



**A**ND Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 19:20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 19:21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 19:22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. (John 19:19-24)

Have you considered the significance of the seamless Robe of our Lord? In reading the Gospels, we often skip over the parts which we consider mundane (none is mundane) and miss deeper meanings even in the passing reference above in John, Chapter 19.

Jesus is our High Priest. In fact, He was High Priest for all time and eternity, but His priestly office required a blood sacrifice to be offered as an intercessory offering for the people. There was only one such blood sacrifice that could truly atone for sin. The sacrifices of the Old Testament Church of goats and other animals could not suffice as a worthy offering – these were merely a foreshadowing of the true sacrifice required. In order to better understand the role of the High Priest in His Office, it will be profitable to read the following passage from the Book of Hebrews 9:1-18. I will cite particular verses from this text, but best if you read them all.

From the first death of an innocent lamb in Genesis (to cover the nakedness of our early parents) to the last Temple sacrifice before the Lord's crucifixion, all these animal sacrifices pointed to that greater sacrifice to come. The Office of High Priest prefigured the intercession of the true High Priest in Christ. The High Priest of old was the only person allowed in the Holy of Holies where the veil of the curtain separated the Holy Place from the Holiest which contained the Ark of the Covenant inside of which was the rod of Aaron, the Manna, and the Ten Commandments:

**T**HEN verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 9:2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread ; which is called the sanctuary. 9:3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 9:4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 9:5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 9:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tab ernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 9:7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

Remember how the High Priest, Caiaphas, confessed unwittingly to the Sonship of our Lord: *And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, All of you know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, **that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.** And this spoke he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that n ation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.* (John 11:49-52)

You may recall from Leviticus that the High Priest was NEVER to rend his garments: *And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, **nor rend his clothes*** (Leviticus 21:10) Should he do so, he would forfeit his office as High Priest. (see also Lev 10:6) Did Caiaphas not rend his garments at the charges against our Lord? *And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answer you nothing? what is it which these witness against you? But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus says unto him, You have said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall all of you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest (Caiaphas) **rent his clothes**, saying, He has spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now all of you have heard his blasphemy.”* (Matthew 26:62-65) There had not been want for a High Priest in Israel for those many centuries, but now, suddenly, that priesthood among the Jews was coming to an end!

Now consider the Robe of Christ which the Roman soldiers cast lots over. *“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. This was in fulfillment the prophecy in the Messianic 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm the opening verse of which Christ cited from the cross: *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.* (Psalm 22:18) The soldiers did not part the robe was of whole cloth and seamless. It was woven from top to bottom, so they cast lots for this prized possession.*

This seamless garment is consistent with the Office of High Priest: *And you shall embroider the coat of fine linen, and you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the girdle of needlework.* (Exodus 28:39) Jesus' garment was "woven in one piece from top to bottom" (John 19:23), and the temple veil was "torn in two from top to bottom" (Mark 15:38). The "top to bottom" parallel is interesting, as is the contrast of weaving together into one and tearing apart into two.

At the very moment of His giving up the Ghost, the Lord became the uncontested High Priest of His people. The Temple Veil was ripped top-to-bottom symbolizing that

salvation comes from above and not by our own making. As our Lord assumed His rightful Office as High Priest, the Temple Veil that only the High Priest could enter was rent in twain. Why? Because Christ, being our High Priest, is our Door and Way to the Father. We may come boldly to the Throne of Grace and Mercy Seat standing just above the Ark of the Covenant. He is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. No man comes now to the Father but through Him.

Even His seamless garment bore testimony of who He was. Caiaphas, too, unwittingly confessed His required sacrifice in redeeming his people and nation. When Caiaphas rent his own priestly garments, it was an overt signal that he had forfeited his Office as High Priest in deference to One to whom the title had belonged from the beginning. No more shadows and mysteries – Christ is our only intercessor wit, our Advocate and Counsellor with the Father.