***A New Kind of Priest***

**Advent 2022, Jesus in the Old Testament December 11, 2022**

***“ Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you,   
who are symbolic of things to come:   
I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.”*Zechariah 3:8**

**Priests pointing to Jesus**

*Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”*

*3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”*

*Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”*

*5 Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by.*

*6 The angel of the Lord gave this charge to Joshua: 7 “This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.*

*8 “ ‘Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. 9 See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,’ says the Lord Almighty, ‘and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.*

*10 “ ‘In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,’ declares the Lord Almighty.”*

Zechariah 3

*6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.*

Revelation 5

1. There is a long history of priests in the Old Testament: Cain and Abel in Genesis 4, Melchizedek in Genesis 14; Jethro in Exodus 2; God promised that his people would be a kingdom of priests in Exodus 19:6; the Aaronic priesthood in Exodus 28:1-5; the priestly work in Leviticus; and the priests who mourn in the Minor Prophets (see Joel 1:9; Ezra and Nehemiah)

2. The purpose of the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods is to prepare for Jesus!

**The priesthood of Melchizedek**

*17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).*

*18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19 and he blessed Abram, saying,*

*“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,*

*Creator of heaven and earth.*

*20 And blessed be God Most High,*

*who delivered your enemies into your hand.”*

*Then Abram gave [Melchizedek] a tenth of everything.*

Genesis 14

*4 The Lord has sworn*

*and will not change his mind:*

*“You are a priest forever,*

*in the order of Melchizedek.”*

Psalm 110

*7 During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him 10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Hebrews 5

*11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. 13 He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. 15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared:*

*“You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”*

*18 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*

Hebrews 7

1. Melchizedek’s priesthood is shared by Cain and Abel, Job and Jethro, and Abraham

2. Melchizedek’s priesthood always pointed forward to a future priest who would complete   
Melchizedek’s work

3. Melchizedek’s priesthood provides the “perfection” that Aaron and his sons never could

**What Jesus did and is doing as our Priest**

*11Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, 13and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. 14For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

*15The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:*

*16“This is the covenant I will make with them*

*after that time, says the Lord.*

*I will put my laws in their hearts,*

*and I will write them on their minds.”*

*17Then he adds:*

*“Their sins and lawless acts*

*I will remember no more.” o*

*18And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.*

Hebrews 10 (quoting from Jeremiah 31:33-34). See Jesus’ prayer in John 17:16-18.

*14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 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. 16 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.*

Hebrews 4 (see 1 Corinthians 10:13)

*23 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24 but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

*26 Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.*

Hebrews 7

1. Jesus is the ultimate provision from God

2. Jesus’ experience of suffering and temptation

3. Jesus is interceding for us

4. Jesus opens access for us to the throne room of God

**What Jesus’ priesthood means for the church**

1. Our priesthood is a ministry of spurring, meeting and encouraging

*19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Hebrews 10

2. Jesus’ priesthood answers questions about suffering and wrath

*7 During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him 10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

Hebrews 5

3. Jesus’ priesthood shows that his work is finished

A further thought. The text leads me to say to you that it is utterly hopeless, if you desire salvation, for you to expect Jesus Christ to do anything more than he has already done. Many are waiting for a something, and they scarce know what. Now Jesus, when he died and went to heaven, perfected for ever all his work; and if you do not believe to-day in what he has done, there will be no surer grounds for belief to-morrow.

Spurgeon’s “The Only Atoning Priest”

4. We are priests who serve!

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

Revelation 1, also Revelation 5:10, 20:6  
See 1 Peter 2:4-12 for a little longer passage on “holy” and “royal” priests.

Serving God:

Serving each other:

Serving our community:

**Resources for meeting Jesus in the Old Testament**

I appreciated Tim Challies’ visual Christmas study at [*https://www.challies.com/visual-theology/a-visual-theology-advent-reading-calendar-for-your-family/*](https://www.challies.com/visual-theology/a-visual-theology-advent-reading-calendar-for-your-family/)

Tim Keller has a wonderful “big picture” series on Genesis which is available at [*https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/genesis/chapter-genesis/chapters-03-05-fall*](https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/genesis/chapter-genesis/chapters-03-05-fall). I’ve included his sermon on Genesis 3 is at [*https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9*](https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9)

William Ames has a classis Puritan take on the three-offices at [*https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/*](https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/)

John Calvin summarized his thinking on Christ’s work as prophet, priest and king at [*https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/ppk\_calvin.html*](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/ppk_calvin.html)

Kim Riddlebarger, “The Triple Cure” at [*https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king*](https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king)

Spurgeon has several sermons on these themes:  
his sermons on Hebrews at [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/scripture-index/hebrews/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/scripture-index/hebrews/) “The Kingly Priesthood of Saints” at [*https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/sermons/2022/the-kingly-priesthood-of-the-saints-c-h-spurgeon-sermon/*](https://banneroftruth.org/us/resources/sermons/2022/the-kingly-priesthood-of-the-saints-c-h-spurgeon-sermon/)  
“The Only Atoning Priest” at [*https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon\_charles/sermons/1034.cfm*](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/sermons/1034.cfm)“The Priesthood of Believers” at

[https://www.spurgeongems.org](https://www.spurgeongems.org › sermon › chs3266) *[› sermon › chs3266](https://www.spurgeongems.org › sermon › chs3266)*

Berkoff has some great discussion of Christ’s priesthood at [*https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/berkhof/systematic\_theology.html#priest*](https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/berkhof/systematic_theology.html%23priest)

Derek Thomas has a short article on the importance of Genesis 3:15 at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/significance-genesis-315*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/significance-genesis-315)

David Linden has a sermon on the “long story of Jesus” in Isaiah at [*https://davidhlinden.com/article/birth-of-jesus-christ*](https://davidhlinden.com/article/birth-of-jesus-christ)

R. C. Sproul has a wonderful summary of the incarnation at [*https://www.ligonier.org/posts/incarnation-what-we-celebrate-christmas*](https://www.ligonier.org/posts/incarnation-what-we-celebrate-christmas) and an article on Jesus’ kingship at [*https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings*](https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/king-kings)

Tim Keller wrote a Christmas Eve editorial in the NY Post at [*https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/*](https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/%20)

John Walton has a good analysis of names in Isaiah 7:14 at [*http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/30/30-3/30-3-pp289-306\_JETS.pdf*](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/30/30-3/30-3-pp289-306_JETS.pdf)

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# Christmas is the most unsentimental way of looking at life

By [Timothy Keller](https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/)

December 24, 2016  
at [*https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/*](https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/)

Christmas is the only Christian holy day that is also a major secular holiday. This brings some discomfort on both sides. Many Christians can’t help but notice that more and more of the public festivities surrounding Christmas studiously avoid any references to its Christian origins. The background music in stores is moving from “Joy to the World” to “Have a Holly, Jolly Christmas.”

On the other hand, nonreligious people can’t help but find that the older meaning of Christmas keeps intruding uninvited, for instance, through the music of traditional Christmas carols. It can be irritating to have to answer their child’s question, “What does that music mean —‘born to give them second birth’?”

Christmas does not say, ‘Cheer up! If we all pull together we can make the world a better place.’

As a Christian believer, I am glad to share the virtues of that day with the entirety of society. My fear is, however, that its true roots will become more and more hidden to most of the population.

The secular Christmas is a festival of lights, a time for family gatherings, and a season to generously give to those closest to us and to those in greatest need. These practices are genuinely congruent with the Christian origins of the celebration. The emphasis on light in darkness comes from the Christian belief that the world’s hope comes from outside of it. The giving of gifts is a natural response to Jesus’ act of self-­giving, when he laid aside his glory and was born into the human race. The concern for the needy recalls that the Son of God was born not into an aristocratic family but into a poor one. The Lord of the universe identified with the least and the most excluded of the human race.

But the truth is that Christmas, like God himself, is both more wondrous and more threatening than most understand.

Christmas is about receiving presents, but consider how challenging it is to receive certain kinds of gifts. Some gifts by their very nature make you swallow your pride. Imagine opening a present on Christmas morning from a friend — and it’s a dieting book. Then you take off another ribbon and wrapper and you find it is another book from another friend, “Overcoming Selfishness.” If you say to them, “Thank you so much,” you are in a sense admitting, “For indeed, I am fat and obnoxious.”

In other words, some gifts are hard to receive, because to do so is to admit you have flaws and weaknesses and you need help. Perhaps on some occasion you had a friend who figured out you were in financial trouble and came to you and offered a large sum of money to get you out of your predicament. If that has ever happened to you, you probably found that to receive the gift meant swallowing your pride.

There has never been a gift offered that makes you swallow your pride to the depths that the gift of Jesus Christ requires us to do. Christmas means that we are so lost, so unable to save ourselves, that nothing less than the death of the Son of God himself could save us. That means you are not somebody who can pull yourself together and live a moral and good life.

Christmas, therefore, is the most unsentimental, realistic way of looking at life. It does not say, “Cheer up! If we all pull together we can make the world a better place.” The Bible never counsels indifference to the forces of darkness, only resistance, but it supports no illusions that we can defeat them ourselves. Christianity does not agree with the optimistic thinkers who say, “We can fix things if we try hard enough.” Nor does it agree with the pessimists who see only a dystopian future.

The message of Christianity is, instead, “Things really are this bad, and we can’t heal or save ourselves. Things really are this dark — nevertheless, there is hope.” The Christmas message is that “on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”

Notice that it doesn’t say from the world a light has sprung, but upon the world a light has dawned. It has come from outside. There is light outside of this world, and Jesus has brought that light to save us; indeed, he is the Light.

Adapted from the book [*“Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ”*](https://www.amazon.com/Hidden-Christmas-Surprising-Behind-Christ/dp/0735221650?tag=nypost-20&asc_refurl=https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/&asc_source=web) by Timothy Keller (Viking). Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.

## The Offices of Christ

**William Ames at** [*https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/*](https://heraldofgrace.org/offices-of-christ/)

Christ undertook His office in order to obtain salvation for His people (1 Tim. 1:15). Both the calling and the components of the office are worthy to be considered. The calling is an action of God the Father, whereby He bound His willing Son to His office by an eternal covenant (Ps. 110:4; Isa. 53:10; Luke 22:22; Acts 4:28; Heb. 5:4, 6; 7:24). This involved choosing the ends (Isa. 42:1); foreordaining the means (1 Peter 1:20); and sending the Son (John 3:17).

There are three components to Christ’s office. First, Christ holds the office of Prophet (Deut. 18:15). By this, He reveals perfectly the whole will of God. This office has various names: Christ is a Teacher (Matt. 23:7); the Apostle of our confession (Heb. 3:1); the Angel of the Covenant (Mal. 3:1); the Word of God (John 1:1); the very Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24); and the Treasure of wisdom and understanding (Col. 2:3).

In order to be the perfect Prophet, Christ necessarily was both God and man. It was necessary for Him to be God in order to understand and minister the will of God perfectly (John 1:18; 3:13; 1 Cor. 2:11, 16). If He had not been man, He could not have properly declared this will to men by His own person (Heb. 1:1).

Second, Christ holds the office of Priest. His priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 7:17), and therefore is indestructible (Heb. 7:16); stable and perfect (Heb. 7:18–19); eternal (Heb. 7:24); and perpetual, leaving no room or need for other priests (Heb. 7:24–25).

In the execution of His priestly office, Christ is the Priest, the sacrifice, and the altar. He is Priest in both natures (Heb. 5:6). He was the sacrifice principally in His human nature, as the Scriptures attribute His sacrifice most primarily to His body (Heb. 13:12; 1 Peter 2:24; Col. 1:22) and blood (Col. 1:20). However, this sacrifice became effectual because of Christ’s divine nature as the very Son of God (Acts 20:28; Rom. 8:3)—which is understood properly according to the idea of the altar (Heb. 9:14; 13:10, 12, 15). The function of the altar is to sanctify the offering, granting it dignity beyond itself (Matt. 23:17). Herein is manifest why Christ as Priest had to be both God and man: if He were not man, He could not have atoned for men; if He were not God, the sacrifice would not have been sufficient.

Third, Christ holds the office of King (cf. Deut. 17:14–20). His kingdom is called the kingdom of God; the kingdom of peace and glory; the kingdom of light and glory; the kingdom of heaven; and the world to come. In His kingdom, Christ’s rule is His power to dispense and administer all things pertaining to the salvation of men with force and authority (Ps. 2:6; Dan. 2:44; Luke 4:36). This kingship is universal, that is, it encompasses all ages, being eternal (Matt. 22:43–45; Dan. 2:44; 7:14). Christ’s rule is over all kinds of men (Dan. 7:14; Rev. 17:14)—even all the world and its creatures (Eph. 1:21, 22). Christ governs both man’s outward and inward activity (Rom. 14:17), dispensing everlasting life or death (Rev. 1:18). For the heirs of the kingdom, Christ as King brings the greatest peace and most perfect joy (Isa. 9:6; Eph. 2:16; Heb. 7:2). Again, it is necessary that Christ be King as God and man: the latter, that He might be the spiritual King of our souls, dispensing eternal life and death; the former, that He might be the Ruler of the same nature as His body.

The threefold office of Christ announces three truths. First, it identifies the state of man and how it is remedied in Christ. Man suffers under ignorance, which is resolved by the prophecy of Christ; dwells in alienation from God, which is restored by the priestly work of Christ; and possesses no power to live holily, which is established by the kingship of Christ. Second, Christ’s threefold office reveals the way salvation is brought to bear upon man. It is first preached by His prophecy; obtained by His priesthood; and applied by His kingship. Third, the threefold office exposes that salvation is accomplished by Christ. Christ first taught others the will of God; then He offered Himself; and afterward He entered to rule in His kingdom.

**William Ames** (1576–1633) was William Perkins’s most famous successor. His Marrow of Theology, had a profound impact in England, The Netherlands, and especially New England. This article is adapted from 1.19 of this classic.

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From Kim Riddlebarger’s “Triple Cure” article at [*https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king*](https://www.monergism.com/triple-cure-jesus-christ-%E2%80%93-our-prophet-priest-and-king)

**Christ Our Priest**

The priestly office of Christ occupies a major place in the New Testament and includes not only a discussion of the office itself, but also of Christ’s sacrificial death to redeem sinners from their sin. The key passage in the New Testament, Hebrews 5:1 and following, lays out the characteristics of a true priest. First,’every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God’ (v. 1). Second, such a priest is appointed by God (v. 4). Third, the high priest’offers gifts and sacrifices for sins’ (v. 1). In addition, the priest makes intercession for the people (7:25), blessing them in the name of God (Lv 9:22). Clearly, Jesus Christ is the high priest par excellence.

The Old Testament predicted a coming Redeemer. The Psalmist records God saying about his chosen one:’The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘you are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 110:4). Zechariah tells us that the coming Redeemer’will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne’ (Ps 6:13). There is no doubt, as Berkhof notes, that ‘the Old Testament priesthood, and particularly the high priest, clearly prefigured a priestly Messiah.’8

The author of the book of Hebrews is clearly cognizant of this. Though he is the only New Testament writer who applies the term to our Lord, he repeatedly speaks of Jesus as a priest. We are told ‘to fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess’ (Heb 3:1). We are informed that we’have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God’ (Heb 4:14). Christ has not taken upon himself’the glory of becoming a high priest’ (Heb 5:5), for the author applies the words of Psalm 110:4 to him:’he has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek’ (Heb 6:20). Jesus is the kind of high priest ‘who meets our needs-one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people,’ for this high priest’sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself’ (Heb 7:27). Thus Christians are able to take heart, for our high priest, when he had completed his work, ‘sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven’ (Heb 8:1).

A great deal of biblical data is devoted to Christ’s work as high priest, but we can only briefly survey it here.9 The Scriptures point us in several directions. One aspect of this, which we may easily overlook but which is extremely important to notice, is that not only does Christ the high priest offer an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, but he also is himself the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin! We get a strong hint of this in the Mosaic epoch of biblical revelation, through the nature of the sacrifices that were instituted, and which themselves were mere types and shadows, pointing us to the Messiah yet to come. The sacrifices offered during this time temporarily expiated the guilt of the sins of the people through the sacrifice of the substitute-in this case, an animal who was offered up to God. But the Psalmist, who records for us the prophetic words of the Messiah himself, takes this further.’Sacrifice and offering you did not desire…burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, ‘Here I am, I have come-it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart” (Ps 40:6-8). The Messiah indicates that his own coming sacrificial death will supersede the Old Testament sacrificial system.10

The New Testament quite frequently and powerfully makes this very point-Jesus Christ’s sacrificial death is the fulfillment of the types and shadows of the Mosaic system. The author of Hebrews, as but one example, makes it very clear that Jesus Christ, through his one sacrifice, has done something that the blood of bulls and goats could never accomplish. While the blood of animals could not take away sin, the blood of the Messiah, on the other hand, is that through which ’we have been made holy’ (Heb 11:10). This is a major theme throughout the New Testament.

Just as Christ’s prophetic work did not cease when he completed his earthly ministry, so neither has his priestly work. Though Christ took his place at the right hand of his Father, because his redemptive work was finished (Heb 11:12), Jesus Christ presently intercedes for us when we sin (1 Jn 2:1-2). While we are correct to focus on what Christ has done for us as our high priest, we must not forget those things he is doing for us even now. He prays for our sanctification (Jn 17:17). He is now our ‘great high priest who has gone through the heavens,’ so too we can now’approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need’ (Heb 4:14-16). Even now, our great high priest is building us’into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’ (1 Pt 2:5). What comfort we can take, knowing that our Lord is in heaven, preparing for us to see his glory (Jn 17:24). For the great high priest who intercedes for us never sleeps nor wearies, he never prays without full effect, and he is ever mindful of our continuing struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil (Heb 2:18). Jesus Christ is both the author and the finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2). He is our great high priest and the good shepherd, who even now guards his flock. No one shall ever snatch us from his hand (Jn 10:28-29), and nothing will ever separate us from his love (Rom 8:37-39).

#### The Only Atoning Priest (No. 1034) Delivered on Lord's Day Morning, February 4th, 1872, by C. H. SPURGEON at <https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/sermons/1034.cfm> At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

*"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God: From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."-*[Hebrews 10:11-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/heb/10/11/s_1143011).

WE SHALL HAVE this morning to repeat a truth which has sounded forth from this pulpit many hundreds of times; but we shall offer no apology for our repetitions, seeing that the truth to be preached is one which cannot too often be proclaimed. If you lift up your eyes at night to the stars what a wonderful variety of celestial scenery is there! The astronomer can turn his telescope first to one quarter of the heavens, and then to another, and find an endless change in the sublimities which meet his gaze. Such are the doctrines of the gospel; they are full of variety and beauty, and glory: but yet in the heavens one or two conspicuous constellations are more often regarded by the human eye than all the rest put together. The mariner looks for the Great Bear, the pointers, and the pole star; or, if he should cross the equator, he gazes on the southern cross. Though these stars have been often looked upon, it is never thought to be superfluous that practical men should still observe them. Night by night they have their watchers; for by them ten thousand sails are steered. I should suppose that in those days, now happily past, when slavery reigned in the Southern States of America, the Negro if he desired liberty for his boy would be sure, whatever else of the stars he did not teach him, to point out to him the star of liberty. "Know well, my child, those friendly stars which point to the lone star of liberty. Follow that light till it leads you to a land. There fetters no longer clank on human limbs." Even so it seems to me that certain doctrines, and especially the doctrines of atonement and justification by faith, are like these guiding stars; and we ought frequently to point them out, make sure that our children know them, and that all who listen to us, whatever else they may be mistaken about, are clear about these, the guides of men to the haven of freedom and eternal rest. I believe if I should preach to you the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ every Sabbath-day and that twice, and nothing else, my ministry would not be unprofitable, perhaps it might be more profitable than it is; so we are coming to the same truth which we handled last Sabbath evening. Many dishes are put upon the table at intervals, but bread and salt are always placed there; and so we will have the atonement again, and again, and again; for this is the bread and salt of the gospel feast.

I purpose, this morning, to handle the text thus. First, we will *read, mark, and learn it;* and then, secondly, we will ask God's grace that we may *inwardly digest it.*

I. Come, then, first of all to THE READING, MARKING, AND LEARNING OF IT; and you will observe that in it there are three things very clearly stated. The atoning sacrifice of Jesus, our great High Priest, is set forth first by way of *contrast;* then its *character* is described; and, then, thirdly, its *consequences* are mentioned. Briefly upon each.

First, it is set forth by way of *contrast*-contrast with that ancient dispensation which was of divine origin, which conveyed much blessing to Israel, and which had the divine approval resting upon it. In that old dispensation, the first point mentioned in the text is, that there were many priests. "For every priest standeth"-implying that there were several. There were many priests at the same time-the sacrifices of the temple were too numerous to have been all of them performed by one man: all the descendants of Aaron were set apart to this work, and even then they required the aid of the Levites in certain inferior duties. And as there were many priests at one time, so there were many in succession. As a priest died, he was succeeded by his sons. By reason of infirmity, they were not able to continue in their office even through the whole of their lifetime; there was a certain period at which they were commanded to surrender their office to younger men. By reason of mortality the priesthood was perpetually changing; one high priest died, and was succeeded by another. Now the reason for the existence of many priests was this, that no one priest had accomplished the work of expiation. The good man has gone to his fathers and offered up the last of the morning lambs-but the morning lambs must still be offered. The high priest is dead, and there shall be no more opportunity for him to enter into that which is within the veil, but there must be a new high priest appointed, for the work is not finished. There were many priests, and as one generation passed away, another inherited the mitre. Now, herein is the glory of Christ that he is but one, and to this our attention is called by the apostle; that whereas there were many priests, and the sacrifices were hereby proved to be incomplete, since others had to take up the work; here is but one priest for ever, and he has finished his work, and therefore sits down at the right hand of God.

In further contrast, we observe that as there were many priests, so there were many sacrifices for sins. The sacrifice was offered once, but sin was not put away, and therefore had to be offered again. The great day of atonement came every year, wherein sin was afresh brought to remembrance. There was a day of atonement last year, but the people are unforgiven, and there must be a day of atonement this year; and when that day is over and the priest has come forth in his holy and beautiful apparel, with the breastplate gleaming in the light of God, Israel may rejoice for awhile, but there is one thought that will sadden her; there must be an atonement day next year, for sin still remaineth upon Israel, notwithstanding all that the house of Aaron can do by all their sacrifices. Yea, and moreover, remembrance of sin was of necessity made every day. There was the lamb for the morning, the innocent victim was slaughtered and burned; but the morning sacrifice did not put away the day's sin, for as the sun began to descend in the west another victim must be brought, and so on each morning and each night, victim, victim, victim, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, because the expiation was always incomplete. But our blessed Lord, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," was sacrificed but once, and that one sacrifice hath completed his expiatory work. In very truth his was a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than theirs.

Follow the contrast a little further, and observe the Apostle's assertion that the repeated sacrifices of the law could never take away sin. Those must have been strangely blind who thought they could. How could the blood of bulls and of goats put away sin? What conceivable connection can there be, except in symbol, between the death pangs of a beast and the sin of a man before God? The principle of substitution was by the legal sacrifices clearly set forth, but that was all; those offerings did not and could not provide the actual substitute. The principle of vicarious sacrifice they plainly unfolded, but they provided no real sin-offering. How could they? Where but in the Christ of God could a propitiation be found? Where else is there one who could in our nature make recompense to the injured law of God?

You will observe, dear brethren, that the words used in the text are these, "Can never take away sin." The word is, "Can never strip off sin." As if our sins were like filthy garments-the vestures of our disgrace-these could not be taken from us by the daily ministering of priests. There was no power in their sacrifices to remove the polluted coverings. Yet the priests were very diligent, for "every priest standeth" in the posture of activity, and they were persevering too, for "every priest standeth daily." They were obedient too, for they did not offer sacrifices according to their own devices, but, as the text saith, "the same sacrifices"-that is to say, such as were ordained of God. The priests were both diligent, constant, and obedient, and the principle of the truth was in their offerings-viz., the doctrine of substitution; yet sin still remained upon the consciences of the offerers, and none of them were made perfect.

Mark well one inference from this. If the sacrifices which were presented reverently and perpetually, according to God's own command, and were presented by men about whose priesthood there could be no manner of question-for they had received it indisputably of the Lord-if these offerings were of no service to the taking away of sin, it is clear enough that the offerings of so-called priests in these modern times cannot have any efficacy. Here is a priesthood, certainly appointed of God, offering victims ordained by divine order, and yet their service does not put away sin. How much less, then, can it be wise to trust in doubtful priests, who present sacrifices unwarranted by the word of God. Their descent cannot be proved, their title their pretensions of one sect are ridiculed by another, they are all alike deceivers; have done with them and rest alone in Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our profession.

If Jerusalem has no sacrifice in all her flocks, what use can it be to look to Rome? If Aaron's seed cannot put away sin, to what end shall we look to the shavelings of Antichrist?

Following the apostle's words, we come to *the character* of our Lord's sacrifice, and we perceive, in reading, that his priesthood was personal, and entirely within himself. There is but one true atoning priest. The twelfth verse says, "this man." The word "man" is not in the original; it is "this," "this priest," if you will; "this man," if you please; but its vagueness may make us think that the apostle scarcely knew what to say. You see the stars and the moon in their brightness, but suddenly they are all eclipsed and lost in a superior light. What can this glory be which has paled their fires? It is the sun rising in his strength. So, while we are beholding the priesthood of Aaron with all its excellence, it suddenly ceases to shine, because of the glory which excelleth, the radiant presence of one, for whom, like heaven's manna, it is not easy to find one fully descriptive name. Shall we call him "man?" Blessed be his name; he is so, our near kinsman, the "Son of Man." Shall we call him "priest?" He is so. Blessed be his name; he is the true Melchisedec. Shall we call him "God?" Well may we do so, for he counts it not robbery to be equal with God. But this one divinely mysterious person-this unique and solitary high-priest, accomplishes what the many priests of Aaron's race could not compass. They were weak, but he is allsufficient. He has wrought out eternal redemption, and made an end of sin.

Note well, that none stand with him at the altar; none is appointed to aid him, neither before him nor after him is there one to share his office. He is without father, without mother, without predecessor, and without successor. He stands alone and by himself, this glorious one who looked and there was no man, and therefore his own arm brought salvation; he trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him. Jesus, the sole sacrificing priest of our profession, has completed what the long line of the Levitical priesthood must have left for ever incomplete.

And we are told further, by the apostle, that as there was but one priest, so there was only one sacrifice. He "offered one sacrifice for sins." He himself was the sacrifice; his body the altar, himself the priest, himself also the victim. On Calvary's tree he presented himself a substitute for human guilt, and there he bore the crushing weight of Jehovah's wrath in his own body, on the behalf of all his people. On him their sins were laid, and he was numbered with the transgressors; and there he, in their stead, suffered what was due to the righteousness of God, and made atonement to divine justice for the sins of his people. This was done, not by many offerings, but by one sacrifice, and that one alone. Jesus offered no other sacrifice: he had never made one before, nor since, nor will he present another sacrifice in the future. His sin offering is one.

The text adds further that, as there was but one sacrifice, so it was but once offered for ever, or, as puts it, "Once for all." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." There is in the Scriptures no such idea as that of Christ perpetually offering himself; it is a childish invention of superstition. We are expressly told that he offered himself *"once."* Under the law the lamb was offered many times, the same sacrifices were repeated; but our Lord exclaimed, "It is finished," and concluded all his sacrificing works. He "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever." I do not know how your Bibles happen to be marked as to the comma in the passage; mine, now before me, reads thus:-"After he had offered one sacrifice for sin for ever sat down;" but that which I use at home is marked in the other way-"After he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down." We do not quite know where the comma should be; some of the best scholars maintain that it should be joined to the preceding words, others that it belongs to the succeeding. It does not involve any point of doctrine; and it may be read whichever way you please, without error. I think, however, the preponderating testimony is in favor of its being read, "he offered one sacrifice for sins for ever;" at any rate those words express a great and precious truth. Look back as far as you can, there was no sacrifice for sins, except the "lamb slain from before the foundation of the world;" look on as far as you will, till this present dispensation shall have completed its circle, and men shall have passed the judgment-seat, and you shall find no atonement for sin except this one-it stands alone, shining as a lone star, or a solitary rock in the midst of a raging sea. The propitiation which God has set forth was and ever must be one. The Lord Jesus offered himself once, once only, once only for ever: there is no other atoning priest, no other sacrifice, and there is no repetition of that one sacrifice.

Now we go on to notice *the results* of Christ's one offering, which are, in the text, described as threefold-towards *himself,* his *enemies,* and his *people.*

Towards *himself:* After he had offered one sacrifice for sins he for ever sat down at the right hand of God. Every priest, under the old dispensation, stood; but this man sat down, and the posture is very instructive. The typical priests stood because there was work to do; still must they present their sacrifices; but our Lord sits down because there is no more sacrificial work to do; atonement is complete, he has finished his task. There were no seats in the tabernacle. Observe the Levitical descriptions and you will see that there were no resting-places for the priests in the holy place. Not only were none allowed to sit, but there was nothing whatever to sit upon. According to the rabbis, the king might sit in the holy places, and, perhaps, David did sit there; if so, he was a striking type of Christ sitting as king. A priest never sat in the tabernacle, he was under a dispensation which did not afford rest, and was not intended to give it, a covenant of works which gives the soul no repose. Jesus sits in the holy of holies, and herein we see that his work is finished.

There is more teaching in the passage. He "sat down;" this shows that he took possession of the holy place. Under the law, when the priest had done his work, what did he do? He went home. Neither the temple nor the tabernacle was his home. If you had asked a priest, "Where dwellest thou?" he would have said, "amongst the tribe of Levi yonder I have my abode." But this man, when he had finished his work, sat down in the holy place, because he was at home, not a servant only but a son, yea, and Lord of the whole house; and, therefore, he took his own seat therein by right. It is a joyful truth that he did this representatively, to show us that while the law gave no permanent possession, and could not establish the seed of Israel in possession of sacred privileges, the gospel gives us an abiding place amongst the children of God, who dwell in his house for ever.

The apostle tells us where this seat of Christ was. He says, he "sat down at the right hand of God." This indicates the highest glory possible; our poet calls it

"The highest place that heaven affords."

There was no nobler position, or Jesus should have had it. Note the remark of this same apostle in the first chapter of this epistle: "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, sit thou at my right hand?" Angels do not sit at the right hand of God; they are constantly in the place of service, and therefore they stand ready to fly on their Master's commands; but Jesus sits in the highest seat as Lord over his own house, clothed with honor and dignity, enthroned in the place of favor at the right hand of God. Sitting there he is to be viewed as clothed with everlasting power, "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him." "Exalted to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins;" no more the "despised and rejected, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief," no more in weakness and dishonor taken out to die; he sits as a king upon his throne, distributing royal bounties, coequal with Jehovah himself. As King of kings, Jesus Christ is exalted at the right hand of the Father. So much with regard to the result of the Redeemer's passion in reference to himself.

Now, observe carefully the result of his offering with regard to *his enemies.* He sits there "expecting till they be made his footstool." They are crushed already; sin which is the sting of death has been removed, and the law which was the strength of sin has been satisfied. Sin being put away by Christ's death, he has effectually broken the jawteeth of all his enemies. When Jesus Christ offered himself unto God he fulfilled that ancient promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Christ has set his foot upon the old dragon's head, and crushed out his power. Still, however, a feeble fight is kept up; feeble, I say, for so it is to Christ, though to us it seems vigorous. Sin and Satan within us, and all Christ's enemies without us, including death itself, are vainly raging against the Christ of God, for every day they are being put beneath his feet; every day as the battle rages the victory turns unto the enthroned Christ. In us I trust sin has been put beneath Christ's feet; in thousands of others it shall yet be so. Jesus upon the throne expects the growth of that victory till all his enemies shall be utterly and ignominiously beaten. "O long expected day, begin!" Father, fulfill thy Son's expectations, for thy saints expect it in him. Let the time come when every enemy shall be beneath his feet.

We will not tarry, however, on that, but close this exposition of the words of the text by noticing the effect of Christ's death upon *his own people.* We are informed that he hath "perfected" them. What a glorious word! Those for whom Christ has died were perfected by his death. It does not mean that he made them perfect in characters so that they are no longer sinners, but that he made those for whom he died perfectly free from the guilt of sin. When Christ took their sins upon himself, sin remained no longer upon them, for it could not be in two places at one and the same time; if it was on Christ it was not upon them; they were acquitted at the bar of God when Christ was, on their behalf, "numbered with the transgressors." When Jesus suffered the penalty due to his people's sins to the last jot and tittle, then their sins ceased to be, and the covenant was fulfilled: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more for ever." There was a clean sweep made of sin: "He hath finished transgression, and made an end of sin;" and that for all his people. They want no other washing, no further purging, as far as pardon of sin and acceptance with God in the matter of justification are concerned, for they are all perfected by his sacrifice.

His people are described in the text as "them that are sanctified," and you must beware of misunderstanding that word as though it meant those who are made perfectly holy in character. The word implies an inward work of grace, but it means a great deal more. The passage should be read "He hath perfected for ever them that are being sanctified," for it is in the present in the Greek. The text is not to be made to say that those who are perfectly sanctified are perfected, that would be a common-place, self-evident truth; but the great high priest perfected for ever those who are being sanctified. Now, sanctification means, primarily, the setting apart of a people by God to be holy to himself. Election is sanctification virtually; all God's people were sanctified-set apart and made holy to the Lord-in the eternal purpose and sovereign decree or ever the earth was. Christ has by his death perfected all who were sanctified or set apart in election. This purpose of sanctification is carried out further when those set apart are called out by grace. When effectual grace separates men from the world by conversion and regeneration, then they become, in another sense, the sanctified; they are set apart even as Christ set apart himself, dedicated to God's service, and separated from sinners. As the work which began at regeneration is continued and carried on in them, they are in another aspect sanctified; they are realising in themselves that sanctification or dedication to God, which was theirs from before the foundation of the world. The text relates not only to those in heaven who are perfectly sanctified, but it relates to all who were set apart in the purposes of grace, that as far as their pardon and justification are concerned, Christ perfected them for ever when he offered up himself without spot unto God.

II. We have thus studied the interpretation of the words, reading, marking, and learning them. Now, I ask your earnest attention while we try to DIGEST THESE TRUTHS. It is in the digestion that the real nutriment shall come to our hearts.

All ye who desire eternal life lend me your ears, for this matter concerns you-observe that the whole business of this passage concerns sinners. The verse speaks about the Jewish priests who offered sacrifices for sins, and then it further speaks concerning Christ Jesus who has put away sin. O ye guilty, the gospel is meant for you. If there be any of you who are innocent and pure, and without spot, for you I have no words of consolation; but oh, ye sinners, the gospel is for you, for you the priesthood and the substitution of Jesus, for you his death on earth, for you his reign and power in heaven. This fact ought to encourage every trembling conscience. Are any of you saying, "Ah, I shall never be saved, I am so guilty?" Believe not that lie of Satan. "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The gospel has for its special aim and intent the putting away of sin, and therefore it is suitable to your case.

Hearken then further to me. See in the text the position out of which you should labor to escape. It is the position of those who stand daily ministering and daily offering sacrifices which can never put away sin. You are seeking mercy and I know what you are doing; you are going about to establish a righteousness of your own. You thought, "I will pray very regularly,"-you have done so for months, but prayers can never put away sin. What is there in prayer itself that can have merit in it to make atonement for sin? You have read the Scriptures regularly, for which I am most glad, but this you always ought to have done, and if you now do it most commendably, in what way will that put away sin? "Ah, but I have been a regular attendant at a place of worship." It is well you should, for "faith cometh by hearing;" but I see no connection between the mere fact of your sitting in a place of worship and the putting away of sin; you know it has not eased your conscience yet, but has even increased your sense of sin. Perhaps some of you have for years been trying to save yourselves, and you have got no further; you feel as if you were further off than ever you were. "Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which profiteth not?" Why stand you daily at the altar offering that which can never put away sin? It would be infinitely wiser to flee to the sacrifice which can atone.

Now, follow on the text, and, oh, may it come into your very soul, for its practical teaching is that the one sole object of faith for the pardon of sin, is the man, the priest, Christ Jesus. "This man," says the Apostle, "offered one sacrifice for sins for ever." If thou wouldst have peace of heart, thou must get it only from this one glorious person, the Christ of God. I tell thee solemnly, thou wilt damn thyself by thy prayers, and thy tears, and thy repentings, and thy church goings, and thy chapel goings, as easily as by blasphemy and fornication, if thou trustest in them; for if thou makest a Savior and an idol of thy best works, they are accursed. Though thine idol be of purest gold, it is as much an abomination unto the living God as if thou hadst made it of filth. There must be no looking anywhere but to Jesus, not in any measure or degree. He who looks partly to Jesus, and partly to himself, looks not to Christ at all. If a man shall put one foot upon the land and the other on the sea-the foot that is on the land will not avail him, he must certainly fall, because his other standing place is weak. If a chain be made strong enough to bear huge weights in every portion except one link, yet as we all know its strength is not to be measured by the stronger portions, but by the weak link; and if you have one weak link in your hope, if you are resting in anything you are or hope to be, or can do or feel, that one weak link will snap and ruin you for ever.

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,  
Can do helpless sinners good."

From top to bottom, from foundation to pinnacle, our hopes must be in the work of Jesus, and we must trust in him alone, or else we shall build in vain. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." Other hope beneath the skies there is none. O soul, learn the uselessness of looking to anything but Christ; but, be thou assured of this, if thou wilt look to him, and to him alone, he will put away thy sin, nay, he has done it by the sacrifice of himself.

Furthermore, here is another thought-I would that you would drink it in as Gideon's fleece drank in the dew-it is this: the efficacy of the atonement of Christ for sin is as great to-day as ever it was. He "offered one sacrifice for sins," for what? for a thousand years? No! But the text says *"for ever!"*-for ever!

"The dying thief rejoiced to see,  
That fountain in his day,  
Anal there may I, though vile as he,  
Wash all my sins away.

Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood,  
Shall never loose its power;  
Till all the ransomed church of God,  
Be saved to sin no more."

"One sacrifice for sins for ever." The devil tells you it is of no use for you to believe in Christ, there is not efficacy for you, you have sinned away your day of grace; tell him he is a liar, Christ has offered one sacrifice for sins *for ever;* and while a man lives beneath the covenant of mercy, where the gospel is sounded in his ears, there is efficacy in the atonement for ever. The atoning sacrifice has no limit in its merit, the salvation of some has not drained it of even the smallest degree of its power. As the sunlight, though it be seen by millions of eyes, is as bright as ever it was, so is it with Jesus. Perhaps the Sun's fires may grow dull, and become dimmed in the course of ages, but it is certain that the eternal fount of mercy, the Sun of Righteousness, will never fail. He will continue to flood his people with the golden sunlight of his forgiving grace. He has made one sacrifice for sins for ever. I will come to him then. He is able to save me-he is able to save me even though I were a sinner of seventy years of age. I will come to him, I will rest in him-in him alone. Oh, believe me, if you do this you have eternal life abiding in you.

A further thought. The text leads me to say to you that it is utterly hopeless, if you desire salvation, for you to expect Jesus Christ to do anything more than he has already done. Many are waiting for a something, and they scarce know what. Now Jesus, when he died and went to heaven, perfected for ever all his work; and if you do not believe to-day in what he has done, there will be no surer grounds for belief to-morrow. If faith be difficult to me to-day, I must not expect that I shall have any more evidence, or that there will be any more truth for me to rely upon, if I live another twenty years. God has set forth Christ for you as guilty sinners to rest on; and if that is not enough for you, what more would you have? Christ has offered himself, and died and suffered in our stead, and gone into his glory; and, if you cannot depend upon him, what more would you have him do? Shall he come and die again? You have rejected him once; you would reject him though he died twice. But that cannot be done; there is enough in his sacrifice to answer all the purposes of mercy, and if you sin wilfully by rejecting him, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation." This is the point; all the atonement that could save me in ten years time is here now; all that I can ever rely upon if I postpone all thoughts of faith, all is here already. There will be no improvement in Christ. He has perfected his work. Oh, poor troubled soul, rest thou on him now. While I put these words, as it were, into your mouths, how I wish I could put them into your hearts! How foolish you are who are looking for signs and wonders or else you will not believe. May the Spirit of God show you that Jesus is now able and willing to save you, and that all you have to do is to take what he has done, and simply trust him, and you shall be saved this morning, completely saved, perfected through his one sacrifice. There remaineth no more to be done by the Redeemer. He sits down, and he will not rise for any further sacrifice. He has finished his atonement and perfected those he means to save; and if you believe not in him, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

Yet, again, I want you, dearly beloved brethren, to gather from the text before us the true posture of every believer in Christ. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down." If I am a believer that is my posture, if you are a believer that is yours,-you are to sit down. Under the law there was no sitting down. Even at the Passover the Israelites stood with their loins girt and their staves in their hands. There was no sitting down. It is only at the gospel supper that our proper posture is that of recumbency, reclining, or sitting down, because our warfare is accomplished. They that have believed have entered into rest. Jesus hath given us rest, we are not traversing the wilderness, we are come unto mount Zion, unto the glorious assembly of the church of the first born whose names are written in heaven. Our justifying work is finished, finished by Christ. Sit down Christian, sit down and rest in thy Lord. There is much to be done as to fighting your sins, much to be done for Christ in the world, but so far as justification and forgiveness are concerned, rest is your proper place, peace in Christ Jesus your lawful portion.

Your position is also to be one of expectancy. Christ, when he sits down, expects his enemies to be made his footstool. Expect, O believer, the time when you shall be rid of all sin. Fight manfully against your inbred corruptions, struggle against sin as you see it in the outside world, and expect every day with holy faith that you shall get the victory. As Christ sits there expecting, he hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in himself; and we will sit there and look down upon this erring world, and expect the time when all evil shall be beneath our feet as it is beneath his.

Meanwhile, our posture is, once again, that of those who are perfected in Christ Jesus. How I wish that we could all realize this, and live in the power of it. If I am, indeed, a believer, I have nothing whatever to do in order to put away the guilt of my sins. I have much to do by faith to overcome the power of sin in me, and to seek after holiness; but so far as the guilt of transgression is concerned, Jesus Christ's one offering hath perfected all his people, there is not a sin remaining upon them, nor a trace of sin; they are "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" before God's sight they are perfectly lovely; they are not somewhat beautiful, but they are altogether lovely in Christ; they are accepted not in part but altogether, "accepted in the Beloved." When I get upon this strain, words are quite inadequate to express the emotions of my soul. This truth might well make David dance before the ark of the Lord-to think that though black in ourselves, we are comely in Christ; though like the smokedried tents of Kedar we are foul, yet clothed in our Savior's beauties we are like the curtains of Solomon for glory. The glory of the text is that we are perfected *for ever;* not for to-morrow, and then suffered to fall from grace; not for the next twenty years, and then turned out of the covenant; but he hath perfected *"for ever"* those that are set apart. It is a work which abides like the worker himself, and while Christ sits on the throne his people cannot die; while his work remains for ever perfect, they are also for ever perfect in him.

Now, brethren, another practical point is this, that it becomes us to make the evidence of our interest in this gracious work more and more clear to others. The text says, "Hath perfected them that are sanctified," or set apart as holy unto God. We must be more and more set apart every day, we must labor after holiness; this must be our object, not in order that we may be saved, for we are saved already, but in order that by others it may be clearly seen that we are saved, and they seeing our good works may glorify our Father which is in heaven. If I have in myself no measure of holiness, how shall I be recognized as belonging to Christ? Is it not foolish presumption to say "I am perfect in Christ," if still my soul lives in sin, and loves it? May the Lord, by his Spirit, lead us in the ways of holiness, and then, walking in the light as he is in the light, we shall have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son shall cleanse us from all sin.

Finally, brethren, it remains for us to recollect that Christ will be one of two things to every one of us here present: either we shall see him at the right hand of God and rejoice that he is lifted so high, or else we shall behold him there with horror as we writhe beneath his feet. For his people, perfected for ever, it is their heaven to think that Christ is highly exalted. Oh, would we not exalt him if we could! Is there anything in this world that we would keep back from him? Is there any suffering from which we would shrink if we could lift him high? I hope I can speak for all of God's people and say, the dearest object of our life is to honor him. Oh for high thrones for Jesus and bright crowns for Jesus!

"Let him be crowned with majesty  
Who bowed his head to death!  
And be his honors sounded high  
By all things that have breath!"

Let him have the highest place that heaven can yield him.

But, if we will not believe his Godhead, if we will not trust him as the Mediator, if we have no part in his sacrifice, if we oppose his gospel, if we reject his claims to our obedience, there is another position we shall have to take up, and that is, beneath his feet. Those feet will be heavy indeed! They were pierced once; but if ever those pierced feet come upon you, they will crush you to powder. Nothing is so terrible as love when once it is turned to anger. Oil is soft, but how it burns. Inflame love into jealousy and it is cruel as the grave. Beware, ye that reject the Savior, for in the day when he cometh he will smite you with a rod of iron, and even his face, which is full of tenderness to-day, shall then be full of terror, and this shall be your cry, "Hide us ye mountains, ye rocks conceal us, from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." What a wonderful mixture of words, "The wrath of the Lamb." It is one of the most dreadful expressions in Scripture. The Lord grant we may never feel its terrible meaning. May his blood cleanse us. Amen.