

A Great High-Priest - Blessing the People

by J.C. Philpot

J.C. Philpot's sermon explores the role of Christ as the Great High Priest who blesses His people with spiritual and eternal blessings.

Scripture: Numbers 6:23, Psalm 84:11, Psalm 133:2, John 14:19, Romans 11:29, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 1:3, Hebrews 7:25, 1 Peter 1:8, 1 John 5:11

Topics: "High Priest", "Divine Blessings"

Description

J.C. Philpot preaches on the ministration of the blessed Lord as the great High Priest, focusing on His role in blessing the people. Drawing parallels between the typical high priest under the law and Jesus as the ultimate High Priest, the sermon emphasizes how Jesus blesses His waiting people from the courts of bliss in His glorified humanity. Through His blessings, including eternal life, reconciliation, justification, and spiritual affections, Jesus communicates His grace and glory to His church, making His presence at the right hand of the Father a fountain of spiritual life in the heart.

Transcript

Chapter Fourteen from the book *Meditations on the Sacred Humanity of The Blessed Redeemer*

One important part of the ministration of the blessed Lord, as the great High Priest over the house of God, we have not yet touched upon. This is his blessing the people .

This, we know, was committed to the typical high priest under the law as one of the functions of his ministerial office. "Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying. On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." #Nu 6:23-27 . The chief season when the high priest blessed the people according to this formula was on the great day of atonement, when, after having carried the blood of the bullock and the goat into the holy of holies, and sprinkled it on and before the mercy-seat, he laid aside his linen garments, and, putting on the garments of glory and beauty, showed himself to the people who were praying without. #Lu 1:10 . In all this there was a beautiful propriety. The high priest had two distinct sets of consecrated garments. One set was made wholly of linen, which he wore on the great day of atonement. This was simplicity and purity itself, and as such is elsewhere used as a type of the pure humanity of the Son of God in the flesh, as #Eze 9:2,11 Da 10:5 . The other set of consecrated garments was worn on days of high and great solemnity; and being made of gold, and blue,

and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, was called "golden," or "garments of glory and beauty." The linen garments, then, which the high priest wore when he offered the bullock and the goat, and took their blood into the most holy place, were not only typical of the pure and perfect human nature of the Lord Jesus, but of that nature in its state of humiliation on earth. Similarly, the garments of glory and beauty, such as the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue, with its hem adorned with bells of pure gold and pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen, and the ephod on the breast, with the twelve precious stones on which the names of the tribes were engraved, #Exod 39 typically and figuratively represented the glorified humanity of the blessed Lord, which he now wears at the right hand of the Father.

As, then, the high priest, when he had laid aside his linen garments, and assumed the garments of glory and beauty, blessed the people from the court of the tabernacle, so the Lord in his glorified humanity blesses his waiting people here below from the courts of bliss. In him, as the church's risen Head, all spiritual blessings are lodged: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." #Eph 1:3 . He is the living Fountain whence all the streams flow to water his church here below. The ancient promise made to Abraham was, that "in him and his seed," that is, Christ, as the apostle explains the word, #Ga 3:16 , "all the nations of the earth should be blessed." Every blessing, then, which the elect enjoy either for time or eternity, in providence or in grace, comes from him as their covenant Head. They are blessed in him as they are chosen, adopted, and accepted in him. #Eph 1:4-6 . Not to speak of his blessings in providence, though in these "he daily loadeth us with benefits," #Psa 68:19 , how unspeakable are his blessings in grace!

Look at the blessing of eternal life which hangs before the eyes of the poor way-worn pilgrim in this world of sin and sorrow, as the prize of his high calling, the prospect of which, at the end of his race, animates his drooping spirits - this rich and glorious crown, without which all others would cease to be blessings, is given in Christ. "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." #1Joh 5:11 . This blessing the risen Lord bestows on his people when he first quickens their souls into spiritual life, for he is "the resurrection and the life," #Joh 11:25 , and "quickeneth whom he will;" #Joh 5:21 ; and the life thus given he ever maintains, for his own words are, "Because I live ye shall live also." #Joh 14:19 . As, then, he ever lives at God's right hand, for he says, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore;" #Re 1:18 ; and again, "Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them;" #Heb 7:25 ; he sends down the blessing of eternal life into their soul. And this blessing of eternal life which he thus bestows has a sweet connection with the anointing which he received as the consecrated High Priest; for the droppings of that rich unction went down to the very skirts of his garments, and falls in regenerating grace upon the hearts of his people, like the dew of Hermon: "It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." #Ps 133:2,3 . How sweet to carry in the bosom the pledge, earnest, and foretaste of eternal life, and to feel it to be the gift of God; #Ro 6:23 ; stored up in Christ, who is himself "the true God and eternal life;" #1Joh 5:20 ; manifested and brought to light in the Person of Jesus; #1Joh 1:2 ; and firmly secured by covenant oath and everlasting promise. #Ps 21:2-4 89:34-37 Tit 1:2 1Joh 2:25 .

From this ever-flowing and overflowing fountain of eternal life proceed all other spiritual blessings, as reconciliation to God by the blood of the Lamb; free and full justification by his imputed righteousness; deliverance from all condemnation, past, present, and to come; and, as a consequence of these glorious

mercies, manifested pardon of sin; peace of conscience; fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; revelations of his presence, power, loveliness, glory, and beauty; sips and tastes of his dying love; spiritual affections; heavenly desires; holy longings after conformity to his image, for grace and strength to imitate his example and walk in his footsteps, for power to do that which is pleasing in his sight, and to live to his praise - in a word, all that sweet and sacred intercourse with the blessed Lord which is the very life and power, sum and substance of all vital godliness; and without which all religion is but an empty form, a name, and a notion. It is thus that the reality of the presence of the Lord Jesus at the right hand of the Father is made experimentally known. He is seen, felt, and believed in as the Way, the Truth, and the Life; for he is walked in as the Way of access unto God; sought unto as the Truth, the knowledge of which maketh free; and cleaved unto as the Life, from whom it was first received, and by whom it is ever maintained.

Our blessed Lord was to be "a High Priest after the order of Melchizedec." It will be remembered that Melchizedec met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him. #Ge 14:19 . In the same way our great High Priest blesses the seed of Abraham; for "they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham;" #Ga 3:9 ; and as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they walk in his steps who "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." #Ro 4:3,12 . But Melchizedec the type could only ask God to bless Abraham. He could not himself confer the blessing; but Jesus, the antitype, our great Melchizedec, whose priesthood is after the power of an endless life, #Heb 7:16 , blesses his people, not by merely asking God to bless them, but by himself showering down blessings upon them, and by communicating to them out of his own fullness every grace which can sanctify as well as save. Even before his incarnation, when he appeared in human form, as if anticipating in appearance that flesh and blood which he should afterwards assume in reality, he had power to bless.

Thus we read that when Jacob wrestled with the angel - which was no created angel, but the Angel of the covenant, even the Son of God himself in human shape - he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." And in answer to his wrestling cry we read that "he blessed him there." Jacob knew that no created angel could bless him. He therefore said, when he had got the blessing, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." #Ge 32:26-30 . To this blessing Jacob afterward referred when, in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, he said, "The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." #Ge 48:16 .

Thus, also, our gracious Lord, immediately before his ascension to heaven, as if in anticipation of the gifts and graces which he was to send down upon them when exalted to the right hand of the Father, "lifted up his hands and blessed his disciples;" and as if to show that he would still ever continue to bless them, "he was parted from them and carried up into heaven," even "while he blessed them," as if he were blessing them all the way up to heaven, even before he took possession of his mediatorial throne. #Lu 24:50 51 .

As, then, he sits in glory at the right hand of the Father, he sends down blessings upon his people. He blesses them "with the blessings of heaven from above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb, and unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." #Ge 49:25,26 . He holds all nature in his hands; the gold and the silver are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; his is the earth and the fullness thereof; all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth; he holds the reins of government, doing according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; so that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? He is the sun and shield of God's people - their sun, ever to be their light; their shield, to be ever their defence. He giveth grace and glory - grace here, glory hereafter. #Ps 84:11 . He makes his strength perfect in their weakness, that they may glory in

their infirmities; #2Co 12:9 ; nourishes and cherishes them, as being members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; #Eph 5:29,30 ; and communicates to them more than heart can conceive or tongue express out of his own fullness; for it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. #1Co 2:9,10 Joh 1:16 Col 1:19 . He can see all the designs of their enemies, and defeat them; all the temptations of Satan, and overrule them; all his snares, and break them to pieces; all his enmity and malice, and can bruise him under their feet shortly. He can pity their case when bowed with grief and afflictions; can hear their sigh and cry out of the depths of trouble and sorrow; and can stretch forth his hand to deliver them from the worst of foes and the worst of fears.

And what a matter this is of living, daily experience, so as to make the presence of Jesus at the right hand of the Father no mere doctrine seen in the letter of truth, but a very fountain of spiritual life in the heart. How continually, how, in deep trouble, almost unceasingly, is the poor, tried, tempted, and afflicted child of God, looking up to this merciful and faithful High Priest and begging of him to appear and bless his soul! This is all that he needs. For the Lord himself to bless him comprises every desire of his heart. One word, one look, one touch, one manifestation of his love and blood, is all that he wants. But if he did not see him by the eye of faith at the right hand of the Father, and able to bless him with the blessing that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow with it, would his prayers, desires, tears, and supplications be so directed toward him? If, too, at times he has been blessed with a sweet sense of his presence and his love, he cannot rest satisfied without some fresh manifestation of these blessings to his soul.

And how fully adapted and divinely qualified he is to communicate these rich blessings; for God, by exalting him to his own right hand, has "made him most blessed for ever;" or as we read in the margin, "set him to be blessings." #Ps 21:6 . He has "prevented him" (or, as the word means, anticipated him in his wishes and petitions) "with the blessings of goodness, and set a crown of pure gold upon his head." This is the reward of his sufferings, for "his glory is great in God's salvation," and therefore "honour and majesty has laid upon him." #Ps 21:5 . And does he not deserve it all? Has he not "obtained eternal redemption for us"? #Heb 9:12 ; and is he not "of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"? #1Co 1:30 . Is he not "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," #Ro 10:4 ; and "the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him?" #Heb 5:9 .

How, then, can we doubt that he is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him"? For what is there which he has not done for their salvation in his finished work? and what is there which he cannot do in the application of that finished work to their heart? For we need his present help as well as his present obedience. When the soul, then, sinks low into trouble or dejection; when troops of sins come to view, like so many gaunt spectres of the past; when innumerable backslidings, slips, and falls crowd in upon the conscience, bringing guilt and fear in their train, how the cast-down spirit will sometimes look at and ponder over the various cases of those sinners of every shape, and hue, and dye, whose salvation, without money and without price, is recorded in the word of truth. How it looks, for instance, at a sinning David, a blood-stained Manasseh, a dying thief, a returning prodigal, a weeping Mary Magdalene, a denying Peter, a persecuting Saul, a trembling jailer, the Jerusalem sinners who killed the Prince of life. And as it views these self-condemned, self-aborred sinners, so freely accepted, so everlastingly saved, how it looks up to the Lord of life and glory that it may receive similar blessings out of his fullness.

It is in this and similar ways that a communication is kept up with the risen and ascended Lord upon his throne of grace; and as he, in answer to prayer, from time to time drops down an encouraging word into the soul, each fresh discovery of his Person and work, of his beauty and blessedness, of his grace and glory, raises up renewed actings of faith, strengthens a lively hope, and draws forth every tender affection

of the heart to flow unto and centre in him. Seeing light in his light, and how rich and free his blessings are, it cries out with Jabez of old, "O that thou wouldst bless me indeed." An "indeed" blessing is what the soul is seeking after which has ever felt the misery and bitterness of sin, and ever tasted the sweetness of God's salvation. And these "indeed" blessings are seen to be spiritual and eternal.

Compared with such blessings as these, it sees how vain and empty are all earthly things, what vain toys, what idle dreams, what passing shadows. It wonders at the folly of men in hunting after such vain shows, and spending time, health, money, life itself, in a pursuit of nothing but misery and destruction. Every passing bell that it hears, every corpse borne slowly along to the grave that it sees, impresses it with solemn feelings as to the state of those who live and die in their sins. Thus it learns more and more to contrast time with eternity, earth with heaven, sinners with saints, and professors with possessors. By these things it is taught, with Baruch, not "to seek great things" for itself, #Jer 14:5, but real things - things which will outlast time, and fit it for eternity. It is thus brought to care little for the opinion of men as to what is good or great, but much for what God has stamped his own approbation upon, such as a tender conscience, a broken heart, a contrite spirit, a humble mind, a separation from the world and everything worldly, submission to his holy will, a meek endurance of the cross, a conformity to Christ's suffering image, and a living to God's glory. Compared with spiritual blessings like these, it sees how vain and deceptive is a noisy profession, a presumptuous confidence, a sound creed in the letter of truth, without an experience of its life and power; and afraid of being deceived and deluded, as thousands are, it is made to prize the least testimony from the Lord's own lips that its heart is right before him.

Looking around then, as with freshly-enlightened eyes, it sees how the world is filled with sin and sorrow; how God's original curse on the earth has embittered every earthly good; how it has marred the nearest and dearest social relationships; how trial and affliction, losses, crosses, bereavements, vexations, and disappointments enter every home, and especially that where God is feared; how, amid these scenes of sorrow and trouble, all human help or hope is vain, that it is dying in a dying world, and must soon pass away from this time-state, where all is shadow, into eternity, where all is substance. As, then, the gracious Lord is pleased to indulge it with some discovery of himself, shedding abroad a sweet sense of his goodness and mercy, atoning blood, and dying love, it is made to long more and more for the manifestation of those blessings which alone are to be found in him. For his blessings are not like the mere temporal mercies which we enjoy at his hands, all of which perish in the using, but are for ever and ever; and when once given are never taken away. They thus become earnest and foretastes of eternal joys, for they are absolutely irreversible. When Isaac had once blessed Jacob in God's name, though the blessing had been obtained by guile, yet having been once given, it could not be recalled. He said, therefore, to Esau, "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed." #Ge 27:33. So when the Lord has blessed his people with any of those spiritual blessings which are stored up in his inexhaustible fullness, these blessings are like himself, unchanging and unchangeable; for "he is in one mind and none can turn him;" "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Those whom he loves he loves to the end; and his gifts and calling are without repentance; #Ro 11:29, for he never repents of having bestowed them, as everlasting love is their unvarying, unceasing source.

But these blessings have more than sweetness of their present communication. They stretch forward as well as reach backward; look into eternity to come, as well as from eternity past. By their communication and manifestation his people are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, for these blessings have a sweet sanctifying influence. Thus, believers in Jesus are said "to rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" #1Pe 1:8; and having a hope of seeing him as he is, to "purify themselves

even as he is pure." #1Jo 3:3. Spiritual blessings are not like mere doctrinal opinions, which often leave a man just where they found him - a slave to sin, self, Satan, and the world. They have a blessed sanctifying influence upon the heart. They prepare the soul for glory; they are earnest and foretastes of it, and are an enjoyment beforehand on earth of the delights of heaven. Thus, their effect is to separate the heart with its affections from the world; to subdue and crucify a worldly spirit; to mortify pride and covetousness; to cause the conscience to be tender and alive in the fear of God; to make sin exceedingly sinful, its remembrance bitter, and its indulgence dreaded; to draw forth a spirit of prayer and supplication; to open up the scriptures in their spiritual meaning; to encourage holy meditation; to feed the soul with choice fruit out of the word of truth; to breathe into it that spirit of faith which gives life and feeling to every gracious movement Godward, and in a word, to communicate, maintain, and keep alive that inward holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Can earth show a more blessed sight than a believer upon his knees before the throne of grace, looking up to the most blessed Lord at the right hand of the Father, and his sympathising High Priest looking down upon him with love in his heart, pity in his eye, and blessings in his hand? These are, indeed, for the most part but rare seasons, and are often sadly broken through and interrupted by coldness, carnality, and death; but it is only in this way, however long the interval or dark the mind in the intermediate season, that fellowship is maintained with Jesus as the great High Priest over the house of God, and he experimentally made the soul's all in all.

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