

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

JESUS IS YOUR HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 4:14 “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.”

The Old Testament High Priesthood was established by God. The role of the High Priest was to serve as an intermediary between God and his people (ancient Israel). He was considered the highest-ranking spiritual leader among the Israelites. The high priest had to be “whole” physically (without any physical defects) and holy in his conduct (Leviticus 21:6-8). The high priest had to offer a sin offering not only for the sins of the whole congregation, but also for himself (Leviticus 4:3-21). Only he was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place behind the veil to stand before God. Having made a sacrifice for himself and for the people, he then brought the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the mercy seat, God’s “throne” (Leviticus 16:14-15). He did this to make atonement for himself and the people for all their sins committed during the year just ended (Exodus 30:10).

Jesus is your High Priest! He was without sin, so He did not need to offer a sacrifice for the atonement of His sins. Rather than offering an unblemished lamb as a sacrifice for your sins, Jesus offered Himself. He sprinkled His own blood on the mercy seat rather than the blood of an unblemished lamb. “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21) “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:12) “. . . the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7) “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2) [Read Hebrews 9:1-28]

What does all of this mean for you? Robert Kolb’s essay in the Large Catechism gives the following answer, “Christ reconciled sinners to God by satisfying the Law and God’s wrath against sin . . . The (Holy) Spirit implants trust in hearts through the promise of forgiveness and life through Christ’s death and resurrection, transforming sinners to children of God. Christ’s victory over Satan (by His life,

death, and resurrection) snatches us from the jaws of hell, liberates and restores us to the Father's favor and grace (and) transfers us from Satan's lordship to God's." (Large Catechism, pp. 376-377)

Prayer: Jesus, your blood and righteousness are my glorious dress. Amen.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day, Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay;
Fully absolved through these I am From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood, Which at the mercy seat of God
Pleads for the captives' liberty, Was also shed in love for me.

Lord, I believe, were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.

When from the dust of death I rise To claim my mansion in the skies,
This then shall be my only plea: Jesus hath lived and died for me.

Jesus, be endless praise to Thee, Whose boundless mercy hath for me,
For me, and all Thy hands have made, An everlasting ransom paid.
(LSB 563)