

# Christ, Our High Priest

by F.J. Huegel

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*Jesus Christ is our great high priest who has fulfilled the need for a mediator between God and humanity through his deity, humanity, and high priestly ministry.*

**Duration:** 48:30

**Scripture:** Job 9:29-33, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 12:18-21

**Topics:** "Christ Our Priest", "Atoning Sacrifice"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the perfect standing that believers have before God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He uses an illustration of a special event in Mexico to highlight the privilege of being in the presence of a great leader. The preacher then turns to the story of Job, who struggled to understand his suffering and questioned the existence of a mediator between him and God. The sermon concludes by highlighting the role of Jesus as the ultimate high priest who purged our sins through his suffering. This is supported by the reference to Hebrews 1:3, which describes Jesus as the brightness of God's glory and the one who purged our sins.

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## Transcript

May we pray, O gracious Father, to think that we may own that name, that we are called by that name, Christian, except our praises, gracious Father. And enable us, we pray, to enter in, in an ever fuller measure, into the possession of our possession, because of the glory of the name, because of the glory of the great work of redemption consummated by our Lord and Redeemer. We ask it in that worthy name which is above every name, the holy name of Jesus, our Redeemer.

Amen. I cannot go forward in the presentation of the message of the afternoon without giving expression to the joy and gratitude of my heart for these days and all the blessings that I've received. You've all been so gracious.

I know you've prayed for me. I've been the object of your care and your love. I just thank the Lord for you.

Brother Ehler has been talking about seven years. This is the seventh, and truly it is the happiest of all. Praise the Lord, it's been so wonderful.

And now we move into, as Brother Ehler said, into the Spanish sphere. Well, we'd love to have you come, even though you may not understand the Spanish. You can rejoice in the spirit of Christian fellowship, and

if you cannot come, do pray for us.

That this rising tide of blessing may just flow out, overflow now into the hearts of these dear young people who are preparing for the ministry in the Rio Grande Bible Institute. This afternoon, I want to meditate with you upon a theme that is rarely taken up by Christians, expounded from the pulpits of our churches, but oh, how very necessary today, when people are turning prongs at the doors of psychiatrists, seeking for their spirits, for their hearts, the solution of their many tensions, complexes, guilt complexes, seeking peace. Christ, our great High Priest, among the needs of hearts, the hearts of the children of men, with their doubts and fears and their uncertainties and their sense of guilt, their longings for security, for peace, for joy.

No doubt, the one which takes precedence above all others is the need of a priest, witness to great bodies, castes of priests in the natural religions, and there's Romanism, endless hierarchies of priests. Now, the Lord himself took this into account, you know, back in the early days, when Israel was called to prepare the way, as the chosen people were the coming of the Redeemer, an entire tribe given over to this function, the tribe of Levi, the High Priest, who alone was permitted to enter into the holy of holies, and that once a year no more, however not without blood, representing the people, bearing upon his breast, from that breastplate, the names of the tribes of Israel, as he entered into the holy of holies, representing his people before the Most High God. But all this has passed away.

All this ceases now to have any meaning. There is but one priest, the great High Priest, Jesus Christ the Lord. Now, let us first of all think of him, our great High Priest, as to his capacity.

Who is he? Is he able? There are no stronger words than those that we find here in the epistles of the Hebrews, regarding the nature of our great High Priest. My friends know that this is the one book of the New Testament dedicated to this matter, the tendency among Jewish believers to turn back to the ceremonies of the temple, to priests, to sacrifices. And so out of that need came the epistle to the Hebrews, which was an effort, it reads here on the part of the Apostle Paul.

We are not sure as to whether Paul was the author. It had been the conviction of the Church through the years that it must have been Paul. It's surely Paul's theology.

On the part of Paul the Apostle, to throw up a dike and turn these heathen Christians that were turning away back to the Savior, our great High Priest. There are no stronger words in all holy writ regarding the deity of our Savior. I don't know what those who do not accept this fact do with Hebrews.

Where we have the Father, this is not the voice of some Bible teacher, of some theologian. This is the voice of the Father. Thy throne, O God, it is the Father speaking as we have it here in verse 8. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy throne. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And thou, Lord, the Lord Jesus, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest. They all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou pull them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. This as to the deity of our great high priest, by whom all things were made, and who by the word of his power upholdeth, as we have it here in the epistle to the Hebrews, the first chapter, all things. But our great high priest is not only the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh.

Our great high priest is a man. We have it here in the epistle to the Hebrews, the 4th chapter. You've noticed how from time to time I stumble about in my Bible, but for 40 years I've been working in my Spanish Bible.

And I'm not at home here in this Bible. 4:15, yes, here in the 4th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, we have that word regarding the humanity of our Savior. It doesn't seem to be just a passage.

Inasmuch as they all partook of flesh and blood, he also partook of the same. 2:14, for as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is to say, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behooves him to be made like unto his brethren. Yes, in all things it behooves him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered, being tempted he is able to succor them that are tempted.

Now here we have the fulfillment of that passionate yearning expressed in chapter nine of the book of Joel. Joel there, overwhelmed by sorrow and shame, this man who had been the richest of his time, reduced to utter poverty, the victim of a loathsome disease. Some commentators state that it must have been a form of leprosy.

There we have him, unable to understand the mysterious providences of God. He thinks that it's the Lord himself who has smitten him. Well, the Lord permitted it.

Yes, it did come to him along the line of the permissible of God, but the immediate agent was the devil, who raised a doubt, you know, as to Job's loyalty. And he said, if you will just permit me to strip him of his wealth, this man that you say is so loyal will curse you to your face. He's in your hands.

Now the blows fall. Job can't understand. We have him in the ninth chapter saying, beginning with the twenty-ninth verse, If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall it pour me.

For he is not a man, the Lord, he is not a man as I am that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any day's man between us, betwixt us, that he might lay his hand upon us both. Ah, if there were but, it reads in the Spanish, un arbitro, an arbiter.

If there was but an umpire is in one of the margins of a version that I have seen. Here it reads a day's man. Paul's word, you will recall, is the meteor.

We might say a high priest, a priest. Oh, if there was but one who could bring us together. But he would have to be as high as God, and he would have to be as low as man.

He would have to be in a position to perfectly represent God before man, and to perfectly represent man before God. Oh, if that could but come to pass. Ah, how the messianic hope throughout the pages of the Old Testament moves in what varied forms, it appears here, the groaning, the agony of this great patriarch who feels the need of a mediator, a priest, who could arrange everything, who could take care of his sin, who could meet all the needs of his soul, who could intercede for him, who could represent God before his conscience, and his conscience before God.

Well, we have the answer, for we have just read here in Hebrew that this high priest, none other than the Son of God, the one to whom the Father speaks, saying, Thy throne, O God, forever, and the one who in the virgin breast took upon himself the form of a man, that he might be tempted in all points, like as we, and so be a sympathizing, a compassionate priest, fully understanding our life. Now, let us turn to the epistle and look upon some of the statements there as regards the high priesthood of Jesus our Lord. In the sixth chapter, where we read in verse 20, here the sacred writer speaks of how Jesus had entered within the veil.

The forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Or as it is in the fourth chapter, where we read beginning with the fourteenth verse, it is seen then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. Let us hold fast our profession, for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity.

No. Whatever the nature of the trial, well, the Lord Jesus went beyond. No matter.

He knows more about it than you do. He went to deeper depths than you'll ever be able to go. His footprints are there in the sands beyond.

And that's what we read here. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity, but was in all points tempted like as we yet without sin. And friends, I wonder if one would not, it's not written here, but I do believe one would dare to say, and tempted as we never will be.

Because, you know, to be tempted as Jesus was, you'd have to be as great as he. Oh yes, to be tempted as was Jesus, you would have to enter into the fulfillment of a mission, a mission of redemption as great as was his. No man.

Well, only Jesus in the hour of trial, in the hour of temptation, only from the brow of our blessed Redeemer, have fallen great drops of sweat as though they were blood. Yes, the bloody sweat. In that hour when he was tempted, friends, to seek another way farther, if it is possible.

As we said the other evening, we may be sure it wasn't just the fear of death. No! Christian martyrs have gone to the stage singing, inspired, upheld by the Redeemer and all. Ah, there was something mysterious in that cup.

If it be possible, let this cup pass. Well, the Scripture tells us, He was to be made sin, he who knew no sin. Paul says, putting it in even stronger terms, made a curse.

Ah, the curse of the sin of the world! Do you wonder that for a moment as a man he staggered and he felt prostrate, saying, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And then, in the third chapter, where we read in the first verse, Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Well, we're doing that this afternoon. Are we not, friends? Or as it is in the fifth chapter, beginning with the twelfth verse, beginning with the fifth verse, reading to the eleventh.

So also Christ glorified and wrought himself to be made an high priest. But he that said unto him, Thou art my son today, have I begotten thee? As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek, who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard and that he feared. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered in being made perfect.

He became the offerer of eternal salvation unto them that obey him, called of God and high priest, after the order of Melchizedek, of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered, seeing that ye are dull of hearing. And then in the seventh chapter, beginning with the twenty-sixth verse, For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Who needeth not daily as those high priests to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the people's? For this he did once.

Recently a priest was converted in Bolivia. I received a letter that he was coming up to visit Mexico, Jose Rico. He tells the story in a book he has written of his conversion, and he states that it came out of a consultation he went to the Hebrew, epistle to the Hebrews, in a controversy with another priest over a matter.

He went to the epistle to the Hebrews, and when he came upon this fact, For this he did once, a sacrifice for the sins of the people. This he did once, when he offered up himself. In the book, Jose Rico states that he was arrested at that point.

And I, who state every time that mass is held, that I am sacrificing afresh for the sins of the people, the body of Christ, Well, he realized that he had been proceeding with a great lie upon his lips, and it led to the conversion of this priest. The law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for us. Now let's turn, friends, to the official, to ask the question, to find the answer to the question, what has he done, our great high priest? What has he done for us? It all comes out in the third verse of the first chapter.

This is one point among others which has led me to believe that the author can be none other than Paul. This is one of the characteristics of Paul's epistles. You will invariably find there in the first chapter at the very beginning, a verse that sums up all that's to follow.

And here you have it. Who, speaking of the Son, being the brightness of his glory, the Father's, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Ah, think of his greatness to be able to do that.

You know, for some reason, this rings the bell in my heart, if I may use that expression in a very special way. You hear it so much in the Latin lands, this term. I was talking with Brother Friesen this afternoon.

He's holding a service over in the prison on the other side of the river for inmates of the prison. And we were speaking about prisoners. In the Spanish, it's purgar una pena.

Fulano está purgando una pena. He's purging a pain, purging a condemnation, a judgment. His sin, purging.

How? Through his suffering. Now, there have been cases in history, we know that, of one man giving his life for another, making himself responsible for his crime. This has happened, yes? Ah, but here we have one friend, so great, that through his bitter suffering and death, the sins of all men were purged.

I don't know of a book in the Bible, friend, so designed, so effective, in bringing to the heart of the believer a sense of utter security as this book. And it is here in this book that we read about the full assurance of faith, faith coming to full bloom. Well, this is the epistle that does it, friends.

If this fact does not bring peace to your troubled conscience, well, I shouldn't put it that way, it cannot fail to bring peace to your troubled conscience and to establish you in a perfect sense of security in the presence of the Most High. In chapter 10, beginning with the 14th verse, we read, For by one offering he perfected, he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Can you accept that? You must.

I, with all my blemishes, well, the moment I looked at myself, I see nothing but corruption. Perfected, yes, perfected forever, them that are sanctified, so great is the sacrifice. Now, of course, we know that it does not mean that as to our moral condition, we are without sin.

Because we are told, John tells us in his first epistle, the first chapter, that if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. That's not the meaning. Ah, so great is the sacrifice, that you're standing before God.

Friends, it's a perfect standing, perfected. Why you stand where the sun stands. You sit where the sun in heavenly places, co-heir of God with Christ.

Your mediator, your high priest, places you there. I wonder if you'd forgive a very, sort of a ridiculous illustration, but it was so much in my mind this afternoon, down in Mexico, the great day of the year, the 4th of July is the 16th of September. Oh, great marches, soldiers, and the president on the balcony of the presidential palace and great throngs gathered in what is called the Zocalo.

Well, my wife and I never attempted. It's very difficult to get in and to see it, unless you have some privileged position. One day our boy came home.

It was the 16th of September. He'd been out with a neighbor boy. They were just lads.

Couldn't have been much more than six, seven years. Where have you been? Oh, I was down at the destini, the 16th of December procession. Oh, you were.

Yes, with Godo. Oh, with your friend Godo. Where? You saw it? Yes, I saw it.

Where? From the presidential balcony. But my dear boy, what are you talking about? Where Godo's papa happens to be close to the president. And the boy, our boy went forth in his overalls and playing in the streets just as he was, and there he stood beside the president in his overalls.

I can just see those two lads walking in there, this little one Godo coming up to his father, and of course our boy with him, and the father beside the president there in the balcony taking in the great procession. Well, friends, yes, there's one, the son. The son just takes us right there into the presence of the father, perfected our position forever.

And then in the ninth chapter, where we read beginning with the 24th verse, For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, nor yet that he should offer for himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others, for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But now, once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Now this is what our great high priest has done. Let us look for a moment at what he is doing, for he ever liveth, as it is in chapter 7, verse 25, he ever liveth to make intercession for the saints, wherefore he is able even to save them to the uttermost, them that come unto God, unto God by him seeing, he ever liveth to make intercession for the saints.

When my dear friend and brother Gordon asked for the passage, scripture reading of the afternoon hour, I said, oh, the high priestly prayer of our Redeemer. You heard his voice. You recall how he prayed for Peter.

There we see how effective is his ministry as a priest interceding. Why, he foresaw it. Simon, Simon Satan hath asked for thee that he might sift thee as wheat.

But I have prayed. You know, you wonder sometimes how Peter ever got out of that hole, don't you? It was very deep and it was very muddy. You wonder how he got out of that hole, don't you? Having denied his Lord three times, finally with cursing.

Yes, you just wonder. Ah, friends, here is the answer. I have prayed for thee, and when thou art converted, confirm thy brethren.

Often in an hour of need, we go about seeking for someone truly spiritual to pray, to pray for us. We go to the pastor. Well, in every church there's some dear saint.

I remember one down in Mexico in the city of San Luis Potosi, Panchita, oh, the moment Panchita, she visited all the churches, when the moment she entered, spirits began to arise, here is Panchita, there's going to be a blessing. There's going to be a blessing. For she lived in the spirit of intercession.

I say we seek someone. Friends, let us not forget that our great high priest is forever interceding for us. Now, that will establish you in a sense of utter and absolute security in the presence of the Most High.

That will remove all your doubts and all your fears and all your qualms and all your anxieties. And all these hidden, ah, here's the reason for it, the throngs searching for help through psychiatry today. These hidden guilt thoughts.

Here's the remedy, friends. And now finally, as we close, one other point, which we find in the twelfth chapter. You will recall that the great high priest, the high priest, I should say, in the days of the Israelites, as he entered into the Holy of Holies, there was a breastplate upon which were the names of the tribes.

He took them in representative fashion before the presence of the Father. But that's only a shadow. And Paul speaks of these matters that took place in the tabernacle of the Old Testament as shadows.

Ah, the reality. The fulfillment is all in the Lord Jesus Christ, our great high priest. Ah, we shall read from the eighteenth verse.

We are not come, no, we are not standing where the Jews stood. We are not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more, for they could not endure that which was commanded. And it so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with a dart.

And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, exceeding me quite. Fear in Quaker, the mount where the law was given. All this to signify the majesty of the law.

Ye have not come. We don't stand there. That has all been superseded.

That has all passed away forever. Where do we stand? Well, we read in the 21st, the 22nd verse, ye are come. Now he's speaking to Christians.

Ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God. He doesn't say we hope to come. We are come.

We've arrived. Just see what this does for your fears and your doubts. How it establishes one in a sense of eternal security.

But ye are come unto the mount, Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, unto God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men, made perfect, and to Jesus, of course. You've come. You've come to the mediator why he has you upon his breast.

You've arrived. Yes, you've arrived. But God, who is rich in mercy for his great love, wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ by grace your Saviour hath raised us up together, made us sit together.

We've arrived. You've come. The mediator has placed you, made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We have no words, gracious Father, with which to express our gratitude. Were it not as we have just read in the epistle to the Hebrews, like Job of old, there we would be in our anguish, groping in the dark, thirsting after thee, not knowing what to do with our sins. But, Father, we have it in thy word that the Son, having purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and we are in him, the risen Christ.

How we do thank thee, Father. And may all this be burned into our innermost consciousness, that it may be the end of fears and the end of doubts and the end of secret guilt complexes and the end of frustrations and the end of discouragement and the end of all satanic oppression, that we may be more than conquerors, for thou dost tell us that that is indeed our status through him who loved us. Amen.

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