

Hebrews 10:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And having an high priest over the house of God;

Analysis

And having an high priest over the house of God; This brief verse emphasizes Christ's ongoing priestly ministry on our behalf. "Having" (echontes, ἔχοντες) is a present participle indicating continuous possession—we have and continue to have a High Priest. His priestly work is not past only but present and ongoing. Christ's priestly ministry includes His intercession for believers (Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:34) and His representation of us before the Father.

The title "high priest" (hierea megan, ἱερέα μέγαν—literally "great priest") recalls the earlier discussion of Christ's Melchizedekian priesthood (Hebrews 5-7). Unlike the Levitical priests who served in cycles and died, Christ serves perpetually. Unlike priests who needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins, Christ is sinless. Unlike priests who entered an earthly sanctuary, Christ entered heaven itself. He is the ultimate and final High Priest.

He is priest "over the house of God" (epi ton oikon tou Theou, ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Θεοῦ). The "house of God" refers to God's people, the church (Hebrews 3:6, 1 Timothy 3:15). Christ's authority extends over the entire household of faith. Every believer, in every place, in every time, has Christ as their High Priest. This universal priesthood means no local priest or bishop can claim unique mediatorial authority—Christ alone mediates between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5).

The combination of a new way (verse 20) and a High Priest over God's house provides complete assurance. We have both the highway to God (through Christ's sacrifice) and the guide along that way (Christ's ongoing priestly ministry). He

opened the way and now leads us along it. His presence guarantees our access and acceptance.

Historical Context

The High Priest held the most sacred office in Israel, uniquely authorized to enter God's immediate presence in the Holy of Holies. The office traced back to Aaron (Exodus 28) and continued through his descendants. The High Priest wore distinctive garments, bore the names of the twelve tribes on his breastplate and shoulders, and carried the Urim and Thummim for divine guidance. He alone could make atonement for all Israel on the Day of Atonement.

When the author calls Christ the High Priest over God's house, he claims that all the symbolism, authority, and function of the Aaronic high priesthood find fulfillment and surpassing in Christ. The old covenant priests foreshadowed the reality that Christ embodies. He doesn't merely perform the High Priestly duties better than Aaron's descendants; He performs them perfectly and finally, rendering the old system obsolete.

This truth confronted first-century Jewish Christians who might romanticize the impressive temple rituals and high priestly pageantry. Yes, the earthly priesthood was glorious—but only as a shadow. The reality is Christ, and the reality infinitely surpasses the shadow. The Reformation applied this same logic against claims that ordained clergy possess unique mediatorial status. If Christ is the sole High Priest, all other priests are at best under-priests sharing in His ministry, not independent mediators.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's ongoing high priestly ministry on your behalf affect your confidence when you face spiritual battles or accusations?
2. In what ways do you rely on human spiritual leaders that might subtly diminish your trust in Christ as your ultimate High Priest?
3. How can you take fuller advantage of having a High Priest who perfectly understands your weaknesses and perfectly represents you to the Father?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἱερέα	μέγαν	ἐπὶ	τὸν	οἶκον	τοῦ	θεοῦ
And	priest	having an high	over	G3588	the house	G3588	of God
G2532	G2409	G3173	G1909		G3624		G2316

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 2:17 (References God): Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 6:20 (Parallel theme): Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 8:1 (Parallel theme): Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

Hebrews 3:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Hebrews 7:26 (Parallel theme): For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

1 Timothy 3:15 (References God): But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Matthew 16:18 (Parallel theme): And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

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