



WALKING ON WATER
BIBLE CHURCH

Jesus the GREAT HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 4:14-16



Pastor Mike Holloway

Hebrews 4:14-16

- Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.
- For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.
- Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



Text Focus: Hebrews 4:14–16

- This passage transitions from the warning about unbelief and failure to enter God's rest (Hebrews 3:1–4:13) into the major teaching about Christ's superior priesthood.
- Jesus is presented as both heavenly High Priest and sympathetic helper in our earthly struggles.



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Text Focus: Hebrews 4:14–16

- Two key truths form the foundation of Christian confidence:
- 1. Christ has ascended into heaven as our victorious High Priest.
- 2. Christ understands our temptations and helps us overcome them.
- Because of this, believers are commanded to
- hold fast and approach God confidently.



The Heavenly Dimension (Hebrews 4:14)

- Verse 14 serves as both conclusion and introduction: it concludes the discussion of entering God's rest and introduces Christ's superior priesthood (4:14–7:28).
- The command rests on Christ's priestly victory.
- Two reasons confidence is possible:
 - Jesus has passed through the heavens.
 - Jesus conquered temptation.
- Thus believers can boldly approach God's throne for mercy and grace.



Meaning of 'Therefore' (oun)

- The word 'therefore' connects this passage with previous teachings.
- It refers back to Jesus' priestly work (2:17–3:1) and the penetrating power of God's Word (4:12–13).
- Since all humanity stands exposed before God, we need a High Priest who represents us.
- Jesus fulfills this role perfectly.



Hebrews 4:12-13

- For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- And there is no creature hidden from His sight, **but all things are naked and open** to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.



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Jesus the 'Great' High Priest

- Jesus is called the 'great' (megas) High Priest, emphasizing His superiority.
- In the first century many high priests were political appointees serving Roman interests.
- They were often wealthy elites disconnected from ordinary priests.
- Jesus contrasts sharply: appointed by God, righteous, and compassionate.
- His greatness is moral, spiritual, eternal, and divine.



Ascended Into Heaven

- Jesus has 'passed through the heavens,' referring to His ascension and exaltation.
- This echoes Psalm 110:1 — sitting at God's right hand.
- He ministers not in an earthly temple but in the heavenly sanctuary.
- He now intercedes for believers in God's presence.
- **His ministry is eternal, unlike the temporary Aaronic priesthood.**



So How Do We Explain Ezekiel's Temple and Priesthood?

- Ezekiel 40–48 describes:
- A temple,
- Priests,
- Sacrifices,
- Ritual laws.
- Some interpret this as a future Millennial temple with renewed Levitical worship.



Ezekiel Passages to Consider

Topic	Main Ezekiel Sections
Temple structure	Chapters 40–42
God's glory returning	Chapter 43
Priests restored	Chapter 44
Sacrificial system	43, 45, 46
Ritual & worship laws	44–46
Land & tribal allotments	47–48



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Typological Fulfillment in Christ and the Church

- Key ideas:
- Temple imagery represents God dwelling among His people.
- Priesthood fulfilled in Christ.
- Church becomes God's temple.
- All believers become priests.



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Typological Fulfillment in Christ and the Church

- New Testament repeatedly shows the fulfilment of Old Testament temple imagery:
- John 2:19–21
- Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”
- Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”
- But He was speaking of the temple of His body



Typological Fulfillment in Christ and the Church

- Biblical Support:
- New Testament repeatedly shows the fulfilment of Old Testament temple imagery:
- 1 Corinthians 3:16 — believers are God's temple.

Do you not know that **you are the temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. **For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.**



Typological Fulfillment in Christ and the Church

- Biblical Support:
 - Ephesians 2:19–22 – **The church is God's dwelling.**

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,
in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.



Typological Fulfillment in Christ and the Church

- Biblical Support:
 - 1 Peter 2:5, 9 — believers are a priesthood.

Verse 5 - you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Verse 9 - But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;



Jesus the Son of God

- The title stresses His divine identity.
- He is not merely human but the God-man.
- Hebrews repeatedly emphasizes Christ's sonship and divine authority.
- No other priest could claim divine sonship.
- His priesthood carries absolute authority and sufficiency.



Hold Fast Our Confession

- Believers are commanded to 'hold firmly' to their confession (homologia).
- This refers to public confession of faith in Christ.
- Early Christians openly affirmed doctrine before believers and unbelievers.
- The audience faced temptation to retreat into Judaism due to pressure.
- Abandoning Christ endangered their eternal destiny.



His Earthly Help (4:15–16)

- Christ's heavenly ministry is joined with earthly sympathy.
- He intercedes in heaven while understanding struggles on earth.
- Because He became human, He knows our battles personally.
- He is both powerful Savior and compassionate helper.



Jesus Understands Our Weakness

- He empathizes with our weaknesses.
- He endured temptation throughout His entire earthly life.
- The perfect tense emphasizes continuous experience of testing.
- He experienced pressures far beyond what we experience.



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Tempted in Every Way

- 'According to our likeness' means Jesus truly shared human experience.
- He faced hunger, rejection, suffering, loneliness, betrayal, and pressure.
- He faced unique temptations we never will.
- Yet He fully understands ordinary human struggles.



Yet Without Sin

- Jesus was tempted yet never sinned.
- Scripture affirms His complete sinlessness.
- He never needed sacrifice for Himself, only for humanity.
- His victory qualifies Him to help us overcome sin.



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Debate on Christ's Ability to Sin

- Theologians debate whether Jesus could have sinned or could not sin.
- Some emphasize His humanity; others His divinity.
- Gethsemane shows real struggle and dependence on the Father.
- Scripture does not settle the philosophical question.
- What matters: Jesus truly experienced temptation and triumphed.



Approach the Throne of Grace

- Because Jesus understands and intercedes, believers are invited to approach God confidently.
- 'Draw near' is a major Hebrews theme connected with worship and prayer.
- Old Covenant access was restricted; only the High Priest entered yearly.
- Through Christ, believers now approach God directly.



The Throne as Mercy Seat

- God's throne is also the mercy seat now opened to believers.
- Jesus opened access through His sacrifice.
- We receive mercy for past failures and grace for present needs.
- Grace empowers us to overcome trials and temptation.



Help in Time of Need

- God's help arrives precisely when needed.
- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are available to believers at all times.
- Christ's intercession ensures divine assistance is never absent.



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Application for Believers Today

- 1. Hold firmly to faith despite cultural or social pressure.
- 2. Pray boldly, expecting God's help.
- 3. Remember Christ understands personal struggles.
- 4. Depend on grace rather than self-effort.
- 5. Encourage discouraged believers with Christ's sympathy.



Pastoral and Evangelistic Emphasis

- Believers must not drift from Christ back into spiritual complacency.
- Jesus is both Savior and present helper.
- Unbelievers are invited to come to the throne through Christ.
- The open throne means salvation and restoration are available now.



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Summary

- Jesus is our victorious heavenly High Priest.
- He sympathizes with our earthly struggles.
- He conquered temptation and offers us victory.
- Believers therefore hold fast and approach God boldly.
- Mercy and grace are available in every moment of need.



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