

DEVOTION for PENTECOST 21

Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!"

For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning: in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are brought to an end by your anger; by your wrath we are dismayed.

You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.

For all our days pass away under your wrath; we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty;

Yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of you?

So teach us to number our days that we get a heart of wisdom.

Return, O Lord! How long? Have pity on your servants!

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, and for as many years as we have seen evil.

Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us;

yes, establish the work of our hands!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen

Hebrews 4:1-16

We enter God's rest through Jesus our Great High Priest

How is the Sabbath rest related to Jesus?

What kind of rest does Jesus give us?

What is our confidence knowing Jesus is our Great High Priest?

Mark 10:23-31

All things are possible with God

Why is it hard for those who have wealth to enter God's kingdom?

Why is it impossible for anyone to enter the kingdom apart from God's power?

How does Jesus bless us in time as we follow Him?

"OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST"

Hebrews 4:14-16

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need."

I can't imagine anyone more intimidating than the Jewish high priest. He was clothed from head to ankle in special garments, worn when serving in the temple. He was clothed head to ankle, because he had to remove his sandals since he was standing on holy ground in the Most Holy Place. He had special head gear reserved for him alone, which bore the divine name and carried the inscription, "*Holy to the Lord.*" He wore a breastplate set with twelve precious stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. He carried a censor with special incense that could only be used in the temple service. He had a list of ritual duties that he had to follow perfectly. He wore a bell, so the other priests could hear him moving and know he was alive. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu perished when they offered unauthorized fire in the presence of the Lord. In case the high priest also did something wrong and died, a rope was tied to his leg so he could be pulled out of the Most Holy Place. The Jewish high priest had an intimidating persona and an intimidating job.

There are many things that make Jesus different from a human high priest. The author of Hebrews lists several of them throughout this letter. First and foremost, is His divinity! Jesus is the sinless Son of God from eternity. He writes, "*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature and He upholds the universe by the word of His power.*" Although Jesus is God from eternity, He became a human being in time, shared in our lives as a human being, kept the law perfectly in our place, died for our sins and rose for our justification. In this He became the source of eternal salvation for all who believe. Those are big differences. But the most important difference between Jesus and any other high priest, is His love for the people He serves.

The night he was betrayed Jesus told the disciples, *“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.”* No high priest in the history of ancient Israel said anything like that. The next day He did something that no other high priest could do, or would have ever considered doing; He showed the depth of His love by offering Himself on the cross to atone for our sins, cause our salvation. In this He became the source of eternal salvation for all who believe in Him. He is our great high priest, for as the author of Hebrews says, He saves to the uttermost those who believe in Him.

“HOW SWEET the NAME of JESUS SOUNGS” (Public Domain)

**How Sweet the name of Jesus sound in a believer’s ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away our fear.
It makes the wounded spirit whole and calms the heart’s unrest;
 ‘Tis manna to the hungry soul and to the weary rest.
Dear name, the rock on which I build, my shield and hiding place;
my never-failing treasury filled with boundless stores of grace.
O Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend, my prophet, priest and king,
my Lord, my life, my way, my end, accept the praise I bring.
How weak the effort of my heart, how cold my warmest thought!
But when I see thee as Thou art, I’ll praise thee as I ought.
Till then I would Thy love proclaim with every fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy name refresh my soul in death.**

Prayer

Dearest Jesus, you are the author of our salvation and our Great High Priest. Through you we have access to the Father in peace. We praise you for your glory with the Father and the Spirit, from eternity. We give you thanks that you did not consider your divinity something to be clung to, but when the time was right you emptied yourself and partook of our humanity bearing the likeness of a servant. Through your faithful service and sacrificial death, you atoned for our sin, so we might come into the Father’s presence in peace. Keep us in your grace. Continue to meet all our needs and support our faith, until faith passes into sight and we stand in your presence in your resurrection. In your Name. Amen

THE LORD’S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

THE CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction Hebrews 4:16

*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Bible Knowledge Quiz

On what day did the Jewish high priest enter the Most Holy Place?

What did the high priest take with him as an offering?

What sign appeared in the temple when Jesus died, to show He had entered the Most Holy Place?

Answers to last week’s quiz

Water and vegetables (Daniel 1:8-16).

12 months (Esther 2:12).

The vessels from the Jerusalem Temple (Daniel 5:22-28)

