

The Main Point

Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh

By Phillip M. Way

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TIME in the Word Ministries

PO Box 1495

Marble Falls, Texas 78654

Website: www.timeintheword.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/timeintheword

Take your Bibles, if you will, and open with me back to the book of Hebrews, this morning chapter 8. We've been looking, as I mentioned, in the month of December at a series of messages titled "Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh." We've been looking at the gifts that the wise men brought and laid before Jesus and what those things represented, what they pointed towards, the foreshadowing and the prophecy that was involved in each of those. The gold, of course, proclaiming that he was King. The frankincense referring to his priestly duty. And now, as we looked last week, the myrrh, that bitter perfume that was used for embalming his body as his body was laid into the tomb, knowing that Jesus came to be a high priest in the order of Melchizedek, that he was born so that he might die, and after his death he was buried and raised, and this morning we find him, then, in chapter 8 as the writer of Hebrews tells us, this is the main point, we find Jesus our high priest seated at the right hand of the throne of grace, the throne of majesty on high.

Our text this morning says,

1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."

So we begin in our text this morning and we come to the main point. This is the main point that the writer of Hebrews has been making for the entirety of the book and I know, I appreciate that like any good preacher because we know the book of Hebrews really is a sermon that's been recorded for us, like any good preacher he makes the main point all the way into chapter 8 and still has many chapters to go. Any preacher who tells you that

they're on their last point and that they're about to conclude, just buckle up, you're not done yet, there's still more coming. We talked about that in preaching class. Yes, they actually have preaching classes where you find out who really is not very good at it and just talked about landing the plane, and there are some preachers who pilot their sermon like they have no landing gear because they just circle and they never actually bring it home and never make a landing. Our writer this morning by inspiration of the Spirit says, "This is the main point of what I've been saying to you and it revolves around this high priesthood of Jesus and what that means for His people, that the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh, the high priestly King who is Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

I want you to understand the significance right here in the first verse, this main point that we have a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. Now the significance there is not that we have a high priest, that point has been made, it's been elaborated. He is a priest ever since chapter 4. He is a priest in the order of Melchizedek. So he was foreshadowed there, he was pointed to, this is a new ministry, it's a new priesthood, it's a new covenant as we'll see at the second half of the chapter this morning, but for now the significance is not that he's a high priest. We've established that. The significance is he's seated because when the Old Testament priest under Aaron, when they ministered before the people to the Lord, they didn't sit down. They were on their feet the entire time. The Old Testament priest while he was serving, doing what he was doing in the administrations of the priesthood, did not sit down on the job because his job was never finished. It was a continual job. He was offering sacrifices, there were meal offerings and there were blood offerings, all of these components of the people coming, all of this atoning work that had to be done that we know actually never atoned for any sin but just pointed to Christ.

Hebrews 10, he begins a couple of chapters over, he says, "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." Further down in verse 11 of chapter 10 it says, "every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." Here is the good news of Christmas, here is the main point: the reason we rejoice that Jesus is our high priest is because he offered one sacrifice, it was sufficient, it was done, it was finished, his work was done and he sat down. There's not more work for him to do in that regard.

Jesus finished his work. This is where the writer of Hebrews begins in the very first chapter. We don't get to verse 3 before we read, "who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." The work that Jesus was sent to do, to make atonement for our sins, he did by

himself and there is nothing for us to add to that work. He did it, he finished it, and it's done. Hallelujah, it's finished, it's paid, it's a final sacrifice.

Again back to chapter 10:12-14, "this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." Can you imagine the astonishing fact that's being made here to these Hebrews who have believed, who are in danger of going back under the old covenant, who are about to forsake what they had embraced, and they had been raised in this life of continual sacrifice: morning sacrifice, evening sacrifice, sacrifices that were offerings of commitment and praise, sacrifices that involved blood for atonement and for sins. There was the Day of Atonement, all of these different times of the year, all of these days, all of these Sabbaths, all of this ritual that was done repeatedly over and over and over and the writer of Hebrews says, "But this Man," Jesus, the God-man, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down." That had to be astonishing for a moment. If you can imagine if there's something you've done your whole life like laundry, do you ever hope for the day that one day the laundry would finally be done, just be done? No, it doesn't happen, not in this life. No, you have kids, you have pets. No, it's not going to happen. It piles up and it's always there and it's never done. Can you imagine if you came home one day and there was no laundry? None. You would wonder what your husband had done and what you needed to find out that he was involved in. No, this is just the reality of daily life.

Well, for the Jews this daily life was sacrifice for sin, constantly being reminded of their sinfulness before God and Jesus offered himself once for sins forever and sat down at the right hand of God, "from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." The payment has been made. Our salvation has been secured. Our sins have been forgiven and Jesus is sitting on the throne.

John 19 tells us, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said," while he was on the cross, "I thirst!" Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." I think there's some significance there that at the Last Supper Jesus told the disciples when he passed out the last cup and they had the last cup together, the cup of blessing, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you." Jesus then told the disciples who were gathered there with him, "I will not drink wine again until I drink it in the kingdom." And the next wine put to his lips are while he's on the cross having accomplished everything. The kingdom was secure. The king had finished his work and with that he took the wine and he proclaimed, "It's finished, tetelestai, paid in full." Again, your debt wasn't canceled, your debt was paid. Jesus paid it once for all.

Here is a final sacrifice. Here is a finished work. There is nothing to add. How much of false religion is all based on what we have to add to what God has done, that God has given us a little but we must do our part, we must meet some qualification, we must do some work, we must make some offering, some penance, some sacrifice, some continual

offering of ourselves in order to join with Christ and his work and add ourselves to it so that we might benefit from it. When Jesus finished the work it was done, there was nothing to add. And listen, not even your faith, I want you to understand that, Jesus did not require your faith to save you and, in fact, when you believe, he already told the disciples, "This is the work of My Father that you believe Me." You see, even that faith is not your work, that's his work in you. It's his work and it's finished, it's done. We experience that in time and so we preach the gospel that men need to repent and to believe but, trust me, their salvation doesn't depend on their repenting and believing, their salvation depends solely on the finished work of Christ.

When we come to stand before him in that day, we will not tell God that the reason he should let us into his heaven, as if we've got to pass a quiz to get there, because we prayed a prayer, joined a church, or did something special. No, we're going to throw all the praise back on him because our salvation is all his work. It's all what he has done. He's finished it. There's nothing added to it. In John 17:4 praying in that high priestly prayer, Jesus said, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

His work was done and so now we see that he's seated at the right hand of the throne of majesty on high. To be elevated to the right hand, this is a place of honor, it's a place of exaltation, but I want you to understand when we read the phrase there that he is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, we often then will picture that, that God the Father is on the throne and maybe Jesus and the Holy Spirit are on thrones on either side kind of like the queen and the prince, you know, you've got the king in the middle and somebody sitting on a throne here and somebody sitting on a lesser throne here. You understand there's not multiple thrones. There's one throne. For Jesus to be sitting at the right hand of the throne means he's sitting in God's chair at the right side, meaning equal with God. Why? Because he is.

If there are those who claim that the Bible never tells us that Jesus is God, they obviously have not read the Bible with any understanding and they've spent no time at all in the book of Hebrews because when we look at this statement made over and over again that Jesus finished the work and he's seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, this means he sat down in God's chair. He had finished the work the Father had sent him to do and he sat down. He had submitted himself to come and do that, we studied that in the previous weeks in Philippians 2. He emptied himself. He limited himself. He did not hold on to all the glory that could have been his. Jesus rightly could have come the first time like he's described coming the second time, on a white horse with a sword coming out of his mouth, with beams shooting out of his eyeballs, and he could have immediately landed and demanded that everybody bow and worship him. He would have been perfectly right, within his rights as holy God to do so but instead he limited himself.

He concealed that glory. We see a glimpse of it on the Mount of Transfiguration, that glory that shone out of him and through him because he is God. He's equal with the Father so while he was submissive and while he was obedient, obedient to the point of

death, then what happened? God highly exalted him and now as he's been raised, as his work has been finished, he's seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high. Here's where we see Christ. Can you imagine as it's recorded for us, Stephen's experience, as he preached and preached a history lesson for the Jews that were listening about all that God had done and how they had been stiffnecked and refused to hear his word, had killed the prophets, and now here they were with Paul taking the credit about to stone him. And as they were putting him to death in Acts 7:55 it says, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Jesus was standing waiting for Stephen. There he was at the right hand, right where the Scriptures tell us that he is.

Now this in no way, by the way, limits his omnipresence. It's not that Jesus is only in one fixed place in the universe. He's seated on the throne of God in eternity and as he is there, Stephen saw that moments before he went to be with him. Can you imagine to know what was coming and to preach with anointing and with zeal and with passion, and then to look up and to see Christ waiting? Revelation 3:21 says, "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

Jesus offered himself, finished the work and he sat down on the throne waiting now for us, waiting for his return, as we talked about it, while he was here, while the Incarnation happened and Jesus was fully a man, he was not at that point aware of when the Second Coming would be because he limited those things. Trust me though, there are those who still say Jesus doesn't know. Glorified risen Christ sitting on the throne, he knows exactly when he's coming back. He knows the moment and he tells us to watch because we can see and know the season and the times.

By the way, if you want to know when the last days are, we're there. We've been there for 2,000 years. Christ's coming initiated the last days so if you have to wonder, "Are the last days coming?" No, we're here. "Ah!" People freak out. Don't worry about it. Jesus has got this. He knows. These are the last days. Everything he says is going to happen in the last days, it's happening. Don't believe me? You're not paying attention. It's happening. The scoffing, the falling away, talk about a falling away, look at the church today as opposed to two years ago. Look at the places in the world today the church still refuses to gather and praise God. Look at the places where those are now just conveniently watching at home. Now there are those who have a reason to watch live streaming, we appreciate that, but if that's your only method of church, of fellowship, of worship, you're doing it wrong. People are falling away. People are chasing after their own lusts. They're doing their own thing. They call Jesus Lord but his question is, "Why in the world would you call Me Lord and not do what I say? Why would you call Me Master and not obey Me?"

He is the risen Christ, he is seated on the throne and beside the seat here we read about his ministry in the sanctuary, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected and not man for every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. The gifts and sacrifices, the gifts are the meal offerings for our worship and praise, the sacrifices are the blood offerings for atonement for sin. Therefore it is

necessary that this one also have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law, who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things.

His sanctuary is the true sanctuary, not the shadow but the reality. We can think about it this way. As limited as it may seem, John MacArthur says, our earthly worship is only a remote reflection of what worship is like in heaven. But I want you to understand the similarities. Can you imagine the worship going on around the throne of God right now, that cloud of witnesses that is gathered, that has gone there before us? And I promise you they're not watching us. The angels watch, the redeemed, they're looking at Christ. They're not looking here. They're not aware. Ecclesiastes says there's no awareness of these things. Why? Let me ask you this: if you have a choice to stand and face and worship Christ or look back at this pitiful earth, where are you going to spend your time? In awe of the one who gave himself for you. Imagine that worship in heaven. Imagine that sound in heaven. Imagine that glory in heaven. Imagine how drastic that in the book of Revelation where it does tell us that at one point in time there is 30 minutes of absolute silence in all of creation. This means God terminates the praise. It all stops. That will be a deafening silence. To be there in the presence of Almighty God and yet to be quiet.

But now with the church, the saints, the elect of all time who have gone on to be with Christ, to be gathered around the throne and to be praising him and here what we have is just a reflection of that. The true tabernacle is there. There is his ministry. There is the true sanctuary. Not the shadow but the reality. Hebrews 9 tells us, "the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience." The tabernacle pointed to Christ. It was a shadow. It was a type.

Who is the way to God, to his presence, to his throne? It is Christ and if his work is finished, the question is: well, what does he have to do now? If his work is finished, what does Jesus have to do now? That work I think is anticipated here in Hebrews but we do see that there is something that he is continuing to do. The work of salvation is finished but now he intercedes for us. Really we see an ongoing work in that he intercedes as a minister in the true sanctuary and the one other thing that we know Jesus is doing is he's building his church. He is continuing to build his church based on that foundation of his finished work.

In Romans 8:34 we read, "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." How glorious to know that while the work is finished, he still continues to pray for us. Can you imagine Jesus praying for you to the Father? And we're told the Spirit does the same. So if you feel, as I know many have confessed to me in this last week, if at this time of year you feel alone, I want you to stop and I want you to pause and I want you to contemplate this morning this fact, this truth from Scripture: however alone you might feel right now, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are both

before the throne of God praying for you. Can you even comprehend? We feel so abandoned at times, we feel there's no one. Well, there's two someones at least. Hopefully you know that there are those in your church family that pray for you.

I got a great email this week. I got an email from somebody who I will not name the name but somebody who said, "I need a list of all the people in the church because I've been praying for people and I want to know if I'm leaving people off and I'm forgetting them. Send me the list. I want to pray for these people." You're being prayed for by the Son, by the Spirit, by other people within the church. We pray for one another and lift one another up because we're not alone, because we are family, because his work is finished and now part of his continuing ministry is to intercede for us.

Hebrews 7:25 says, "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." We know that the saving work of Christ cannot fail because even while it's completed he still continues to pray for us who are being saved. He is the author and finisher of our faith and it's his intercession that keeps us as we continue in this process of sanctification and wait for that day of glorification.

We also know that Jesus is building his church. I think there's often some confusion about this because we read in John 14, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." Literally, "In My Father's house are many rooms." You don't get your own mansion, I'm sorry. I hate to burst your bubble but if you're going to heaven for the mansion, no, go to heaven for Jesus, that's more than enough. But he's building a house.

"If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Now there are those, then, who think that Jesus' work isn't done, that he's gone off somewhere and he's building something in heaven for us. What is he building? He's not building something remote for us. What is there in the heavens that needs to be completed? What is he building? He's building his church. This is what he said when Peter made the confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Those rooms in the Father's house that are being prepared for us, those rooms are the churches in the world. It's us being built by Christ, being knit together.

In Ephesians 4 those apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor/teachers have been given by Christ to the church to equip them for the work of ministry, and the concluding paragraph there is, "but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." Now what do you have that you haven't been given? Paul says everything we have we've been given, it's been given to us by God.

Well, Christ has given us gifts and abilities within his church to build one another up, and as we edify and isn't it funny the word "edification," it is the word "to build a house, to build a domicile." What are we building? The temple of God where the Spirit resides in us and in our midst. He's building his church. He's not building someplace for us to hope to go to one day. He's building us now as his family and when we see him return, what do we finally see? We see the new Jerusalem descend out of heaven. Trust me, it's not what he's built there, it's what he's called up there. It's the church. That new Jerusalem is his people from all time descending now in the new heavens and the new earth to reign with him forever. This is how the story ends, with us descending with him from heaven to the new heavens, to the new earth, to reign with him forever and ever and ever.

They want us to be afraid. They want doom and gloom. Everybody wants you to fear and fear again and fear some more, and just when you think you don't have to fear anymore, there's something else to be afraid of. There's only one thing in all of creation to fear and that is God himself because we know how this story ends. This is the ministry of Christ in the true sanctuary preparing a people for himself to offer to the Father so that God gets all the glory. Do you understand it's not even about us? When it comes to Christmas, of course, the focus is on the gifts. You're the gift. I've said it before, if you really look closely, what you find in the Bible is the theology of regifting because the Father gifted us to his Son and the Son gifts us back to the Father, and it's not even about us, it's for the glory of God. We get to play a part in that, to glorify and to exalt his name while he builds his church.

We have the shadow, we have the substance. We're told if Christ was on earth as a priest, he wouldn't be able to offer these things because he wasn't a priest according to the order of Aaron but that's just a copy, that's just a shadow of the heavenly things. Moses was given the pattern to follow, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain." We read earlier in Hebrews that Jesus is the express image of God. That phrase "the express image" literally translated "Jesus is the stamped icon of God." By the way, this is why we don't use icons because Jesus is the icon. It's him. He is the express image of the Father. That's why he said to the disciples, "If you want to see the Father, you've seen Me. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." Not in any way confusing the fact that the Bible says there aren't any who have seen God and lived. If you just get a glimpse of where he's been, Moses radiated and scared the people to death just because of the refraction of the glory of God. But Jesus said, "If you've seen Me, you've see the Father. I am His stamped, His express image." The fullness of God in human form. Here he is.

This, by the way, is the danger of images of Christ because if you make an image or a representation of Christ and it's not accurate, that's a false image. That's the very definition of a false image. God says in Deuteronomy 4, "You don't know what I look like." But then Jesus came and now we don't know what he looks like and people think that's sad, we need pictures and paintings and all of that. First off, Jesus is not some skinny, white, hippie dude. He's not but here's the truth, you understand we're blessed for not seeing him? Those are his words. There are those who will believe who will not see and they're blessed because they believe. Why? Because faith is the substance of things

hoped for and one day that evidence that's been presented in the word will be reality face-to-face when Jesus returns or calls us to be with him and we see him face-to-face. That's what we wait for, to see him without any preconceptions, without any idols in our minds, to simply want the pure glory of God, to see it in the face of Christ.

In this ministry as a high priest, an intercessor, we now see that the reason he came, we're told in verse 6,

6 ... now He has obtained a more excellent ministry [more excellent than that of Moses and of Aaron,] inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

The news just keeps getting better and better in Hebrews 8. We have a high priest. His work is finished. He's seated on the right hand of the throne of the majesty interceding for us. Because his work is finished, now he prays for us and he's building his church, and as he's doing this, it's because he's obtained a more excellent ministry because he's also a mediator of a better covenant which was established on better promises. Again, that word "better" is a keyword in the book of Hebrews. This is all about Christ, a mediator of a better covenant which was established on better promises.

He says,

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Jesus has come to be a better mediator. You remember the problem with the Aaronic priesthood, all you had to do to be in that priesthood was be descended from Aaron and we know there were some scoundrels who descended from Aaron. And if you think it's great, think about this: the man under whose line this order was started was also the first one to craft a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving the law. So the head of the Aaronic order led the nation in the worship of a false image of God.

So there's a problem with this priesthood. They mediate but they have to do it continually and repeatedly and before they can even offer sacrifices for the people, they have to offer

sacrifices for themselves. Well, Jesus has come to be a better mediator. Job offers a complaint in Job 9:33, he says, "Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both." Job said, "I need somebody between me and God. I need somebody who can deal with the problem and deal with us both."

Well, 1 Timothy 2:5 Paul says, "there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." This is the glory of him being mediator: we could never get to God so God came for us. We as men, as human beings, could never satisfy the wrath of God so God became a man so that as the God-man he could make atonement for our sin and finish that work and pay it in full so that he could be the mediator of this new covenant.

Hebrews 12 says, "you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: 'And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.' And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.') But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel."

This is Christ, the mediator, the mediator of a better covenant. We are first introduced to that covenant in Jeremiah 31. In the Old Testament we're given the hope of the new covenant and it's quoted by the writer of Hebrews here. You see, there was a problem with that first covenant, not within the covenant itself but within the people that the covenant was made with. They could not keep the covenant. Why? Break one law you've broken it all. So if you break one law, you've broken the covenant. That's why the covenant had to be renewed and renewed and renewed and renewed because the people couldn't keep it. They refused, they wouldn't, they were unable so there was a fault.

And that's what we know, it says, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them." The problem wasn't in the promises that he made, it wasn't in the giving of the law. The law is perfect. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The problem was not with the substance of the covenant, it was that that covenant was given to show us how absolutely incapable we are of being pleasing to God. It shows us we're under a curse and under condemnation.

It couldn't be kept so Christ came and walked in obedience and established a better covenant and look at this new covenant. First, this new covenant is better because it's based solely on God's sovereign terms. In this new covenant, we are not a member of the covenant, we're a beneficiary of the covenant. Who is the covenant made with? The

covenant is made between the Father and the Son. The promises but the fulfillment, by the way, here we see the new covenant, it's the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. The promise is made to Abraham, are fulfilled. Why? Because who were those promises made to? Ultimately to us? No, to the seed. Who is the seed, singular? Christ. So if you're in Christ, you're in Abraham's line, you're an heir of Abraham and now in the new covenant Christ has kept the terms.

The covenant has been made with him so it can't be broken. He keeps it and we're the benefit of that. We see his sovereignty on display when he says there, "I will make a new covenant." This is a decree, a decision from God's will that he sovereignly will declare this new covenant to be. It's different from the old. It's not a modification. It's not an enhancement. It's not a restatement. It's new. Now sometimes where we get in trouble with hermeneutics is we try to redefine terms and let me tell you this, I don't care if it's a politician, I don't care if it's a news report, I don't care if it's a preacher, as soon as somebody uses the word "nuanced," slap them like the heretic they are. It is not that nuanced. The word of God is clear, it's simple, and it's plain. The trouble is we can't understand it without the help of the Spirit. So if I have to explain it to you, and nuance it, there is no nuance in the new covenant. We don't have to twist things. This is not like the old. There is not a requirement for us, and this is a reason to praise, there's not a requirement for us in the new covenant because we know from the old covenant if there was, we would break it. We'd be hopeless. "Oh, another new covenant. Wee!" Yeah, but now you have the Holy Spirit permanently indwelling. "Wee!" And that works out so well everyday, doesn't it? Do we still battle against sin and against the flesh and against lust and self, the idol that our heart always lifts up?

So the new covenant is not like the old, it's not just a modification, it's new. I want you to see, too, about this: even while it's given to us in the book of Jeremiah and even while we read these words, "This covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says the Lord, "I will put My laws in their mind, write them on their hearts, and I will be their God." Now I was reading several commentaries on this passage just in preparation, just to get an overview of this text, especially from Jeremiah, and several commentators made the point that this covenant was made with old covenant Israel and not with Gentiles, and so if you're a Gentile you're not in the new covenant, you can't be because the new covenant is made for Israel, unless you get grafted in and become an Israelite. Now this is what the Judaizers were saying, wasn't it? Well, first, you've got to come under Moses so you can be under Abraham so you can be a child of God. And so by keeping the law, then you do your part and that's evidence then that you are in the new covenant. I want you to understand when we're told that this new covenant is made with the house of Israel after those days and you see what God goes on to describe in this covenant, this covenant is not just made with and, in fact, is not made with physical Israel. The new covenant was not given to a group of people genetically descended from Abraham. How do we know this? Because who are the sons of faith? What is Paul arguing against in the book of Galatians? If you've been listening on Wednesday nights, we're going to through Galatians, what is Paul arguing against the Judaizers? The Judaizers say to become a believer, a follower of Christ, you first have to be obedient to Moses, submit to circumcision and keep the law and then believe in Christ. So take your

works and add it to what Christ has done, combine the two and now you can be saved and Paul says absolute theological hogwash, and I think that's the Greek term he used. That's hogwash. He preaches a gospel of grace, a gospel of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, based on what the fact that the promises that were made to Abraham were made hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before the law and the old covenant ever came to be.

So we go back to the promise, we go back to the grace, and what is the promise? The promise to Abraham is fulfilled in this: that if you are in Christ, you are an heir, a son of Abraham. If you want to be part of this covenant that God is making, open your eyes wider than a genetic Israel. Why? Because the majority of genetic Israel rejected Christ and as a result, the good news is, yay, Gentiles, we got the gospel preached to us. But I want you to understand that is not a parenthesis, that is not Plan B, that is not, just like we say, the cross was not Plan B, the cross has been the plan from eternity past all along, that's why Jesus came, to go to the cross to die, to be buried, to be raised. It is not Plan B. It is not a parenthesis for Gentiles to be saved. How do we know this? Because Gentiles were saved all through the Old Testament because the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, because the women that are in the genealogy of Christ in the book of Matthew, not one of them was a Jew by birth. They were Gentiles.

This was the plan all along. We've looked at it in the book of Galatians and in the book of Hebrews. This was the plan so don't limit the new covenant to genetics because it's not about genetics. If Paul teaches us anything in Galatians, it's that it's about this line of faith. It is about a bloodline, the blood of Christ, those who have come to God believing in the finished work of Christ. Listen to what he tells us in the book of Galatians. He says, "Therefore only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.' So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."

Galatians 3:15-18, "Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." And at the end of Galatians 3, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Here is the reality: Gentile believers are not grafted into genetic Israel. Gentile believers just like Jewish believers are grafted into the root who is Christ. Don't substitute what the word of God says with some man-centered theology that still seeks to divide us based on

race. In Jesus Christ there is no more Jew or Greek. He's come and made us all one people, one holy nation. He's done that at the cross because this new covenant we find in this covenant all the promises given to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ. Therefore to be in Christ is to be an heir of Abraham.

These are the better promises. He talks about the promises. They're not legalistic. It's not the old covenant based on obedience. The fault again was disobedient people. Well, in the new covenant Christ met the terms. He made the covenant on our behalf, in our place, and we're the beneficiary of it. This new covenant is internal, not just external. When we look at the old covenant, even if we go back and look at the law, in Deuteronomy, "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." So we start with the heart. He says, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." We've talked about this, that the word of God was everywhere all over the house, you even wore it in between your eyes on your forehead, but what happens? Well, as sinful people typically do, as soon as you give us something to look at, we begin to worship the thing we're looking at instead of what it points to and so it comes to the point where it's just a ritual. I'm just going to hang the word of God here and hang it there and put it up there, but I'm not going to read it, I'm going to be reminded of it. Why? Because it's not written on my heart. It's just external.

And this is what happened with the law, the people applied it externally and that led to the sect of the Pharisees. If I can keep this law outwardly and I look like what I'm supposed to look like, then what does it matter what's on the inside? So what did Jesus come and do? He preached the Sermon on the Mount and he said, "Don't you know all of that points not to the external but to the internal, to the heart? You've made it all external religion but it's all about the heart. It's always been about the heart."

In this new covenant we're told his law is in our mind and it's written on our heart, "I will be their God and they shall be My people." You see, for that to happen we have to have a change of heart, don't we? That heart of stone has to be removed. We have to be given a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 11 says, "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." And Ezekiel 36, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."

With this new covenant comes the promise of a new heart, of the law of God being written in our minds and on our heart. We've got the promises. John 14:17 Jesus says, "he Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." Not only do we

have a new heart, we're now indwelt, sealed by the Holy Spirit to lead us in worship and obedience to God.

We also see this new covenant is personal. In the old covenant, you were always going and offering sacrifices continually for yourself, for others, for your family, doing all of this all of the time. In this new covenant, we're told in the new covenant you don't have to teach anyone to know God, not that we don't preach the gospel but you're not teaching them to know God because if you're in this covenant, you know him. He says, "I'm going to put My laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest." This is a definite distinctive of the new covenant, that all in this covenant know Jesus Christ. They know him.

John 14:26 Jesus says, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." What is the Spirit's ministry? To carry us along? To gift us? To bear fruit through us? Ultimately what is it? To point us to Christ. To testify of him. The Spirit points us to Christ and reminds us who he is and what he's done.

Then in this new covenant he says, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now it's not that God can forget. He knows everything. It's not that he has amnesia but it's covered. To say he doesn't remember it means it's no longer held against us, we're forgiven. What are we forgiven of? All your unrighteousness. Do you have a lot of unrighteousness in your life? Have you ever noticed with this process of sanctification the more you walk with him and the better you know his word, the more of your own sinfulness you're aware of? And yet all of our unrighteousness, all of our sins, all of our lawless deeds, they're forgiven. They're forgiven.

Part of some heresy today is there are those I've actually heard teach and have told me that you need to be sure that you're confessing your sin every time you're aware that you commit a sin, confess the sin. There's nothing wrong with that. Confess your sin, we're supposed to confess it, but then they've taken it to this extreme: it might happen that you die suddenly and if you die suddenly and haven't confessed your sin, there's some stuff you're going to have to answer before when you stand before Christ before you're ushered into heaven because there is some sin that still needs to be forgiven. When Jesus paid it, he paid it all and when we're called to stand before him, I want you to understand wood, hay, stubble, it's all burned up, it's gone, there's no condemnation to those who are in Christ. None. There's none. Jesus is not going to call you before him and say, "Now you didn't have time to confess these things so let's get this right first." No, why? Because our forgiveness is not based on our confession. We are supposed to confess but our forgiveness is not based on our confession, our forgiveness is based on the finished work of Christ. He's paid it all. He satisfied the Father and he forgives us completely.

We see that about the old covenant in verse 13, "In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away." The old covenant was growing obsolete. It began to grow obsolete when Jesus was crucified, when the veil in the temple was rent, and it's vanishing away. What happened when the temple was gone? 70 AD the temple was destroyed. There's no temple. There's no priesthood. There's no sacrifices. There's no ability to do anything to fulfill the old covenant and I want you to understand it was less than five years from when this was written that the temple was gone in 70 AD. Gone. But we don't need the temple. We are the temple because Christ is the High Priest. He saved us and he secured us.

Let's thank him this morning.

Father, how we thank You for the finished work of Christ, what You sent Him to do and what He has accomplished, who He is and for this new covenant. This morning we simply praise You for this finished work in Jesus' name. Amen.

Providence Reformed Baptist Church - Sunday, December 26, 2021

Sermon Series: Gold, Frankincense, and Myrrh – Hebrews 7-8

4. The Main Point – Hebrews 8:1-13

Pastor Phillip M. Way

Introduction: The main point, or theme of the Book of Hebrews revolves around the High Priesthood of Jesus and all that means for His people.

- I. The High Priest – vs. 1-5
 - A. His Seat (vs. 1)
 - 1. OT Priests did not sit down on the job, as it was never finished – Heb. 10:1-4, 11
 - 2. Jesus finished His work – Heb. 1:3
 - a. A Final Sacrifice – Heb. 10:12-14; John 19:28-30
 - b. A Finished Work – nothing to add – John 17:4
 - 3. The Right Hand of the Throne – honor, exaltation, equality – Acts 7:55; Rev. 3:21
 - B. His Sanctuary (vs. 2-5)
 - 1. The “True” Sanctuary – not the shadow, but the reality – Heb. 9:8-9
 - 2. “Earthly worship is only a remote reflection of what worship is like in heaven” – MacArthur
 - 3. If His work is finished, what does He have to do now?
 - a. Intercession – Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25
 - b. Building His Church – John 14:1-6; Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:15-16
 - 4. The Shadow and the Substance
- II. The New Covenant – vs. 6-12 – a more excellent ministry
 - A. Better Mediator – Job 9:33; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 12:18-24
 - B. Better Covenant – Jer. 31:31-34
 - 1. Based Solely on God’s Sovereign Terms – “I will make...”
 - 2. Different from the Old Covenant
 - a. Not a modification or enhancement
 - b. New, not like the Old
 - 3. Made with Israel – fulfilled – Gal. 3:7-9, 15-18, 26-29 – “all the promises given to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ, therefore, to be in Christ is to be an heir of Abraham”
 - C. Better Promises
 - 1. Not Legalistic – Old based on obedience
 - a. The fault? Disobedient people
 - b. Christ kept the terms of the New Covenant
 - 2. Internal vs. External – Deut. 6:6-9; Ezek. 11:19-20; 36:26-27; John 14:17
 - 3. Personal – All will know Me – John 14:26
 - 4. Total Forgiveness
- III. The Old Covenant – vs. 13
 - A. Growing Obsolete – Matt. 27:50-51; Mark 15:37-39; Luke 23:44-46; 1 Tim. 2:5-6
 - B. Vanishing Away – 5 years after the letter to the Hebrews, the Temple was destroyed
 - 1. No Temple
 - 2. No Priesthood
 - 3. No Sacrifices

Cross References

Hebrews 10:1-4

10 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Hebrews 10:11

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

Hebrews 1:3

3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Hebrews 10:12-14

12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

John 19:28-30

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" 29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. 30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

John 17:4

4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

Acts 7:55

55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,

Revelation 3:21

21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Hebrews 9:8-9

8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—

Romans 8:34

34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:25

25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

John 14:1-6

14 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Matthew 16:18

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Ephesians 4:15-16

15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Job 9:33

33 Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both.

1 Timothy 2:5

5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

Hebrews 12:18-24

18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.” 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”) 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31 “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke,

though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Galatians 3:7-9

7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Galatians 3:15-18

15 Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Galatians 3:26-29

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Ezekiel 11:19-20

19 Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

John 14:17

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:26

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

Matthew 27:50-51

50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

Mark 15:37-39

37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. 38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

Luke 23:44-46

44 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,