



# Great High Priest

Hebrews 2:14-18    John 3:13-18

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Pastor Dave Bolte

In the Book of Hebrews, Jesus' earthly life is portrayed  
as **His training** to be our **Great High Priest**.

As true God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus became a Perfect Man and lived like we do. He was just like us but without sin! *It's like --- if you will --- He was learning firsthand what it is like to be a human being so that He can be sympathetic and understanding and helpful to us.* Think about how the Gospels teach us about Him:

- † He was born and raised in a home with Godly parents;
- † He studied the Scriptures, memorized verses, & learned how to pray;
- † He learned and obeyed the 10 Commandments;
- † He ate and drank and slept like we do.
- † He barely had two nickels to rub together;
- † He was tempted to sin like we are, *but He never gave in.*
- † He was weak and tired and needed time to rest and take a nap.
- † He had good friends;
- † He had miserable friends;
- † He had bitter and ruthless enemies.
- † He experienced injustice and humiliation;
- † And finally, Jesus suffered, and bled, and experienced excruciating pain, dying a torturous death on the cross.

Jesus' earthly life is portrayed in the Book of Hebrews as **His training** to be our **Great High Priest**. *It's like He was learning firsthand what it is like to be a human being so He can be sympathetic and understanding of you and your life and your hardships.*

Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the service of God, Hebrews 2:17

**Jesus was doing more** than just learning what is like to be a human being; He was living as the **Perfect Human Being** for us and on our behalf. He was the **New Adam** who fully obeyed God in all things; He was the **New Israel** who would perfectly hear and obey God's Word; He was the **Perfectly Obedient Son** who faithfully carried out every detail of His Father's Will<sup>1</sup>.

God's Will for Jesus was that He would not just live for us, but He would even “*taste death*” for every man, woman, and child. His death **destroyed the devil**; and **set us free** from living in fear, dread, and non-worry, of death. Jesus obeyed God the Father *even to the point of dying* on a cross as the Savior of the World<sup>2</sup>. Jesus' Resurrection from the dead is God the Father's **approval and acceptance** of His Son's obedient life and sacrificial death!

Now that Jesus lived, died, and rose from the dead, He has been installed as our **Great High Priest**<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful **High Priest** in the service of God, Hebrews 2:17

A **High Priest** in the Old Testament did two things; He represented God to the people, and He represented the people to God. He was the **Mediator** between God and man. The risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ is described as our **Great High Priest** Who is both *merciful and faithful*. His *merciful and faithful* work is seen in two areas:

Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful **High Priest** in the service of God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. Now because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:17-18

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<sup>1</sup> This is called the **Active Obedience of Christ**. Jesus “*actively obeyed*” God's Word and Commandments perfectly; and His perfect and obedient life is “credited” to you through faith and God now considers you to have lived a perfectly obedient life! You are both Holy and Righteous in God's eyes because of Jesus!

<sup>2</sup> This is called the **Passive Obedience of Christ**. Jesus *allowed* Himself be arrested, tried, and crucified according to God's Will to save the world. Although Jesus could have called a legion of Angels to rescue Him, He did not. He was “*passive*” in order to accomplish the Father's Will. God's Will was that Jesus take our place under God's wrath for our sin and the Jesus die instead of us. You are now set free from the power of sin, forgiven, and are reconciled to God the Father! The Resurrection is proof that God accepted Christ's Active and Passive Obedience on your behalf!

<sup>3</sup> These verses about Jesus as our **HIGH PRIEST** introduce the **central theme** of the Book of Hebrews; a theme that is developed throughout the rest of the book.

Jesus, our *Great High Priest* **makes atonement** for your sins and *helps you when you are tempted!*

**Atonement** is an Old Testament worship word that means the blood of a sacrifice has covered over your sin. It is the major way that forgiveness of sins is taught in the Old Testament. On the *Day of Atonement*<sup>4</sup>, the high priest went into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled blood on the Ark of the Covenant. By this act, the peoples' sins were *covered over by the blood*; they were **atoned for**; and God forgave them. The idea is that when God looks down on His people, He does not see their sin, but He sees the blood of a sacrifice has covered over their sin<sup>5</sup>. The sacrifice died instead of the people. Jesus is the sacrifice for you and for me and for all people – even the people of the Old Testament times. He died instead of us. His blood covers over your sins; God sees the blood of His Son and not your guilt nor your sin, He does not see your rebellion nor immorality. **You are forgiven! Your sins have been atoned for by Christ!**

In this word picture of **atonement**, Jesus is our *merciful and faithful Great High Priest* who is *continually* making **atonement** for you; He is *always* covering over your sin with His blood. It's like *real-time, play-by-play forgiveness* throughout your life. This is what the Risen and Ascended Lord Jesus, our *Great High Priest*, does for you. This is His work in Heaven right now! He is faithful and He is merciful: your sins are atoned for; they are *continually* covered over by the blood of Christ.

In addition *Jesus our merciful and faithful Great High Priest helps you when you are tempted to sin.* Because of what He experienced during His life on earth, He understands you. It's like His life was His training to be *High Priest*. He was tempted just like you are, in every way, but He never sinned. He is *sympathetic and understanding* --- **He knows! He will to help you!**

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<sup>4</sup> The annual Old Testament “**Day of Atonement**” is the *foreshadow* for the one-time New Testament “Good Friday”. Instead of the blood of animal sacrifices repeated year after year, it is now Christ's blood, *once and for all* shed on the cross on Good Friday, that covers over our sins – He “made atonement” for us --> **and His atonement lasts forever!!**

<sup>5</sup> It is **ALWAYS** important to remember that not one of the Old Testament sacrifices could take away sins – but rather every *single one of them* pointed forward to Jesus, **the once and for all sacrifice**, that takes away the sins of the world (even the Old Testament people's sins). See Hebrews 10:4.

He helps you in temptations, trials, hardships, problems and pain in many ways. For instance, as our *Great High Priest*,

- † He continually *prays* for you to resist temptation and to remain faithful and strong in faith
- † He speaks to you through His powerful *Word* – which empowers you to resist temptation, to patiently endure, and to live a holy life
- † He has sent the *Holy Spirit* to be with you forever; He is at work to strengthen and fortify you, to help you turn away from temptation, and to bear up under every suffering
- † He has given you His very own prayer to use – *the Lord's Prayer* – where you ask God the Father to “*lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil*”
- † Our *Great High Priest* has given you *His Body and Blood* in bread and wine to strengthen you through the forgiveness of your sins; you have a very real “*Holy Communion*” with Jesus, your *Great High Priest*.
- † Jesus the all-powerful and all-knowing Lord over all provides *a way out* for you in the midst of your temptations and suffering; you are **NEVER** trapped in your temptations, trials, hardships, problems or pain
- † Jesus even *limits the intensity and duration* of your suffering and temptations --> they will never crush you, they are not more than you can bear. You can withstand them!

Jesus your *Great High Priest*, was tempted just like you are, in every way, but He never sinned. He understands and He is sympathetic to! *He helps you in every temptations, trials, hardships, problems and pain!*

*Isn't the Book of Hebrews fascinating?*

**Chapter 1** taught us the **divinity** of Jesus: 10 different ways to describe His divine Person and Work; and how He is far superior to all the angels in Heaven. Jesus is God Himself!

**Chapter 2** taught us the **humanity** of Jesus: He is the Perfect Man. He lived His earthly life in complete obedience to the Father. He was sent to destroy the devil for us, and to set us free from living in the fear, dread, and non-stop worry of death and dying. His death and resurrection set Him apart as our *Great High Priest*, He is *merciful and faithful*: He **makes atonement** for your sins and *He helps you in every temptations, trials, hardships, problems and pain!*

No wonder we are be **paying ever increasing attention to Jesus!** Amen!