



INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 7:11-28

The main problem in the world—everybody's problem—is how to be reconciled to God so that we escape his terrifying wrath at the judgment. That's the main problem.

And the Biblical answer is priesthood. And specifically, the superior priesthood of Christ. The reason there are priests in the Old Testament is that priests are needed to intercede for us with God. They enter the holy place where we are not allowed to go. And they take sacrifices for us so that our sins will be forgiven. All of that Old Testament priestly system was meant to teach us about our sin and the holiness and wrath of God and the inescapable judgment that is coming on us. And the point of it all was this: God has made a way to get right with God. He provided priests in the Old Testament, and then he provided his Son, the final High Priest.

So the reason for all this talk about Christ's relation to Melchizedek in verses 1-24 is because the eternal, superior priesthood of Jesus is our only hope of eternal salvation. God's wrath never changes. There is only one hope for sinners like us. We must have a faithful high priest, who will intercede for us forever. We need a king of righteousness (verse 2). We need a king of peace (verse 2). We need someone without beginning and ending (verse 3). Someone who has an indestructible life (verse 16) and will never die and need to be replaced (verses 23-24). We need someone greater than Abraham and greater than Levi—something like Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham, (verses 6-7) and who received tithes from Abraham and, in a sense, from Levi in Abraham (verses 5, 6, 8-10). We need a new and greater priest—so much greater that verse 11 says there was no perfection through the Levitical priesthood. All the Old Testament priesthood could do was point toward the One superior priest (after the order of Melchizedek, Psalm 110:4), whose sacrifice of himself and whose eternal intercession would guarantee eternal salvation for all God's people.

So the first implication of verse 25 is that all this truth about priesthood is because what we need saving from is the wrath of God. God's way of solving that problem is priesthood. This is not ours to figure out or solve. God has to do it for us. And he has done it. He ordains a Priest, his Son.¹

Watch It  Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #12; Heb. 7:1-28 www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples

¹ Sermon by John Piper <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/jesus-from-melchizedek-to-eternal-savior>

Open it

1. What is your favorite restaurant? What makes it stand out from the rest?

Read it

Hebrews 7:11-28

Explore it

2. What were the Law and Levitical priesthood incapable of doing?
3. On what basis has Jesus become a high priest?
4. What does our passage say has happened to the former commandment? Why?
5. Why is Jesus able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him?
6. How is our high priest, Jesus, characterized in this passage?

Apply it

Perfectly not Confusing

Often in Scripture the word “perfection” has the meaning of “maturity” or “completeness.” So some assume “perfection” here means “completeness in relation to God.” But actually the meaning here is more specialized and means “to put someone in the position in which he can come, or stand, before God” — access to God. This is also the meaning of “perfect” in verse 19. It is also the meaning in two other Hebrews texts — 10:1,14. So again, “perfection” here in verse 11 refers to access to God and a right relationship to him.²

7. In what ways was the Law unable to make you “perfect” in bringing you access to God and restoring a right relationship with Him?

8. How is Christ able to bring you to perfection?

² Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 3319-3325). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

Becoming Whole Again

This new priest (Christ), like Melchizedek, has one grand qualification, which is not external but internal—“the power of an indestructible life” (v.16b). This does not mean that he never died. It means that our priest died a death that could not hold him— a death that was followed by resurrection! Therefore, to say that Jesus is high priest on the basis of “an indestructible life” is to say that he is high priest on the basis of the Resurrection. This is implicit in the words of the Father to the Son: “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (v.17). Thus, the Resurrection not only declared Jesus to be the Son (Romans 1:4), but it also marks the inauguration of Christ as our high priest.³

- 9. Christians often forget to talk about Jesus’ resurrection when witnessing to others and sharing about Christ’s work on the cross. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, what would that mean for Christianity?**

- 10. What significance does Jesus’ resurrection from the dead have in your own life today?**

³ Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 3403-3406). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

The One

Josephus reckoned that some eighty-three priests served from Aaron until the destruction of the second temple in AD70 (Antiquities, 20.227). But the Talmud lists even more— eighteen during the first temple and over three hundred for the second (Yoma 9a).

In marked contrast to this, the author asserts that Jesus “holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever” (v.24). The Greek word for “permanently” can have the sense of unchangeable or permanent as our translation has it, or it can mean that the priesthood is non-transferable. Hebrews scholar Philip Hughes thinks that “The term is enhanced by its ambivalence: the priesthood of Christ does not pass to another precisely because it is a perpetual priesthood.”⁴

11. Eternity is one of those things we can't fully wrap our minds around. As you think of Jesus' eternal, permanent priesthood, what thoughts come to mind?

12. What hope do you find in Jesus' permanent priesthood?

⁴ Ibid

The Real Hero

Our text argues emphatically that Jesus “is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him.” The term translated “uttermost” is unusual, being used elsewhere only in Luke 13:11, and combines the idea of completeness with the idea of eternity—“ for all time” (RSV). It means complete, absolute, total, eternal salvation! Moreover, the words here allow for no possibility of our supplementing our salvation by doing good (cf. Ephesians 2:8, 9). Salvation is all Christ’s work, from beginning to end.⁵

13. Describe the confidence you have in Christ saving you to the uttermost. How does this confidence differ from any other confidence you have?

Get This Thing Started

As Raymond Brown says, “He saves us, not only in the moment of initial commitment, but day by day and moment by moment” — through all time! His perpetual saving work brings about our growing sanctification as we are made ever more like him.⁶

14. Rather than thinking of salvation as a lifestyle rather than a specific moment in time, how would this change how you view your daily dependence on Christ?

⁵ Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 3491-3492). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Brown, Raymond. The Message of Hebrews (The Bible Speaks Today Series) . InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

15. In what ways are you struggling to live out your salvation daily? How might Jesus be able to help you in this struggle?

In Plain Sight

Even the most devout priests who served under the old covenant were transgressors. Although required by their office to lead pure and sinless lives, they were, like others, sinners by nature. The former priesthood stressed the importance of outward cleansing and ritual purity, but Christ's priesthood is effective because of his inward moral purity and his sinless perfection.⁷

16. What external things could you find yourself placing too much emphasis on today?

17. Our passage says that Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant. How would you describe how the New Covenant in Jesus is better than the Old Covenant?

⁷ Ibid

This study was compiled and questions were written by Pastor Jeremy Anderson (Indian Creek Campus)—www.villagebible.church/smallgroup