

**The 1689 Confession; Chapter 8, Paragraph 5 – “Of Christ the Mediator”, Message # 18 –
“High Priest of Good Things”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class,
by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 26th, 2020.**

Paragraph 5 – The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, f) hath fully satisfied the justice of God, procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, g) for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.

f) Hebrews 9: 14, 10: 14; Hebrews 9: 15; Rom 3: 25-26; g) John 17: 2

Last Sunday, we took a look at the Lord Jesus Christ’s priesthood in terms of its being distinct from the Levitical priesthood, and superior to it, because His was the power of an endless life. I took you to Hebrews chapter 7, verses 11-28 and showed that perfection did not come through the Levitical priesthood because their order and the sacrifices that they offered were based upon the law of a fleshly commandment. The Levitical priests were really quite unable, by their ministrations, to actually communicate to the people of the Jews that they were ministering to, the reality of spiritual blessings which their sacrifices represented. Only Christ Himself could do that, and so the reality of the justification and sanctification of the worshiper, whether Jew or Gentile, could only take place based upon the New Testament, New Covenant work of Christ.

I also took you to Hebrews 9: 6-10 and I showed you that the fleshly ordinances, those carnal ordinances, of the Old Covenant ceremonial law were imposed upon the Old Testament people of God, the Hebrews, until the time of the reformation came when Christ would fulfill all of these fleshly types and shadows. At that time when Christ came and fulfilled the law, there was an annulling of the former ceremonial commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, it says in verse 18 of chapter 7 of Hebrews, for the law made nothing perfect. I then began to show you the reasons that Christ’s Priesthood was, and is still to this day, and will be forever, perfect in every way. Christ’s High Priestly ministry was strong and successful in terms of His offering Himself as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, and He is presently at the right hand of the Father, continually interceding on behalf of elect sinners everywhere in all generations, because His ministry is according to the power and endless life, or an indestructible life. (verse 16, of chapter 7)

Now today I want to bring to your attention the fact that Christ is Mediator of the New Covenant by means of His death. The priests under the Old Testament came, as it says in verse 12 with the blood of bulls and goats and calves. The Lord Jesus Christ came to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; all the elect people which the Father had given to Christ, as our Confession in this paragraph says. Let’s look at these things more carefully.

Hebrews 9: 1-3 – “Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All...”

Verses 6 and 7 – “Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance....”

Verses 11-15 – “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this creation.” Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal

Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” “And for this reason He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

1st – Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come.

You will notice that Paul does not say in this place that “Jesus” came as High Priest of the good things to come, or that “the Son of God” came as the High Priest of the good things to come. Both of those wordings would have been appropriate and true statements. But, he says that “Christ” came as the High Priest of the good things to come, and he did this for a reason. The reason that he worded it in this way, by the leading and superintendence of the Holy Spirit, was so that we might understand that he wanted to bring out the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Hebrew people’s promised Messiah, the One who they had been expecting would come for many generations. The desires and expectations of the Jewish people were fixed on the coming of Messiah. (John Owen on Hebrews 9: 11) You will recall in Matthew 11: 2, when John the Baptist had heard about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’ The way that John the Baptist words this, shows us that it was not only his expectation that the Christ, the Messiah, would come as the last and final revelation of the will of God, but it was also the expectation of all of the people of Israel in general. For all the godly people in Israel were looking for the One who would perfect and sanctify all the people of God.

There are two of the ancient manuscripts, in which this verse reads this way: “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things which have come.” The King James version says – “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building....” Whatever variation there is, in translation, God intends that we should understand that Christ is the greater and more perfect tabernacle. John chapter 1, verse 14. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, (He tabernacled among us) and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Christ was the greater and more perfect tabernacle than the tabernacle in Old Testament times. In His righteous and holy Person, were concentrated all of the good spiritual things that had come in His Incarnation and would come by way of His fulfillment of the ceremonial and moral law of God. And so, we should understand that all these good spiritual things would come through the sacrifice of His body and blood. They would come on account of, His offering Himself up in our place as a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. His body was the more perfect tabernacle, one not made with human hands, but formed by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary’s womb. The good things that He came to bring were peace with God and reconciliation between God and men. He would become our Surety. He would pay our sin debt; that debt of obedience and sufferings which we owe to God, but cannot pay because of our many sins and spiritual weaknesses. Christ would made peace between ourselves, by the blood of His cross; by taking our place in judgment, by His bearing God’s righteous wrath which against us, and which was upon us, and due us, because of our sins. By His offering Himself up to the death of the cross, offering Himself without spot to God, shedding His precious blood, He consciously did so, in order that He might purchase the atonement which would take away and cover all our sins.

2. The ministry of the high priest in Old Testament times could only cleanse ceremonially, but it pointed to the need Christ’s perfect and effectual ministry.

Verse 13 – “For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh...” The blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean worshiper who desired to be cleansed from their sin, it says here, only sanctified for the purifying of the flesh. It could only cleanse a person in an outward, ceremonial sense. We are talking about efficacy here, the power and the ability of sacrifice offered, to forgive and cleanse from sin.

Leviticus chapter 16, verses 29-34 – “This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father’s place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.”

I believe that this day of Atonement was a type of the sacrifice of Christ. The high priest once a year going into the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, with the blood of the sacrifice, to make atonement. If this ceremony was engaged in, by the high priest or any of the people of God waiting outside, if it was engaged in faith, looking at the sacrifice and offering of the animal forward, and then forward in faith to the sacrifice which God would provide through the coming Messiah, the Lamb of God, then I believe that real forgiveness for their sins could be found. The ceremony itself could not actually cleanse Hebrew person’s conscience from dead works to the serve the living God. But their day of atonement was typical, the tabernacle was typical, and the sacrifice was typical, and it looked forward to the coming offering of Christ on the cross.

Leviticus 6: 2-7 – “If a person sins and commits a trespass against the LORD by lying to his neighbor about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbor, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and swears falsely--in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, and give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering, to the priest. So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these things that he may have done in which he trespasses.”

So, you can see that here were the instructions about what a person was to do who had committed a trespass against the Lord. He had lied to his neighbor, or extorted from his neighbor, or sworn falsely about something which was lost by his neighbor and found by him. Because he was guilty, he would restore what stolen, or the lost thing which was found would be returned. And he would bring his trespass offering to the Lord to the priest. The priest would make atonement for him before the Lord, and he would be forgiven; not by the priests actions, but on account of the fact that those actions were typical of Christ’s high priestly ministry, and in faith looked forward to it. It was nothing of the Old Covenant ceremonial law and the observance of it that was efficacious in itself. It was the efficacy of Christ’s High Priestly ministry as the only Mediator between God and man, that secured the blessing of forgiveness.

3. Christ’s offering was made through the Eternal Spirit.

Hebrews 9: 14, 15 – “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”

It say in John chapter 3, verse 34 it says – “For He whom God sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.” All that Christ did and accomplished in terms of our redemption was

done in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this case, He offered Himself up, in His human nature, without spot to God. He Himself was the perfect offering for our sins, and He offered Himself in the perfect way; that is, as a sinless sacrifice. I like what John Calvin says in his commentary on this: “He now clearly shows how Christ’s death is to be estimated, not by the external act, but by the power of the Spirit. For Christ suffered as man; but that death becomes saving to us through the efficacious power of the Spirit; for a sacrifice, which was to be an eternal expiation, was a work more than human. And he calls the Spirit eternal for this reason, that we may know that the reconciliation, of which he is the worker or effecter, is eternal.”

Our faith in Christ as our great High Priest, the One who is the spotless Lamb of God, will be effectual to cleanse us from dead works, those works that we try to do to please God in our own strength or by our own wisdom, so that we might serve the living God, through a New and Living Way which Christ has provided for us. May we ever be thankful for the efficacy, the effective power of Christ’s blood, to cleanse us from all sin, and the gift and working of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us, so that we are to serve Him with a clear conscience by faith. Let us therefore live to God’s glory and consciously think of good works that we could do, to show forth our thankfulness.