

ENCOURAGING NEWS **(Hebrews 4:14-16)**

I. The position of Jesus now (Hebrews 4:14).

- a. As we mentioned in the introduction, the writer goes back to showing us that Jesus is better: in this case, a better high priest.
 - i. Beginning in here and going through a greater part of the book, this is the focus.
 - ii. The Jews revered the position of the high priest and it was important to show that Jesus is greater than any high priest on earth has ever been.
- b. To show that Jesus is greater, the writer was first inspired to show the position Jesus now occupies.
- c. Jesus is a High Priest in heaven.
- d. Aaron and other high priests on earth would pass through a curtain once a year into the most holy place.
 - i. The most holy place was a foreshadowing of heaven.
 - ii. You remember that the veil between the holy and most holy place was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross (Mark 15:38).
 - iii. Only one time per year, in the 7th month, on the 10th day of the month, could the high priest enter the tabernacle.
 - iv. All of this is found in Leviticus 16.
 - v. He would have already offered a bull for himself and one for the people as well as a goat for all their sins.
 - vi. One goat, the scapegoat would be touched by all the people and then let out into the wilderness.
- e. Jesus, who is better, has passed on into heaven itself.
 - i. Jesus is now reigning there, on the right hand of God.
 - ii. He is sitting on the throne overseeing His kingdom.
- f. The greatness of Jesus above all others is what is being stressed here.
 - i. Others only went into that which looked to heaven.
 - ii. They could only go once per year.
 - iii. Jesus, after having offered Himself for the people, went into the true heaven and has stayed there ever since.
- g. Because He is so great, we ought to hold onto our confession of Him for dear life.
 - i. The phrase hold fast means to cling to tenaciously.
 - ii. We ought to have a death grip on it and not let it go.
- h. Remember, the writer's original audience was a group of Jewish converts who were being tempted to give up Christ.
 - i. Why give up the greatest High Priest for a far inferior high priest?
 - ii. Cling to your confession of Christ made at baptism.
- i. The same holds true for us when the world calls or the trials of life hit.
 - i. To leave Jesus is to leave our only hope.
 - ii. He is the only one who has passed into the heavens.
 - iii. He is the only one ruling over His spiritual body of people and turn from Him is committing spiritual suicide.

II. The perfection of Jesus while on earth (Hebrews 4:15).

- j. The high priest in those days had become an officially appointed position.
 - i. When you read about the high priests that ruled in the days of Jesus, Annas and Caiphas, you don't read about people who were concerned about the common folk.
 - ii. All those men, and all the leaders of the Jews, cared about was their power and prestige.
 - iii. If someone had to get killed to keep it, so be it.
 - iv. If someone lost what they had to keep it, so be it.
- k. Yes, Jesus has ascended on high, but while He was on earth, He went through the same things each of us do.
 - i. 1 John 2:15-16 lets us know the avenues of temptation: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, the pride of life.
 - ii. At His temptation after His baptism, our Lord faced each of these avenues when Satan came to Him.
- l. Jesus, the human side of Him, could have sinned.
- m. Despite the possibility He could have sinned, He never did.
- n. But because He was tempted, Jesus can be sympathetic to us as we go through temptations.
 - i. We all know the old saying, don't judge a man till you walk in his shoes.
 - ii. Jesus has been in our shoes.
 - iii. The word translated sympathize means to suffer with another person.
 - iv. It carries the idea of having entered into the experience and feeling the heartache yourself.
- o. Jesus was and is perfect in overcoming temptation, yet He knows exactly how we feel because He has been there and done that.
- p. Jesus is not some far off individual who cares nothing for those He is supposed to be assisting.
- q. Rather, our High Priest hurts when we hurt.

III. The purpose of Jesus on the throne (Hebrews 4:16).

- r. The purpose of Jesus on the cross was to save man.
- s. The purpose of Jesus on the throne is to aid those that allow His work on the cross to accomplish its purpose in their lives.
- t. Because He is where is and He is what He is, you and I can confidently come to Jesus for help in time of need.
 - i. The time of need is that time temptation comes.
 - ii. You and I can't handle those things on our own so we must be people of prayer, seeking the help of our High Priest.
- u. There is no way we can physically approach the throne.
 - i. This has to be a reference to prayer.
 - ii. We are to ask for what we need (1 John 5:14-15).
- v. The purpose of Jesus is to give us what we need when we come to God through Christ in prayer.
- w. His is a throne of grace.
 - i. This looks back to the mercy seat found on top of the ark of the covenant in the most holy place.
 - ii. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on that mercy seat and it brought the propitiation of the sins of the people.
 - iii. Now that Jesus has become the propitiation for our sins, (1 John 2:2),

we approach Him for the grace we need in time of temptation.
x. We can and will receive the mercy and grace each of us needs because of what Jesus has done for us to become our High Priest.