

Why Did Jesus Die?

Hebrews 4:16a

Nutshell: Because of Christ's sympathetic priesthood, we are compelled to come near and stay near God.

I. Context: The Rest Christ won on the cross.

II. Text

Heb 4:16 therefore, we should keep bringing ourselves near to the throne of grace with complete frankness, that we may receive compassion, and may find grace, *leading* to well-timed stabilization.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. Paul wrote an inspired book to a Jewish audience; 2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1. Hebrews is the only possibility.

B. Outline of Hebrews

Authority: God has at last spoken In Son (*Ἰερέτης*), ← follow this font
His express image, **1:1-3a**

Theme: **The SON** purified us from sin (Priest), then sat in authority (**King**), **1:3b**

I. Supreme over the angels, 1:4-14

Therefore hear Him, 2:1-4

II. Supreme as man, 2:5-9

Ps 8- Since man must reign, 2:5-8a

but man failed, 2:8b, Christ became man, 2:9a

Theme reprise: crowned with glory and honor (King), 2:9b
to taste the death of "each one" of His own (Priest), 2:9c
to bond with them and help them, 2:10-18
freeing them from bondage to Satan and fear, 2:14-15

Therefore, think hard on Him, 3:1 (*Ἰερέτης*)

III. A better stewardship than Moses, 3:1-6

Therefore hear Him, unhardening our hearts,

Ps 95- for Moses' group didn't enter God's rest, 3:7-19

IV. A better Rest than Joshua, 4:1-11

Therefore, fear, 4:1a, lest we also miss God's rest

Ps 95- David told his people not to miss that rest, 4:1b-3

The Promised Land was a type of God's 7th day rest,
which itself was a type of Salvation, 4:4-8

Christ's Salvation has become the final Sabbatismos, 4:9,
the Son resting from the work of Salvation as the

Father had rested from the work of Creation, 4:10

We must exert ourselves to enter that Rest, 4:11

For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13

Theme reprise: Having the highest high priest (Priest), the
Son of God (King),

Let us hold to our confession of Him (*Prophet*), **4:14**

especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

V. A better priesthood than Aaron, 4:14 - 10:18

VI. Exhortations based on Christ's supremacy, 10:19 - 13:21

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

Kid-speak: What are the 3 jobs Christ has? Prophet,
Priest, and King. As a Priest, He paid for our sins on the
cross. Because He beat sin, He will be King forever.

C. Heb 4:16, Paul is about to go into an extended teaching on
Christ as the final high priest- his main subject of the book

1. In 4:14, Paul has just repeated his theme: Christ is King
based on His sacrifice as Priest; therefore, we must hear
Him (as Prophet) and affirm what we have heard ("cling
to our confession")

a. His kingship founded on his priestly work

b. His prophecy and His prophets pointing to both

2. In 4:15, Paul has given us a reason to cling to our
confession of Christ: Christ's true sympathy with us in all
our temptations

3. Now 4:16 will give us another exhortation *based on*
Christ's sympathetic priesthood: Draw near to God in
prayer & worship

a. Do you need such an exhortation?

i. Human nature says you do. At our *best*, we are
easily fatigued.

ii. Physical and mental fatigue lead to spiritual
fatigue; plus spiritual fatigue happens all by itself.

- b. Drawing near to God requires *effort*. The effort is made easier with a *reason*. The reason is enhanced when it is to our *benefit*. Paul is sharing such benefits with us here.
- D. Observation: Heb 4:16's symmetry and expression of its elements has a poetic feel
- E. "Therefore"
 - 1. *Since* Jesus felt every temptation I do or *can* experience just so He could aid me in temptation (v 15)
 - 2. we should...
- F. "We should keep bringing ourselves near"
 - 1. This is one word in Gk. It appears again in 10:22.
 - a. There, it is the opening exhortation to the appeal or application section of the book, 10:19-13:21
 - b. Having finished the big part of the book (which we're just entering), 4:14-10:18, Paul's first 'lesson' based on Christ's new, everlasting priesthood will be: "We should keep bringing ourselves near," the exact word as in 4:16
 - c. Implication: THAT'S WHAT CHRIST'S SACRIFICE DOES: opens the way to God, impelling us into God's presence
 - ✠ d. Further implication: If we don't keep bringing ourselves near to God, CHRIST'S SACRIFICE MUST HAVE SOME ALTERNATE MEANING FOR US,
 - e. maybe sincerely held, but... effective?... even for salvation?
 - f. Paul's warnings do not abate in 10:19-13:21. *Getting* Christ's priesthood wrong is deadly, but *treating* it wrong (such as not accessing God) can be just as deadly.

Kid-speak: When Jesus died on the cross as a Priest, He made it where we can go to God anytime. But that also means that we're *supposed* to go to God a lot. That means pray a lot.

- ☑ 2. In 4:16, Paul is therefore gives the initial statement of his **main exhortation of the book**
- G. The repeated exhortation from 4:16 to 10:22 gives us new insight on the structure of the book
 - I. Christ is King based on His sacrifice, 1:3
 - 1. King over the angels, 1:4-2:4
 - 2. King as man, 2:5-9
 - a. because of his sacrifice, 2:9-18
 - b. which bonds Him and His sympathies to us, 2:9-18

- II. Even Moses was only a servant in King Jesus' house, 3:1-6
 - 1. Moses could not bring the people into God's Rest, 3:7-19
 - 2. But the OC left the door open for that Rest, 4:1-8
 - 3. But also warning any who would *not* enter, 3:7-4:8
- III. Christ's sacrifice has become God's final Rest, 4:9-10
 - 1. Which we had best enter, 4:11
 - 2. For God is sifting us, 4:12-13
- IV. Christ as King is our High Priest, 4:14
 - 1. Thoroughly sympathetic with us, 4:15
 - 2. **COMPELLING US TO ACCESS GOD, 4:16**
 - a. Argument that Jesus *is* this High Priest, 5:1 - 10:18
 - b. **COMPELLING US TO ACCESS GOD, 10:22**

Kid-speak: What did the priests use to bring to God to show that sin needed to be paid for. An animal. They would kill it. What did Jesus bring? Himself. He died to pay for our sins.

- H. Paul's main point of the book is to prove Jesus as High Priest
 - ↓ 1. The main moral is that we must make use of His sacrifice
 - 2. What difference that Jesus is priest if we don't actually, in real time, in life, hour by hour, **come before God?**
 - a. Thinking on His words before Him
 - b. Praying
 - c. (a. + b. = conversation)
- I. "We should" is based on the subjunctive mood
 - 1. "Keep bringing" is based on the present
 - 2. A simple compound verb, "bring near"
 - 3. And what are to bring ourselves near to?
- J. "The throne of grace"
 - 1. Matt 19:28, Jesus will sit on a throne of glory (and 25:31)
 - 2. In Hebrews, the Father speaks of the Son's throne, 1:8
 - a. 8:1 is going to be another restatement of the book's Theme, with Jesus as High Priest at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens
 - b. 12:2 is similar, moving from the Cross to Christ sitting at the right of God's throne
 - 3. Because Christ's throne is founded upon His work on the cross, it is a **THRONE OF GRACE**
 - a. A throne speaks of authority. Grace speaks of favor.
 - b. The Throne of Grace means *AUTHORITATIVE FAVOR*. God *commands* our acceptance and appoints favor on us.

Kid-speak: What are the 3 jobs Christ has? Prophet, Priest, and King. As a King, Jesus can say, “I don’t let your sin count against you anymore. I have **grace** on you.” Grace is great!

- ★K. The short phrase “throne of grace” itself encapsulates the book’s theme: grace from Christ’s priestly work founds His throne as eternal king
1. Ps 89:14 says that righteousness and justice are the foundation of Messiah’s throne. Grace is fair because it is paid for. Righteousness is satisfied with our debt paid.
 2. Prov 20:28 says a king’s throne is upheld by mercy: a more direct-line statement of the “throne of grace” principle
 3. Prov 25:5 says a king’s throne is established when the wicked are removed from before him. Those who spurn grace (in whatever way, including counterfeiting it) will not abide in Christ’s presence.
- L. “We should keep bringing ourselves near” fits perfectly with “throne of grace.”
1. At the Throne, God’s favor is authorized and decreed
 2. Why would we be anywhere *but* the throne of grace??
- M. “Grace,” *xaris*, 155x
1. “Grace” is based on the Gk *xairo*, to be cheerful- all of your “rejoice” verses
 2. *Xaris* is translated “thanks” several times, Rom 7:25. Thanks implies a gift or favor bestowed.
 - a. About 1/3 of the time, “grace” means approval; making someone happy; someone looking kindly on another, including God on men, Lk 2:52
 - b. About 1/3, it speaks of God’s power working in us, since that is a ‘gratis’ working, 1 Cor 15:10
 - c. The meaning of grace we know best is the other approx. 1/3. It speaks of God’s specific bestowal of saying mercies through Christ. ‘Unmerited favor,’ Rom 4:4
 - i. Paul sometimes portrays this as the *opposite* of “works/deeds” as our basis for God’s approval.
 - ii. Or as an effective mediator over us vs. the Law
 - d. (27x, “grace” is part of a greeting or sign-off. “Grace to you,” etc. This is most likely the power.)

Kid-speak: What is grace? It’s God taking our sins away even though we don’t deserve anything good from God, since we

wanted to be bad.

N. “Grace” in Hebrews

1. We’ve already considered the first use of “grace” in the book, Heb 2:9, “...in order that, by/in/through/unto God’s grace, He might taste death for each one.”
 - a. The preposition (based on the dative) is quite important. I went with “unto.” That is, *to achieve* the manifestation of God’s grace, Jesus went to the cross.
 - b. You can glean the same basic idea with any of the other prepositions
 - c. This seems like the **grace of redemption**
2. Heb 10:29 is the next occurrence of “grace” (after our v). It speaks of the danger of misrepresenting Christ’s blood, thus insulting “the Spirit of grace.”
 - a. That is, the Holy Spirit, who administers the Cross’ benefits, will not do so where the Cross is misrepresented
 - b. Again- the **grace of redemption**. Scary.
3. Heb 12:15 is next: “looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God.” Like Esau, rejected. Outside of this grace = outside redemption. **Grace of redemption**. Scary.
4. Then Heb 12:28: receiving an unshakeable kingdom, “let us have grace” to serve God
 - a. Now we seem to move from Justification type grace to Sanctification type grace. 2 sides of one coin.
 - b. To “have” grace makes it an internal possession- so, God’s power working in us
5. Heb 13:9 says it’s “good that the heart be established by grace” rather than food regimens*
 - a. This one could be either justifying or sanctifying grace
 - b. Understanding both together may be intended
6. Finally, Heb 13:25: “Grace be with you all.” Justifying grace stands on our behalf. Sanctifying grace is in us/ with us. This is sanctifying grace.

Kid-speak: There’s a second kind of grace that goes with the first one. After God washes our sins away, He puts the Holy Spirit in us and gives us the power to do good. That power is called grace, too.

O. The concept of God’s Grace is vital to Hebrews. ♦ Reliance on

the Old Covenant (not OT) in any way denies grace.

1. But Paul's main argument is that OC reliance denies Christ
2. Christ is the new order of priest, long foretold and absolutely necessary. Going back to any of the ceremonial aspects of the Levitical priesthood (*including the dietary laws) denies Christ (despite protests of loyalty to Christ).

P. Now *how* are we supposed to keep bringing ourselves to the throne of grace?

1. "With" (*meta*) "complete frankness"
2. The Gk for "complete frankness" is a compound word, lit., "saying everything." Strong's definition, "all outspokenness."

D
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- a. Jn 7:26, Jesus spoke "openly/publicly/freely/boldly," yet was not arrested
- b. Jn 10:24, "If you're Christ tell us _" plainly/publicly/freely
- c. Jn 16:25, I'll soon cease figurative speech and tell you _ of the Father. freely/plainly/openly
- d. Col 2:15, Christ exposed Satan's regime in _ . public, openness

3. Uses in Hebrews

- a. 3:6, paired with "boasting." "If we hold down the **boldness** and the **boasting** of the hope firm to the end"
- i. But "openness" modifies "hope" well and pairs well with "boasting."
- ii. We have to lay hold of it, pin it down, and not let it go. "Confidence" is another good translation.
- b. 10:19, "we have _ to the entrance of the Holy Place with the blood of Jesus." Openness, confidence, boldness
- c. 10:35, "don't throw away your _." Confidence fits well.

Kid-speak: Look what it says! It says that when we come to God, we need to tell the **whole truth**. No pretending. No forgetting about bad things I did or thought. We have to talk to Him about everything, because those are the things Jesus died for.

Q. Frankness requires knowing yourself. Knowing yourself dampens coming to God. But God will help unravel the riddle.

1. Many very smart people will never know themselves
2. It can be exhausting to be completely open before God
3. But the quest pays back tenfold

4. And in whatever area and to whatever degree we're without it, relationship with God is pretend anyway
 5. Jesus' complete sympathy means that *He* was tempted to be fake with God too (less than 100% frank)
 6. 1 design of the Model Prayer is our exposure. (Book plug.)
- R. We'll explore next time *to what end* we must keep bringing ourselves near the Throne of Grace with this complete frankness/confidence
1. Until then, you know *that* you should
 2. You know *why* you should (Jesus' sympathetic priesthood)
 3. I charge you, then: **Draw near!** If you do, you will already have experienced what we will examine next time.

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
 Our own weakness may be the last thing we want to talk about with God, but it should be first on the list.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**
How have I lost righteousness?
 Do I honor the Cross in accessing God?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
 I will change my HABITS such that they honor the Cross.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**
 Item #1: Sufficient daily, secluded time to access God.

Wrap-up: The question "Why did Jesus die?" has multiple answers. One of them is, "So we would come before God."

The Throne of Grace is not a nice option in case we need it (as we'll see next time). *Accessing the Throne of Grace is proof that we have grace at all.* To paraphrase 1 Cor 8:1b, Knowledge of Grace puffs up; Love of Grace builds up a real relationship with God.