

Hebrews 7:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Analysis

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. This verse catalogs Christ's perfect qualifications as High Priest, demonstrating why He alone can save completely (v. 25). "Such a high priest became us" (eprepen gar hēmin archiereus, ἐπρεπεν γὰρ ἡμῖν ἀρχιερεύς) means this priest was fitting, appropriate, necessary for our need. Our desperate condition required not merely a good priest but a perfect one.

Five attributes describe Christ's unique excellence: "Holy" (hosios, ὅσιος) emphasizes His piety and devotion to God—He perfectly fulfills all divine obligations. "Harmless" (akakos, ἄκακος, literally "without evil") means innocent, guileless, without malice—He harbors no evil intent toward any. "Undefiled" (amiantos, ἀμίαντος) indicates absolute purity, unstained by sin—externally and internally spotless. "Separate from sinners" (kechōrismenos apo tōn hamartōlōn, κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν) doesn't mean physical distance during His earthly ministry (He ate with sinners, Luke 15:2) but moral separation—He never participated in sin despite constant proximity to sinners. The perfect tense indicates His permanent sanctification.

"Made higher than the heavens" (hypsēloteros tōn ouranōn genomenos, ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν γενόμενος) describes Christ's exaltation above all creation following His resurrection and ascension. He transcends even the highest

heavenly realms, seated at God's right hand (Hebrews 1:3, 8:1). This exaltation qualifies Him to intercede effectively—He's not distant from God but dwelling in His very presence.

Historical Context

Levitical high priests, while consecrated for office, remained sinners requiring atonement for their own sins before interceding for others (Hebrews 5:3, 7:27). This compromised their effectiveness—how could defiled priests mediate perfect holiness? The annual Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) began with the high priest offering sacrifice for himself, acknowledging his unworthiness. Moreover, earthly priests served in a tabernacle that was merely a shadow of the true heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 8:5). For first-century Jewish Christians, this verse demonstrated that returning to Levitical priesthood meant settling for shadows and imperfection when they possessed substance and perfection in Christ. The Qumran community (Dead Sea Scrolls) expected a perfect eschatological high priest who would inaugurate the new age. Christianity proclaimed that expectation fulfilled in Jesus—the priest who needs no personal purification, offers perfect sacrifice, and ministers in the true heavenly sanctuary. His exaltation 'higher than the heavens' means believers' prayers and worship reach directly into God's throne room through Christ's mediation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do Christ's moral perfections contrast with human priests and demonstrate His unique qualification to save?
2. Why was it necessary for our High Priest to be both fully human (v. 15) and completely separated from sin?

3. What comfort does Christ's exaltation 'higher than the heavens' provide for believers?
4. In what ways does Christ's sinless holiness both convict and encourage you?
5. How does understanding Christ's perfect qualifications strengthen your confidence in approaching God?

Interlinear Text

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|-------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| Τοιοῦτος | γὰρ | ἡμῖν | ἔπρεπεν | ἀρχιερεύς | ὅσιος | ἄκακος |
| such | For | us | became | an high priest | who is holy | harmless |
| G5108 | G1063 | G2254 | G4241 | G749 | G3741 | G172 |
| ἀμίαντος | κεχωρισμένος | ἀπὸ | τῶν | ἀμαρτωλῶν | καὶ | |
| undefiled | separate | from | | sinners | and | |
| G283 | G5563 | G575 | G3588 | G268 | G2532 | |
| ὑψηλότερος | τῶν | οὐρανῶν | γενόμενος | | | |
| higher than | | the heavens | made | | | |
| G5308 | G3588 | G3772 | G1096 | | | |

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Creation): For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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;

1 John 2:2 (Sin): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 Peter 2:22 (Sin): Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

Hebrews 9:14 (Parallel theme): How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 1:3 (Sin): Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Hebrews 12:2 (Sin): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1 John 3:5 (Sin): And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Luke 23:47 (Parallel theme): Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

Luke 23:41 (Parallel theme): And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.