

The Letter to the Hebrews Who is Jesus? – Lesson 6

Presenter:	Larry Monson "JUST LARRY" http://theinsight.com
Topic: THE Better High Priest	The Letter to the Hebrews – Chapter 4:14-5:9 Compare and contrast between the Jewish Priesthood and the Great High Priest of Jesus.
Key verses for today's study	Hebrews 4:14 <i>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of GOD, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.</i>

Exercise one – Three questions

What is a priest?	
To you, what is the most important characteristic of a priest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Set apart B. Empathetic C. Sympathetic D. Intercessor E. Judge F. Leader
What is the most important attitude you should have when coming to church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Humility B. Enthusiasm C. Boldness D. Seeking E. Submission

<p>Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible study of a sermon • Jewish converts to Christianity • Jesus better than the prophets • Jesus better than angels • Jesus has more honor than MOSES • Jesus brings a perfect rest to those who have faith
<p>Idea #1 : Salvation brings something more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bonus of reconciliation is a _____ Life. • Faith is more than a dependence upon something. • Faith must be in something • Faith must be a shared thing. • We have a _____ _____.
<p>Idea #2: History of the priesthood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The High Priest was the _____ _____. • Aaron was the first appointed priest • Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers has all the rules and special rules for the priesthood.
<p>Idea #3 Day of Atonement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The day of Atonement was regulated and officiated by the priests _____. • Blood for sin • Was not last very long (one day without guilt)
<p>Idea # 4 Danger of the Priesthood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hadab and Abihu • Lack of faith • Two sins _____ and _____.

<p>Idea #5: New Testament priesthood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They had no connection to the people they were to represent because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They had no _____. ○ Saw no _____ in themselves. • Political selection from the Levites (Aaron’s tribe) • They were to do specific things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deal _____. ○ Offer sin offerings for themselves ○ Offer sin offerings for the _____. ○ To not think of themselves as being more _____.
<p>Idea # 6: Priestly Indifference</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant attitude of watchfulness against “Unclean things” • Passive role: no actions to prevent sin only there afterwards. • Self-perceived importance “Without us…….”
<p>Idea # 7: Jesus the High Priest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the characteristics of Jesus the High Priest? • How should we come before Jesus the Great High Priest?
<p>List to do this week:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pray that God will put someone in your life that needs a word of encouragement. 2. Be a priest to someone this week by being gentle, compassionate, showing sympathy, empathy and demonstrating Jesus to them. 3. Read 5:11 through 6:12 three times this week and make a list of questions these verses would suggest to you.

Great High Priest

The hierarchy of our church does not include anyone with the title of Priest. Sometimes I wonder about the necessity to have a priest at all. Again, it is probably part of my Protestant background. Never-the-less, as I am studying a portion of the New Testament entitled Hebrews, I find several passages depicting Jesus as the High Priest (Hebrews 2:17; 3:1; 4:14-5:10; 6:20; 7:11-8:2; 10:12). The office of priest was an important one in the Old Testament system and is fulfilled by Jesus.

In the Jewish system, a priest mediated between the people and God. They seemed to need a person to assume a job as middleman. Appointed to that job was Aaron and his descendants, with the tribe of Levi serving as assistants in the Tabernacle (Numbers 3:5-10). The Levites were viewed as belonging to God (Numbers 3:12); they were set apart and very special. I found specific regulations for the priests in Leviticus 21 – 22. The high priest was the chief religious leader and had certain duties. The most important, of these duties, was the high priest who entered the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Only the high priest could enter and, before doing so, he was required to make a sacrifice for himself. In this way the high priest was cleansed and could then go on to offer the cleansing sacrifices for the people (Leviticus 16).

This is where Hebrews comes in speaking to a group of Jewish Christians, and tells them that Jesus is the Great High Priest who mediates. His sacrifice is what provides cleansing for our sins. Rather than a yearly (or daily) atonement, Jesus' sacrifice is once-for-all (Hebrews 10:1-18). Jesus, like the high priests of Old Testament times, stands in the gap between us (the people) and God. He made the necessary sacrifice for us (Jesus was without sin so did not need to offer a sacrifice for Himself as did the high priests of the Old Testament). Those who have put their faith in Jesus have been made righteous by Him (2 Corinthians 5:21) and are now able to enter God's presence. This mediation of Jesus is permanent and continual. Hebrews 7:23-25 says, "The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever." While Jesus' sacrifice was once-for-all, His mediation for us continues. Jesus also communicates the will of God to us through His teachings and through the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).

Jesus is not only our High Priest, but also a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:11-22). Melchizedek is introduced in Genesis 14. He is said to be both a king and a priest (Genesis 14:18). He met Abram (later known as Abraham) after Abram's battle victory. In their meeting, Melchizedek blessed Abram, and Abram gave him a tenth of everything, thus confirming Melchizedek's priesthood and authority. The writer of Hebrews explains that Jesus is of this order of priests – His priesthood is based on authority rather than on lineage (Hebrews 7:11-17), and it is also kingly. Therefore, Jesus' priesthood institutes a new way of being: "For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well" (Hebrews 7:12). With Jesus as High Priest, a new covenant is in effect.

So do we need someone to stand in the gap? Yes. Do we need someone to make a sacrifice? Yes. Do we need someone to represent us? Yes. Do we need a new covenant? Yes. Do we need a new relationship to God? Yes. Yes to all these. Perhaps the most crucial thing for believers to understand today is that it is because Jesus is our High Priest that we can approach God with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). We no longer need to go through earthly mediators. Jesus has broken the barrier, made the sacrifice, established a new covenant, and re-instituted our relationship with God. Because of our High Priest, we are free to come to God.