

Book of Hebrews Part 10: 4:12-14; American Church; Yeshua Is The Word and High Priest (10/11/2018)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/ms5hb2y/book-of-hebrews-part-10>.

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

We've been looking at a particular passage in the book of Hebrews in chapter 4 verse 12—**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** We have been focusing on the statement made by the writer—**the word of God**—and its attributes and characteristics. The writer tells us it is—**living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.** It is able to bring—**division of soul and spirit**—and is —**a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

I want to open up by sharing with you an example of recipients who actually understand what the writer of Hebrews is conveying. From time to time we have the privilege of reading something like this that is so powerful in itself. The testimony presented by the reader has the ability to radically transform your life and perspective. It causes you to step back and look at yourself, your surroundings, and your church. It causes you to measure yourself against the truth.

I'm not going to share the whole article with you; I'm just going to share the headline and introduction with you. This is what it says:

North Korean Christians 'Desperate' for Bibles, Risking Death to Acquire a Copy

Michael Foust | *ChristianHeadlines.com Contributor* | Tuesday, November 6, 2018



The article then goes on to state—**North Korea's Christians are so hungry for a Bible that they're willing to risk 15 years in a labor camp or even death to acquire a copy of God's Word.**

Think about that statement. The word of God means so much to them, is so valuable to them, and they want their own copy of the Bible so much that they are willing to go to prison for it. They value it so much, they hold it to such a standard, their value of it is above everything else in the universe, including their own selves that they're willing to die for owning their own copy of the word of God.

Talk about putting things into perspective, because as you peer out and look at modern-day Christianity and what it is producing, and then I look at these people mentioned in the article, there is no comparison. When the writer of Hebrews tells us in 4:12—**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**—the people in that article get it. They are actually willing to go to prison or even die for the word of God. These recipients are hearing what the writer of Hebrews is saying. They are hearing what the Spirit of God says; however, when we look at this country, we see nothing like that. The believers mentioned in the article are reminiscent of the first Christians mentioned in the book of Acts. When I read this article, I see the hearts of the believers in the book of Acts. I see the dedication and willingness to put their own life on the line. These people look like the early Christians in the book of Acts.

By comparison, when we look at where Christianity is going in this country and others, it's absolutely embarrassing. We sit in front of the television for hours, yet we can't break away to read the word of God. We can go to the gym for hours at a time, but we can't pray for 15 minutes let alone a half hour. I'm going to tell you something about how Christianity is being defined today. Christianity today is about filling your heart with the love of all the things in the world. We inundate ourselves with the things of the world to the point we don't have time to read the word of God, pray, or even fast. Where is prayer and fasting? Where is the sacrifice that we see from our Christian brothers and sisters all over the globe who are willing to die for the faith? They're not worried about what's going on in the world. They're not worried about their status. They're not consumed by the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. These things don't matter to them. What matters to them is the word of God.

The frightening thing is we don't want holiness; instead, we want to be entertained. No longer do we want the shepherds to feed the sheep; we're calling in the clowns so they can entertain the goats. This is what many people want in the church today. If you don't understand my metaphor, you can take a look at what Charles Spurgeon said in the 1800's. He said, "The time is coming where instead of the shepherds feeding the sheep, we will have clowns entertaining the goats." The very thing Charles Spurgeon saw on the horizon is what we are in today. We want to be entertained; we can think of nothing better. I'm going to tell you, you're going to have a hard time convincing me that the church we're looking at today is going to be willing to go to prison for 15 years for possessing the word of God. The church today is not willing to be put to death for possessing the word of God because we are not even willing to pick up the word of God and read it now. We don't have a clue what it says.

We live in a country where we have the most protected religious rights in the world; at least for now. We're living in a generation that has more opportunity to actually own a copy or to have access to a Bible than any other generation in the history of the world, yet we have no idea what it says. Islam is making a mockery out of Christianity. Islam is going up against pastors because pastors don't know the word of God. The Islamic Imams know the Bible better than they do. Let that statement sink into your heart.

By comparison, North Korea's believers are so focused that their major goal in life is to own a Bible. These are people who are rich in the Kingdom of God. Amen? After I did a study on the churches in the book of Revelation, I have been asked, "What church do you think we are in this country?" I will tell you, we are the church at Laodicea. Let me show you what it says to the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-15—¹⁴ **And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ I know your works....** That statement—I know your works—has always kind of taken me back because the Christianity that is going on today will tell you, your works don't matter. They will tell you, works has nothing to do with your salvation. Why then is Yeshua concerned with our works if it is irrelevant? Because works are still very relevant.

Yeshua continues in Revelation 3:15-17—**that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁷ So then, because you are luke-warm and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-**

Do you know what is so frightening about that verse? It is written to the church; to the assembly of Christians. These people are believers who are under the impression they are saved. That is what is scary about the verse. They think they are blessed, "We love Jesus; we are so blessed." Yeshua himself comes on the scene and tells them, "No you're not. You are a pile of filth. You are wretched. You have eyes, but you do not see. You have ears, but you do not hear. It is total blindness. There is a total delusion.

I don't want to be part of that church. I don't want to be so wrapped up in that deception. If they're not careful, they're going to be those spoken of in Matthew 7:21-23. They are going to be standing before Yeshua, and He is going to say—**Depart from Me you who practice Lawlessness** (Matthew 7:23). He tells them He wants nothing to do with them. They confess Him, but they do not know Him. God forbid we become part of that church.

Think about John 12:25—**He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.**

So think about the North Koreans or even Chinese Christians who are willing to die for the faith or be tortured just to have the word of God or gather to pray. That is awesome faith! That is someone who has rejected everything this life has to offer and instead have invested everything they have into the kingdom to come. They have invested all their time and resources into the Kingdom. Is that what we're doing here in this country? We need to be radical. We need to go to the extreme of our faith so that there are news articles coming out for the first time, in a long time, of believers who exist in America who are so radical they are willing to die for the faith.

With that being said, I want to shift gears for a moment. I want to circle back to something I briefly alluded to in last week's message. If you remember, one of the things I talked about was looking at the historical context of Scripture. The only Scripture that existed in the 1st century was in fact the Torah and the Prophets. There's no question about it. You can go through the New Testament and see where a writer makes a comment like, "It is written," or "Scripture says." Every single time you see these comments they are making direct reference to the Torah or the Prophets, which is part of what we call the Old Testament.

Having said that, there is something I left off of last week's message in regard to the statement—**word of God**—found in Hebrews 4:12. We are talking about that statement in that it is referring to the written word; however, that is not all it is talking about. That statement is multi-dimensional. Every time you read the word of God, you should be thinking about Yeshua because the written word and the Living Word are synonymous with one another. You cannot compartmentalize those two things.

So we have the written word, which is the Torah and the Prophets, yet every word that comes out of Yeshua's mouth is what? It is Scripture. That is something I want you to see. I don't want you to misunderstand where I'm going with this. Every word that came out of Yeshua's mouth is the word of God. So we have the Word speaking the word of God. If Yeshua is the living Torah as in the word became flesh, then every word that came forth from Him is absolute truth.

What I want to show you is that from the very beginning, from the very on-slot, the disciples acknowledged this reality. They hailed His words to Scripture. I'm going to show you this, and I'm only bringing this up for clarity's sake; however, I want to show you this because sometimes it's better that we see these things than simply hear them.

To do this, we are going to go to Paul's epistle in 1 Timothy 5:18—**For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain."** This is quoting Deuteronomy 25:4. Paul is quoting the Torah, and he calls it Scripture. Now pay attention as he goes on and says—**and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."** This is interesting because in this verse we find Paul quoting not just one Scripture from the Torah but two Scriptures.

Now, you can comb through the Torah and Prophets, and you will not find the statement—**The laborer is worthy of his wages**—anywhere. We could certainly argue particular passages, such as found in Jeremiah 22 or other parts of Torah that might allude to that statement, but you will not find that statement anywhere in the Old Testament. It doesn't exist, so where did Paul get this? Paul is quoting Yeshua, and we find this in Luke 10:7—**And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages** (emphasis added).

So Yeshua is literally giving His disciples instructions in the beginning of the Luke 10:7 verse. Then what happens? He tells them— **the laborer is worthy of his wages**. It is the identical statement to Paul's quote. What I want you to notice is how Paul identifies Yeshua's statement as Scripture—1 Timothy 5:18—**For the Scripture says....** Paul is calling the words of Yeshua, Scriptures!

Let me take it a step further because going on to the next chapter we read this by Paul in 1 Timothy 6:3—**If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our LORD Jesus Christ** (emphasis added). Paul is saying if we do not consent to the words of Yeshua, we are dead men.

Paul does not stop there. He continues in the 1 Timothy 6:3 verse by stating—**and to the doctrine which accords with godliness** (emphasis added). Do you see what he just did? Go back to 1 Timothy 5:18 where we find a structure. Paul was quoting Scripture; he quotes Scripture from the Torah, and then he holds it up against the words of Yeshua implying that Yeshua's words are Scripture. There is a structure that has been laid out. That same structure is being laid out again in the 1 Timothy 6:3 verse.

I Timothy 6:3- If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,

Now here's what you need to understand about this. Paul is explicitly using the term “doctrine” in the context of Torah. You need to understand that because if you don't understand it you're going to completely miss what just happened here and the structure that has been laid out. When Paul says—**doctrine**—he's saying—to the [Torah] which accords with **Godliness**. He is reverberating the structure of holding the words of Yeshua up to the Torah. He is calling them together because you can't separate the written word from the Living Word because they are one in the same and are unified. Both are Scripture.

I want to take this a step further and show you how the structure Paul was using was not foreign to him. You can actually find it in the Old Testament. I want to show you this so you can see Paul's not just grasping things out of the air. He is actually following the prophet Isaiah which says—**To the Law and to the testimony!** (Emphasis added, Isaiah 8:20). Who is the testimony of the Living God? It is Yeshua. He is the ultimate testimony of God.

Continuing in Isaiah 8:20—**To the Law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them** (emphasis added). If you do not speak according to Yeshua and His Torah, there is no light in you. That is scary, and you can see this is consistent throughout Scripture.

Let me take it a step further by showing you Yeshua's words in John 6:63—**It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life** (emphasis added). Every word that comes out of the mouth of our Messiah is the life; we are to live on it! That should remind you of Deuteronomy 8:3—**man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD**. This is what Yeshua is saying. Every word that proceeds from Him is what you are to live on. We are to be sustained by it; it gives life!

I want to take this even a step further by taking you to the early church history. I want to show you a statement by Ignatius who was an early radical believer. Early on in the 1st century he fought against Gnosticism. I may not appreciate everything Ignatius had to say, but I certainly appreciate how he combated and went after the Gnostics of his age. He also went after Docetism which is the belief that when Christ was on the cross suffering, he didn't technically really suffer. He never really suffered because He was infinite, He was a spirit being, and He was so holy He would never become part of a man. They insisted nothing so holy could become part of the evil matter. That is why Ignatius went after them in a powerful way.

Having given you that backdrop, this is the statement from Ignatius I want to share with you—**Some ignorantly deny Him (Jesus), or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the Law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured** (emphasis added, Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnæans Ch 5)

So what he is saying is these Gnostics have gone out, and they are full of deception. They are deceiving others, but guess who they're not convincing? They're not convincing the Torah or the Prophets, and they're not convincing the Gospel of Yeshua regarding the testimony of His death, resurrection, ministry, or His words. Why is Ignatius bringing the Torah, the prophets, the gospel, and the words of the LORD to the table? Because they are all Scripture. These things are all identified as the trusted word. Everything gets measured against them.

Let me take you further into history and show you something from Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*. This is what he says—**And when I had come to Rome I remained there until Anicetus, whose deacon was Eleutherus. And Anicetus was succeeded by Soter, and he by Eleutherus. In every succession, and in every city that is held which is preached by the Law and the prophets and the LORD"** (Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.22). In other words, he's talking about Scripture in that Scripture goes forth and how it goes forth. It goes forth through—**the Law and the prophets [the Old Testament] and the LORD** [Yeshua the King].

Now let me leave you with one last thought in regard to this. When I go to the Torah and the Prophets, and this is something I have had to make very clear to many people, there is only one way I go to them, and that is by looking at them through the lens of Yeshua. That is the only way I approach the Torah and the Prophets. I am seeking Yeshua and His righteousness when I study the passages in the Torah and the Prophets. If you do not approach the Torah and Prophets in that manner, you will not extrapolate the riches of the mysteries of the Living God. They will be withheld from you. There will be a veil on your eyes. We know this is true because in 2 Corinthians Paul makes it very clear there are many Jewish believers who study and devote their lives to reading in the Torah, the Old Testament. Then Paul says there is a veil that remains on their eyes because the veil is only taken away in the Messiah Yeshua. He is the key. Apart from Him, we can do nothing; therefore, there is one way we approach the Torah, and that is through Messiah Yeshua alone.

With that said, I want to go back to our passage in Hebrews 4:12—**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** Now we are going to continue in Hebrews 4:13, and you need to keep in mind what you just learned—**And there is no creature hidden from His sight.** That is an amazing thing! There is no creature hidden from His sight. That statement is made in light of what he just said in verse 12 where he brought the word of God to the table. The topic is the word of God, and now he's saying—**there is no creature hidden from His sight.**

That is not a coincidence; he's conveying something here. Continuing—**but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.** The writer in verse 13 has just taken us back to the Garden of Eden. Most of us know the story of Adam and Eve. They were in the Garden of Eden, and God commanded they could eat from any tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were not supposed to eat from that tree. Well, how did that work out for them? They did the very thing they were commanded not to do. It was through deception.

Here is the thing about that story. When they partook of the forbidden fruit, when they turned their backs on the Torah, on the Law of God, something happened to them. We find this in Genesis 3:7—**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked** (emphasis added).

What the writer of Hebrews just said in 4:13 was—**but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him [the LORD] to whom we must give account.** This is what we just got done reading in the story in Genesis. It continues in Genesis 3:7—**they were naked;** [Then Adam and Eve did something to rectify the situation. What did they do?] **And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.** They sewed fig leaves. Why did they do this? Why would Adam and Eve sew fig leaves together? Because they were ashamed. Their shame was exposed, and they needed to cover the shame, so they sowed fig leaves.

Continuing to Genesis 3:8—**And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day** (emphasis added). The Hebrew word of sound is defined as voice. So Adam and Eve heard the voice of God walking in the garden.

Now I want to take you to the Targum because there is something in the Targum that ties everything about this together. There is something the Sages grabbed onto in regard to this event, and it is imperative we draw it out. The Sages saw it in one particular way, and I think you're going to appreciate this because it is going to take us much deeper into the context. This is what we read in the Targum—**And they heard the voice of the Word of the LORD God** (emphasis added).

That is an amazing statement! So in the Targum it says they heard the voice of the One who is the Word of God. That One is Yeshua. So here you can see it was Yeshua who went to talk to Adam and Eve. Yeshua went to present Himself in the garden and they heard His voice. So Adam and Eve heard the word of the Word [Yeshua] of the LORD. That is the context. This is very important.

Now continuing the passage in Genesis 3:8 we read—**and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden** (emphasis added). Did you get that? They disobeyed God by breaking His Law. All of the sudden their eyes were opened, and their shame was exposed, so they covered themselves. The next thing we read is the word of the LORD, the voice of the Word of the LORD speaks to them and fear overcomes them. As a result, they run and hide.

Isn't that interesting because when you go to Revelation 6, and the end of the chapter, we read about all the mighty and rich men of the world who were exulted by the word. These men are in total terror and cry out to the mountains—**Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!** Why do they cry out? For the answer, go to Revelation 19 where we find Yeshua coming out of heaven and a sword comes out of His mouth to strike the nations. What happens? They hear His voice. The word of the LORD is the sword. He is going to open His mouth, He is going to speak, and they're going to hide in the mountains. That is exactly what is happening here in the Garden of Eden. They heard the voice of Yeshua, the Holy One of God, and they go to hide amongst the trees.

Continuing in Genesis 3:9—**Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"** I think we can all agree that nobody can hide from the LORD. Right? So the statement is drawing us in. We can't go anywhere from the presence of God where He will not find you. So this statement is kind of blaring out. It's almost shouting at you, "Pause here. Understand this."

So look at that statement—**Where are you?** Here's the beauty of it. When you go back to the Targum, in this passage the Sages describe what's actually being said, and this is mind blowing. The Targum's version is a little longer, but I want you to pay close attention because this is what we read— **And the LORD God called to Adam, and said to him, Is not all the world which I have made manifest before Me; the darkness as the light? and how hast thou thought in thine heart to hide from before Me? The place where thou art concealed, do I not see? Where are the commandments that I commanded thee?** (Emphasis added). So when we go back and look at this passage in Genesis 3:9—**Where are you?**—the Sages are saying this is what God say— **Where are the commandments that I commanded thee?** Where did they go?

The Sages talk about one of the fascinating things about Adam and Eve. Prior to them disobeying God, rejecting God's Law, by eating the forbidden fruit, the glory of God covered them. His righteousness covered them. The Sages describe this light like substance that covered their nakedness. Think about Psalm 104:2 where it tells us the LORD—**cover Yourself with light as with a garment.** Interestingly, man was made in God's image.

So right here at the beginning you have this Light of God, this holiness, and what is the light? Psalm 119:105—**Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.** Adam and Eve had this light covering them, then the LORD comes to them asks— **Where are the commandments that I commanded thee?**

What happened? There is an amazing situation unfolding here. How does

Adam answer? He says in Genesis 3:10—**So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid [Why was he afraid?] because I was naked; and I hid myself."** Adam hears the voice of God, and he runs to hide, but he doesn't run just to go hide; he runs to hide because he's naked.

Hold on a second! Time out! They already had coverings. Adam and Eve were covered with fig leaves. They had taken care of the problem. That is, until they heard the word of the LORD. When they heard the word of the LORD it stripped them bare. They were totally ashamed.

This is the point I made last week. When you go through the Torah and the Law, it will strip you naked by showing where you are sinning against God and, therefore, not pleasing Him. He will illuminate it. This is why we need the word of God. It is living and powerful. It brings conviction.

Going back to Hebrews 4:13—**And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.** Judgment is coming. This is a reality. Judgment is coming.

So what do we do because judgment is coming? Let's go back to Revelation and look at what Yeshua said to the Laodiceans. After Yeshua gets done tearing them up in Revelation 3:17 by telling them they are—**wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked**—He comes forth and gives them hope. This is the wisdom He give them in Revelation 3:18—**I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.** This is a reference to the Torah, to His commands which are purity and holiness. He is telling them, "Buy from me that which is holy." There is a statement in Proverbs 23:23 that says—**Buy truth and do not sell it.** Yeshua is saying the same thing that is said in Proverbs 23, "Buy truth and do not sell it."

What is truth? Psalm 119:142—**Your Law [Torah] is truth.** That is truth. We are to buy it and never sell it.

I think about these North Korean believers who understand that concept. They are willing to do what it talks about in Matthew 13 where a man comes across this field and finds this unbelievable treasure. What he did was dig a hole and hide that treasure in that field. He goes home and sells everything he has and goes back and buys the field not for the sake of the field but for the treasure. He is willing to give everything he owns for that treasure. That treasure is the word of God.

The same moral is told in the story of the pearl. You find a very beautiful, precious pearl of great price; you go sell everything you have to attain that pearl (Matthew 13:46). The word of God is the pearl; the word of God is the treasure.

Yeshua is not done in Revelation 3:18—**and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed.** He says—**that you may be clothed.** This is the whole thing. You see, Adam and Eve were not clothed when they sewed fig leaves together. Fig leaves didn't do the job rectifying it and walking their faith out according to the dictates of their own heart did not cut it. The only thing that would cut it is hearing from God, turning back to keeping His commandments, buying truth and not selling it. Then and only then will you have these garments.

To verify this, all you need to do is go to Revelation 19 because in Revelation 19 what we discover is the white garments are the righteous acts of the saints. It is their obedience to God's words. It is obedience to Yeshua. Amen?

There is one last thing I want to mention here in Hebrews 4:13 where it says—**we must give an account.** I want you to understand what is being talked about is judgment; the terror of judgment. This is literally the engine that is to drive the gospel; however, this is the part the devil has gone out and taken out of the gospel. Now the gospel says, "God is loving and caring," and yes He is. We are told today, "God just wants to share grace with you. Come in as you are. Don't worry about it. Everything's fine; you're fine. He loves you as you are. There are no problems or issues. It is OK; just do this." What is not being talked about is the judgment which is the very engine that is to drive the Gospel. Why is that? Because there is no point in anyone confessing Yeshua as Messiah, needing a redeeming Savior, unless your life is on the line.

It is not even just about sin in and of itself. What does that mean? Who cares? Well, it's the Law—**The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law** (1 Corinthians 15:56). It is the Law that is going to bring the hammer. That is what is missing in the gospel.

When you go tell people, "If you don't call upon the Messiah for forgiveness of sins; if you don't make Him LORD and Savior; you are going to be destroyed in the most horrific fashion. You will experience fear and terror that you have never experienced before in your life, and you will be eternally separated from Him forever." Where is the engine that is to fuel this gospel? Where has it gone? We need to bring it back.

Ecclesiastes 12:13—**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. ¹⁴ For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.** Why should I fear God and keep His commandments? Because He's going to call

into account everything. He is going to reveal it. Every work is going to be brought into judgment; judgment is coming! Oh my goodness!

Now you hear the buzz of Big Brother, which is communism. Big Brother is getting bigger, right? I have even heard talk amongst Christian pastors and Christian radio programs talking about a serious concern of Big Brother overreaching and crossing the line of our liberties, which it does. The fear and the concern in regard to Big Brother overreaching is that Big Brother is listening to us. They hear everything we say. That is what you are concerned about? How about being concerned about God hearing every word you've ever said and every deed you have done. He is the One you want to fear!

I realize we don't like it when we see what's happening regarding this ugly filth of communism and this Godless form of debauchery and sin infecting this country. However we've got to keep our wits about us. We've got to have clarity like these North Korean believers. They have clarity. We need to fear the One who hears every word spoken. No matter where we are, it's recorded. We need to keep our wits about us regarding that.

Continuing in Hebrews 4:14—**Seeing then that we have a great High Priest** (emphasis added). This is an interesting statement, and the writer is accentuating it intentionally. It would be like saying, "We have a great, great priest." Through the Greek word for great, the writer is adding emphasis to help the reader understand Yeshua is the greatest great High Priest who has ever lived or will ever live. As we continue in this epistle, you're going to see how the writer reveals Yeshua as the most decorated and exalted High Priest in the history of God's people.

Now I want to talk a little bit about this office of High Priest. The writer of Hebrews argumentatively devotes more time to Yeshua in this capacity of High Priest than anything else. We are going to talk about this by peeling the layers back on this one. I am going to get very deep today, but as we go through this information, it will develop.

The first thing I want to mention is when God implemented the priesthood, he did so in a very specific fashion. The priesthood was an exclusive club within all Israel because it was only assigned to Aaron and the sons of Aaron. No one else got to be a part of this club. Other people tried to assume this position, such as Korah in Numbers 16. As you read those passages, notice how that worked out for Korah. The earth opened up and he and his family fell to their deaths.

So the first thing you need to recognize about being a high priest is it is a very exclusive club. We can find the directive being given in Exodus 28:1—**Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.** So no one except Aaron and his sons can serve as priests.

The second thing I want you to recognize is the priestly function and what their responsibilities as priests meant and the role they played in Israel. The thing you need to recognize is the Kohen Gadol, High Priest, was the high judge. He was a judge; therefore, if there were matters of controversy that could not be dealt with on the local level, the people could go up to Jerusalem and present the matter to the Kohen Gadol because he was the supreme justice, if you will, of the Supreme Court of Israel. You can read about that in Deuteronomy 17. You can see all of this when you read about Yeshua being brought to trial. When Yeshua was brought to trial, He was brought to Caiaphas the High Priest.

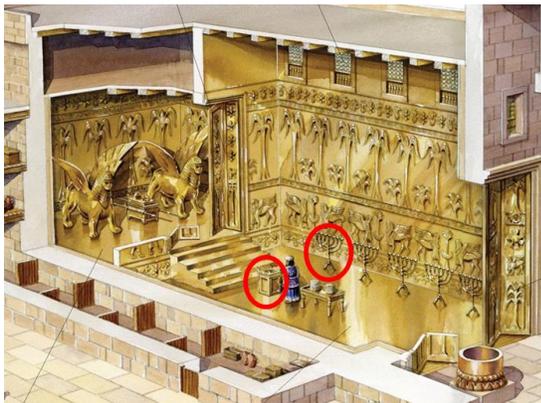
I also want you to recognize the Kohen Gadol is the great judge of Israel. This is important when you look at Yeshua. As we go through these different levels, of what the High Priest's functions and responsibilities were, it is going to proclaim and convey to us Yeshua regarding who He is, and what He does for us. Yeshua is judge. You can read John 5:22 where Yeshua states—**For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.** So the Kohen Gadol is judge.

The second responsibility of a Kohen Gadol is they are teachers of the Torah. You can reference Leviticus 10 to see they were to teach the people the Laws of God. They were to make the distinction between clean and unclean. We are told in Malachi 2:7—**For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, And people should seek the Law from his mouth; For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.** This is what the people were to do. They were to be like little sheep going to a shepherd. So the Kohen Gadol is a great judge and teacher.

What is Yeshua? He was a great sage. He was the greatest teacher who ever lived. He had the greatest ability to exegete His own words. You can look at Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7 to see Him do that regarding the Torah.

Then you can see the dialog between Peter and Yeshua in John 6:66-68—⁶⁶ **From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.** ⁶⁷ **Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"** ⁶⁸ **But Simon Peter answered Him, "LORD, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.** Peter was there feeding off of Yeshua's teachings. Yeshua was a great shepherd. So we find the Kohanim were shepherds of Israel. That is what Yeshua is.

Let's take this a step further and looking at more of the functions of the Kohanim. They were the ones who ministered in the Temple of God. They took care of the ceremonies in the temple. There were specific requirements God had laid out in the Torah that had to be met every day. So every day the priest would have to go into the Holy of Holies and burn incense before the LORD.



They would also trim the lamps on the menorah in the morning and in the evening. The priest would make sure those lamps are beautifully lit to light up God's house. Think about that. The priest, the Kohen, was responsible for establishing light in the Temple of God. Then Yeshua comes and says—**I am the light of the world** (John 8:12). When you go back to Genesis 1:3 where it says—**Let there be light**—keep in mind there was no sun or moon yet as they had not been created,

yet God says—**Let there be light.** This was Yeshua bringing light to the world.

So when you look at these responsibilities, it is so meaningful and deep. It is all about Yeshua. That is my point. When we go to the Torah and the Prophets, we are looking for Yeshua. You can see these things that point to Yeshua in the Kohanim.

The other thing I want to show you is as you go out of the Temple you have the Brazen Laver where the priests would wash. You also find the Altar. Another part of the priest's responsibility was for both peace offering sacrifices and sacrifices for sins. There is a theological term called sacerdotalism, which is

the belief that without the priest there cannot be sacrifice. You want to remember that because the reality is true. Without the Kohen, there cannot be sacrifice. This tells us so much about who Yeshua is and His importance. We need Him!

There was no ceremony greater than that of Yom Kippur. This ceremony took place once a year, and this was the only time the Kohen could enter the most holy place, the Holy of Holies. First, he would bring blood of a bull for himself and then the blood of a goat to atone for the sins of Israel. It was the priest who laid his hands upon the azazel, or the scapegoat, and he would confess all the sins of Israel, and that goat would carry the sins off into the wilderness. The priest was instrumental for keeping Israel and God in relationship. Without the priest, making these offerings, intercession, and atonement for Israel, they would be totally separated from God because it says in Isaiah 59 that our sin separates us from God. We need atonement; we need a repair of the breach; therefore, the Kohen were the most critical aspect of all Israel. No atonement meant no relationship with God.

Let me take this a step further by taking you to Exodus 28:20—**And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty** (emphasis added). The one thing you need to understand about the High Priest is he was adorned like no other. There was not one like him. He was completely unique and in every way absolutely beautiful to behold. When the High Priest walked around, nobody asked who the High Priest is because everyone knew. Not just that, but you heard him because he had 72 golden bells all the way around the bottom of his garment. Every time he took a step you would hear him. It was absolutely breathtaking! When he would walk in a room, every eye would be on him. Now think about Yeshua and the focus the Father has placed upon Him. This is all starting to come out in these verses.

Continuing on in Exodus 28:4—**And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.** So you have these garments, and technically speaking there are eight garments that the Kohen Gadol possessed and donned if you will. Interestingly enough, when you look into the Talmud and read about how the rabbis looked at these garments you find the rabbis traditionally have placed a lot of weight and emphasis on the garments themselves saying how the high priest was clothed is absolutely critical to recognize.

What they did was they attributed different facets to different articles of clothing. I want to show you this, and I have a purpose for doing so. The first piece of clothing I want to show you is the tunic. It is the white piece underneath everything else. The tunic atoned for murder. That is how the rabbis see it.



Next you have the pants. The pants are not seen because they are completely underneath the robe. They wore pants underneath so when they went up on the altar, their nakedness would not be exposed. The rabbis attributed these pants as atoning for immorality.



Next we have the turban, which atones for pride, and the miter, which is the crown plate around his head, atones for arrogance.



Then we have the belt, which atones for immoral thoughts. We were just talking about the thoughts in our heart. This is the very thing Yeshua talked about when He told us even if a man thinks impure thoughts about woman, he has committed adultery.

for foolish judgment.



Then we have the breastplate of judgment. This atones

Next we have the ephod. It is considered by some Sages to be the most important piece that a priest wears. There is a lot of debate as to what the ephod really was; however, traditionally it is understood to be more of a cape like thing. You can't see it in this picture, but it covered the back of the Kohen Gadol. It is interesting that the rabbis would attribute the ephod to idolatry. Why is that? Because when we walk in idolatry, we turn our back to God, and yet this is the very piece that atones for idolatry. According to the Apostle Paul, idolatry is covetousness.



Next we have the robe, which atones for evil speech. This is a beautiful blue robe that atones for evil speech.



So we have the rabbis looking at all these different pieces the priest possessed, and they're saying all of it has to do with atonement. Whether or not I agree with the rabbis in this point of view I don't know. There is, however, one thing I do agree with when we look at the Kohen Gadol, what he embodies is forgiveness. It is mercy and grace. That is what you see when you look at him.

Keep something in mind pertaining to all of this. When the people of Israel went to the Temple, and they were loaded down with sin and needed forgiveness, imagine how they would weep with joy to be able to see the Kohen making intercession for them in order to bring them back into right standing with God? This is what we need to have pictured in our minds when we think of Yeshua because He brings us back. He has the ability to do that. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.



Now in closing there are a couple things that are really interesting about the priest that are not shown in these pictures. If you look at one of the pictures, and look at his shoulders, you can see two pads. On those pads stood two Onyx stones. This is very important because on those were the names of the children of Israel. The Kohen Gadol bore all of Israel on his shoulders. When you think about Yeshua, that is what He does.

Another thing that is fascinating to me, when I think about the priest, and how he's adorned with gold bells and pomegranates around the bottom of his robe. When you look at his head, you would see the crown was inscribed, Kodesh LaAdoni, which means Holy to the LORD. What is interesting about the crown, or miter, is it is worn

right over the frontal lobe of his head. Do you know what part of the brain function takes place in the frontal lobe? It is responsible for your character. Do you know that's where your reasoning and judgment come from? So every aspect of his mind is holy to the LORD.

Then of course you have the breastplate of righteousness. It bears the names of the children of Israel. Where is it located? It is located over the heart. God loves His people; God loves Israel. You can see this because it is placed upon his heart.

