

"A Disannulling ..."

"For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness (for the law made nothing perfect) and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God ..." (Heb. 7:18f).

The word "*disannull*" in this text means "a setting aside, abolition." It is evident that Hebrews 7:18 is in the midst of an ongoing argument: the word "*for*" ties it to the prior statements. The "*aforegoing commandment*" which was disannulled was a commandment which pertained to the provision for priests for Israel, which priests were to be the lineal descendants of Levi, through Aaron. That commandment is called "*the law of a carnal commandment*" in verse 16. It is called "*carnal*," not to signify sinfulness, but rather because all serving priests had to be fleshly descendants of Aaron. It is called "*weak*" and "*unprofitable*" because the constant deaths of priests prevented them from continuing in serve. It was "*unprofitable*" because it lacked the power of eternal cleansing: the blood of bulls and goats could not remove sins (Heb. 10:4).

The parenthesis "*(for the law made nothing perfect)*" is likewise part of the writer's argument. Reference to a "*commandment*" is a specific allusion to the command which specified that Aaron's sons should serve as priests; referral to "*law*" is a reference to the system or covenant in which that specific commandment was found. Earlier in the chapter the writer stated, "*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*" (7:12). Certainly the law which pertained to the priesthood had to be changed because the priesthood had been changed, but is this the only law the writer had in mind, the law which pertained to the priesthood? No, the writer has the whole system in view for he says in vs. 22 that "*Jesus became the surety of a better covenant.*" Since it is the New Covenant versus the Old Covenant that the writer will discuss and elaborate on at length in chapter eight; comments on that will be reserved for that chapter. Since the writer elaborates further on the worth of Christ's priesthood versus the weak and unprofitable priesthood of Aaron, further comments in this article will be confined to that.

Because Christ has an unchangeable priesthood (and, we might add, permanent atonement through His sacrifice), the writer declares, "*Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw nigh to God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*" (Heb. 7:25). The effectual worth of Christ's blood is seen in these words "*able to save to the uttermost.*" The assurance is that all who draw nigh to God through Him can

have their sins remitted no matter what those sins might be. The key, of course, is that those whom He saves to the uttermost are they who draw nigh to God through Him.

"For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Who needeth not daily, like the high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for this he did once for all when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27). One must not conclude that the words, *"For this he did once for all,"* means that He offered up *"sacrifices for his own sins."* The preceding description of Christ will not permit such a conclusion: *"holy guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners."* Nor yet does He offer up daily sacrifices for the sins of the people. His was a one time, once for all time offering and to this though the writer will return once and again as his argument continues.

Jim McDonald