

The Wednesday Word, Oct. 7, 2009: We Have a Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14: Seeing 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.

We so very often miss the “little big” phrases of Scripture. There is one of them in Heb 4:14: it says, “We have.”----- Did you notice it? “Seeing then that we have a great high priest.” Now, suppose the scripture said, “Seeing then that there is a great high priest” would that make a difference? Indeed it would! So what’s the difference? The difference is one of possession. It’s a comfort to know of the possibility of a high priest somewhere out there, but this verse takes us way beyond that! “We have a great high priest.” He’s ours. We have Him and He has us!

He’s a high priest filled with love, grace and sympathy for His purchased possession. He’s the great high priest who was slain but who is now seated on the throne of grace and majesty. He’s the great high priest who ever lives to apply the benefits of His atonement to us. He’s the great high priest who brings us into the presence of God. He’s the great high priest who lifts us to the throne of grace. He’s the great high priest who gives the full knowledge of God. He’s the great high priest superior to all the priests of the Old Testament. In the Old Covenant, Israel had many high priests. When one of them died, another would replace him. But our high priest is greater than all these priests and indeed to all other supposed priests for He is not merely the high priest, He is the great high priest. He will never die and will never be replaced (Heb 7:16).

In the Old Testament, the high priests were but “faint types and shadows of Christ,” who carried the names of the tribes of Israel upon their breast and shoulders. That the names of the 12 tribes were written on the priest’s breastplate emphasized God’s love for them; that these names were also upon the shoulders spoke of the strength of God towards and for them! (See Exod 28:6-14; Exod 28:15-29).

Likewise, at this very moment our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, bears our names with love and strength. What an amazing salvation! What an amazing savior!

“Before the Throne of God above
I have a sure and perfect plea
A great High Priest whose name is love
Whoever lives and pleads for me

My name is graven on His hands
My name is written on His heart
I know that while in Heaven He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart
No tongue can bid me thence depart

Once a year, under the Law, the high priest went behind the veil and into the holiest of all to sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat (Lev 16). But our great high priest, the Lord Jesus, has passed through the very heavens and has gone into the heavenly sanctuary with His own blood where He represents us in all His glory (Heb 9:24). He has accomplished redemption and has ascended and

as we fasten our attention on Him we will have confidence to continue on in the Christian faith. We have a great high priest!

Do you know what it is to have a Great High Priest or is this a mere theory? Are you living in this knowledge or is your life characterized by regret? Are you constantly thinking, "If only I had not made that stupid mistake...or if only I hadn't done that or if I hadn't let down my guard at that time"? Is your past robbing you of today's joy? Then it's time to forget your past! Your great high priest has finished His work---it's over. His blood has cleansed every wicked thing that you have ever done (John 19:30).

You might say, "But you do not know what I have done in the past!"

I don't need to. The blood of Jesus cleanses all sin (I John 1:7). Consider Paul; in a murderous frenzy, he plundered and wasted the early church. I'm sure this was hard for him to forget. But he knew about the shed blood of the Lord Jesus. He knew that his Lord was his great high priest and intercessor. He knew that his sins had been taken away and, as a result, he was able, therefore, to forget those things that lay behind and to press on. He was able to say, "We have a great high priest!"

Like Paul, we can forget our past for we have a great high priest. Our past is past. It has been wiped out. It is gone! In Christ we have everything we need! We have a great high priest! Enjoy Him and you will enjoy life!

And that's the Gospel Truth!