

- *The sinlessness of Christ*

1. We need a sinless Saviour

- *Jesus is holy*

- *Jesus is innocent*

- *Jesus is undefiled*

- *Jesus is separate from sinners*

- *Quite unlike the Levitical priests*

2. We need an effective Saviour

- *Levitical priests offered sacrifices daily because they were ineffective*

- *Jesus' sacrifice was once for all*

- *The Day of Atonement and daily offerings*

Our writer's last argument at this point focuses upon the sinlessness of Christ.

1. **We need a sinless Saviour.** What would be the use of a Saviour who could not stop sinning himself? If anyone is to help us in the battle against sin and Satan it has to be Someone who has himself succeeded in that very same conflict. This is exactly what we have in Jesus. ²⁶*For such a high priest is what we need. He is holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners, and he has become exalted so as to be higher than the heavens.*

Jesus is sinless. He is **holy** – totally free from sin. Satan could find no starting point in Jesus' own nature or character. 'He has nothing in me. He has no power over me', said Jesus^{□1}. Jesus is **innocent**, pure, blameless, transparent, uncomplicated. Jesus is **undefiled**. He has not fallen into sin and brought some stain upon his character. Jesus is **separate from sinners**. He did not give way to the pressure of sinners upon him so that he joined them in their wickedness. He did not keep away from them by avoiding them, but he kept away from their lifestyle. So he knows what it is to have a battle in life and yet come through to total and complete victory. But more than that, he 'has become exalted so as to be higher than the heavens'. This means that he is permanently in a position of total and absolute power, so that he gives himself fully and freely to the work of rescuing God's people and bringing God's sons to glory.

In all of this Jesus is quite unlike the priests of the tribe of Levi. ²⁷*He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people.* The priests were **not** holy, innocent and without the stain of past sins.

2. **We need an effective Saviour.** Because of their own sinfulness the Levites could only be a faint shadow of the sacrifice for sin that we needed. But Jesus was not the ever-repeated shadow. He was the reality who did everything that was needed to atone for sin in one act of sin-bearing upon the cross. *For he made an offering of himself once for all time.*

The Levitical priests offered sacrifices daily because they were ineffective. It was as if they were always trying again and again to produce the effective sacrifice but could never succeed. Jesus offered himself 'once for all time' because his one-and-only sacrifice was totally successful and never needed to be repeated. There can never be any 'sacrifice of the mass' – or anything like it – in which the cross of Christ is repeated. The Levitical priests offered many sacrifices; Jesus offered one sacrifice. The Levitical priests offered something other than themselves; Jesus offered himself.

Strictly speaking it was only on the Day of Atonement that the high priest offered sacrifices first for himself and then for the people. But our writer also has in mind the daily offerings for sin. He takes it for granted that these also were sacrifices for sins, and the high priests needed them as much as anyone else. So

□1 John 14:30

he puts the two occasions for sacrifices together.

3. We need a divine Saviour

- Levitical priests were mortal, fallible, often sinful
- Their work preliminary, temporary, shadowy
- Jesus is the final reality
- The law was weak and shadowy
- The divine Son is strong and effective
- God appoints a Son
- Only a divine Saviour is sufficiently powerful
- He is fully equipped
- Fully sympathetic
- Willing and capable

3. **We need a divine Saviour.** Our writer continues: ²⁸*For the law appoints men as high priests, people who have weakness, but the word of the oath – which came later than the law – appoints a Son who has been perfected for ever.* The trouble with the Levitical priests was that they were men – and they had no nature other than a human nature. They were mortal, fallible, often sinful. But their work was preliminary, temporary, shadowy^{□1}. Jesus is what we need, not fallible men. His work is not preliminary; it is the final reality. It was later than the law and replaced it. The law is replaced by Jesus. He is our righteousness. He is our rule of life, and our guide. He is our holy day. He is our sacrifice and high priest. He is our hygiene, our holy food. He is everything that we need that was suggested and shadowed by the Mosaic law.

God appoints a Son. Both law and gospel were God's decree. Both were 'appointed' by him. It is not that the Mosaic covenant was demonic and the gospel is holy! Not at all. The same God appointed both law and gospel. In that sense there is no contrast between them. The contrast is not a contrast in **origin**. It is a contrast in prediction and fulfilment. There is a difference in character. One is weak and shadowy; the other is strong and effective.

God appoints a Son. Our writer does not say, 'God appoints a better high priest' – although that could have been said. He is stressing the failure of human help and the need of divine help. God's Son is the One by whom God made the worlds, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person. Only a divine Saviour is sufficiently powerful to bring us to glory.

Yet God fully equipped his Son to be the Saviour. He is 'perfected' – trained by suffering to be the very One that we need. Who else is worthy to be called 'Saviour'? No one! All human beings let us down and disappoint us – and we ourselves are a disappointment to others. At this point there is no other name but the name of Jesus! No one else **fully** sympathizes with us. Only our Lord Jesus Christ is willing and capable of bringing us to the uttermost glory.

□1 see 8:5



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