

CHRIST IS THE EXALTED HIGH PRIEST: A HEAVENLY, SPIRITUAL MINISTRY HEBREWS 08:01–05

Introduction

Note the words of verse one, “The point.” The word “point” means the chief element, major thrust and principle thought. The writer is about to give the major thrust and principle thought of the High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest; He is the One who stands between God and man, the only Person who can make man acceptable to God. What is the major thrust and principle thought of His High Priesthood? It is *ministry*. Jesus Christ is the *great Minister* of God, the One who ministers both in heaven and upon earth for man. Both places are significant. Jesus Christ is the great Minister, the Supreme Minister who ministers day and night for man in both heaven and earth.

Now, for the critical question: What is the great ministry of Jesus Christ? What is it that He does for us?

- I. Jesus Christ is the Minister of a heavenly, spiritual priesthood, (v. 1).
- II. He is the exalted High Priest: at the right hand of God’s throne (v. 1).
- III. He is the exalted Minister: of the true tabernacle (v. 2).
- IV. He is the exalted minister who offers the gifts and sacrifices of men to God (v. 3).
- V. He is the exalted minister of the real, heavenly world (vv. 4-5).

I. *Hebrews 08:01 Jesus Christ, the Perfect High Priest*

Jesus Christ is the perfect High Priest, the Minister of a heavenly, spiritual priesthood. There are qualifications for being a priest on earth; a man has to meet certain conditions in order to serve as an earthly priest. So it is in heaven and for God. If someone is going to stand before God for man, that someone has to meet certain conditions. The heavenly High Priest has to have certain qualifications. Note how the Lord Jesus Christ meets every one of these requirements.

=> He has to be perfect, completely faithful and true to God (Heb. 2:17; 3:1-2; 5:8-9; 7:11; 7:19).

=> He has to be merciful and become the sacrifice for man’s sins — become the sacrificial Lamb of God for man (Heb. 2:17; 8:27).

=> He has to live as a man and undergo all the trials and temptations of men and conquer them all without ever sinning. He has to be sinless (Heb. 2:18; 4:14-15; 7:26).

=> He has to help, actually feel, man’s infirmities and have compassion for man. He has to show mercy and help man when he needs help (Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16).

- => He has to be appointed and ordained by God to be the High Priest in heaven (Heb. 5:5-6; 7:28).
- => He has to become the perfect author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9).
- => He has to be the priest who is in the order of Melchizedek and not in the order of earthly priests (Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11; 7:21).
- => He has to be the forerunner — the one who went before us into heaven (Heb. 6:20).
- => He has to be eternal, that is, have an “indestructible life” (Heb.7:16; 7:17; cp. 7:3; 7:24; 7:28).
- => He has to live forever to intercede for those who come to God through Him (Heb.7:25).
- => He has to be exalted to the right hand of God — exalted above the heavens (Heb.7:26; 8:1).

When someone meets all of the above requirements, that someone is qualified to be the High Priest in heaven. WITHOUT QUESTION...

JESUS CHRIST MEETS ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS
TO BE THE PERFECT HIGH Priest of heaven.

Jesus Christ is the Minister of the heavenly spiritual priesthood. No one else is qualified — no one has ever been or ever will be qualified except Him. Now again, note the words, “the point” — this is the chief point, the major emphasis of all that has been said.

II. *Hebrews 08:01 Jesus Christ, the Exalted High Priest*

Jesus Christ is the *exalted High Priest*; He sits on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. There He sits with the Sovereign Majesty of the universe, with God Himself, ruling and reigning with all authority and power both in heaven” and earth. There He sits in all the glory and honour, dominion and power of God Himself.

Mark 16:19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.

Luke 22:69 “But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

Acts 2:36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 5:31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Eph 1:20 Which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

Phil 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.

1 Tim 6:15 Which God will bring about in his own time - God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Heb 1:9 “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

1 Pet 3:22 Who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Rev 5:12 In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!”

III. Hebrews 08:02 The Exalted Minister of Heaven

Jesus Christ is the exalted Minister of God, the Minister of the sanctuary of heaven. He is the exalted High Priest in heaven, but that is not all that He is. He is also the exalted Minister of the sanctuary. He is not in heaven just to rule as Lord and to receive the honour and worship of subjects throughout the universe. He is not there ruling and reigning from a far distance, a Lord who can never be known or reached by His people. It is true that Jesus Christ is in heaven to reign in majesty and glory, but He is also in heaven to be the Minister of heaven, to be the Minister of the true sanctuary and tabernacle or place of worship. He is there...

- to receive us as we come to God.
- to hear our cries for mercy and grace to help in times of need.
- to save us completely.
- to represent us as the sacrificial offering for our sins.
- to deliver us from all the trials and temptations of this corruptible and dying world.
- to minister the Word of God to our hearts.

Jesus Christ is not in heaven selfishly enjoying the wonder and glory of its sanctuary: He is not in heaven selfishly soaking up all its glory for Himself. Jesus Christ is in heaven ministering — looking after and reaching out to people...

- He is listening and hearing the cries of people and ministering to their needs. In fact, He is ministering to every need that God’s people have.
- He is receiving the worship and praise of people and offering their names up to God.

Jesus Christ is actively ministering and looking after the true sanctuary and the true tabernacle, the real place where men are to worship, that is, heaven itself. (Note: the true sanctuary and tabernacle means that part of heaven where God sits upon His throne, where the very presence of God is. It is the very place where men are to offer their worship and praise to God. It is the place where Christ ministers as the High Priest before God.)

Heb 2:17-18 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God,

and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Psa 40:17 *Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer; O my God, do not delay.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

IV. Hebrews 08:03 Jesus Christ, the Exalted Minister

Jesus Christ is the exalted Minister who offers the gifts and sacrifices of men to God. This is what is meant by this verse. The very purpose for High Priests was to offer gifts and sacrifices on behalf of men. High Priests were appointed; the very reason for their existence was to offer these gifts and sacrifices so that God would accept men. By making such offerings it was felt that God would be pleased, and He would approve men for heaven.

The point is this: Jesus Christ is now the High Priest, the One who is to offer the gifts and sacrifices of men to God. But note: as seen in earlier passages, only perfect gifts and offerings are acceptable to God. And no man has a perfect gift and sacrifice to offer to God. What then can be done? If Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, He has to have something to offer for us. As this verse says, “It was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.” But what could He offer? There was only one thing: He had to offer Himself, for He is the only gift and sacrifice in the world that is perfect. Therefore, Christ offered Himself as the perfect gift and sacrifice to God. And He did it for us. This is the critical point: Jesus Christ offered Himself as the gift and sacrifice for us. He gave Himself for man — gave Himself as man’s gift and sacrifice to God. What an unbelievable thing to do! But Jesus Christ did it.

=> He Himself *actually became* our gift and sacrifice to God.

=> He actually *offered Himself* as our gift and sacrifice to God.

Jesus Christ is the exalted Minister who offers the gifts and sacrifices of men to God.

Gal 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.*

Eph 5:2 *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

Titus 2:14 *Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Heb 9:26-28 *Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

1 John 3:16 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

Rev 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

V. Hebrews 08:04–05 Minister of the Heavenly Tabernacle

Jesus Christ is the exalted Minister of the real, heavenly world. This is the meaning of these two verses. Verse four simply says that if Christ were a priest on earth, He would not be a priest at all. He simply was not born of the priestly tribe of men, the Levite tribe. And no man could serve as priest unless he was born into the priestly family.

This, of course, means something of critical importance: Jesus Christ is not the minister of the shadow of what is in heaven, of earthly gifts and sanctuaries and tabernacles — all are but shadows of what is in heaven. Jesus Christ is the Minister of heaven, of the real world, of the real sanctuary and tabernacle of God. The word “copy” (hupodeigmati) means shadow, shadowy outline, a reflection. The things of religion and worship upon earth are only examples and shadows, copies and sketches, shadowy outlines and reflections of heavenly worship.

Note: there is a real world, a heavenly world, and there is a tabernacle, a throne room in which the glorious presence of God dwells. It was the pattern from which Moses made the earthly tabernacle (cp. Exo. 25:40). God had shown Moses the real pattern of heavenly worship and told him to make a copy of it upon earth. That is what the tabernacle was that was carried around by Israel in the wilderness wanderings.

The point is this: earthly priests can only give us the shadow and picture of heaven. But Jesus Christ is the Priest and Minister of the heavenly worship, of the real world.

Therefore, He is the One who can lead men into heaven, into the world that is real and perfect and that has no end. He is the One who can lead us into the very presence of God.

Mat 6:20 *“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”*

Luke 10:20 *“However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”*

John 14:2 *“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.”*

Acts 7:55-56 *But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”*

Heb 9:23 *It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

Heb 11:10 *For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

Heb 11:27 *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.*

Rev 7:9 *After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.*

Rev 22:14 *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” ■*