

Sermon Series
The Superiority of Jesus Christ
October 10, 2021

Title: A Perfect Ministry

Subject: Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, Ministry, The Right Hand of God, Heaven, True Tabernacle, Salvation, Uttermost, Gifts, Sacrifices, Ministry

Theme Text: Hebrews 8:1-2 (ESV) ¹ Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

Theme Illustration: The perfections of Jesus Christ include not only His perfections as the God-man, savior, and character, but His perfections are applied in the perfections of His ministry to God's true saints. His perfections and authority make possible a perfect ministry. A perfect ministry is realized when what God decrees for His saints comes to pass. A perfect ministry is when God's standards for His people are met. For the saints to be perfected, a perfect savior and minister must mediate.

When applied to man the word perfect is vastly overused. This reminds us of the downgrade in the word perfect as also is true for the word good. When surrounded by the corruption of man anything that appears to be above what we are used to, we describe as good or perfect. When that word is used, we dumb down the true meaning of perfect. We are measuring by our standards. Perfection is measured by God's standards. What we mean is that whatever meets our approval or our need by our standard. When the scriptures depict Jesus as the perfect minister, He meets God's standard as High Priest to minister in the real tabernacle, not the model, not on earth but at the right hand of God in the heavenly sanctuary.

Read: Hebrews 8:1-5

Introduction: It is important to remind ourselves of the context. Throughout chapter 7, the Holy Spirit revealed the supreme excellency of the Great High Priest of Christianity and the covenant which He inaugurated, the New Covenant. We saw that the superiority of Christ as high priest was illustrated because He is eternal, not temporary and that is as our eternal high priest. He is able to save to the uttermost, Hebrews 7:25.

Because His priesthood came via a divine oath, not the family line of Aaron, God has made the old order obsolete and superseded. The Holy Spirit will now spend some time with us comparing the old and the new covenants and the superiority of the new covenant predicted by the prophets. The fact that both Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesied concerning the new covenant, should have alerted Israel that the new day was coming and was to be ushered in by the Messiah.

Transition: Such a high priest as ours infallibly secures the salvation of all God's people as we have previously studied. Thus, our High Priest is able to perform the perfect ministry. The old order was incapable of presenting the saint perfect to God. This weakness was aptly demonstrated by the people who died in the desert on the way to Canaan. Jesus Christ has a perfect ministry because He is in:

1. The Perfect Position: Hebrews 8:1-2 (ESV) ¹ Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.

Verses one and two describe the advantages of our Great High Priest's ministry was not from Earth, but heaven at the right hand of the Father. Our God-man, therefore, was in the perfect position to perfect the elect. The temporary nature of the old order and the superiority of the new is aptly demonstrated in the position of ministry. The Aaronic order

ministered in the tabernacle on earth. That tent was a picture or type of the true tabernacle in heaven. Our High Priest ministers in the real place of ministry, in the real tabernacle, not the model.

This truth begs the question, why did Jesus after His great victory on Calvary and his glorious resurrection have to leave earth and go to heaven? If He had remained on earth, he would not have been a priest or minister because there were already priests appointed for this task, although inadequate to perfect the saints.

Since Christ ascended to the right hand of God and now occupies the position of honor and authority at the right hand of God is further evidence that He is not a minister of the earthly sanctuary but the heavenly one. From chapter 7 until now, the excellency of Christ's person was demonstrated. Now it is the excellence of His ministry.

The beginning of verse one makes it plain. We are now coming to the summation of this letter. And that is the superiority of our Lord's priesthood above that of Aaron which is evidenced by the superiority of the covenant that Christ and His priesthood is the mediator. The new covenant is superior because of the person and place from which the covenant is mediated. The old order is mediated on earth from a model. The new order is mediated from heaven, from the true sanctuary.

One of the objects in this letter was to draw the hearts of the Hebrew saints away from their attachment to the temple at Jerusalem and to move their eyes from Earth to the true sanctuary of Christian worship on high. This is why the ascension of Christ is so eventful. It was from this position that He gave the Holy Spirit to the church at Pentecost and believers upon regeneration.

When Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father, His work of atonement was finished, but His work of ministry continues. Our faith apprehends what Christ did on Calvary, but also what He is doing now for his people until His return.

The true sanctuary is heaven. Heaven is the place where the glory and majesty of God are most fully displayed, **Psalm 102:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ **that he looked down from his holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth...** Heaven is called the sanctuary because it is there that the reality prefigured in the holy places of Israel's temple is revealed. But is the true tabernacle, a building? No, the true tabernacle is the humanity of Jesus Christ, **John 1:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.** The word dwelt means the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. This is the tent that the Lord set up, not man, referring to the virgin birth and incarnation.

For example, in Hebrews chapter 10, is where we learn that the curtain in the temple was a picture of Jesus body, **Hebrews 10:19-20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ **Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,** ²⁰ **by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh... The tabernacle and temple of Israel was the incredible Old Testament type in a picture of Israel's incarnate Redeemer.**

In the tabernacle sacrifices and incense was offered to God and holy services were performed by the priests. Well Christ, our high priest in his body offered up His sacrifices, prayers, and holy services, **Hebrews 5:7 (ESV)** ⁷ **In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.**

To the tabernacle, the people brought all their offerings. So we must bring them all to Christ, **Hebrews 13:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ **Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.**

As mentioned, the tabernacle that the Lord pitched is a reference to the virgin birth, the supernatural character of our Lord's humanity. This was the body that was prepared for Messiah. As mentioned in the Psalms, **Hebrews**

10:5 (ESV) ⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me;

Transition: The perfect place of ministry is in His human body in the presence of the Father, a perfect place. This enables Christ's:

2. The Perfect Place: Hebrews 8:3-4 (ESV) ³ For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴ Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.

Verse three makes a connection between the requirements of a priest in ministry. That requirement was to offer the required sacrifice before the earthly High Priest entered the sanctuary; he had to offer a sacrifice under the law. Thus, also did our eternal high priest when He entered the true holy of holies, where He offered Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of the people He carried with Him. That sacrifice was acceptable because He was the Lamb of God, without spot or blemish.

This reminds us that the perfect place of ministry to accomplish God's purposes is in heaven. The continuing intercession for the saints must be accomplished at the right hand of God as the type indicated. Aaron had to carry the incense, the prayers of the priests and the people, into the holy of holies, Leviticus 16. Thus, as the type indicated, Christ must take His place designated and appointed by oath High Priest of God's people, and thus are able to reap the benefits of His ministry.

Transition: Christ is able to perfect the saints because the ministry itself is carried on in:

3. The Perfect Tabernacle: Hebrews 8:5 (ESV) ⁵ They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the

tent, he was instructed by God, saying, “See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.”

Those earthly priests served in the temporary sanctuary. From God’s standpoint, Judaism, and all the types pointing to Christ were set aside when God tore the curtain of the temple, **Matthew 27:51 (ESV)** ⁵¹ **And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.** From our standpoint, that reality was not known to Israel until the temple and Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A. D.

In requiring Moses to build the tabernacle. According to the pattern shown on the mountain, the material tabernacle only revealed a faint foreshadowing of spiritual and heavenly realities. These are fulfilled in Christ.

The earthly and physical ministry of Israel’s priests were but a dim outline of things above. A type symbolizes visibly an absent and unseen reality.

Conclusion: What application can we draw from our text? The first application is that we should place our whole trust and faith in Jesus Christ to save us to the uttermost.

The second thing we need to notice is the precision that God required of Moses in the building of the tabernacle to reflect heavenly realities. Now we know why. That tabernacle was a picture of His only begotten Son who would give his life for the life of His people.

Shouldn’t we therefore just as careful to exercise the same diligence as to reflect heavenly realities in our worship? what God requires of us in our worship? God did not allow Moses to make his modifications to God’s design to suit his fancy. What makes us think that we can worship God according to our fancy. We have been given a pattern of worship in the Holy Scriptures. Let our worship reflect the heavenly realities.

