

**Text: Heb 8.1-2**

We move into the first two verses of chapter 8. I probably should do longer sections, but as I look through these passages, I find things that stir me up so much in a couple of verses that I must let it fly. So, here we go.

Chapter 7 focused on an exposition of Ps 110.4,

Ps 110.4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.”

The argument contrasted Jesus, our High Priest, with Aaron and the Old Testament priests, showing that Jesus was superior in every way to the OT priesthood.

The underlying Scriptural foundation is about to change. From Ps 110.4, the author begins to develop Ps 110.1:

Ps 110.1 The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

We are continuing to exalt Jesus Christ as we follow the argument of Hebrews. But now we are going to look away from the character of his priesthood to the work of his priesthood.

Read Heb 8.1-2

This brief passage is a transition from chapter 7 to chapters 8-10. It's like we've walked down a long street, full of interesting sights, only to turn the corner to look down another, longer street, and the vista is breathtaking.

Our text opens the whole concept out, resting on what went before, but pointing to what is to come.

### *The True Priest in the True Tabernacle*

**Proposition:** The chief point about our High Priest is that he is seated in the sanctuary.

## **I. The pith of the argument (1a)**

A. The big word of the first point: κεφάλαιον

1. In first position in the verse for emphasis
2. Related to the word for “head” — my trans.

“now the head with respect to the things that are being said”

3. Two main senses:

- a. Can refer to a summary (would look back to ch. 7, and sum up) — there is *some* looking back
- b. But also can refer to the “chief point” of something
  - 1) “to crown the argument”
  - 2) “to crown our present discourse”
  - 3) Modern: “to put the cherry on top”

One commentator mentions William Tyndale and how he put it:

TNT Heb 8:1 ¶ Of the thynges which we have spoke this is the pyth: that we have soche an hye preste that is sitten on the right honde of the seate of maieste in heven

4. Tyndale’s “pyth” is our “pith”

**1 a:** a usually continuous central strand of spongy tissue in the stems of most vascular plants that probably functions chiefly in storage ...

**2 a:** the essential part: *core*

**b:** substantial quality (as of meaning)<sup>1</sup>

B. The pith of the argument is the words that follow

1. The tense used here is present tense, though it is translated past in NAU and KJV
2. Here is ESV:

Heb 8:1 ¶ 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,

<sup>1</sup> Frederick C. Mish, ed., *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

3. The following statement: “we have such a high priest” is the crowning glory of the argument
  - a. There is a bit of a look back in the word “such”
  - b. But there is mostly a look forward: a sense of anticipation
  - c. The author of Hebrews is building a case for the proposition: You should never abandon such a high priest

## II. The posture of our priest (1b)

- A. Such a high priest: he has taken his seat
  1. The verb views the action as completed, he sat down
  2. The reason: his work is done
    - a. Compare Heb 10.11-14
    - b. Compare Zech 6.11-13
- B. Such a high priest: he is on the right hand of the Majesty on high
  1. This term for God is used in three places in the NT
    - a. Here, of course
    - b. Jude 25

Jude 1.25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

- c. And Heb 1.3

Heb 1.3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

The whole point of Hebrews: You would abandon someone like this?

### III. The place of his situation (2)

#### A. Two words describe his place

1. He is a minister “of the holies” (“sanctuary”)
  - a. OT tabernacle had a holy place and the “holy of holies”
  - b. His place encompasses it all
2. He is a minister of the true tabernacle
  - a. The word “true” does not mean the earthly tabernacle is false
  - b. It means the earthly tabernacle is an inadequate expression of the real
  - c. Thus: true = real, genuine
  - d. The “type” of which the earthly tabernacle is the “antitype”

By the way, it is interesting that he describes the holy place in heaven as a “tabernacle” — a tent, rather than a temple

Some argue from the “tabernacle language” in Hebrews that it is written after the destruction of the temple – but its use here argues against that.

- e. The true tabernacle is “pitched” — has its tent pegs driven in — by the Lord, not by man

#### B. The word minister has to do with the service rendered in the true tabernacle

1. We get the English word “liturgy” from this word
2. He performs priestly service in the true tabernacle

“*Leitourgos*, ‘who serves,’ in the LXX describes one who functions in the office of a priest in the tabernacle/temple.”<sup>2</sup>

3. Functions of the OT priesthood
  - a. Opened the doors of the temple

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<sup>2</sup> David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 441.

- b. Lit the incense; cleaned and trimmed all the lamps
- c. Conducted the morning sacrifice
- d. Received the sacrifices of the people
  - 1) Examined the victims for defects
  - 2) Performed the ritual, offering part or whole in the Great Altar
- e. Received those who came for examination (esp. lepers) or cleansing
- f. Received the vows offered by devout people
- g. Received the purification offerings of people
- h. Conducted the evening sacrifice
- i. Closed the doors of the temple
- j. Throughout the day, they patrolled the temple looking for repair needs; arranged to raise funds for such needs

In short, the temple, and the tabernacle before it, was a busy place

- C. There is a difference between the OT service and our Priest
- 1. They were busy with many activities every day, all day
  - 2. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high
  - 3. His work is done: there is no more work to do

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The chief point about our High Priest is that he is seated in the sanctuary.

The OT religion represented the work of Christ, but its work was never done.

Human religions fill the lives of their people with rituals, set prayers, superstitions, images of the gods, and unending activity.

Our High Priest completed his work and sat down. "It is finished," he cried.

How could anyone turn from him to the old ways of doing all the rituals in a vain hope for peace?