

Jesus Christ, Our High Priest (Part 2)

He Is Our ONLY Propitiation

As we continue our study of *Jesus Christ, Our High Priest*, it may be helpful to give the sequence of events between the time of Jesus' resurrection until now, and the importance of His present ministry in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle as our High Priest.

- God resurrected Jesus three days after Passover on the first day of the Jewish week, which corresponds to our Sunday.
- Jesus presented Himself alive to His apostles and others after His resurrection over a period of forty days (Acts 1:3) after which He ascended (Acts 1:9-11).
- Hence, Jesus ascended forty days after His resurrection and seven days before Pentecost. Pentecost occurs forty-nine days after Passover which is a jubilee of days (7 days x 7 weeks = 49 days + Passover = 50 days).
- After Jesus ascended out of sight of His apostles, He passed through the heavens (Hebrews 4:14) and entered into the tabernacle that is exalted above the heavens (Hebrews 7:26). The tabernacle that Jesus entered is not made by earthly materials as the earthly tabernacle was, but is said to be "not of this creation" (Hebrews 9:11).
- God appointed Jesus as High Priest because of His eminent qualifications (Hebrews 1:2-4; 2:10-18; 5:5-10), after which He entered into the Holy of Holies, the "holy sanctuary".

- After Jesus sprinkled the Holy of Holies with the blood of His once-for-all sin-offering (Hebrews 1:3; 9:23-24), He sat down at the right hand of God. The phrase, “at the right hand” is a figure of speech for exaltation or place of honor. The name “Benjamin” means “son of my right hand”.
- The purpose for Jesus appearing in the presence of God for our benefit (Hebrews 9:24) as our High Priest is to make propitiation for our sins. The High Priest’s function was ONLY on behalf of God’s people, and no one else.

Hebrews 2:17

”Therefore, He (Jesus) had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

The verb “to make propitiation” is a present infinitive. The infinitive states that the purpose for God appointing Jesus as our high priest is “to make propitiation for the sins of the people”. The present aspect of the infinitive underscores that the action is presently occurring.

Propitiation on the Day of Atonement is the act performed only by the high priest wherein he presents before the LORD in the Holy of Holies the appropriate blood sacrifice on a specific day and sprinkles the blood on and before the Ark of the Covenant; as a result, those who have humbled themselves before the LORD by confessing their sins are forgiven because His wrath toward sin has been appeased. God’s people who did not humble themselves and repented from their sins were cut off from the people, i.e., the blessings of the covenant (Leviticus 23:26-32, especially verse 29; see also Leviticus 16:1-34).

Jesus Christ is both the satisfying blood sacrifice and the High Priest who mediates the sacrifice on our behalf. He has been doing this faithfully since He sat down in the Holy of Holies, i.e., from the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out until now (Acts 2:33).

Jesus entered once for all into the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 9:12). Unlike the earthly high priests, He does not have to emerge again and again to make another sacrifice year after year. His once-for-all sin-offering at Calvary was perfect, for unlike the blood of bulls and goats that could never take away sin, Christ's propitiatory offering is satisfactory before the holy God.

This is why the Scriptures say, "since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens . . . let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16). And again, "since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:21-22).

Jesus is in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle still today, making propitiation for our sins based on His once-for-all sacrifice sin-offering. However, most do not know where He is (other than "in heaven") or for what purpose!

- There will come a time, however, when Jesus will no longer make propitiation for God's people. He will emerge from the seclusion of the Holy of Holies and "will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him" (Hebrews 9:28). This He will do when the Kingdom is inaugurated and Jesus raises from the dead who are His. When we see Him, it will be too late to ask for

forgiveness for our sins. “Today” He is making propitiation in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle. “Today” is the Day of Atonement or the Day of Propitiation.

Therefore, it is of the upmost importance that while Jesus is still in the Holy of Holies “today” that when we sin, we confess them to God. Jesus is our great, merciful and faithful High Priest who will cleanse us from our sins when we humble ourselves and confess our sins. He alone is our Advocate before the Father.

1 John 1:5—2:2

⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. ^{2.1}My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those* of the whole world.

As long as Jesus remains in the Holy of Holies, we may draw near with confidence to the throne of grace and ask for forgiveness of our sins, which of course is based on the perfect once-for-all sacrifice of our High Priest, Jesus Christ.