

Hebrews 9:11-14

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as the high priest of the good things that were coming, he went through the greater and more complete tent, which was not made by human hands (that is, it is not part of this creation). ¹² He entered once into the Most Holy Place and obtained eternal redemption, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood. ¹³ Now if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkled on those who were unclean, sanctifies them so that their flesh is clean, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works, so that we worship the living God?

Great High Priest Better than Any Other High Priest

Good Friday is a solemn day. On this day we remember how the Son of God suffered and died for the sins of the world. God's own Lamb was offered on the altar of the cross to take away the world's wickedness and guilt.

The Good Friday of the Old Testament was the Great Day of Atonement. On that day the high priest of Israel entered the presence of God in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle to make atonement for sin. So holy was this day to the Jews and so solemn was the act of entering into the presence of God by the high priest that, according to a Jewish website (chabad.org) when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place at the temple in Jesus' day with a rope tied around one ankle. The rope was there to pull the High Priest out if anything happened to him while in the Most Holy Place without anyone else having to risk entering the place of God's presence.

On this Good Friday, approach God with a similar reverence of faith. Jesus our Great High Priest is better than every other high priest.

I.

“But when Christ appeared as the high priest of the good things that were coming...” (Hebrews 9:11, EHV). That's an odd phrase. In the Old Testament, God's people were looking for good things to come. They had God's promises, but the fulfillment lay ahead, in the future. The “good things that were coming” had become a description of the age of fulfillment, when the Savior would come.

Jesus was the One who finally came to fulfill all those good things that were coming. That includes all that was foreshadowed by the Old Testament priesthood, its sacrifices and offerings, its rites and rituals, and the place where the Old Testament priests served.

Earlier in this chapter the writer speaks about the layout of the tabernacle. It was a tent—a portable worship facility. It was 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high. It was divided into two rooms separated by a curtain. The Holy Place was 30 feet long and contained an altar of incense, a golden lampstand, and a table on which loaves of showbread were placed each day.

The Most Holy Place was a perfect cube of 15 feet. In it was the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of God's presence with his people. That gold-plated box had two angels on the cover. Inside the Ark were the tablets of stone, a bowl of manna, and Aaron's staff. Above it hovered the glory of the Lord.

No one ever saw that box. At least, no ordinary person did. Only priests ever entered the tent of the tabernacle in the first place, and only the high priest entered the Most Holy