

Hebrews 4:12-16^{iv}

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

^{iv} About Hebrews 4:12-16

This reading unites two summary points based on the author's discussion about Jesus' superiority to Moses and the similarity of the Israelites' situation in the wilderness to that of Christian believers (3:1-4:11). The early Church saw itself as the new people of Israel in the wilderness, living between the time of the exodus and the time of entry into the promised land—the second coming.

God's word probes the inmost part of our being to reveal our true nature. Yet, in case this warning discourages us, the author reminds us of the graciousness of Jesus, our high priest. Verses 14-16 emphasize Jesus' solidarity with humanity. Like the high priest who annually made atonement by entering the Holy of Holies (Leviticus 16:1-19), Jesus "has passed through the heavens" (v. 14) to intercede for us. Because Jesus has gone before us, we can approach God's throne without fear, confident of finding a merciful reception.