

**Hebrews 8:1-6**  
**Our High Priest in Heaven, Part II**

- I. Hebrews 8:1-6: 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. 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. 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." 6 But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.
- II. Now, let me remind you in slightly different words what we saw last week from Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 9.
- A. On the date of atonement, verse 2 tells us that God dwelled in the cloud of glory right over the ark of the covenant.
1. God's covenant presence, the presence of the immutable and all glorious sovereign God, was present for worship in the most holy place.
  2. To put it differently, the glory of God that fills the highest heavens, the place Isaiah saw seraphim flying around the glorious throne of God, that heavenly glory descended to dwell in the cloud within the most holy place, above the ark of the covenant—the earthly throne of God.
  3. What Isaiah would see in its heaven reality is now presented in the temporary earthly dwelling of God in the tabernacle—and especially in the most holy place.
- B. And the question is this: what must happen for that redemptive presence of God—his glorious dwelling in the tabernacle—to *continue* in the midst of Israel? What must happen in order for Israel to *continue* in fellowship with God, to continue to worship him in his glory? What must happen for the glory of God to continue in the midst of his people in a bond of fellowship and love?
1. Here, in summary form, is the answer:
  2. In Leviticus 16, Aaron, as a high priest who represents all of Israel, enters once a year through blood sacrifice into the most holy place in the worship of God.
    - a. The significance of this event is critical to understand.
    - b. Through Aaron, and through the sacrifices he offers, God accepts the worship of his people and in a sense renews his presence with them through the animal offerings and sacrifices.
  3. Through Aaron, and through the sacrifices he offered, God's redemptive

presence would continue to abide with Israel.

- a. On the day of atonement, God would come to his people year after year, dwelling in his glory in the most holy place, and he would accept the worship of his people through Aaron and the animals offered up each year.
  - b. The worship of God's people was expressed through Aaron, and through his ritual sacrifice—through the offering of the scapegoat and through the sin offering in blood.
  - c. It was through these high priestly offerings that God would continue to dwell in a redemptive covenant with his people—a covenant in which friend dwells with friend in a mutual bond of fellowship and delight.
4. To put this in a focused way, we can say this: Through the sacrifices and offerings of Aaron, God would delight in his people through as his people delight in him. That is the very heart of worship
- a. God delights in you through the priestly offering of blood. And you delight in God in light of that priestly offering of blood.
  - b. The day of atonement was the day when, in a grand expression, God would delight in the worship of his people, and his people would delight in him, through the blood offering of the high priest, Aaron.
5. Here, then, is the heart of Israel's religion as it is expressed on the day of atonement: (1) God, who dwells in a cloud of glory in the most holy place, would delight in Israel, his portion, through priestly offerings of blood, and, (2) his people, through the same priestly offering of blood sacrifice, would delight afresh in God.
- a. Israel is God's portion; God is Israel's portion.
  - b. This is true especially when we see that God dwells in the midst of his people through a high priest and blood sacrifice.
    - (1) The scapegoat bears away the sin of Israel and the curse of God.
    - (2) The sin offering, through blood, brings access to God.
  - c. As Aaron offers each, access into the most holy place is given to Aaron, on behalf of the people, once per year.
6. Year after year this continued. It was the way that God dwelled with his people. It was the nature of true religion under the old covenant.
- III. Now, the author of Hebrews is telling us in Hebrews 8:1, we have the fulfillment of Israel's true religion in the ascended Christ.
- A. It is to the ascended Christ that you look in order to find the nature of the true religion expressed annually on the day of atonement.
  - B. That "true religion" in the Mosaic covenant has found its climactic fulfillment in

the blood and in the ascension of Jesus Christ, the high priest of the New Covenant.

- C. In light of the day of atonement, here this: “8 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[a] that the Lord set up, not man. “
1. What do you see here but the high priest who has gained eternal access into the heavenly reality where the glorious presence of God dwells in all its fullness.
  2. The author of Hebrews is announcing here that Jesus Christ, as ascended bodily into heaven, is seated not in the earthly most holy place, set up by man, but he has ascended into the true tent in heaven, and he sits at the right hand of throne of Majesty.
  3. That throne, where he sits, is in heaven, the true tent, the heavenly dwelling tent of God created in the absolute beginning by God.
- D. So that we do not miss it, I want you to look closely at Hebrews 8:1-2: in verse 1 the author speaks of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and in verse 2 is in the “true tent” set up by the Lord and not man.
1. This text is so concrete: in heaven you find the reality that the tabernacle imaged on earth.
    - a. In heaven, the glory of God is set on grand display, so that all creatures present might worship God for his glory alone.
    - b. That glory is the Majesty of God’s presence. A majesty that is the fullness of the glory of God that would shine in the golden room with the ark of the covenant and the golden cherubim.
    - c. That glory in that earthly most holy place, was a dim copy and provisional shadow of the glory of the Majesty that dwells in heaven.
    - d. Heaven is the dwelling place of the worship inducing majesty of God’s presence.
    - e. In heaven, as Isaiah would see in Is. 6, there is a glory that vastly surpasses that earthly glory that dwelled in the earthly most holy place, a place where flaming coals of fire and winged cherubim encircle the Majesty of God in heaven.
  2. Within the heavenly tent dwelling of God, filled with the glory of God, there is a throne of Majesty.
    - a. That throne is the throne of God himself. That throne is the thing Isaiah saw—it is the place of the radiant light of God’s glory.
    - b. That throne is the place where the triune God dwells in all of his glory—glory that fills that place with the radiant light of God’s presence.

- c. And it is that throne of Majesty that supplies the place for angels and saints gather to offer adoration and praise for the glory and the power, the holiness and the goodness, the sovereignty and the freedom, of the triune Majesty of God himself.
  - 3. Entering into *that* heavenly tent and seated on *that* heavenly throne, as ascended bodily into heaven, we have a high priest and a servant, Jesus Christ.
- E. Now, then, in light of the day of Atonement, what is the significance of Jesus being permanently associated with heaven, seated at the right hand of the Majesty of God, as a high priest and a minister?
  - 1. Here is there so that, in union with Him, God might delight in our worship, even as we delight of our worship of God in union with Christ.
  - 2. Think of it this way, just as the worship of Israel was accepted by the blood of the sacrifice and by the obedience of the high priest on the day of atonement, so likewise in Christ.
    - a. God accepts you in the blood of Christ and delights in you as you are in Christ.
    - b. And you offer yourself to God in worship, as by the blood of Christ you are brought to worship God.
  - 3. By the blood of Jesus, the curtain of heaven has been opened, so that there is a living way to God in union with Christ.
    - a. In union with Jesus Christ, by his blood given as a sin offering for you, you have been brought near to God.
    - b. Hebrews 10:19-20 in capsule form says this: we enter into the most holy place in heaven through the curtain of Jesus bodily sacrifice.
    - c. Through the blood of Christ's sacrificial offering, you find the opening into the most holy place in heaven itself, where Christ has now ascended.
- F. By his blood, and by his resurrection, he has ascended into heaven, where he ever lives and serves as a high priest at the right hand of God.
  - 1. In him, God delights in you, and in him you delight in God.
  - 2. And you, now, in Christ, are already entering into the glory of that heavenly worship of God that knows no end, because it comes to you in an ever-living heavenly high priest!
  - 3. That is the heart of our religion!
- G. Let me give you a few things to reflect on this Lord's Day:
  - 1. First, the Lord's Day, Sunday, is set aside for you to reflect on these very things.
    - a. You cannot think about them all the time all week, given your responsibilities with children, grandchildren, and work.

- b. That is understood.
  - c. But every Lord's Day you can set aside time to reflect on the glory of Jesus Christ, serving as your high priest, and how God looks upon you in Him, and how you look upon God in Him.
    - (1) God looks on you in love and friendship in Christ.
    - (2) And you look upon God in praise and adoration in Christ.
    - (3) Each Lord's Day is a time to reflect on these heavenly realities.
    - (4) These are among the central things you are to treasure all day long, as you are able, each Lord's Day.
  - d. The Lord's Day can then be set aside for the cultivation of God-centered, heavenly minded worship of God in union with Christ.
    - (1) That God centered and heavenly minded worship, you see, is the substance of our Christian religion.
    - (2) And so the Lord's Day is to be treasured, just because it serves this purpose of the cultivation of true religion in Christ.
2. Second, I want you to reflect, right now, on the way that your worship is now directed to the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, where Christ lives and intercedes for you.
- a. Where Christ is, seated on the throne of the Majesty in heaven, that is where *true worship* is found.
    - (1) Only in Christ, and in union with Christ, is true worship found.
    - (2) Thus, true worship must be Christ-centered and heavenly minded.
    - (3) It cannot be any other way.
  - b. The true tabernacle, set up by the Lord Jesus Himself, exists in heaven. And it is in *that* place that you enter in union with this heavenly High Priest.
    - (1) As the author says, we have come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, because we have come to Jesus (Heb. 12:24).
    - (2) To come to Jesus is to come to the perfection of worship in heavenly places, which is precisely what we are doing right now.
3. But let me also press this upon you: that presence of heaven, the personal presence of Christ, as your high priest and servant in heaven, that personal presence abides with you at all times and in all places, not simply here on the Lord's Day.
- a. Jesus will be with you always, even to the end of the age.

- b. He is not with you some times and not other times. He is with you in all times and in all places by the supernatural power of His Spirit and by the inerrant power of his inerrant Word.
  - c. Although Christ is present in a special way in our formal worship, he is present in the deepest religious way to us whether we lie down at night, or rise up in the morning.
  - d. Whether we groan in illness or rejoice in youth, whether we feel the heat and fatigue of the summer sun or the refreshment and life of spring, we know that in Christ God causes an oasis in the wilderness.
4. Listen to Isaiah 41:17 as it is true in union with the ascended Christ:  
 17When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the LORD will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. 18I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 19I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, 20that they may see and know, may consider and understand together, that the hand of the LORD has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.
- a. Let speak directly to you in light of the book of Hebrews: you are right now in the wilderness (3:7-11 makes this explicit).
    - (1) In the wilderness, in union with the ascended Christ, you have pools of refreshing water, flowing to quench your thirst in a dry and weary land, where there is no water.
    - (2) In the wilderness, in union with the ascended Christ, rivers are wide open on the bare heights, and fountains gush forth in the midst of the valleys.
      - (a) The cool clear water that slakes thirst in the wilderness is found in Christ.
      - (b) By faith, you are to drink of him, and he will water your heart in the wilderness, and, behold, the wilderness will become a pool of refreshing water, as the life and glory of the ascended Christ comes to you.
  - b. He refreshes you, in the wilderness, by his Spirit working through his Word, and sustains you in refreshing waters of life, while in the wilderness.
- H. So, today, on the Lord's Day, turn your mind to heaven, where Christ lives and intercedes for you.
- 1. God delights in you in Christ, as you delight in God in Christ.

2. Turn your mind and your heart to that temple dwelling above, where Christ lives forever in the presence of God and where streams of living water flow in abundance.
  3. Turn your mind to Jesus, in whom you find the streams of living water that alone give you life, and indeed, cause you to flourish in the wilderness, as the life and verdure that are in Christ Spirit and Word cause you to flourish as the very garden dwelling of God, as the Lord prepares you way in the wilderness.
- I. Amen!

1. On earth, he had something to sacrifice (vs. 3).
  - a. That something was himself (9:26).
    - (1) Jesus, like the scapegoat, offered himself as the one who bears away the sin of his people (9:26) and the judgment curse of God (9:27).
    - (2) But Jesus offered his own blood, and by that blood the way into heaven was opened.
  - b. By that blood, and in light of his resurrection, he has entered into the glory of heaven.
2. And just as Aaron entered into the presence of God through blood on earth once a year, so now Christ has entered through his own blood ascended into the presence of God in heaven, where he dwells forever.
  - (1) And when he ascended into heaven, the author of Hebrews tells us this: “24 he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives

to make intercession for them.”

- b. And, as such, he is not subject to death, as was Aaron and the high priests of that order (7:28). Do you see the point: because Jesus lives forever, as ascended, death cannot keep him from serving.  
(1)
  - c. The whole main point is this:
  - d. As you are in Christ, you are brought through his blood into heaven, where you
  - e. That throne is the place of the special presence of God for the worship and adoration of his creatures, angels and men alike.
3. In heaven, there is a true tent dwelling of God, pitched by the Lord, and not men. It is the highest heaven.
  4. And in that highest heaven, there is a throne of Majesty.
  5. This is the heavenly reality that the old covenant tabernacle shadowed and imaged.
  6. And sitting at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high you can see the ascended Christ.
  7. He sits at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.
  8. The Majesty in heaven is the fullness of God’s glorious presence that evokes worship and adoration from angels and saints alike.
    - a. The Majesty in heaven is that everlasting presence of God for the wonder and delight of his people.
    - b. The Majesty in heaven is what the day of atonement brought forward in shadowy ways each year.
  9. But the shadow of that glory on the day of atonement has given way to the majesty itself at the right hand of God in the heavenly tent dwelling of God—the heavenly tabernacle.
  10. That means, as he sits at the right hand of that Majesty in heaven, he is *the one*, greater than Aaron, who has permanently entered into the glorious presence of God in heaven, and is with whom the glory-presence of God is found.
  11. What that means is very straight-forward: the throne of the majesty in heaven is found in a heavenly tent dwelling of God.
  12. the throne within that tent where you see the Majesty of God in heaven.
  - 13.