

# Looking to Jesus



*A Study of the Book of Hebrews*

# Looking to Jesus

**“Jesus: Our Merciful and  
Faithful High Priest”**

**Hebrews 2:17**

***Jesus served as the perfect High Priest in His earthly ministry***

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*“Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” - Hebrews 2:17*

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## Outline of Hebrews

**Introduction**

**Hebrews 1:1 – 1:4**

**I. Jesus' Superiority to the Angels**

**Hebrews 1:5 – 2:18**

a) His Divinity

Hebrews 1:14

b) *A Call to Acceptance*

Hebrews 2:1-4

c) His Humanity

Hebrews 2:5-18

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## Outline of Hebrews

### II. Jesus as the Superior High Priest

### Hebrews 3:1 – 10:18

#### A. The Character of Jesus as High Priest

#### Hebrews 3:1 – 5:10

a) The Faithful Son/High Priest

Hebrews 3:1 – 3:6

*b) A Call to Obedience*

Hebrews 3:7 – 4:14

c) The Merciful High Priest

Hebrews 4:15 – 5:10

#### B. The Function of Jesus as High Priest

#### Hebrews 5:11 – 10:39

a) *A Call to Maturity*

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20

b) Jesus' Superiority to Melchizedek

Hebrews 7:1 – 7:28

c) Mediator of a New Covenant

Hebrews 8:1 – 10:18

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## Outline of Hebrews

### III. The Enduring Faith of the Believer

**Hebrews 10:19 – 13:19**

*a) A Call to Faithfulness*

Hebrews 10:19 – 10:39

b) Examples of the faithful

Hebrews 11:1 – 11:40

c) The Example of the Ultimate Faithful One

Hebrews 12:1 – 12:13

d) Faithful Living

Hebrews 12:14 – 13:19

**Conclusion**

**Hebrews 13:20 – 13:25**

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## The High Priest

As is evident in the name, the High Priest is distinct from other priests by rank, function, and standards.

The first somewhat mention of a High Priest "*Priest of the Most High God*" is in Genesis 14:18 and it refers to the mysterious priest/king Melchizedek.

Although Aaron and his sons were consecrated as the first priests in Exodus 28, the first mention of High Priest as an official office is not until Leviticus 21:10.

Jehoaida is the first named person to be specified as the High Priest (2 Kings 12), although the office is assumed for men who preceded him (Eleazar, Phineas, Eli, etc.)

# THE *Anatomy* of

## JEWISH HIGH PRIEST

ISRAEL, 605 BCE – 70 CE



### THE EPHOD

The breastplate would sit upon an equally elaborate apron-like garment called an ephod. There is an ongoing debate about what exactly it was but *The Bible* describes it as being made of the same material as the breastplate. It had two shoulder pieces containing golden rings that would affix to the breastplate, with the ephod held together by a girdle fastened at the front.

### ROBE OF THE EPHOD

The high priest would wear a robe underneath the ephod – it was sky-blue in colour in reference to heaven. As well as a woven collar, the bottom of the garment had tiny bells made of pure gold and pomegranate-shaped tassels in blue, purple and scarlet. The bells would be heard when the high priest was ministering.

### BARE FEET

The entire ensemble symbolises atonement for the sin of bloodshed on the part of the children of Israel, except for the underwear, which was purely for modesty and contained no openings. A high priest's feet would be bare, however, allowing them to touch the ground of God. Claims that a rope would be tied to the high priest's ankle so that his body could be pulled out should he be killed by God in the Holy of Holies are not thought to be true.

### THE GOLDEN CROWN

Placed over the high priest's fine linen mitre and extending towards both ears, the priestly crown was a pure golden head plate engraved with the words "Holiness to the Lord", held in place by two tied blue straps. By wearing it, the high priest would atone for the sin of arrogance on behalf of the children of Israel and show his intellectual devotion to God.

### PRIESTLY BREASTPLATE

A rectangular breastplate containing 12 precious stones across four rows was worn across the heart. The fabric itself was made from gold, fine twisted linen and yarns dyed tekhelet, purple and scarlet. There was a fold within which the Urim and Thummim (literally translated as "lights and perfections") were placed. It's not known exactly what these two objects were but they were a way of receiving revelation from God.

### IMPORTANT GEMSTONES

The stones on the breastplate were a ruby, emerald and topaz on the top row; a caruncle, sapphire and quartz crystal on the second; a jacinth, agate and amethyst on the third; and a chrysolite, onyx and opal on the bottom. Each represented one of the 12 tribes of Israel, with their names engraved on the stones.

### FINE LINEN TUNIC

The garment that would touch the high-priest's body was known as the priestly tunic and was made of pure linen. The white material would reach the neck and it would be visible under the robe of the ephod as sleeves and a section at the feet. Priests would also wear the tunic but only the high priest's version would be embroidered – except on the Day of Atonement, when it would be plain.



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## The Character and Function of the High Priest

According to Exodus 28, the High Priest was to be extravagantly dressed while in service (chest piece, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, and sash)

He was to wear the names of the 12 tribes of Israel: 6 engraved on each onyx shoulder piece, and one on each of the 12 precious stones set in his ephod

His turban bore a gold plate on the front which said “Holiness Unto the LORD”

The High Priest was consecrated by being washed with water, anointed with oil, a smeared (right earlobe, right thumb, right big toe)/sprinkled with blood

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## The Character and Function of the High Priest

According to Leviticus 21, the High Priest must live a life of holiness, set apart from the people.

He was not permitted to defile himself by being in the presence of a dead body – even his parents

He was only permitted to marry a virgin from his clan in the Tribe of Levi

He could not have a physical defect/handicap; this would disqualify him from service

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## The Character and Function of the High Priest

The High Priest was considered to be the mediator between God and the children of Israel

He was to oversee the priestly functions of sacrifice, instruction, and worship

He was to offer a sacrifice for his personal sins, and for the sins of the nation continually

He was to preside over the annual Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), to sacrifice for the sins of the nation

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## **Jesus: Our Merciful and Faithful High Priest**

Although Jesus was not of the Aaronic genealogical line, the writer of Hebrews will later show us how He was qualified to serve as the last and greatest High Priest

Jesus perfectly exemplified and executed the office of High Priest like no one did before Him. The closest human example is Melchizedek, of whom very little is known

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## Summary

***We are richly blessed to be represented by a merciful and faithful High Priest, who stood in our place by sacrificing Himself for our sins!***

***“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”.***

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(Hebrews 4:15-16)***