

Hebrews 4:14-16

“Passed through the heavens”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 14 Passed through the heavens

III. Vs. 15 Sympathetic high priest

IV. Vs. 16 Throne of grace

I. Introduction

In Hebrews 4:11 the writer of this letter shared about the revolutionary change available in our behavior known as “rest” that was made possible because of the superiority of our High Priest, Jesus. It is essential that every Christian “*be diligent to enter this rest*” (verse 11). This principle of REST, is not an option that we can choose to accept or ignore. It is the whole goal of God's work in human hearts. The principle makes it possible to enjoy activity out of rest and has been granted the believers through faith in Christ. We have ceased from our self-directed activities, stopped being the CENTER of our own universe. This is what the life of rest is all about; trusting in the Lord Jesus who has come to indwell our hearts, to do through us all what we can never do apart from Him. But message today is all about the Person who alone has made this possible, Jesus. It is my aim to cause you to appreciate Jesus even more than you already do! Yesterday I celebrated my anniversary to Deniece and it is days like yesterday that causes me to reflect on just on blessed I am to have her in my life. It is good for believers to take time and real life just how unique Jesus is and one way we can do this is by examining a text like Hebrews 4:14-16.

II. Vs. 14 Passed through the heavens

Vs. 14 The writer through out this letter issues five warnings against rejecting the Messiah and turning back to the Levitical system of righteousness. He also proves that Jesus is superior to the prophets, the angels, Moses and Joshua. In the verses before us this morning the writer continues proving that Jesus is a superior High Priest to that of Aaron. The question the readers would have asked was: **In what way is Jesus better than Aaron as a High Priest?**

1. Vs. 13 The first way the writer showed Jesus' superiority was in in the previous section in verse 13 where we are told that *"before Him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we must give an account."* **Jesus Christ is superior to Aaron in His knowledge about those He serves as High Priest, you and me.** Jesus knows us thoroughly, sees everything about us. Nothing is hidden from Him, we are absolutely open before Him. He knows our weaknesses. He knows what temptations we deal with. He knows with in all of us is a hunger for acceptance. He knows, that under pressure we will tend to excuse our failure.

2. Vs. 14 The 2nd way that Jesus is superior to Aaron in verse 14, *"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."* Here we are told that, Jesus is the only one who has *"passed THROUGH the heavens."* The word *"through"* in the Greek is in the perfect tense which **speaks of a completed action in the past that has results in the present.** The superiority of Jesus over Aaron as High Priest is stated in that little word **"THROUGH"**. These Hebrew readers were very familiar the work of the High Priest and were completely dependent upon

him to accomplish his tasks or they would remain in their sin. The High Priest would need to pass “**THROUGH**” the court of the tabernacle, “**THROUGH**” the Holy Place, into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the atoning blood of the Lamb upon the mercy seat atop of the Ark of the covenant. **But all of this was a shadow of the real thing.** Aaron could accomplish the shadow but not “*passing **THROUGH** the heavens*”. This isn’t just saying that Jesus “*passed **INTO** the heavens*” but that He “*passed **THROUGH** the heavens*”. The difference is that when we take people and put them on a rocket and blast them off into space they pass into the heavens but they are still within the limits of “**time and space**”. No matter how far we could send them even if it was possible to send them to the farthest reaches of the universe **they would still be in the heavens.** But here the claim is that Jesus has “*passed **THROUGH** the heavens*”, **went outside of the limits of time and space.** Aaron could never perform this! Friends, the atonement was NOT complete at the brazen altar, the atonement had to be carried “THROUGH” into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled on the Mercy seat for it to be complete. This mercy seat in the tabernacle was only a **REPLICA** of the one in heaven. **Jesus’ sacrifice for our atonement wasn’t complete at the cross.** It wasn’t completed until He as our High Priest entered to heaven with HIS own BLOOD and presented it upon the mercy seat in Glory in His bloodless body that our sin has been paid for. This is what the writer of Hebrews states in Hebrews 9:12 “*Not with the blood of goats and calves, **but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.***” Not only was Aaron unable to offer a **lasting sacrifice** that would pay for sin, even if he could’ve he wouldn’t have been

able to “pass **THROUGH** the heavens” to complete the atonement. John describes this very scene in Revelation 5:6 where he describes what he sees saying, “*And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood **a Lamb as though it had been slain.***” Jesus not only “passed **THROUGH** the heavens” but he had to overcome satanic obstacles according to Ephesians 6:12 “*spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places*” and Colossians 2:15 “*having disarmed principalities and powers..*” This is an amazing picture of the battle that Jesus waged after His death on the cross as he “passed **THROUGH** the heavens” to the mercy seat to complete the atonement. Jesus is superior because there are no limits to his power to accomplish this.

3. The writer tells the readers how Jesus was able to accomplish this as we are told that, “Jesus Christ is the Son of God”. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said of Himself, “*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*” The writer declares not only His title as, “the Son of God” but as Paul declared in Colossians 2:9 that “*in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*”. Jesus was a greater High Priest than Aaron because of what he alone could accomplish “passing THROUGH the heavens” but the writers point is that “*Who Jesus is as the Son of God*” is what enabled Him to accomplish what He did! After having made these statements the writer again warns his readers to “*hold fast our confession*”.

III. Vs. 15 Sympathetic high priest

Vs. 15 The writer also makes clear that though the Lord Jesus has passed into the place of supreme power, with no limits upon his ability to work, he has not lost His compassion and mercy

towards us as He is fully aware of the human limitations and problems. “*We have not a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*” The Greek word “*sympathize*” is a compound word that means to “*suffer with*” and means more than just a knowledge of human infirmity. It points to a knowledge that shares a common experience with a person. The Greek word “*weakness*” deals not with physical sufferings but with moral temptations which is further explained by the words “*in all points tempted as we are*”. Jesus, in His earthly life went through a full life of every pressure, every temptation, every fear, and by every anxiety and every worry. He was tempted in a greater way than any person has ever been, yet he did it without failure, without sinning. Never once did he fall.

IV. Vs. 16 Throne of grace

Vs. 16 Finally the writer exhorts these professing believers to do more than give intellectual assent and obtain salvation. The Greek phrase “*Let us come*” was a familiar phrase used by the Hebrews to describe their approach to God through the first testament sacrifices and is here being used to approach God through the sacrifice of Jesus as Messiah. By doing so they would find two things:

A. Obtain Mercy: This is what is need for past sins and is justification

B. Find Grace: This is what is needed for present and future sins and is sanctification

Because of these “*four words everything has changed forever*”. These four words don’t seem initially to be that big of deal, but when the reference is to the Holy God they change everything and everyone! These four words change everything

because God sits upon: “**The throne of grace.**” The great reformers, nailed it when they summed up their movement taken from the Word of God as: **No sacrifice but Calvary; No priest but Christ; No confession but to the throne of grace!** These three truths turned Europe upside down during the Middle Ages. There are two truths here that aren’t normally associated: A throne always speaks of authority and power, while grace conveys the idea of sympathy and understanding. These two thoughts are NOT normally combined together but here in Jesus Christ they are. **We have in Jesus a person with infinite power, yet He is in complete and utter sympathy with us.** Because of the figurative language employed in Scripture the perceived idea is that heaven is some place a long long far away in space somewhere, a great distance from earth and us. But the truth is heaven is outside time and space, where we currently dwell. And based upon that heaven and more specifically the “the throne of grace” can be within us as well as around us, above us, and beyond us. **The throne of grace is not in remote space; it is right in the heart of a believer in whom Jesus Christ dwells.** To come to “the throne of grace” does not mean we go into our prayer closet and make a long distant call. Instead it means to look upon the One who indwells us. The throne of grace is that close to us, and available to us. Because of this fact the writer says, “let us draw near with boldness, with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help every time we need it.” That is, all the time, every time you need it!