

## **Our Great High Priest Part II—Holding Fast**

***“Having therefore a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us lay hold of our confession”***  
(Hebrews 4:14).

There is a good deal of uncertainty in the world today. It would be safe to say that there has never been a period in human history when there wasn't a large measure of uncertainty. Uncertainty is germane to the human condition, since God expelled His creatures from the “womb” of Eden. Born and nurtured in the garden of God, Adam and Eve were “cradled in the bosom of God.” Then came the awful reality of temptation and its bitter fruit. Exiled from the “citadel”—the fortress of God's protection—the race of mankind would know nothing but uncertainty until the day of God's final consummation.

So uncertainty is a fact of life. The only refuge in this uncertainty is the return to the citadel of God—but this time not in dependence upon the flawlessness of the human flesh, but the power of God now residing within our spirits. Thousands of years of human history have proven irrefutably, that the human being is not capable of measuring up to God's standards. Therefore, God has sent the redeemer—Jesus Christ—to accomplish this by the indwelling presence of His Holy Spirit. Thus, the flesh is still faltering, but the Spirit of God within holds us fast.

This redemption was accomplished by the coming of the Son of God to earth; by His living out the implications of the human condition; by His death on the cross; by His resurrected life; and by His sending of the Holy Spirit to dwell within the heart of all who will receive Him.

**Who has passed through the heavens.** In the process of redemption, God sent His Son—the projection of His own being—“who passed through the heavens.” What does that mean? And how many heavens are there? The debate about the number of heavens has been an endless one through the centuries of Christian theology and will probably not be resolved this side of our final abode. But the blessings and ministrations of God are from a point beyond the heavens. Ephesians 1:3 says that we are blessed with spiritual blessing in the *epiouranios*. Without getting too technical, it is a Greek word that means the “supra-heavens.” It is really not a matter of material location, because we are thus talking about time and space. It is rather a position in the eternities beyond time and space, beyond the heavens. How many heavens are there? It is not all that important. Christ came from a position beyond time and space—the infinity of God. He came from beyond time and space in an instant and in an instant shall carry us beyond time and space to dwell eternally with God. So the source of our salvation is infinity; the substance of our salvation is Spirit; the end of our salvation is eternity. All of this was accomplished by our great high priest who “passed through” the heavens to dwell with God's creatures on earth. Christ is beyond the reach of fleshly failure—He cannot fail. And thus our salvation, which is of the Spirit of

Christ, once vulnerable in the earthly paradise is now beyond the reach of human failure, secured by the power of Christ.

**Let us therefore hold fast to our confession.** What does that mean? It must be remembered that this book was written originally to the Jews. All the way through the epistle, there is a continual undercurrent of warning as befits those who had, as a nation, forfeited their position with God by their carelessness. Now they are confronting God's last effort to redeem His people, in the person of Jesus Christ. If they do not seize the opportunity to identify with Christ, they have no other hope. Accordingly, the author uses the Greek word *krateo* which means "to grip" or "to seize." Their forefathers had let their glorious position as the oracles of God slip away from them. They had bartered the riches of God's glory for the gold and silver idols and ritual debaucheries of their pagan neighbors. Warnings to them must be couched in dramatic terms, in order to awaken in the people of God the stirrings of a last hope.

**The confession.** A confession is a collection of ideas. So the Greek *homologeō*—and the English word "confess," which is from the Latin. A confession isn't necessarily a vocal utterance, but the beliefs one holds. It is not one's faith, but what one believes about one's faith. The author is saying, "You're on the right track—don't give up as your fathers did, because we have a great high priest to bring into reality all that God purposed in the redemption of His people. He is not saying, "Don't give up your faith"—but "don't give up your confidence in your confession of faith."

The Great High Priest is the fulfillment of all the sacrificial system ordained by God to accomplish the redemption of His people.

For Jew and Gentile alike, Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, has spanned the endless reaches of God's universe to bring to His creatures the full force of God's power in deliverance from the curse of the Fall and the recovery of the eternal oneness with God.

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