

The Appearing of the High Priest

By [Arthur Melanson](#)

When did our High Priest come out from the Holy of Holies to present Himself to the people? This question seems to be ignored by many Christians. It is of vital importance, however, because unless our High Priest appears who can be saved?

The example is set in the Old Testament. Every year on the Day of Atonement the high priest would enter in to the Presence behind the veil in the Holiest of all. “Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 23:27,28)

The High Priest must come out from the Holy of Holies to present Himself to the people so they know the blood of the sacrifice atoned for their sins. If the High Priest does not appear the people have no assurance of salvation. No appearance, no forgiveness.

Jesus Christ is our High Priest. “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 6:19, 20) It is obvious by these verses that He did enter the Presence behind the veil. *And the Christians of that generation waited!*

Salvation didn't come at the cross. It didn't come at Pentecost. It didn't come at the ascension. According to the pattern of the Old Testament, forgiveness of sins came when the high priest came out from the Presence behind the veil.

Jesus, representing us, was in the Presence of God at the time of the writing of Hebrews. All of that generation knew it would take the return of Jesus to complete the work of atonement. Thus they spoke of this redemptive work as a *hope*.

“. . . but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” (Hebrews 3:6) Hope is something we wait for that we do not yet have. Salvation was still a hope in that day.

Their Christian hope rested on the oath and promise of God. They also knew their High Priest would return before that generation passed away. Jesus emphasized this in His teaching. So they waited in eager anticipation for the finished work of salvation, or atonement. Peter wrote of these things: “. . . who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:5)

If Christ didn't return, as some Christians would have us believe, then no one can truly say he has salvation. If Christ hasn't come out from the Presence behind the veil, then the work of atonement is an unfinished work.

The good news is Jesus did return! (The good news, or Gospel, is not preached correctly unless the Second Coming of Christ is included.) Back now to our original question. When did our High

Priest come out of the Holy of Holies to present Himself to the people? He returned in A.D. 70 at the fall of Jerusalem, in that generation—just as He promised He would.

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