

Names of God from the Bible

38 – Great High Priest

All God's Names are eternal names – so He is still the Great High Priest for us today.

Reading: Hebrews 4:14–5:10

How can God be both God and our High Priest at one and the same time?

Surely, by definition, God demands our worship because He is worthy of that worship. However, we all recognise that we are not perfect. In order to present our worship, we first need to make atonement for our sins. We cannot stand clean before a Holy and Righteous God, just as we are. Something has to be done to restore our broken relationship. Some offering, some sacrifice, some mediation has to occur before we can be forgiven.

Most people acknowledge the problem and seek all sorts of ways to reach a suitable solution. Regrettably, most of our attempts at finding the answer are temporary and unsatisfactory. People from different cultures around the world offer food, money or other items to their idols or evil spirits in an act of appeasement. Some offer the blood of animals and, in some cases, even the blood of humans, in the hope of relieving suffering, sickness, oppression or death.

Sadly, none of these seems to be adequate, either in the short term or more particularly in the long term. There is never any conviction or confirmation that the offering has been accepted or successful. Usually guilt, insecurity and fear remain. Consequently, offerings and sacrifices have to be made frequently and regularly for any semblance of normality, let alone peace, to be experienced.

Whilst the tourism industry may relish and increasingly promote these cultural experiences, titillating the base instincts and intrigue within our psyche, as a great means of generating a profit, they will leave the traveller, explorer and thrill-seeker with a feeling of empty mysticism and a cold spiritual reality.

The common thread is, however, a need to reconcile relationships, pay the penalty for wrong-doing and satisfy the desire to appease the infinite spiritual presence. As Christians, we recognise the ultimate Spiritual Authority as God – the Creator of the world and everything existing in it, whether living or lifeless.

Christians recognise the fact that they are sinful and need forgiveness. Nevertheless, they are totally incapable of doing anything to change that position. God, being righteous and just, requires a perfect sacrifice. Whilst a spotless animal was acceptable in the past, we realise that it was an inadequate symbol. However, it did point forward to the supreme Sacrifice – the spotless Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who walked on this earth, lived and died as our Supreme and Final Sacrifice.

No other sacrifice is required. Forgiveness is available to all and flows through the shed Blood of Christ on the Cross of Calvary. So God, in Christ, became the Sacrifice, the once-and-for-all-time sacrifice for sin.

But wait, there's more! Sacrifices are usually presented by priests. It has been that way for the millennia and throughout the world. The High Priest presented the most efficacious sacrifice. In Christ Jesus, we find both the Sacrifice and the High Priest. Christ offered up His own Blood to God. Christ, the High Priest, offered up His own Sacrificial Blood on our behalf and God the Father

Names of God from the Bible

accepted it as 'payment in full'.

Yet there is more! Because Christ rose from the dead, He lives forever more. The High Priest constantly intercedes on our behalf. The High Priest, Jesus, constantly lives in God's presence. Jesus constantly remembers us and intercedes for us to His Father. Furthermore, because Jesus Christ's Sacrifice was spotless and all embracing, He has sat down – His atoning work completed. This is what Jesus was alluding to when He shouted triumphantly from the Cross: "It is finished!"

I can know now that I am forgiven and clean, and thus able to approach God's throne, not through any merit of my own but through the Blood of Jesus Christ shed for me. I no longer live in guilt, fear or insecurity – I am free to live in peace and joy with the assurance that, one day, I will live with my Jesus and Heavenly Father forever.

What does that name mean for us today

As Christians, we can know that we are forgiven and able to enjoy a vibrant, exciting and fruitful relationship with God as Father, and nothing will be able to destroy that eternal relationship.

Prayer

Thank You, Jesus, for being both my High Priest and my Saviour – the ultimate Sacrifice for my sins. Please help me to understand more and more of what Your high priestly role is today. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Genesis 14:17-24
- Psalm 110
- Hebrews 7:1-27

Questions

1. What does a high priest do?
2. Why was there no chair for the high priest in the temple?
3. How does Jesus fulfil the name *the Great High Priest* today?