

**The 1689 Confession; Chapter 8 – “Of Christ the Mediator”, Message # 11 –
“Aaron’s High Priestly Garments”, Presented in the Adult Sunday School Class,
by Pastor Paul Rendall on March 1st, 2020.**

Paragraph 9 – This office of mediator between God and man is proper (1) only to Christ, who is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and may not be either in whole, or any part thereof, transferred from him to any other.

1. 1st Timothy 2: 5

Paragraph 10 – This number and order of offices is necessary; for in respect of our (1) ignorance, we stand in need of his prophetic office; and in respect of our alienation from God, (2) and imperfection of the best of our services, we need his priestly office to reconcile us and present us acceptable unto God; and in respect to our averseness and utter inability to return to God, and for our rescue and security from our spiritual adversaries, we need his kingly office (3) to convince, subdue, draw, uphold, deliver, and preserve us to his heavenly kingdom.

1. John 1: 18 2. Colossians 1: 21 Galatians 5: 17 3. John 16: 8 Psalm 110:3 Luke 1: 74 and 75

Introductory Statements

We are told here in Paragraph 10 that we need a Prophet in respect of our ignorance. To follow this up we secondly need a High Priest. We need our Lord Jesus Christ as a High Priest in respect of our alienation from God, and the imperfection of the best of services. We need His High Priestly work of sacrifice to reconcile us to God, and make us acceptable unto God, and even faultless before His presence with great joy. In other words we must have a High Priest to mediate on our behalf in regard to our being sinners, so that we might be saved and become God’s saints. Christ had to offer the sacrifice of Himself to atone for our sins, and to apply the redemption that He has purchased on our behalf, and then having risen from the dead and having ascended on high, He then continues to intercede on our behalf so that His presence there at the right hand of God, we who are His people are continually forgiven of all of our sins; our persons and our works being accepted by God the Father being covered by His blood and righteousness.

1. What was a high priest in Old Testament times?

Hebrews 5: 1-6 – “For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” “He can have compassion on those are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness.” “Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.” “And no one takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.” “So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.’”

a. A high priest in Israel was a man called by God

So, a priest is one who was taken from among men, appointed to minister to men in things pertaining to God.

b. He would offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins according to the law both for himself and for others.

The fact that he was a man shows that he was sinner even as other men, but because he was a sinner, he could have compassion on people who were ignorant or going astray, since he was also subject to weakness; that is, sinful weakness with having a fleshly sinful nature as we all do. To offer gifts as well as sacrifices meant that he would offer the free will offerings brought to him (things that were given as gift to God) as well as his offering blood sacrifices for sins.

Leviticus 22: 17-21 – “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of the house of Israel or of the sojourners in Israel presents a burnt offering as his offering, for any of their vows or freewill offerings that they offer to the LORD, if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you. And when anyone offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or from the flock, to be accepted it must be perfect; there shall be no blemish in it.”

Leviticus 22: 29 – “And when you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted.”

He was required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.” In this regard Aaron was not like Christ because Christ was sinless, pure, perfect, and holy. But Aaron would be humbled by his own sinful weaknesses and would be able to have compassion on the ignorant and those going astray.

d. The person who was called to this honorable office didn't take the honor to himself, but he was called by God to it.

In regard to special Old Testament people of God, Aaron was the first man appointed to this office of High Priest, at the time of the giving of the law.

2. Aaron in his office as high priest was typical of Christ.

a. He was set apart to it in some very impressive and distinctive ways, which were typical of Christ.

Turn with me over to Exodus 28: 1-4 – “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

So garments were made for Aaron to minister in. These are all called holy garments made for glory and beauty that would be placed upon Aaron because of his office as high priest. Aaron was going to minister in the holy place in the tabernacle and he was to perform holy service to the Lord in regard to sinful people. But there was a beauty and glory that He was going to be clothed with in his garments. Aaron would look so good in these garments! Someone has once said that clothes make the man. It is so in this case. All of this was meant by God to be typical of Christ's human nature, which John Gill says, “was a garment put on, and put off, and on again, and in which He officiated as a priest, and still does; and which is now very glorious, and in which He is fairer than any of the children of men; and of the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness, in which all His people, His priests, appear exceeding glorious and beautiful, even in a perfection of beauty.”

b. The Ephod was Typical of Christ's Perfect Person and His High Priestly Ministry

Exodus 28: 5-14 – “They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and the fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, artistically worked. It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and so it shall be joined together. And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, you

shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial. You shall also make settings of gold, and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.”

George Rogers (who taught at Spurgeon’s Pastor’s College) says – “The ephod, with the breastplate and girdle fastened to it, and put upon the person of Aaron, constituted him a worshipper; adorned with this he could draw near and worship in the holy place. It was put on over the blue robe, and is supposed to have been much shorter than that garment, reaching a little below the knees, whilst the blue robe reached down to the feet. It fitted closely to the person, and was kept in its place by the girdle. It was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen. These materials represent the purity, loveliness, and glory of Christ as the Man Jesus Christ and the mighty God. It would spangle with gold, and the colors would be so blended as to display their richness and beauty in the best possible way. The four materials were the same as the vail was made of, viz., fine linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, which represent the manhood of Christ in all its perfection as such (Heb_10:19-20); but in the gold thread with which that cloth was embroidered (Exo_39:3), I see the Godhead of the Lord, and the two are so joined together that you cannot have one without the other. The back and front parts of the ephod were joined at the shoulders, by means of the shoulder-pieces from which it was suspended. In each shoulder-piece was a precious stone set in gold—an onyx stone, a beautiful white and half-transparent stone. In these precious stones the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraven. Aaron carried the names of his people upon his shoulders. He presented them thus before the Lord, and when God looked down upon Aaron, He saw the names of His people indelibly engraven in white stones. The shoulder is the place of strength. The omnipotent strength of Christ is ours. He carries His people’s burdens and themselves too (Isa_63:9; Isa_40:11; Isa_46:4; Psa_55:22). The government is upon His shoulder, and the crown is upon His head.

c. The Breastplate is typical of Christ’s love for His people.

Verses 17-30 – “And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes. "You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. Then you shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; and the other two ends of the two braided chains you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. "You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. And two other rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod. So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually. And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thumim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.”

I believe that the stones in the breastplate described here, represent the 12 tribes of Israel, and they are typical of God’s Spiritual Israel. God’s people are like the engravings of a signet, it says. They are His jewels, His precious stones. They are engraven on the palms of His hands, and set as a seal on Christ’s arm and heart. They are dear and precious to Him. He ever lives to make intercession for them. He

supplies them out His fullness with grace from the His fullness of grace whereby along with His intercession he cultivates character qualities of the fruit of the Spirit in the hearts of all of His people.

George Rogers says again – “As the heart is the place of affection, and the shoulder the place of strength, Aaron had to carry the names of his people on his heart, to show that he loved them, and on his shoulder, to show that he was ever ready to serve them. The typical and spiritual meaning of this is very sweet. Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, and the names of all His people are not upon, but in, His heart. His omnipotent strength and His infinite love are ours—ours for ever. He never forgets one of His people, nor fails to love them. They are His jewels, His special treasures, His Father’s love-gifts, and He values them because His Father gave them to Him. The time is coming when He will count up His jewels, and it will then be found that not one soul given to Christ by the Father will be missing. As every ray of light that fell upon Aaron would fall upon the names of Aaron’s people, so every smile that God gives to Christ is given also to the people of Christ; for Christ and His people are one, and God never looks upon Christ without seeing His people—all His people, for they are in Him—loved as He is loved.”

Exodus 28: 31-38 – “You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die. "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.”

John Gill says on the robe – “This was a different garment from the ephod, was longer than that, and was under it, and of different materials: that was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen; this only of linen, and wholly of a blue colour, without any curious figures upon it, as were on that: in Exo_39:22, it is said to be of woven work; it was woven from top to bottom, and had no seam in it: so Josephus says (b), "the coat did not consist of two parts, nor was it sewed upon the shoulder, nor on the side, but was one long piece of woven work; ‘and such was the seamless coat our Lord Jesus Christ wore, literally understood, Joh_19:23 and both were an emblem of his perfect righteousness, which has nothing of the works of men joined to it, to justify them before God, and make them acceptable to him: for this robe signifies the robe of Christ's righteousness, the best robe; it has its name from a word which signifies prevarication or sin, because it covers the sins of God's people; the matter of it was linen, and so fitly points at the fine linen, that is the righteousness of the saints, and being blue or sky colored may denote heaven and happiness, which that entitles to, see Mat_5:20, the Septuagint version calls it a garment down to the feet, using the same word as in Rev_1:13 and fitly agrees with that righteousness with which all Christ's members are covered and justified, Isa_45:24.

John Gill on the Golden Bells worn by the high priest – “Golden bells” may denote either the intercession of Christ in heaven, which if not vocal, as on earth, has a speech or sound in it, which is understood: his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, call aloud for peace and pardon, and it is a sound that is always heard with delight; the matter of them being gold may denote the preciousness and excellency of Christ's intercession, and the duration of it; and being on the hem of the robe shows that Christ's righteousness is that on which his intercession depends, and from whence it has its efficacy.”

Conclusion: Aaron was in many ways a type of Christ in the clothing that he wore; the turban or mitre topping it all off. On it was a gold plate with the engraving – “Holy to the Lord” on it. And this being on Aaron’s head, it typifies our great High Priest who is perfectly holy; He thinks upon us for good. It is to Him that we look that He might intercede for us, and take the guilt of any sin away from the holy things that we, His people might commit, in the midst of our service to Him. There is sin in the best works of

any saint, but our Lord Jesus bears all the guilt of all the imperfections away, so that our thoughts, words, and works might be acceptable to God.