

# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series: **STUDIES IN HEBREWS**

Pastor/Teacher

Number: 7

Text: **Heb. 4:14-16**

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Date: **February 26, 2012 a.m.**

## THE ADMONITION TO PERSEVERE (PART IV)

Hebrews 10:19-25 rehearses themes that were first introduced in 4:14-16. Central to both passages is the contrast between the priesthood of Christ and that of the old covenant. Christ has already been described in 2:17 as a *merciful* and *faithful* high priest. His character as FAITHFUL was shown in 3:1-6, and now the other aspect, MERCIFUL, is indicated in 4:14 to 5:10. In 4:14 the thought of 3:6 (before the interjected warning) is taken up.<sup>1</sup>

### **I. THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST AND THE NEED FOR PERSEVERANCE (vv. 14-16)**

(1). THEN, takes us back to 2:17-3:6.

(2). It is the PRIEST who can keep us from Meribahs (3:7-11).

#### **A. THE EXHORTATION TO PERSEVERANCE (v. 14)**

1. WE HAVE: notice that he does not say simply that there is a GREAT HIGH PRIEST, but rather he stresses the fact that WE, believers, HAVE, as a possession, *this* GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

2. PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS; A.T. Robertson in commenting on the word PASSED, Gk. *DIELELUTHOTA*, "Perfect active participle of *DIERCHOMAI*, state of completion. Jesus has passed through the upper heavens up to the throne of God (1:3) where he performs his function as our high priest."<sup>2</sup> This guarantees Jesus' superiority over the high priest of the O.T. who, as Hughes points out, "passed from the sight of the people as he took the blood of atonement into the earthly sanctuary, Jesus our great high priest, at his ascension passed from the sight of the watching apostles as he entered once for all into the heavenly sanctuary, there to appear on our behalf (Acts 1:9; cf. Heb. 8:1ff, 9:11ff, and 9:24ff, where this theme is developed more fully)."<sup>3</sup>

3. JESUS THE SON OF GOD – "having given the first great reason for Christ's superiority in His entering directly into the abode of God, the second feature of this Priest is now dealt with. "The second mark of His greatness," comments Marcus Dods,"is indicated in His designation (Gk. *IESOUN TON HUION TOU THEOU*), the human name suggesting perfect understanding and sympathy, the Divine Sonship acceptance with the Father and pre-eminent dignity."<sup>4</sup>

4. LET US HOLD FAST (Gk. *KRATOMEN*, (old verb from *KRATOS*, power) to cling to tenaciously as here and 6:18. "Let us keep on holding fast") OUR CONFESSION. "The writer," says Westcott, "everywhere insists on the duty of the public confession of the faith. The crisis claimed not simply private conviction but a clear declaration of belief openly in the face of men."<sup>5</sup>

#### **B. THE ARGUMENTATION FOR PERSEVERANCE (v. 15)**

The writer now seeks to show these wavering Hebrews the character of OUR High Priest; He is one with whom our weaknesses can be felt. The writer has already stated that this was one of the reasons for His coming (2:16-18).

1. SYMPATHIZE (Gk. *SUMPATHESAI*) WITH OUR WEAKNESSES. Only here and 10:34. This is more than *knowledge* of human infirmity. It is *feeling* it by reason of a common experience WITH men.<sup>6</sup>

2. TEMPTED LIKE AS WE ARE – Because He has been tempted, He can be touched.

3. YET WITHOUT SIN – "This sinlessness of Jesus," says Hughes, "achieved by his complete conquest of temptation, was an essential prerequisite for the accomplishment of our redemption by his

sacrifice of himself on the cross.”<sup>7</sup> It must be remembered that all of Christ’s temptations came from *without* not from *within*. Owen writes, “Men are tempted to sin by sin, to actual sin by habitual sin, to *outward* sin by *indwelling* sin...whatever temptation He was exposed unto or exercised withal, as He was with all and of all sorts that can come from without, they had none of them in the least degree any effect in or upon Him.”<sup>8</sup>

### C. THE LOGICAL IMPLICATION FROM OUR POSSESSIONS (v. 16)

Since we have Him, let us *boldly* (WITH CONFIDENCE) use Him. The Gk *META PARRESIAS* translated *confidence*, is compounded of two words, whereof one signifieth speech, the other everything or anything. It is translated sometimes boldness, Acts iv. 13; sometimes plainness, 2 Cor. iii 12; it is oft used in the dative case adverbially, and translated boldly, John vii. 26; openly Mat. viii. 32; plainly, thus it is opposed to an obscure proverb, John xvi. 25, 29. It is also used with a preposition, and translated *freely*, Acts ii. 29. The word is opposed to fearfulness or shamefulness, which makes men loath to utter many things which they ought to make known.<sup>9</sup>

“The message is clear,” says Griffith-Thomas, “that because the High Priest is all that has been indicated, we are to make use of Him for our individual needs day by day.”<sup>10</sup>

### D. THE APPLICATION

The puritan Robert Traill puts forth “four weighty questions, which should be in the hearts of all worshippers of God.”<sup>11</sup> Keeping our outline in mind, let us examine these questions, which ask us: Where, how, why and what.

(1). QUESTION: Where may we find God? (comp. Job 23:3)

ANSWER: On THE THRONE OF GRACE (v. 16).

(2). QUESTION: How should we come to God on this throne?

ANSWER: LET US DRAW NEAR WITH CONFIDENCE (v. 16)

(3). QUESTION: Why is it that sinners, such as we, should approach God like that?

ANSWER: Because JESUS, THE SON OF GOD, who is our GREAT HIGH PRIEST, is now in the presence of God on our behalf (v. 14)

(4). QUESTION: What shall we get, and for what may we come to this throne of grace?

ANSWER: THAT WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY AND MAY FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED (v. 16)

Regarding GRACE and MERCY, Westcott remarks, “The twofold aim corresponds with the twofold necessity of life. Man needs mercy for past failure, and grace for present and future work. There is also a difference as to the mode of attainment in each case. Mercy is to be ‘taken’ as it is extended to man in his weakness; grace is to be ‘sought’ by man according to his necessity.”<sup>12</sup> And finally Calvin’s words draw the attention to what the Hebrews were in need of constant reminding. “This phrase THAT WE MAY RECEIVE MERCY contains this most pleasing teaching, that all those who rely on the advocacy of Christ and pray to God will be certain of receiving mercy. By implication the apostle also warns all those who do not keep to this way, and indicates that God will not be moved by their prayers, because they have disregarded the only way of making peace with Him.”<sup>13</sup>

### ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> W.H. Griffith-Thomas, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Eerdmans 1958) p. 53  
<sup>2</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The Pictures V* (Broadmann, 1936) p. 364  
<sup>3</sup> Philip E. Hughes, *Commentary on The Epistle To The Hebrews* (Eerdmans, 1971) p. 170  
<sup>4</sup> Marcus Dods, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament IV* (rpt. Grand Rapids, 1970) p. 283  
<sup>5</sup> B.F. Westcott, *The Epistle To The Hebrews* (rpt. Eerdmans, 1964) p. 106  
<sup>6</sup> Marvin Vincent, *Word Studies in The New Testament IV* (Baker Book House, 1975) p. 430  
<sup>7</sup> Hughes, op. cit. p. 173  
<sup>8</sup> *The Works of John Owen XX* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1975) p. 173  
<sup>9</sup> William Gouge, *Commentary Hebrews* (rpt. Kregel, 1980) p. 227  
<sup>10</sup> Griffith – Thomas op. cit. p. 59  
<sup>11</sup> *The Works of Robert Traill I* (Banner of Truth, 1976) p. 13  
<sup>12</sup> Westcott, op. cit. 109  
<sup>13</sup> *Calvin New Testament Commentary XII* (rpt. Eerdmans, 1974) p. 57