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Messiah is in a Better Position Than Aaron

4: 14-16

Messiah is in a better position than Aaron DIG: What are some of the positive reasons the writer to the Hebrews gives for receiving Messiah? What makes Christ the perfect High Priest? What would that mean to a Jew at that time? Explain why we no longer need priests. When Jesus died, the veil in the Temple that screened off the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom. What did that signify? What qualifies Jesus to be our empathetic High Priest? How could Messiah understand our struggle with sin, since He Himself never sinned? What is the throne of grace? How are we encouraged to approach God?

REFLECT: If you could have an ideal priest, what would his traits be? Do you frequently approach the throne of grace with confidence? Why or why not? Mercy means that YHVH doesn't give us what we deserve, and grace means that He gives us what we don't deserve. How have you seen mercy and grace displayed in your own life? Why is it difficult to grant mercy to someone else, even though we sin?

The Ruach Ha'Kodesh continues to appeal to Jews who have heard the gospel and turned from Judaism but have not yet trusted in **Messiah**. It's as if **He** has been saying, "You know your dissatisfaction with Judaism and with your own lives. You know the superiority of **Yeshua** to the prophets (**1:1-3**), to angles (**1:4-14**), to Moshe (**3:1-6**), to Joshua (**4:8**) and the dangers of not trusting **Christ**, and of your need for **Him**. And here we find that **He** is superior to all other high priests. What is keeping you from making the final decision?"

Up until now the author's appeal has been mostly negative: if you don't believe, you will be separated forever from **YHVH** and **His rest**. But the message now turns to the positive side of the gospel. Salvation not only saves us from spiritual death, it brings spiritual life. The author will prove the priesthood of **Jesus** is superior to the Levitical priesthood by the use of five contrasts. The first contrast shows us that **Yeshua** has a better position than **Aaron**.

Messiah's Perfect Priesthood: Therefore, since we have such a **Great High Priest** (Hebrew: *Cohen Rosh Gadol*) who has passed through to the highest heaven (Hebrews 7:24-26), **Yeshua, the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we acknowledge as true (4:14 CJB)**. Only once previously (2:1 to 3:6) had the writer referred explicitly to the priesthood of **Messiah**, though it was implicit in 1:3, but now he was preparing to undertake an extensive consideration of that truth. But before doing so, he wished to suggest its practical relevance to his readers whom he exhorted to **hold firmly to** the faith. They had to know that the priesthood of their **Lord** offered them all the resources they needed.¹¹⁹

Have: In the Greek text, the word **have** is emphatic and it emphasizes a continuous availability. Believers **have a Cohen Rosh Gadol** who is always available.

Passed through: The Levitical priest, like Aaron, went into the Most Holy Place and after he finished his duties, he came out. A year later, on the Day of Atonement, he went in and out again. This is not the case with our **Great High Priest. He has passed through the highest heaven. He** has passed through the first and second heavens and entered into **the third heaven**, and **He** has remained there. The use of the Greek perfect tense (a completed action in past time, having continuous results in the present time) emphasizes that **He has passed through** and has been there ever **since**. The place of this **Cohen Rosh Gadol's** ministry is in heaven, not on the earth, and therefore, has a better position.



But there is another way in which **Messiah** is seen to be better than Aaron. The events that took place when **Jesus passed through the highest heaven**, show that **He** is infinitely better than Aaron. Aaron could never have performed such a feat. The reference here is to our **Lord's** resurrection from tomb, and after forty days, **His** ascension from the Mount of Olives (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click [Mr](#) - The Ascension of Jesus**) to **heaven as High Priest** having made atonement for **sin** at the cross. In Isra'el, the atonement was

not complete at the bronze altar. Not until the high priest had carried the atoning blood into the Most Holy Place, and had sprinkled it on the mercy seat (see the commentary on [Exodus Fs](#) - **The Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place: Christ at the Throne of Grace**), was the atonement complete. Likewise, our **Lord's** atonement was not complete at the cross. Not until **He** had entered heaven as **the High Priest** having made atonement for **sin**, was **His** atonement complete. **He entered the Most Holy Place once for all time by His own blood, thus setting people free forever (9:12 CJB).**

But that is not all that is involved in **His** superiority to Aaron. Not only was Aaron unable to offer a sacrifice that would pay for **sin**, but he could not have **passed through the highest heaven** to complete the atonement, even if he had been able to offer one. And there was more than gravity keeping Aaron from **passing through the highest heaven**. There was the power of **the Adversary** and **his** demons that would have opposed **his** progress through the atmosphere. This same power opposed the power of **Christ** as **He** ascended to present **Himself** as **the High Priest** who had made atonement for **sin** at the cross. **But He disarmed the powers and authorities** (the definite article in the Greek means the specific ones, or the evil one and his demons), **and made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Colossians 2:15).** The verb **disarmed** (Greek: *apekduomai*) means *to completely strip of from oneself*. What a picture of the battle in the skies in which **the old dragon** and **his** demons attempted to keep **Messiah** from ascending to the mercy seat to complete the atonement. It was their last chance to keep **Him** from the right hand of **the Father** and **He** had to fight **His** way **through** to **the highest heaven**, something Aaron could not do. Thus, **Jesus** was better than Aaron.¹²⁰

Yeshua, Son of God: If there was any doubt in the minds of that first century Messianic community that **Jesus** was **the Messiah**, here the author gives the messianic title. **Yeshua** is **His** human name, and **Son of God** is **His** divine name.

The book of **Hebrews** describes the end of the sacrificial system. The Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on [Exodus Da](#) - **The Dispensation of Torah**) was based on a priesthood interceding between men and **YHVH**, but when **Yeshua** came as **the final High Priest** and offered the final sacrifice; as a result, the need for such a priesthood ceased to exist (see [Aw](#) - **Messiah is a Better Priest Than Aaron**).

Today there is no place in the congregations of **God** for any priesthood - that is an

affront to the full and final priesthood of **Jesus Christ Himself**. Any priesthood on earth now implies that atonement for **sin** has not yet been made. Believers have no need for someone to go to **the Father** for them. **Hebrews 4:16** tells us that we can go directly to **ADONAI's** throne of grace. **First Peter 2:5** and **9** tells us that all believers are priests. Every believer, by faith in **Yeshua Messiah**, enters directly into **God's** presence. When **Jesus** died, the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lw - Accompanying Signs of Jesus' Death**), indicating that access to **the Father** is now forever open to those who come through **His Son**.¹²¹

Messiah's Perfect Person: For we do not have a *Cohen Rosh Gadol* unable to empathize with our weaknesses (4:15a CJB). To many people, **God** seems far off and unconcerned with human affairs, but that could not be further from the truth. The word **empathize** comes from the Greek word *sunpatheo*, which means *to suffer with*. The use of the word here means more than knowledge of human infirmity. It points a knowledge that has in it a feeling for the other person by reason of a common experience with that person. The **weaknesses** here are not sufferings, but moral and physical **weaknesses** that predispose one to **sin**. They are **weaknesses** that undermine our resistance to **temptation** and make it difficult for us to keep from **sinning**. **The Ruach Ha'Kodesh** wants to emphasize that somehow **Yeshua's temptation** was different than ours; that **the Adversary** attacked **Him** with toy arrows. On the contrary, **He** felt the difficulty of being righteous in this world. Even though **His** divinity may have ensured **His** triumph, **His temptation** was real and could only be overcome by means that are open to all: **The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (First John 2:16)**. **The one difference** between our **temptations** and those of **Jesus** is that **His** were without **sin**.

Our **Lord's** appreciation of our **weaknesses** comes from experience **since in every respect He was tempted just as we are**. **Yeshua** experienced the drive of human nature bent on **sinning**. **His** humanity was **His** battleground. It was in **His** humanity that **Messiah** faced and fought **sin**. Just like you and me. **He** was victorious, but not without the most intense **temptation**, grief, and anguish. It is not a **sin** to be **tempted**. **Jesus was tempted, the only difference being that He never sinned (4:15b CJB)**. **Temptation** only becomes a **sin** when you give in to it. Martin Luther said, "You cannot keep birds from flying over your head but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." You can't keep **the devil** from suggesting thoughts, but you can choose not to dwell or act on them.¹²²

When **His** accusers called **Him** a servant of **Satan**, **Jesus** demanded to see their evidence. **Which one of you convicts Me of sin? He** declared (**John 8:46 NASB**). Ask any of my best friends to point out my **sin**, and the hands go up very quickly. But when **Messiah** asked this question, no one spoke. **Yeshua** was followed by **His** apostles, analyzed by crowds, criticized by family, and scrutinized by **His** enemies, yet not one person could remember **Him** committing even one **sin**. **He** was never found in the wrong place. Never said the wrong word. And never acted the wrong way. **He never sinned**. Not that **He** wasn't **tempted**, mind you. Lust wooed **Him**. Greed lured **Him**. Power called **Him**. **Jesus** - the human - was **tempted**. But **Jesus** - the holy **God** - resisted.¹²³

So when we have **sinned** and are in trouble, or are dealing with the **temptation to sin**, we often hesitate to turn to **God**. We think we can handle it on our own, or feel the need to "clean up or act" before we approach **Him**. How can **Yeshua's** understanding and sympathetic nature motivate you to turn to **Him** today in times of **temptation** and trouble?¹²⁴

Because of the death, resurrection, and ascension of **Jesus** into the heavenly Sanctuary, we can now approach **ADONAI** without fear. Every claim of **God's** holiness and justice has been satisfied so that **the LORD** is free to act on behalf of **sinners**. Consequently, we are invited into **His** presence. Aaron could only approach the **mercy** seat once a year on the Day of Atonement (see the commentary on **Exodus 30 - The Day of Atonement**), but we have access to **YHVH** every moment of every day. **Therefore, let us confidently approach the throne from which God gives grace (4:16a CJB)**.

The throne of grace is **God's** throne of judgment, but when **Yeshua** sprinkled **His** blood upon it, **He** turned it into a **throne of grace**. That's perfect provision. What was it that we needed? **Mercy and grace**. So we are to come boldly, **confidently** before **God's throne** to receive the **grace He** has provided for us through the perfect sacrifice of **Jesus Christ**. How could anyone reject such a **High Priest**?

Messiah's Perfect Provision: So that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need, when you need it the most (**4:16b CJB**). **The One** who understands us perfectly will also provide for us perfectly. **No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it (First**



Corinthians 10:13).

*Dear heavenly **Father**, forgive me for not coming to **You** first and for questioning whether **You** could really understand my needs. Thank **You** for your **mercy**. I know I don't deserve it and neither do I deserve **Your** grace, but I praise **You** because **You** are a **gracious God**. I renounce the lies of Satan that distort the knowledge of who **You** really are. Teach me to be **merciful** to others as **You** have been **merciful** to me, and teach me to give people what they need, not what they deserve. I thank **You** for **Jesus Christ**, who made it possible for me to come before **Your** presence, and I resolve from this day forward to do just that. I praise **You** for **Your mercy** and **grace** and for **Your** open invitation for me to come to You. In **Jesus'** precious name I pray. Amen.¹²⁵*