

## Text— Hebrews 4:14-16

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Prior to our Scripture selection we learn about the importance of faith and continuing therein, for we read in Hebrews 3:12-19, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Hence, let us think about the fact that many of the children of Israel could not enter the Promised Land because they failed to trust in the Lord who had performed numerous miracles in delivering them from bitter bondage in Egypt. Indeed, because of unbelief that generation of Israelites was consigned to wander in the wilderness for forty years, and perished therein. Accordingly, we are thereby warned to remain steadfast in the faith of Jesus Christ lest we too lose faith and consequently fail to enter the Promised Land of heaven, for Hebrews 4:1-2 says, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Thus, we need to heed the Gospel; we need to stand fast in the faith of Jesus Christ.

My friends, we are all sinful human beings; consequently, we require able assistance if we

would be and remain firm in the one true faith. Thankfully, our sermon text shows us that we have the necessary able assistance available to us in the Person of:

"OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST"

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Who our great High Priest is
- 2) Why our great High Priest is indeed great

-1-

Verse 14, ----- (Hebrews 4:14)

Our text is addressed to Christians, people with faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord. Consider the opening words of our Scripture selection since we are there informed as to who our great High Priest is, for we read: *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.* Yes, Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest.

The name "Jesus" means Savior, for we read in Matthew 1:18-23, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Thus, Jesus Christ is

true man, sinless man, and is also true God because He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is our Savior and our great High Priest foretold of old.

Jesus had to be true man in order to take our place under the Law and in order to be able to suffer and die for us. However, our text emphasizes the fact that Jesus is *the Son of God*— Son of God with a capital “S” because He is “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” as John 1:14 reports. Realize Jesus had to be true God in order that His perfect keeping of God’s holy Law might be sufficient for all people; and, in order that His bitter sufferings, death, and shed blood might be sufficient ransom for the redemption of all people; and, that He might be able to overcome death and the devil for us.

Accordingly, Jesus Christ – the God/man – is the one true Savior of the whole world, for Holy Writ relates, “when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (Galatians 4:4-5; John 3:16-18) My friends, take it to heart that our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice for ALL sin!

Oh beloved, let us never forget that Romans 4:25 informs us that Jesus our Lord is He, “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Jesus Christ is our living Lord! Jesus the Son of God is our *great high priest, that is passed into the heavens*. Note that it’s “heavens” plural. Jesus did not pass through the heavens as if He is no longer present; rather, Jesus our great

High Priest is *passed into the heavens*, for forty days after His bodily resurrection it happened that after He had spoken to His disciples, “while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight,” as we learn from Acts 1:9. Yes, Jesus removed His visible presence as He now is omnipresent according to both His divine and human natures. Jesus, the God/man, is present in the heaven of the sky and clouds which touches our earth; Jesus, the God/man, is present in the heaven of the stars and planets which we call outer space; and, Jesus, the God/man, is present in paradise, the highest holy heaven where the glory of God dwells in its full brightness and splendor with the souls of departed believers. We know that Jesus is invisibly present on earth because He promised His disciples in Matthew 28:20, “lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Therefore, fellow Christians, take it to heart our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, is always available to supply us with able assistance in all our needs of body and soul because He is not far off and out-of-reach; Jesus is close by and we can always call upon Him in prayer, for 1 John 5:14-15 declares, “this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.” Jesus the Son of God IS our great High Priest!

Looking again at the opening verse of our text, let us observe that these words written to Christians by the apostle Paul state: *we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession*. Thus, we Christians have Jesus the Son of God as our great High Priest and we need to continue to profess Him: that is, we need to continue to have a living faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord if we would benefit from His being our great High Priest. We need to persist in the faith of Jesus the Son of God, for John 3:36 declares, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but

the wrath of God abideth on him.” Jesus serves as our great High Priest interceding on our behalf while we continue to trust and confide in Him, for we read in 1 John 2:1, “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Let us thank and praise Jesus Christ for being our great High Priest!

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As we ponder our text to its conclusion, let us see why our great High Priest is indeed great.

Verse 15, ----- (Hebrews 4:15)

Fellow Christians, Jesus our great High Priest is indeed great, *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.* Think about it. Our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, can truly sympathize with us.

Oh, it’s true that Jesus Christ is the sinless only begotten Son of God; nevertheless, Jesus fully experienced the *feeling of our infirmities* because Isaiah 53:3-6 states, “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Hence, Jesus indeed knows the feeling of our infirmities since He bore ALL of our sins, taking them to the cross of Calvary where He paid for them in full with His own holy and precious blood. Accordingly, Jesus can and does truly sympathize with us; Jesus is indeed our great High Priest.

Furthermore, when Jesus visibly walked this earth He *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet*

*without sin.* Jesus can and does sympathize with our moral weakness in that He is a real man, true man, in addition to being true God. Jesus is without sin of His own, and yet He was genuinely tempted most severely by the devil.

For example, consider the temptations Jesus endured right after His baptism, just prior to His beginning His public ministry in earnest. We read in Luke 4:1-13, “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”

Think about what Jesus endured. Jesus is a real man, and when He was weak with hunger the devil tempted Him severely in regards to health, worldly wealth, and trust in God the Father. Jesus experienced some very extreme temptations; and yet, Jesus did not give-in to the devil. Jesus defeated the devil and resisted all his temptations

by properly using God's Word, the Holy Scriptures. Jesus our great High Priest is indeed great, for Jesus triumphed over temptation while we so often succumb to temptations and fall into sin. Jesus is our great High Priest, *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.* Jesus endured every kind of temptation, but never yielded to temptation; Jesus never sinned in thoughts or in words or in deeds! Jesus our Savior and Lord is our great High Priest!

Verse 16, ----- (Hebrews 4:16)

Fellow Christians, because Jesus is our great High Priest who truly sympathizes with us, *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Yes, realize that WE CAN come boldly to God's heavenly throne of grace, God's throne of undeserved love for us, because Jesus our great High Priest is there to ably assist us in our every need, for Hebrews 7:24-28 informs us, "this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 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. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore." Oh, it's a fact that Jesus our great High Priest is indeed great— He is the greatest!

Notice that our text encourages us to come **BOLDLY** *unto the throne of grace.* My friends, we need not be timid about praying to the Lord for help, for our Savior is ready, willing, and able to see that we surely *obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

We definitely require God's mercy regularly since Ecclesiastes 7:20 informs us, "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." And, we read in Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Hence, we need the forgiveness of sins regularly; and thankfully, we will repeatedly obtain the forgiveness of sins when we pray to God since our text assures us that we will *find grace to help in time of need.* Yes, God's undeserved love, God's unmerited favor, we will find when we pray to Him for forgiveness in Jesus' name, because God's Son, Jesus Christ, is our great High Priest.

There is NO high priest greater than Jesus Christ the great High Priest, for Jesus Christ is also our Savior and Lord who died for us and rose again that we might have eternal life. Therefore, we Christians can say with the beloved apostle Paul, Romans 8:34-39, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Accordingly, let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord; and, let us go forward taking comfort in the fact that Jesus is our great High Priest who forever lives, interceding for us at the throne of God the Father, seeing that we are provided with mercy and grace to help us in time of need. Amen.

m.e.l.