

Christ: A Minister

"Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this: we have such a high priest who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (Heb. 8:1-2).

Many have been the contrasting points the writer has made as he compares the priesthood of Christ with that of Aaron. One dominant fact overshadows all these comparisons: the Aaronic priesthood was just a type, a shadow, a copy of heavenly things. The effectual cleansing which makes possible man's reconciling with God, comes only through the priesthood of Christ's sacrifice: the Aaronic priesthood with its gifts and sacrifices only typified the real thing.

First, the writer in the section states that we have a high priest who has *"sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens."* In this statement the writer makes direct reference to Psalm 110:1: *"The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make all thy enemies the footstool of thy feet"* for it is in that same psalm that the Holy Writer wrote: *"The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek"* (Psalms 110:4). Zechariah states the same: *"He shall be a priest upon his throne"* (Zech. 6:12f). Thrones are associated with kings; the one suggests the other. Priests are connected with sacrifices and like thrones suggest kings, sacrifices suggests priests. Our Priest, however, reigns. And, the scripture links these functions together: priest, king; king, priest. His priesthood lasts so long as does His kingship. His kingship lasts so long as does His priesthood. Christ is to sit at the Father's right hand until all His enemies have been subjected to Him, which the final enemy (according to Paul), is death (1 Cor. 15:26f). When that final enemy is defeated then Christ will return the kingdom back to God and be subject to Him (1 Cor. 15:24). The throne upon which our priest reigns is in *"the heavens."* Note that fact carefully. If His throne is in the heavens, it is not, nor can it be, upon the earth. The writer makes a partial reference to this in vs. 4: *"Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer gifts according to the law."* Since the priesthood of Christ and the kingship of Christ are concurrent, just as He cannot be a priest on the earth, He cannot be a king upon the earth, either.

"Christ is a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (8:2). "Sanctuary," "tabernacle." These two words have different ideas. *"Sanctuary"* meant a place set apart (denominations have their "sanctuary") and in the wilderness the sanctuary was comprised

of the holy place and most holy place. But both compartments were "*set aside*" for service to God. The sanctuary into which our Priest entered alludes to the most holy place (cf. 9:17-12; 23-24).

The tabernacle was the portable tent which Moses was instructed to make. As Israel moved from place to place in her wilderness wanderings, that tent was taken down, then "*pitched*" again in the place of their encampment. Just as we long for "*a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens,*" so our tabernacle in which our high priest ministers also is not "*pitched by man,*" but is pitched by God (2 Cor. 5:1).

The priesthood of Aaron, with all its gifts and sacrifices, was only a copy of the coming priesthood of Christ. Monet was a master artist and original paintings from his brush commands hundreds of thousands of dollars, even millions. There are many copies of his works, but none have the value of those original paintings. In the same way the priesthood of Aaron and the sacrifices and gifts alluded thereto, were copies of the priesthood of Jesus with the gifts and sacrifices He made. And, just as copies of Monet's works are worthless, compared to the original; so the sacrifices of Aaron were worthless compared to the sacrifices of Christ. The worthlessness of that system will be addressed in the next two chapters as our writer continues to show the greatness and sufficiency of the priesthood of Jesus.

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