jesus is called a ***“merciful and faithful High Priest”***

In **Hebrews 3:1** He is called the ***“Apostle and High Priest of our profession”***

Now the writer calls Him Our ***“Great High Priest”***

The phrase ***“We have”*** shows personal possession

Let’s pray and look at ***“OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST”***

***~~~Prayer~~~***

**I. HIS “SUPERIORITY” – v.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”***

Not only are we told that Jesus is Our Great High Priest

But we also see from the characteristics of Christ's work ...

What makes Him Superior to any Priest of the old system

He’s not called ***“Great”*** for no reason

As we look at His Superiority, we first see …

**A. His ‘Description’**

Let’s look at the1st part of **v.14**

***“Seeing then that we have a great high priest”***

Throughout the history of Israel there had been many High Priests

Generation after generation had chosen men that served in this office

Each year (for 1000’s of years) a High Priest would enter the Temple and offered a sacrifice and then carry the atoning blood into the holy of holies into the very presence of Almighty God, on behalf of the people

The Jewish Christians to whom the writer was speaking were quite familiar with this

But here, in this description of Christ as our High Priest, we have something that is distinctly new

Something that had never been said of any OT Priest

Here is not merely *the* *High Priest*, but he is *our* ***“Great High Priest”***

Aaron was the *First* High Priest

But Jesus Christ is Our GREAT High Priest

No OT Priest could assume that title

But what makes our Lord so GREAT

First, in …

**B. His ‘Dwelling’**

Jesus; our Great High Priest has..

***“passed into the heavens”***

Again I emphasize the High Priest’s role of going into the most holy place of the Temple once a year

But notice that Our High Priest has passed into the heavens

Under the old system, God came down to meet with the High Priest in the Holy of holies

**Hebrews 9:6, 7 …**

But our Great High Priest did not enter the earthly tabernacle

But, went into the heavenly holy of holies to present His blood to God as our Great and Eternal High Priest

Not the Blood of Bulls & Goats

**Hebrews 9:12-14 …**

Like no other High Priest before Him …

Jesus has entered into the Heavenly presence of God with His own blood

The Apostle John wrote in **I 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:”***

The word ***“Advocate”*** is a judicial term

It means *called to one's side for aid*

An ***“Advocate”*** is one who pleads another's cause before the judge

The Christian's Advocate is Jesus Christ the righteous

Like the High Priest of the OT went before God on behalf of the children of Israel

We have before the throne of God the Great High Priest who died for our sins and pleads our case

Next we see …

**C. His ‘Deity’**

Jesus Christ is both God and Man

He is described as ***“Jesus, the Son of God”***

- The name ***“Jesus”*** means *Saviour* and identifies His Humanity and His ministry on earth

***- “Son of God”*** affirms His Deity and the fact that He is God

In His unique person, Jesus Christ unites Deity and Humanity, so that He can bring …

- Mankind to God

- God to Mankind

This is no earthly priest who stands before the Father on our behalf

This is Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God

It baffles me that so many people (including religious people) deny and dispute the Deity of Christ

The Bible is full of references to our Lord's Deity

**- John 10:30 – *“I and my Father are one”***

**- Isaiah 7:14 – *“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”***

**- John 1:1 – *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”***

**- John 8:58 – *“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am”***

**- Colossians 2:9 – *“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily”***

When the Deity of Christ is removed, we have nothing left but religion

Anyone who will honestly and humbly look at the issue of Christ's Deity must conclude that He is God!

Such is the testimony of God the Father

**Hebrews 1:8 – *“But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom”***

**D. His ‘Desire’ …**

… Is for us to ***“hold fast our profession”***

Here we see the Priority of His High Priestly work

Because He is there, we can hold fast our profession

Our Lord Jesus Christ desires that we hold fast and stay true to the faith

As our High Priest He is in the presence of God the Father right now and He is interceding for us

**Hebrews 7:25 – *“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”***

**HIS “SUPERIORITY”**

**II. HIS “SYMPATHY” – v.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”***

Because Jesus has been where we are, He can sympathize with us

While on earth Jesus Christ was 100% man and at the same time 100% God

Our Lord's humanity was perfect and He did not have a sin nature

Our text clearly says that He was without sin

Jesus was never tempted or tested to see if He Would sin

But rather, to show that He Couldn't sin

It wasn't to prove Him,

But to Demonstrate His sinlessness to us

First, Let’s look at …

**A. Our ‘Understanding’ High Priest**

The writer says that **“…*we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities***

He is not a High Priest that is not touched by what we are touched by as human beings

As a man, He experienced all that we experience as human beings

**Song:** You have heard the old hymn, *“Jesus knows how you feel”*

That is absolutely true

He knows how we feel

He does, because He has gone through the same things that we do

In His humanity our Lord has experienced the same infirmities and limitations that we do

He knew what it meant to be lonely, tired, hungry, thirsty and betrayed

He understood the need for fellowship with His Father

He knew what it was like to be hated and lied about

He suffered the persecution of the wicked

All Hell raged against Him as He withstood the evil attacks of sin

You ask why? Why would the Son of God subject Himself to such treatment?

Of course, He did it out of Love

He did it so that He could take our place and die for our sin under the wrath of God

He paid the debt that we couldn't pay

Left up to us, we would have to die and spend eternity in Hell for our sin

Left up to Christ, He paid the penalty of sin for every man, woman and child

**Hebrews 2:9 - *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man”***

However, there is yet another reason

**Hebrews 2:17 – *“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"***

***“behoved”*** – *It was necessary; to be fit for; with respect to necessity, duty*

***“It was Necessary for Him to be made like unto his brethren”***

Out of Necessity for you and I …

He allowed Himself to be treated with contempt and cruelty

So that He could be a *“****merciful and faithful High Priest”***

No matter what we come to Him with

He is there and can sympathize with us

Jesus as a man, entered into a relationship with men

By which He experienced all we experience as men,

Therefore He relates to us in every way

As Our Great High Priest, He perfectly Understands

Because He was a man, He has the capacity for sympathizing with us in every situation that comes our way

He has been through it Himself!

Think about when He stood before the tomb of Lazarus in **John 11:35**, the Bible says that ***“Jesus wept”***

His body shook in grief as He wept in sorrow

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He endured such pressure that His sweat became as great drops of blood

He experienced the same emotions we experience

He is **Our** ‘**Understanding’ High Priest**

The writer adds, that even though He experienced all we experience

He is …

**B. Our ‘Undefiled’ High Priest**

The writer goes on to say that Jesus ***“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin”***

Each of us faces temptation

All too often we succumb to the temptation we face

Jesus, like us, faced temptation, but He never succumbed to temptation

The words ***“without sin”*** speak *of being completely apart from and separate from sin*

That phrase expresses the absolute absence of sin

He was tempted by sin, but in Him there was never the slightest taint of sin in either thought or deed

He was man, but He was a sinless man

An example of His temptation is found in **Mark 1:13 -**

***“And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto Him”***

He was tempted by Satan but did not yield nor was swayed by that temptation

As a man, Jesus faced temptation, as we face temptation

Yet, He was **Undefiled** in any way

He was completely and totally free from sin

The truth is, He does not have the capacity to sin

He is not only **Our ‘Understanding’ Great High Priest**

But also **Our ‘Undefiled’ Great High Priest**

**HIS “SUPERIORITY”**

**HIS “SYMPATHY”**

**III. HIS “SUPPLY” – v.16**

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

This verse is rich in doctrine and practical application

We will note 3 thoughts here

First …

**A. Our ‘Confidence’**

The Writer says – *“****Let us therefore come boldly...”***

As children of God we can be confident that we have open access to His throne

As we have already learned, the Jews, with the exception of the high priest, were shut out of God's presence

However, this is not the case with NT Christian

We were shut out, before we were saved

But have now received the invitation to ***“come boldly”***

**Mark 15:38 – *“…the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom”***

**Matthew 11:28 – *“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”***

The word *“****boldly”*** carries the idea of *confidence* and *assurance*

This does not mean that we are to approach God's throne hastily or without reverence

But we are to come with confidence and assurance that we have access and will be accepted

In the OT it was impossible to enter into the presence of God unless you were the High Priest

However, now, we can come boldly and with confidence without the concern of being turned away

**Our ‘Confidence’**

**B. Our ‘Cleansing’**

Where exactly do we go?

***“to the throne of grace”***

The context of this passage shows us that the ***“throne of grace”*** is the Mercy Seat

The Mercy Seat was the place in the Holy of holies where God meet with the High Priest

(Explain the Ark)

If satisfied with the sacrifice of the people …

God would accept their offering and forgive their sins

**Exodus 25:22 – *“And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat,”***

**Leviticus 16:14 – *“And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times”***

When the people of God came on God's terms and the Priest offered the sacrificial blood on the mercy seat,

They were forgiven and restored to fellowship

The same is true even in a greater way in the NT

Jesus Christ is our Mercy Seat

**Romans 3:25 – *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God”***

The word ***“propitiation”*** carries the idea of *satisfaction*

Relating to salvation, it means that God's righteous requirements had to be satisfied

We see here that it is Christ who met that Requirement

That Requirement was perfection (sinlessness)

He Satisfied the Law and satisfied the Righteousness of God

- Noah Webster defines *propitiation* as - *The act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favor of an offended person*

**-** C. I. Scofield said – *“Propitiation is not placating (or gratifying) a vengeful God but, rather, it is satisfying the righteousness of a holy God, thereby making it possible for Him to show mercy righteously”*

The blood made it possible for God to show mercy to the nation of Israel

The mercy seat became the place of *“****propitiation”***

The place of God's satisfaction

It was the place where God

- Met with the High Priest

- Accepted the blood as satisfactory payment

- Forgave Israel of their sins

In the Better way Jesus is our *“****propitiation”***

The word *“****propitiation”*** in **Romans 3:25** and the word ***Mercy-seat”*** found in **Hebrews 9:25** are the same word

Jesus Christ replaced the mercy-seat of the OT

Christ, Our Mercy seat, is the One who has satisfied all the demands of the Law

The Law demanded every man’s perfect obedience, or death

Jesus Christ met and satisfied that demand

As Our Great High Priest, He entered into Heaven with His own blood, Satisfying God’s Demands

In coming to the Throne of Grace we are coming directly to Jesus Christ Who has fulfilled every type of the OT mercy seat

We go to Christ not only for Salvation, but for Sanctification also

**Our ‘Confidence’**

**Our ‘Cleansing’**

**C. Our ‘Conquest’**

When we come to the throne we

***“... obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”***

Praise God! It is not the throne of the Law,

But the ***“throne of grace”***

We cannot come with confidence to the Throne of the Law

For by the Law we stand condemned

The Law prevented the possibility of a bold and confident entrance into the presence of God

But this is the Throne of Grace

- We do not go before Christ for Condemnation,

but for Compassion

- We do not go before Christ to be Imprisoned, but to be Set Free

**John 8:36 – *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed”***

- When we enter into His presence it is not for a Whipping, but to Worship and Attain Help

**CONCLUSION**

Just as the priest of the OT Mediated on behalf of the people

He was the peacekeeper between God and man

In Christianity Jesus is our Mediator

**I Timothy 2:5 – *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”***

Not only is He the Mediator, but He removed the veil

**Ephesians 2:14 - *“For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us”***

As we come boldly to the Throne of Grace let us keep in mind that this Throne of Grace is all about the One who sits on the throne

**Jesus Our Great High Priest**

**HIS “SUPERIORITY”**

**HIS “SYMPATHY”**

**HIS “SUPPLY”**