

In our notes on Hebrews 9:24, we rejoiced to see Jesus Christ, as our high priest, appear on our behalf in the heavenly holy of holies. Before the face of God, He represents us and intercedes for our every need, speaking that word of protection and preservation so essential for our survival as Christ's church militant on earth.

But this week we learn that while Christ exercises that all-important office of intercession for us in His human nature and in His office as our high priest, there is nothing of the weakness in His prayers for us that so often characterize our pleas; nothing of the personal sin which hinders our supplications, and nothing of the doubts as to the issue of our prayers. *We know in part*, and so our prayers arise tainted by our sinful hearts and motives. Christ's prayers are full of omnipotent worth and power. For the Lord Jesus, simply to *will* our destinies is for His desires to be granted.

Monday: Read Hebrews 10:8-14 & 7:23-25 & John 17:24-26

Resting in the Will

Christ's priestly intercessions are ever prevailing and ever victorious because they are founded upon his perfect obedience in our place and in our nature. He comes declaring His intention (Hebrews 10:5-7) to fulfil the will of God by the sacrificing of His own body and blood. His sacrifice is accepted and His cause in every way successful. Risen from the dead, He has now ascended to heaven, vindicated, and He is declared righteous by His Father in all He has accomplished.

It is no surprise, then, that the Father invites His Son, having completed His sacrificial work in our nature while on earth, to "sit at His right hand," (Hebrews 10:12). Such a seat declares that there is now no further sacrificial work to do. While other priests were never allowed to sit down because their work was never done (Hebrews 10:11) Christ rests from His labors and is seated until that day when God makes all His enemies His footstool.

Meditate and Pray: Have you learned to rest in the will of our Risen, Ascended and Victorious Savior? Christ indicated that *it is nothing less than His will which ensures the His intercessions for us will prevail* – until the day that we are joined together with Him according to John 17:24. In this way, Christ fulfills the promise of Hebrews 7:25 – He *will*, "save us to the uttermost."

Listen to how Fisher's Commentary on the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it, describing the glory, effectiveness and power of Christ's position, seated at God's right hand in Heaven:

Q. 51. What is the nature of Christ's intercession? A. It is his WILLING, that the merit of his sacrifice be applied to all those in whose room and stead he died, according to the method laid down in the covenant in their favor, John 17:24 — "Father, I WILL that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am."

How is the church on earth to be, on a daily basis, protected and nourished if Christ is seated in glory? Well, to be sure, the rulers of this world, when they attain great power, use their high positions to glorify themselves and to magnify their own personal glory. They haven't any room in their thoughts for the weak citizens of their kingdom or the dire needs of their people!

But Christ takes possession of heaven (Hebrews 10:12) with an eternal commitment to caring for us personally and perpetually. Much like Joseph in the Old Testament used His throne in Egypt as the *source of daily caring for God's people in Jacob's family* (Genesis 47:12), Christ ensures that even down to the very *number of His own* (literally "according to the number of their mouths") He will make sure that we are provided for in all our conditions, trials, challenges, griefs and needs.

Listen to Fisher's Commentary of the Catechism once again:

Q. 56. What does he by his intercession, in consequence of their being brought into a covenant state? A. He appears for them; and, in their name, takes possession of heaven, and all the other blessings they have a right to, in virtue of that covenant state, Eph. 2:6, Heb. 6:20.

So, to revisit that picture which Stephen has of a standing Christ, ready to receive the dying martyr into heaven, Christ's standing in Acts 7:55-56 is a vision of His care for His suffering church, and not a picture that contradicts Christ's sitting at His Father's right hand in Hebrews 10:12. *Because* Christ is enthroned now, and His work on the Cross accepted in heaven, He *applies* the blessings of His sacrifices to each and every suffering lamb in His flock on earth. In terms of Revelation 1-3, He "walks among the candlesticks of His church on earth in order to know and to effectively and compassionately address, all His church's needs on earth.

Meditate and Pray: Sing about Christ's exalted place, seated on God's throne, with # 299 of our *Trinity Hymnal*:

1 Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious;
see the Man of Sorrows now;
from the fight returned victorious,
ev'ry knee to him shall bow.
Crown him! Crown him!
Crowns become the Victor's brow.

2 Crown the Savior, angels, crown him;
rich the trophies Jesus brings;
in the seat of pow'r enthrone him,
while the vault of heaven rings.
Crown him! Crown him!
Crown the Savior King of kings.

3 Sinners in derision crowned him
mocking thus the Savior's claim;
saints and angels crowd around him,
own his title, praise his name:
Crown him! Crown him!
Spread abroad the Victor's fame!

4 Hark! those bursts of acclamation!
Hark! those loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station;
O what joy the sight affords!
Crown him! Crown him!
King of kings and Lord of lords.

Thurs/Fri/Sat: Read Hebrews 10:12-17; John 14:16-17 & Acts 2:32-36 A Willing Servant Forever

It is no surprise to have the Holy Spirit bearing witness to us, through God's Word, to the glory of our ascended and enthroned Savior (Hebrews 10:12-15). After all, Christ's asking for the Holy Spirit, and Christ's pouring that Spirit upon His church (Acts 2:32-36) is the first petition Christ made in His position of heavenly intercession (John 14:16).

It is no surprise either, that the witness of that outpoured Spirit is He Who gives out Christ's glory on His throne (Hebrews 10:12-15). *In other words*, the proof that Christ is indeed victoriously enthroned now at His Father's right hand is that we now have the Holy Spirit bearing witness to the reality of forgiveness of sins in (Hebrews 10:15).

Listen to how Professor Hywel Jones describes this powerful, saving testimony of the Holy Spirit:

We have said that the main emphasis in Hebrews 10 is on the conscious state of worshippers. There is therefore one question left to consider (in our study of Hebrews 10) and it is how a worshipper can know, as really as he knew his guilt, that he is freely and fully pardoned?

God knows that His law has been kept by His Son, and that He can ask no more. He has consequently enthroned Him at His right hand. The Son is seated there, knowing that no more can be asked of Him and His universal triumph is sure (Heb 10:12-13).

But how can the sinner be as sure as that of having been pardoned and accepted? Can he know that?

The answer lies in the promise of God's New Covenant, found in Jeremiah 31:33 and already quoted in Hebrews 8. But it is not reproduced here as it is there. For one thing the item which speaks about "knowing the Lord," is omitted; but more importantly, the quotation is introduced differently. In Heb. 8, it is prefaced by "He" or "it" says. Here, it is, "The Holy Spirit bears witness to us." That solemn verb, its present tense, and the words "to us," refer to the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He speaks in the heart the given and recorded Word of God.

What is more, to the opening words, "After saying," must be added something like, "He then says," and then comes the promise that God will not remember the sins of which the worshipper is aware. He will never remind us of those sins. That promise, given formally by the Spirit, once in Jeremiah and once in Hebrews, is spoken by Him again in the troubled conscience, and pacifies it. Where such forgiveness is given, there is no need for further sacrifice and the worshipper knows it. The burdened sinner becomes a willing servant – for ever.

Hywel Jones, *Commentary on Hebrews Let's Study* series, Banner of Truth

Meditate and Pray: Father, may we say, with the Apostles Creed, "I believe in the Holy Spirit." May we be quick to get out of the way, to remain quiet, to allow the Spirit time to work at His chosen time and in His own sweet, persuasive method.