

The Purpose of God in Hebrews 7 through 12

Although truly great, Christ's earthly ministry for the accomplishment of God's judicial redemption through the cross could not, of itself, accomplish the purpose of God. Through death and resurrection Christ entered into a second stage, becoming the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) and ascending into heaven to be seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. In this stage, in His heavenly ministry, He is carrying out God's organic salvation in His chosen people for the producing of the new man as the new creation of God. At the beginning of chapter 7 the book of Hebrews turns from the earthly ministry of Christ to His ministry in the heavens:

According to the work and ministry of Christ, this book has a turn at this verse, a turn from earth to heaven. To the end of ch. 6, what is revealed is mainly Christ's work on earth, typified by the priesthood of Aaron. That section is the word of foundation. From this verse, Christ's ministry in heaven according to the order of Melchizedek is unveiled. This section is the word of perfection, which shows us how the heavenly Christ ministers in the heavenly tabernacle. His purifying of sins is typified by the work of Aaron, while His sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (1:3) is according to the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:1, 4). His work on the cross on earth, typified by the work of Aaron, affords us forgiveness of sins. His ministry on the throne in heaven ministers to us the overcoming of sin. His cross delivered us out of Egypt; His throne brings us into Canaan. The Hebrew believers participated in His work on the cross. Now they had to press on to enter into the enjoyment of His ministry on the throne. (Recovery Version, Heb. 7:1, note 1)

Therefore, from chapter 7 onward this book affords us a clear view of the purpose of God and how it is being fulfilled. The writer's intention throughout this book is to contrast Christ and His new covenant with Judaism. Christ's superior priesthood as Melchizedek in chapter 7, the better covenant of better promises with a more excellent ministry in chapter 8, the better sacrifices and better blood with the greater and more perfect tabernacle in chapters 9 through 10, the unique way of faith in chapter 11, and the superior gathering at Mount Zion in chapter 12—all have their deepest significance in relation to this fulfillment.

Chapter 7—Christ's Priesthood Defining the Purpose of God

The status of Christ as the kingly High Priest is a definition of the purpose of God, because in Christ, for the first time in the history of God's administration, the priesthood and the kingship are combined in one person:

In the Old Testament, Levi was the tribe of the priests, and Judah was the tribe of the kings. The Lord descended from the tribe of Judah, causing a transfer in the priesthood and combining in one tribe the priesthood and the kingship (Zech. 6:13), as manifested in Melchizedek, who was both high priest and king (v. 1). (Recovery Version, Heb. 7:14, note 2)

Genesis 1:26 reveals that God's purpose in creating man was that man would bear God's image and exercise His dominion. God's image is realized in the priesthood, and God's dominion is realized in the kingship. The basic function of a priest in the Bible is not to serve God or even to offer sacrifices but to express God. "A priest is a person who is filled, saturated, and permeated with God until he is one with Him. God will then express something of Himself through such a person" (Lee, *Priesthood* 21). Thus, in the first mention of the word *priest* in the Bible, not insignificantly concerning Melchizedek, there is no mention of his offering sacrifices or worshipping God. Rather, we see that Melchizedek met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him (Heb. 7:1). According to Genesis, he also brought Abraham bread and wine (14:18). Moreover, we may infer that Abraham's victory was the consequence of Melchizedek's intercession (cf. Exo. 17:10-13; Heb. 7:25). Melchizedek came from the presence of God, where he had been under the transfusing of God, and met Abraham and blessed him. He was one with God and expressed God, even ministering the riches of the processed God, signified by the bread and wine, to God's overcomer Abraham.

The garments of the high priest in Exodus 28 also demonstrate that God wanted to be expressed through the priesthood. Verse 2 says that these garments were worn for glory and beauty, not for covering and warmth. The glory and beauty here typify the divinity and humanity of Christ for God's expression:

The priestly garments, being mainly for glory and for beauty, signify the expression of Christ's divine glory and human beauty. Glory is related to Christ's divinity, His divine attributes (John 1:14; Heb. 1:3), and beauty, to Christ's humanity, His human virtues. Christ's divinity, typified by the gold of the priestly garments, is for glory, and His humanity, typified by the blue, purple, and scarlet strands and the fine linen, is for beauty. A life that expresses Christ with the divine glory and the human beauty sanctifies us and qualifies us to be the priesthood. (Recovery Version, Exo. 28:2, note 2)

As the One in whom all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:9), Christ is the full expression of God. All that God is in His divine attributes is expressed in Christ through His human virtues. This is signified by the long robe which Christ in His priesthood wears. In Isaiah 6:1 the train of the Lord, His priestly robe, fills the temple, indicating God's expression in its fullness. In Psalm 133:2 the oil that anoints the high priest, who typifies Christ, reaches the hem of his garments, indicating the long priestly robe. In Revelation 1:13 the Lord Jesus has a garment reaching to the feet, a sign that the Lord's virtues are so extensive that they become His fullness. In these passages the primary characteristic of Christ's priesthood is the expression signified by the garment. As a great High Priest, Christ expresses God in fullness.

Christ as King fulfills the second part of God's purpose for man, that is, the exercise of God's authority for His kingdom to come in full. Both the name and the dominion of Melchizedek are rich in meaning for the kingship of Christ. Hebrews 7:2 says of Melchizedek, "First being interpreted king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace." These two names reveal how Christ's kingdom forms the basis for Him to fulfill His priesthood:

Melchizedek means *king of righteousness*, and *king of Salem* means *king of peace* (v. 2). As the King of righteousness (Isa. 32:1), Christ made all things right with God and made all things right with one another. Righteousness issues in peace (Isa. 32:17). As the King of peace (Isa. 9:6), Christ, through righteousness, brings in peace between God and us, and in such a peace He fulfills the ministry of His priesthood. He is the King who becomes the Priest; thus, His priesthood is kingly, royal (1 Pet. 2:9). (Recovery Version, Heb. 7:1, note 2)

Christ being a kingly priest is prophesied in Zechariah 6:12-14. There, Christ is foretold as a man whose name is the Shoot, who will shoot forth from His place and build the temple of Jehovah. He will sit and rule on

His throne, He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between the two of them, referring to the priesthood and the kingship. This is a clear prophecy of the kingly priesthood of Christ, and its significance extends further to include the corporate priesthood of the believers:

Between the two means between the priesthood and the kingship. In the Old Testament no king could be a priest, but in the millennium both Christ and the overcomers will be kings to reign and priests to serve God. These two responsibilities will be reconciled in both Christ and the overcomers. In the millennium the overcomers will be priests, drawing near to God and Christ, and they will also be kings, reigning over the nations with Christ (Rev. 2:26-27; 20:4, 6). This will be a reward to the overcomers. The believers who are defeated in this age will forfeit this reward. However, after being dealt with in the millennium, these defeated ones will participate in the blessing of this reward in that they will serve God in the priesthood and represent God in the kingship in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (Rev. 22:3, 5). (Recovery Version, Zech. 6:13, note 1)

*As a great High Priest,
Christ expresses God in fullness.
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Because Christ's priesthood is constituted by the power of the indestructible life, He abides forever, unlike the Old Testament priests, who were prevented from continuing because of death (Heb. 7:16,

23). Thus, His priesthood is unalterable, and He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him (vv. 24-25). Moreover, verse 28 says that the word of the oath establishes the Son, perfected forever. As the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 3:16), Christ needed no perfecting; He was eternally perfect. However, as the firstborn Son of God (Heb. 1:6; Rom. 8:29), He has been perfected in His humanity through incarnation, human living, death, and resurrection. Now He is completely perfected, equipped, and qualified to be our High Priest. He intercedes for us that we may be saved to the uttermost and brought fully into God's eternal purpose (Heb. 7:25; 9:24; Rom. 8:34), God's full expression in glory (Heb. 2:10).

Chapter 8—the New Covenant Accomplishing the Purpose of God

In chapter 8 there are two matters which in space seem very far apart: first, Christ's more excellent ministry in heaven and, second, God's laws imparted into our mind and inscribed on our heart. The former is objective to us; the latter is subjective. However, these two are actually one, and seeing Christ's ministry on the throne will greatly strengthen our appreciation of His work within us.

Concerning Christ's ministry in the heavens, verse 1 says that we have a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. His ministry is to bring us to where He is: "Christ, as the High Priest in the heavens, brings us into heaven, from the earthly outer court into the heavenly Holy of Holies, which is joined to our spirit by Him as the heavenly ladder (Gen. 28:12; John 1:51)" (Recovery Version, Heb. 8:1, note 1). In the heavens Christ is "a Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (v. 2). The meaning of the word *minister* here is "one who ministers as a priest."

As a minister of the true (heavenly) tabernacle, Christ ministers heaven (which is not only a place but also a condition of life) into us that we may have the heavenly life and power to live a heavenly life on earth, as He did while He was here." (Recovery Version, v. 2, note 1)

In His more excellent ministry He is the Mediator of a better covenant which has been enacted upon better promises (v. 6), and as the Mediator, He is the Executor of the new testament (covenant) bequeathed to us by His death.

Hebrews gives us an extensive view of the present Christ, who is in the heavens and able to execute the new testament in every detail, to make every bequest in it available and real to us. As the divine High Priest, He is executing the new covenant by interceding for us so that we would be brought into its reality (7:25). As its Mediator, Executor, He is executing the new testament and carrying out in us every item of its bequests (8:6; 9:15; 12:24). As the surety of the new testament, He is the pledge that all its promises will be fulfilled, guaranteeing and ensuring its effectiveness (7:22). As the Minister of the true, heavenly tabernacle, He is serving us with the bequests, the blessings, of the new testament, making the facts of the new covenant effective in our experience (8:2). Finally, as the great Shepherd of the sheep, He is shepherding us to consummate the New Jerusalem according to God's eternal covenant (13:20; Rev. 4:3; cf. 21:19-20).

Christ's ministry in the heavens is reflected here on earth through His indwelling the believers as the life-giving Spirit in their spirit. In Hebrews 13:20-21 the writer refers to Christ's work within us, saying that the God of peace is "doing in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ":

From beginning to end this book presents to us a heavenly Christ. Only here, with the word 'God...doing in us...through Jesus Christ,' does this book imply the indwelling of Christ. It is through the indwelling Christ that God works in us so that we can do His will. (Recovery Version, v. 21, note 1)

The work of the indwelling Christ in God's new covenant is represented by the principal bequest of the covenant—the imparting of God's laws into our minds and the inscribing of them on our hearts (8:10). In order to adequately know the meaning of this bequest, we must first explain why the writer, in quoting Jeremiah, changed the word *law* in the prophecy to *laws* in its fulfillment:

In Jer. 31:33, the source of this quotation, the word used is *law* (singular), whereas in this verse it is *laws* (plural). This proves that it is one law that spreads to become a number of laws. This one law is the law of life (see *the law of the Spirit of life*—Rom. 8:2). Every life has a law. The higher the life, the higher is its law. The divine life that we receive of God is the highest life; therefore, it has the highest law, the law referred to here. By imparting His divine life into us, God puts this highest law into our spirit, whence it spreads into our inward parts, such as our mind, emotion, and will, and becomes several laws. (Recovery Version, Heb. 8:10, note 1)

It is by this law of life imparted into our minds and hearts that God accomplishes His purpose in us. A full definition of how this law functions is found in Romans 8, where we see that the law of the Spirit of life frees us in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death (v. 2). By the Spirit of Christ indwelling our spirit, our spirit is life (v. 10). Then as we set our mind upon the spirit, our mind becomes life (v. 6). Eventually, through this indwelling Spirit, God gives life even to our mortal bodies (v. 11). Hence, by the regulation of the law of life, life is dispensed into our entire tripartite being. At the same time the law of life functions to shape us into the image of the firstborn Son, conforming us to His image, so that we become the same as God in life, nature, and expression but not in the Godhead (v. 29). Moreover, chapter 12, which continues chapter 8 (chapters 9—11 being parenthetical), shows that by this law we are constituted members of the Body of Christ with many functions (12:4-8; cf. Eph. 4:11-12, 16).

The law of God in the Old Testament was the Testimony of God (Exo. 16:34; 31:18). However, due to the weakness of the flesh it was impossible for the law to produce God's expression (Rom. 8:3). Fault was thus apparent in the first covenant, and this necessitated a second covenant, the new covenant (Heb. 8:8). In the new covenant, God dispenses Himself as life through the life-giving Spirit into His chosen people, and this life operates as a law spreading in their inward parts, causing them to become His testimony, His expression. Hence, there is no need of outward teachings (v. 11):

The law of life differs from the law of letters. The law of life regulates us from within by and according to its life element, whereas the law of letters regulates us from without by and according to its dead letters. The law of

dead letters depends on outward teachings, but the law of life depends on the inward consciousness. Since we all, great or small, have the law of life, we do not need outward teachings that are according to the law of letters (v. 11). (Recovery Version, Heb. 8:10, note 1)

Hebrews 9 through 10—Christ Being the One Reality of All in the Purpose of God

Hebrews chapters 9 through 10 concern the better sacrifices (9:23; 10:10) and the better blood (9:12, 14), with the greater and more perfect tabernacle (v. 11). Through these three items we may perceive that God's will, His eternal purpose, is that Christ would be everything to His chosen people by His being the one reality of all the various types and shadows of the tabernacle and offerings under the old covenant: "All types and figures of the ancient time, / All things we ever need, both great and small, / Only are shadows of the Christ of God, / Showing that He must be our all in all" (*Hymns*, #496).

In chapter 9 verse 23 the "better sacrifices," which purify the heavenly things, refer to the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ for sins. By this sacrifice He replaced all the different sacrifices under the old covenant. This one sacrifice viewed from its various aspects and typified by the different offerings in the Old Testament can be considered many sacrifices.

Hebrews 10:5-7 reveals that God's will was that Christ would come through incarnation in order to have a physical body to suffer death as an offering to terminate, fulfill, replace, and be the reality of all the Old Testament sacrifices. In verse 7 Christ in His incarnation declares, "Behold I have come...to do Your will, O God." Verse 9 explains that in doing this will, Christ "takes away the first that He may establish the second." *The first* and *the second* here refer to two different categories of sacrifice:

The first here refers to the sacrifices of the first covenant, the old covenant; *the second* refers to the sacrifice of the second covenant, the new covenant, which sacrifice is Christ. Christ came into the world that He might, according to the will of God, put away the animal sacrifices of the old covenant and establish Himself as the sacrifice of the new covenant. (Recovery Version, Heb. 10:9, note 1)

By this will, that is, the offering of Jesus Christ, we have been sanctified and perfected (vv. 10, 14). Perfection here includes both the impartation of the law of life and the full forgiveness of sins under the new covenant (vv. 16-17). Thus, the main thought concerning the will of

God in this entire section (vv. 1-18) is as follows:

Christ has removed sins, accomplishing what all the Levitical sacrifices were unable to do. Having put away sin once for all, Christ has now imparted Himself into us as the divine life so that through the working of this divine life we may become the corporate reproduction of Himself. (Recovery Version, Heb. 10:10, note 1)

The blood of Christ, which was shed through the offering of His body once for all, is better than the blood of animals in the old covenant sacrifices. Through His own blood Christ has obtained an eternal redemption (9:12). Whereas the animal blood could only expiate for sins, not remove them (Lev. 16:15; Heb. 10:11), Christ's redemption has taken sins away (John 1:29). The animal blood could only sprinkle those who were defiled to the purity of the flesh (Heb. 9:13), but the blood of Christ purifies man's conscience, his innermost being, to serve the living God (v. 14).

Furthermore, through His own blood Christ has entered the Holy of Holies, heaven itself, and has purified the heavenly things.

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Heaven and all things in heaven were defiled by the rebellion of Satan and the fallen angels, who followed Satan in his rebellion against God. So all the heavenly things needed to be

purified. Christ accomplished this purification with His own blood when He entered into heaven itself (v. 24). (Recovery Version, Heb. 9:23, note 1)

The blood of Christ is unique and most precious to the believers in God's new covenant. For the Hebrew believers to abandon the church and return to Judaism to offer the old sacrifices, thus relying on the blood of slain animals, would have been to consider the blood of Christ a common thing (10:29), as one blood among many creatures' blood. To do so would have been to seriously disregard the redemptive work of Christ.

The greater and more perfect tabernacle (9:11) is the Holy of Holies, which signifies God's new covenant, in contrast to the first tabernacle, the Holy Place, which signifies the old covenant. The goal of the book of Hebrews is to bring the believers from the Holy Place—that is, from the old covenant, the realm of the soul—fully into the Holy of Holies, that is, the new covenant, the sphere of the spirit.

On the one hand, the writer sets a contrast between the two sections of the tabernacle; on the other, he also lists all the furnishings within both sections, after which he

declares that it is not the time to speak in detail (9:1-5). The arrangement of the furniture of the tabernacle gives a detailed portrait of our experience of Christ in various stages, beginning in the outer court at the bronze altar and the laver, passing through the Holy Place with the showbread table, the lampstand, and the incense altar,¹ and consummating in the Holy of Holies with the Ark of the covenant and its contents.² In the greater and more perfect tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, Christ is the reality of all these items as the bequests of the new testament, which we enjoy in our spirit.

Hebrews 11—a Living That Fulfills the Purpose of God

Were Christ only Priest and King, then the believers would have no share in the fulfillment of God's purpose. However, although explicit mention is not made of the priesthood and kingship of the believers in this book, as it is elsewhere in the New Testament (Rom. 15:16; 5:17; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 20:6; 22:3, 5), the believers' priesthood and kingship nonetheless are clearly described. According to Hebrews 10:22, we are priests called to come forward to the Holy of Holies, to serve Him with consciences purified by the blood of Christ and bodies washed with pure water (figuratively, referring to the Lord's living word which cleanses our outward conduct and work), and in 13:15 we are priests called to offer up sacrifices of praise continually to God. Such sacrifices are a marvelous combining of the priesthood of Christ the Head with the priesthood of the believers, His Body, through the mingled spirit:

Verse 15 is a continuation of vv. 8-14. Since in the church life we enjoy the unchanging Christ as grace and follow Him outside religion, we should offer through Him spiritual sacrifices to God. First, in the church we should offer up through Him a sacrifice of praise to God continually. In the church He sings in us hymns of praise unto God the Father (2:12). In the church we too should praise God the Father through Him. Eventually, in the church He and we, we and He, praise the Father together in the mingled spirit. He, as the life-giving Spirit, praises the Father in our spirit, and we, by our spirit, praise the Father in His Spirit. This is the best and highest sacrifice that we can offer to God through Him. This is greatly needed in the church meetings. (Recovery Version, Heb. 13:15, note 1)

Where is the kingship of the believers in Hebrews? Certainly, there is a hint in 7:1, which mentions Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings. The interceding ministry of Melchizedek caused Abraham to be victorious over God's enemies. Christ's interceding ministry in the heavens likewise saves us to the uttermost (v. 25), to the extent that we too reign as kings and are victorious over the enemy Satan. This reigning aspect of Christ's salvation is described in 10:32-39 and illustrated throughout

chapter 11. In 10:35 the writer charges the Hebrew believers not to cast away their boldness. This is a boldness to endure great conflict of sufferings (v. 32) and bonds (v. 34), to be made a spectacle both in reproaches and in afflictions (v. 33), and to accept with joy the plundering of their possessions (v. 34). In other words, their boldness was in their reigning over the fear of persecution and suffering and over the power of material possessions.

Reigning in life is the experience of the organic aspect of God's full salvation revealed in Paul's Epistle to the Romans. What he describes there has a clear parallel here in Hebrews. Romans 5:17 says that "those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." The gift of righteousness corresponds in Hebrews to the blood of Christ, which takes away sin and purifies our consciences, and the abundance of grace corresponds to the heavenly ministry of Christ at the throne of grace, which executes all the bequests of the new testament to us. Romans 8:37 says that in all things we more than conquer through Him who loved us. The "all things" are the environmental hardships and sufferings in verses 31 through 39, which correspond to the persecution described in Hebrews 10:32-39. Whereas in Romans these hardships are referred to in general, in Hebrews they are specific: the satanically motivated opposition to God's new covenant way from Judaism.

To experience God's complete salvation in both Romans and Hebrews, we need faith (Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38). In Hebrews 11:1 faith is defined as the substantiation of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen. Its definition alone, however, will not suffice to cause us to reign in life. For this, we need to go back to the last two verses of chapter 10: "But My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul does not delight in him.' But we are not of those who shrink back to ruin but of those who have faith to the gaining of the soul" (vv. 38-39). Here the mention of the soul in relation to faith is significant. In Hebrews 4:12 we are told that the spirit and the soul need to be divided by the living and operative word of God. The Hebrew believers, like the children of Israel, were in danger of not entering into God's promised rest because of their unbelief (3:19). Their unbelief was a consequence of their living in the soul, typified by Israel's wandering in the wilderness.³ They needed to press on into their spirit, to enter within the veil, where they would find grace and mercy at the throne of grace. Here in 10:39 to shrink back to ruin was to remain in their soul, to preserve their soul in this age and not lose their soul for the Lord's sake by forsaking Judaism. However, if they would exercise to live in their spirit and forsake Judaism, taking the new covenant way, they would have faith, a living faith, the reigning character of which is fully testified to by the witnesses of faith in chapter 11.

In Romans, to live by faith is to walk according to the spirit by setting the mind on the spirit (8:4, 6). In Hebrews, to live by faith is to come forward to the throne of grace in the Holy of Holies (10:22; 4:16), looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith, who has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God (12:2).

When we look unto Jesus, He as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45) transfuses us with Himself, with His believing element. Then, spontaneously, a kind of believing arises in our being, and we have the faith to believe in Him. This faith is not of ourselves but of Him who imparts Himself as the believing element into us that He may believe for us. (Recovery Version, Heb. 12:2, note 3)

Hebrews 12—the Church Fulfilling the Purpose of God

Among the different items that describe the new-covenant gathering at Mount Zion in Hebrews 12, there is “the church of the firstborn” (v. 23). This designation of the church implies that God’s purpose in the priesthood and the kingship must be fulfilled not in an individual way but corporately.

The firstborn indicates the birthright, which is referred to in verse 16 in a negative way with regard to Esau, Isaac’s firstborn. Esau was a profane person, who gave up his birthright for one meal. The birthright included the priesthood and kingship as well as the double portion of the land. Because of Esau’s profanity the birthright passed to three sons of Jacob: the double portion of the land to Joseph (1 Chron. 5:1-2), the priesthood to Levi (Deut. 33:8-10), and the kingship to Judah (Gen. 49:10; 1 Chron. 5:2).

In the new covenant the birthright belongs to the church, but in Hebrews 12:16 we are warned that, like Esau, we can lose this birthright:

We Christians, born of God, are the firstfruits of His creatures (James 1:18) that He has reaped in His creation. In that sense we are the firstborn sons of God. Hence, the church, composed of us, is called the church of the firstborn (v. 23). As the firstborn sons of God, we have the birthright. This includes the inheritance of the earth (2:5-6), the priesthood (Rev. 20:6), and the kingship (Rev. 20:4), which will be the main blessings in the coming kingdom and which the profane, world-loving-and-seeking Christians will lose at the Lord’s coming back. Eventually, this birthright will be a reward given to the overcoming Christians in the millennial kingdom. Any worldly enjoyment, even one meal, could cause us to forfeit this birthright of ours. After such a serious warning, if the Hebrew believers had still preferred to indulge in “one meal” of their old religion, they would have missed the full enjoyment of Christ and would have lost the kingdom rest with all its blessings. (Recovery Version, Heb. 12:16, note 1)

Thus, such a blessing and privilege falls upon the church in this age of fulfilling the eternal purpose of God by expressing Him as a corporate, built-up priesthood and by reigning as kings in His life. If we are bold to exercise our spirit of faith to receive all the new testament bequests through Christ’s heavenly ministry, not shrinking back by preserving our soul, we will not only enjoy the priesthood and kingship in this age but also will be rewarded with them in the coming age, because such boldness “has great reward” (10:35):

Actually, what we are privileged to enjoy in Christ is the foretaste of the blessings in the coming kingdom. The proper enjoyment of this foretaste will usher us into the full taste of the kingdom blessings. If we do not enjoy Christ today as our good land,...how can we enter into His rest in the kingdom and inherit the earth with Him? If we do not exercise our priesthood today to contact Him and prayerfully minister to Him, how can we fulfill our priestly duty in the kingdom? If we do not exercise our spirit with the God-given authority to rule our self, our flesh, our entire being, and the enemy with all his power of darkness today, how can we be Christ’s co-kings and rule the nations with Him in His kingdom (Rev. 2:26-27)? Our enjoyment of Christ and the practice of the priesthood and kingship today are the preparation and qualification for our participating in Christ’s kingdom tomorrow! (Recovery Version, Heb. 12:16, note 1)

by Jim Batten

Notes

¹Note that in Hebrews the incense altar is associated with the Holy of Holies rather than the Holy Place as in Exodus. See note 1 on Hebrews 9:4 in the Recovery Version for a full explanation of this difference. The full text of the Recovery Version, including footnotes, is available online at <http://online.recoveryversion.org/>.

²See note 3 on Hebrews 9:4 in the Recovery Version.

³To be in the soul, even when handling the Word of God, exposes us to the attack of the enemy and to unbelief. Theologians, beware! See “Study on Hebrews: Hebrews 11” in *The Collected Works of Witness Lee: 1965*, vol. 1, pp. 445-450.

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