

HEBREWS 8:13 - THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Hebrews Chapter 8, verses 1 and 2, "Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man"

There are three things in these verses that he would have us to know:

- 1) We have a high priest (that's the first thing)
- 2) The second thing is he has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (He has sat down at the right hand of the Father)
- 3) The third thing he would have us to know is he is a minister in the sanctuary, (this sanctuary where he is a minister) is in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man

It is interesting that he says "Now the main point in what has been said is this" . . . in other words, the main point in what I have been talking about is this -- we have a high priest.

He has said a lot of things up to this point:

- he has revealed to us how God in these last days has spoken unto us through His Son
- how greater than the angels His Son is and he has informed us that we have as our ministers these angels
- he has told us we are God's house and he has described for us a great salvation which is ours
- he has gone to great length to describe for us a rest which we can enter and that we have a hope which is an anchor for our soul

But taking all this that he has told us, he tells us, the main point I have been trying to get across to you and that which I want you to see and to know what all of this has been about is to show you that we have a high priest. He has already stated this in the 14th verse of the 4th chapter, "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." Vs 15, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." So because of that he exhorts us to, vs 16, "Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."

That is what having a high priest is all about . . . he thinks it is important for us to know that Jesus is adequately and sufficiently qualified to be a high priest . . . in the later part of chapter 7, beginning in verse 24, says "that he abides forever (and so) he holds His priesthood permanently." He holds His priesthood for as long as He lives and He is going

to live forever, so that means we will always have a high priest . . . we will always have the help that we need from our priest. Vs. 25, and "He is able to save forever, or to save completely, those who draw near . . . because He always lives. Vs 26. He is holy, he is innocent, He is undefiled, separated from sinners, and yet He is exalted above the heavens. Vs. 27, He doesn't need daily to offer up sacrifices because in vs. 28 He has been appointed forever and when God appointed Him, He appointed Him with an oath, he said when God could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. This is so important, God not only makes a statement about it in His word, He swears and takes an oath about it.

But it has taken him seven (7) chapters to get them to see the importance of what he is talking about. He has spent 7 chapters and the sum of what he has said up to this point is -- that we have a high priest.

Why is it so hard to get Christians to see and to know what they have and who they are? It is about as hard to get Christian people to understand what God has done for them and to understand who they are as God's people as it is to get them converted in the first place.

Let me give you an illustration of how this affects our lives. You remember the story back in Joshua when the spies went out to spy out the land when the nation of Israel was to cross over the land to take Jericho. They came to Rahab and she hid them . . . the story is told in the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Joshua, but listen as we read from chapter 2, verses 9-11, this is what Rahab tells the men who came in to spy out the land, "and she said to the men, 'I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. **And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.**"

We heard that and when we heard about it, our hearts melted within us, we had no courage within us because of you and we recognized your God . . . **but that was 40 years ago and they came up to the brink of the Promised Land and because of FEAR, they turned back and refused to go in** and wondered around for 40 years and that whole generation died in the wilderness **simply because they didn't know how those people felt . . . they had won the victory 40 years before and didn't know it . . . and they didn't go over into the Promised Land and that whole generation died because they didn't know the enemy was already defeated.**

Another illustration of that is seen over in II Kings, chapter 6, probably a familiar passage. This is the King of Aram and he is looking for Elisha and his servants . . . we'll begin reading in vs. 14, Elisha was in Dothan and the King of Aram, vs. 14, "sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. Now when the attendant of the man

of God has risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city (sort of a surprise). And the servant (ran to Elisha) and said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' (a good question . . . what are we going to do . . . **the moment we see adversity encamped around us, we cry out and say what are we going to do**) . . .

Vs. 15, and so Elisha's answer is, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them. (and I suppose the young man had looked around trying to see those who are with us and saw only he and Elisha standing . . . this reminds us I John 4:4, "He that is in you is greater than he who is in the world." But we still wonder what in the world are we going to do?) But, Elisha didn't make a big deal about it . . . he prayed and said, vs. 15, O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see (let him know and let him understand) and the Lord opened the servant's eyes, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." **They were there all the time, but he didn't see it. All he saw were himself and Elisha and this vast army was encamped against them and all he could say was what in the world are we going to do?**

And the parallel passage in in Ephesians, the first chapter, when Paul is praying for these converts in Ephesus . . . and after mentioning some of the great blessings that they have, he says in vs. 18, "I Pray that **the eyes of your heart may be enlightened (we hear a lot of prayers on the TV for the Lord to save the sinner, especially that one that is closest to hell, whatever that means,** but Paul isn't praying for the Lord to save sinners, he is praying that the Lord will do something in the lives of the Christian) he **prays that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened . . . not so they will be prosperous and have everything they want and everything they think they want, but that they may know something, that they may know what is the hope of His calling (I pray that they may know why God has called them, not their calling, but God's calling . . . I pray that they may know why God has called them and that they may know "what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" . . . not that they might understand what their inheritance is** (most of our prayers in my opinion are awfully selfish because we are always asking the Lord to bless us in the way that we want to be blessed) and **here is the way that we need to be blessed . . . "that we may understand what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (not what God is going to give us, but what we can give Him . . . what His inheritance is in us)**

Vs. 19, "And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." **I want you to know what His power is toward us who believe, what that power really is . . . I want you to understand the power of God in your life.**

And if you go to the Book of Revelations and read the letter that John writes to the Church at Ephesus, they had left their first love . . . you'll see why they need to know this power.

Vs. 19 continues, this power, he says is, ". . . in accordance with the working of the strength of His might, which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him

at His right hand in the heavenly places" (he wants them to know something about that power that comes from Christ, who was raised from the dead and who sits at the right hand, and whose power is) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and whose name is above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things for or to the church . . . **or for the sake of the church . . . everything that He has done in Christ is for the sake of the church, and he wants them to realize that because they are His body, they are the fullness of Him who fills all in all . . . and Paul prays that they might understand that.**

Now, what does all of that have to do with Hebrews 8? It has taken him 7 chapters to try to show them that we have a high priest . . . He became a high priest for us and we have him as our high priest. That has happened for us . . . that is the greatest thing that has ever happened for mankind . . . and we don't even know anything about the priesthood, much less realize that we have a high priest . . . that's the first thing. We have a high priest . . . He represents us . . . we have a man in heaven representing us. Now, I know that doesn't make much of an impression on those who believe that their dad, and granddad, and great granddad are up there representing them, but I'm here to tell you there is only one man in heaven . . . and that man is Jesus Christ.

In the Second Chapter is Acts, Peter said David did not ascend into heaven, David is not in heaven, he said Christ ascended into heaven and **that is the most significant thing that has ever happened . . . that heaven itself has been opened up to a man and that man represents us and therefore we have access to heaven and it is not something that we enter into whenever we die . . . it is something that is ours right now because we have a high priest who is in heaven on our behalf.**

The second point is that He has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Now I don't want you to think that I have gone to seed on Psalms 110, "The Lord said to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.' The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong scepter from Zion, saying 'Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.'"

And then beginning in verse 4, he said the Lord will be doing something upon the earth because He is a priest after the Order of Melchizedek. Vs. 5, because He is at Thy right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations. He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country." He is going to be doing something in the world. So when things start to happen around us . . . when things begin to crumble . . . **we are not to cry out like Elisha's servant and say what in the world are we going to do. We are to realize that the Lord is at work . . . because He is sitting at the right hand of the throne on high.**

Now, this 110th Psalm I've said before is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament and I've run a rough estimate through the New Testament and came up with 12 passages in the New Testament where that Psalm is quoted. It's quoted 4 times in the Book of Hebrews (chapter 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, and 12:2) which refers to Christ sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The other passages are Matthew 22:44, 26:64, Mark 12:36, 16:19, Acts 2:34-35, Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:20, and Colossians 3:1.

Twelve passages that speak of the fact that Christ has taken His seat at the right hand of the Father or at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This means several things: it means, first of all, that He is able to save us completely . . . to save us forever , since He is always there interceding , Heb 7:25 "hence, also, He is able to save forever (to save completely is the word . . . He is able to save sufficiently, completely in every area of our life -- He is able to do a complete job -- we aren't just half saved) He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him."

When God saves us . . . when we become a Christian and realize who we are in Christ, we need to realize that that means our sufficiency is of God -- that all of our needs are met in Him. He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him. Vs. 25, "since He always lives to make intercession for them." He is always interceding.

Now, look at few passages . . . Heb 9:24, "For Christ did not enter the holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one (this doesn't have anything to do with the physical), but He entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" **The only reason Christ went back to heaven in that body as He did was to appear before God on our behalf . . . that He might appear in the presence of God for us.** It wasn't for Himself . . . it wasn't for God's sake . . . it wasn't for the angels sake . . . it was for us and **that is the reason He is there today . . . it is for us that He is interceding.**

Let us draw near with confidence then to the throne of grace . . . we come before the throne of grace with confidence . . . with confidence that we will receive mercy and grace and find help in the time of need . . . that is where our help is.

Romans, chapter 8, some people live in fear of being condemned . . . vs. 34, "Who is the one who condemns (is it Jesus Christ?) Jesus Christ is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us." How can we be condemned by Christ when Christ is the one who died, but not only did He die, but He was raised, and not only was He raised, but He is at the right hand of God and He is, at this time, interceding for us.

Why do we get the idea that He is going to condemn us? Why do we live under guilt whenever He is doing His best . . . He is doing all that can be done before the throne of God on our behalf . . . He is interceding for us.

Not only that, His offering, the offering that He made on the cross was an adequate offering.

Hebrews, chapter 10: 12, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SAT DOWN ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.**" The fact that He has taken His seat on the right hand of the Father means that as far as sacrifice, and offering, and sin is concerned . . . as far as anything on our behalf is concerned, He has already **DONE IT ALL . . . He has finished and He has sat down waiting for the time when His enemies will be made a footstool for His feet.** Vs. 14, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified." He has perfected us in the sight of God . . . God has accepted us in Him as being perfect . . . He has already made an adequate sacrifice to meet all of our needs.

And we stand around and say what in the world are we going to do?

Paul prays that our eyes might be opened in order that we might see what has already been done. That means in Heb 10:18, that there is forgiveness of sins . . . vs. 17, their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more . . . vs. 18, Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering that is to be made for sin . . . as we've said before . . . we can't make any extra offering . . . we can't make God forgive us anymore than He has already forgiven us . . . we can't do any more than He has already done **because He has done it all and His offering for sacrifice was adequate . . . and we cannot improve upon that. All we need to do is to apply it.**

Now, this also means that He has dominion over all things . . . that is what Psalms 110 is all about . . . "The Lord God said to my Lord (that is the Lord Jesus Christ) sit on My right hand until I make thine enemies a footstool for thy feet."

Sitting on His right hand is a position of authority . . . it is a position of Ruler ship because He stretches forth His scepter . . . God does it through Christ . . . Christ does it through His body, through the church. So read again the first chapter of Ephesians, verse 20, and notice His dominion, the extent of it, " . . . He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come" . . . **you can't include any more because there isn't anymore there.**

His power and His authority and His dominion is above everything . . . that means anything or everything that Satan is or that this world is or that man is or that you are . . . He is above it all and He has dominion which means He has control over it . . . and He is ruling . . . He is in charge.

I think Matt 26, vs. 66 is an interesting passage . . . and this deals with Jesus sitting on His right hand. In vs. 63, Jesus is talking to the High Priest and the High Priest is being very authoritative and very spiritual and he is trying to find out if Jesus is claiming to be the Christ, the Son of God

. . . and Jesus' answer to him in vs. 64 is, "You have said it yourself (I am the Son of God); nevertheless (I am going to tell you), hereafter you shall see (you are the High Priest of Israel and you are going to see) the SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN."

Now, to "see" is to know and to understand and not necessarily to see it with your physical eyes. In a little while you are to going to see, you are going to know and you are going to understand that the Son of Man is sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Now I want you to notice that . . . you are going to see two things: you are going to see Jesus sitting on the right hand of power (you are going to understand that) and you are going to see Him coming. My question is how can you see him come and sit at the same time? If this is talking about His Second Coming when He comes back to earth, how can He sit on the throne and come in the clouds at the same time . . . He told the High Priest he would see them both.

I think His coming is explained more in Matt 24, vs. 30, and I must admit that the King James did a better job of translating here than any other version . . . vs. 30, "and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory."

Now, the point is . . . they are not going to see THE SON OF MAN appear in the sky . . . that's not what it says . . . that's the way we usually how we read it . . . but he says "the sign of the Son of Man" will appear . . . and the point is then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven (I think that is the King James translation).

It is the sign of the Son of Man that's going to appear and the sign is that He is in heaven . . . the sign that the Son of Man is in heaven is going to appear . . . and when the sign that the Son of Man is in heaven appears, He is going to come on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

Now, if we know what coming on the clouds means, if we want to know what that means, turn to the 19th chapter of Isaiah, and vs. 1 . . . Isaiah is talking about judgment coming to Egypt and he says, "Behold, the Lord is riding on a swift cloud, and is about to come to Egypt; the idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them." In other words, God is coming against Egypt in judgment. **How is He coming . . . Isaiah says He is coming on a cloud. And Ezekiel 32: 7-8 describes that judgment on Egypt that they will experience when God comes on a cloud. And the Judgment on Saul comes on a cloud and that judgment is described in Psalm 18:9.**

So when Jesus talks about His coming on a cloud, He's talking about Him coming in judgment. And when Jesus ascends and takes His position on the right hand of the Father, the first thing He is going to do is to start judging His enemies. And the first enemy that He is going to judge is that outfit ruled by that High Priest. And He says you are going to see the sign of the Son of Man in heaven . . . You are going to see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Father . . . and He's coming on the clouds . . . you are going to see that.

Well, what was is the sign that He was in heaven? Peter tells us in the second chapter of Acts, beginning in about vs. 29, . . . I like to remind people that the second chapter of Acts has more verses in it than vs. 38, we need to know that . . . beginning in vs. 29, Peter says, "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day (David is dead and buried . . . I can take you to his tomb . . . he is still there in that tomb . . . some people would argue with that, but Peter says that is true). And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS UPON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, and HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID HIS flesh SUFFER DECAY. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God (He has been exalted to God's right hand and has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on High), and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."

The coming of the Holy Spirit was the sign that Jesus was seated on the right hand of the Father. When the Holy Spirit came, that was the sign the Jesus had taken His seat at the right hand of the Father . . . when the Holy Spirit came and they began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, the speaking in tongues was proof that the Holy Spirit had come, **and when the Holy Spirit had come, that was the sign that Jesus was enthroned.**

Let me take you a little further, Paul talks about this sign of the Holy Spirit . . . that explains Acts chapter 2, vs. 4, and we need to hear it again, Paul says in I Cor 14, vs. 21., "In the Law it is written, 'BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,' says the Lord. (And Paul says) So then tongues are for a sign . . . " When the Holy Spirit came and they began to **speak in other tongues to signify that they had the Holy Spirit, Paul said that was a sign . . . what was it a sign of?** Paul doesn't tell us, but in vs. 22, Paul says it is a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers . . . so Paul says speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, is a sign, not for the believers, but for the unbelievers (like the High Priest, for example).

The charismatics says speaking in tongues is my prayer language . . . that is the sign that I have the Holy Spirit . . . they come off with all types of things to try to justify speaking in tongues.

The Bible justifies tongues . . . on the Day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts and Paul says it was a sign . . . what was it a sign of?

If you go back to the 28th chapter of Isaiah, and see where Paul got that passage and see what he is talking about, he says in vs. 11, "Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, He who said to them, 'Here is rest, give rest to the weary.'" Here is where Paul got that passage. What is he talking about in this chapter? Vs. 16 in this passage, says, "Therefore, thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it (or Him) will not be disturbed. And I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the level . . . " He is talking about Christ being the cornerstone.

And Paul says speaking in tongues is a sign that Christ is the cornerstone . . . that God has established His cornerstone that Isaiah spoke of. It was a sign for the unbelievers . . . who were the unbelievers? They were the Jews (not for the believers, but for the unbelievers).

So that is the sign that he is talking about in Matt 26 and 24 that they would see . . . the sign of the Son of Man in heaven was the Holy Spirit . . . speaking in tongues was a sign of the Holy Spirit and that was a sign that God had intervened in the affairs of man and had established His cornerstone, which was Christ, who had begun to reign . . . and God said sit on My right hand until I make your enemies the footstool for Thy feet . . . and the first enemy that He destroyed was the unbelieving Jew . . . and the last enemy that will be destroyed , I Cor 15:25, is death.

And in-between those, He will destroy all of our enemies. If there is a last enemy, there was a first enemy and in-between are all of the enemies we face.

Now, if Christ, sitting on the right hand of the Father, can come on a cloud and destroy those who destroyed Him . . . If He can fulfill that prophesy that He gave that High Priest and destroy the entire Jewish Nation and send into oblivion (which He did) . . . and if He can destroy death . . . don't you think He can handle our little puny problems here in-between . . . and have dominion over them . . .

That's the point . . . He is our High Priest . . . if He can do all of that, then look at what He can do for us! But we get so wrapped up in the world and we have to settle everything the way the world settles it . . . we have to run our finances the way the world does . . . we run our social life along the lines of how the world does . . . you look at the average Christian out there in the world today and particularly we so called baby boomer generation that have filled up so many of our churches . . . YOU CANNOT TELL THEM FROM THE WORLD--NO DIFFERENCE . . . NO WONDER WE DON'T HAVE ANY WITNESS . . . WE DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT CHRIST BEING THE HIGH PRIEST.

We'll take a few minutes to look at the last point . . . Heb 8:2, Not only is He seated at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven," He is a minister in the sanctuary, and this is the true tabernacle

in the which the Lord pitched, not man." His three and a half years upon the earth in His earthly ministry was simply preparatory for His heavenly ministry . . . we talk about Christ having a three and a half year ministry--that was just to prepare Him for His real ministry which actually began whenever He ascended . . . That's when He began to minister on our behalf.

How does He minister on our behalf . . . look at Hebrews, chapter 9, beginning in vs. 11, "But when Christ appeared as a High Priest of good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation (He didn't have anything to do with the Jewish System, and the sacrifices in them Temple and what-have-you), **vs.12**, and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience of dead works to serve the living God?" **Vs. 15**, "And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."

Now what is all of that saying . . . it is saying that Jesus had on Him, according to the scripture, He took upon Him more sin than any one man had ever had individually . . . He took upon Himself the sins of the world . . . Paul said He became sin on our behalf (II Cor 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him").

Now, if He became sin, how can He go back to heaven with all of the sins of the world upon Him? If God cannot accept one man who has sinned, how can he accept Christ with all of the sin of the world upon Him? If sin excludes man from God, then doesn't it exclude Christ from God, if He became sin?

Heb 9, vs. 12, "it was not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all . . ." NOT EVEN JESUS COULD ENTER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD WITHOUT BLOOD. So He shed His blood for all of those sins that He carried . . . He became sin and He paid the price for those sins.

NOW IF HIS BLOOD IS ENOUGH TO BRING HIM INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD, IT IS ENOUGH TO TAKE AWAY MY SINS!! I think that is the significance of Him being a minister in the sanctuary, and this is the true tabernacle in the which the Lord pitched, not man.

