

"Our Great High Priest"

Part 24

Hebrews 4:14-8:5

Introduction: Tonight as we come back to the book of Hebrews we again come to Hebrews 7 and as we do we are stepping into the very last section of this chapter and the writer's closing thoughts on the priesthood of Melchisedec. The section we shall step into tonight will be found in Hebrews 7:20-28.

Now before we get into these verses let me just refresh your mind on the thoughts which we have considered in the first nineteen verses of this chapter. In Hebrews 7:1-10 the writer explained how the priesthood of Melchisedec was superior to the Levitical priesthood.

In Hebrews 7:11-19 the writer explained to his readers what the Levitical priesthood could NOT do. The Levitical priesthood could not bring one person into complete communion with God. Therefore, there was the need for a BETTER Priesthood.

Notice Hebrews 7:11

The writer went on to explain how the Law had to be changed because the Law required that every High Priest had to come from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. So for another Priest to rise up of ANOTHER kind then the Law would need to be changed.

The writer continued to explain how the Levitical priesthood was set aside and was replaced by the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. He then spoke of what the Old Covenant could never do and what the bringing in of a better hope could do.

Notice Hebrews 7:19

The Priesthood of Jesus could therefore bring the common man into complete communion with God which was the desire of God from the beginning.

This now brings us to where we are tonight. But before we get ready to step into this section I need to show you the thought which is at the front of the writer's mind. In the section that we are in the writer has used one statement 4 times.

Hebrews 5:6

⁶ *As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Hebrews 6:20

²⁰ *Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Hebrews 7:17

¹⁷ *For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Hebrews 7:21

²¹ *(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)*

So we see that 4 different times the writer makes reference to Psalm 110:4. Let me show you the verse.

Psalm 110:4

⁴ *The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*

This entire section is a sermon on Psalm 110. Now in verses 20-28 the writer is going to bring this thought to a climax and it is absolutely marvelous.

In the section which is before us we can see 3 reasons why Jesus is SUPERIOR to all the Levitical priests as a Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

I. Jesus, the Superior Priest

Part 1

Hebrews 7:20-28

1. He is a Surety.

Notice Hebrews 7:20

Here in this verse the writer is stating in a negative way that when Jesus was declared to be THE High Priest it was declared by God with an oath.

Notice Hebrews 7:21

Here the writer reflects back to the Old Testament and reminds his readers that none of the Levitical priests were set into the office with an oath. In other words there was no oath given by God that the Levitical priests would continue forever. But in Psalm 110:4 God had sworn an oath that Jesus would be a High Priest FOREVER after the order of Melchisedec.

Now let me explain something to you. God's Word is the Truth even if He does not swear an oath. But when God does swear an oath as in Psalm 110:4 that just places and exclamation point upon the promise and it makes it an eternal promise. God is showing that He is bound to the promise and it will have eternal implications.

Remember the covenant God made with Abraham?

Hebrews 6:13-17

¹³ *For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,*

¹⁴ *Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*

¹⁵ *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*

¹⁶ *For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

¹⁷ *Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:*

This is another place where God entered into an oath because it was an **eternal** covenant. Abraham would be the father of the nation of Israel and from that nation all the world would be blessed because from that nation would come the Messiah.

God did not swear by an oath on many occasions but when He did the promise was always eternal.

Notice Hebrews 7:21 again.

Now we need to grasp the thought here or we will not get what is said in the next verse. Jesus is an eternal High Priest which makes Him superior to the Levitical priests. And as an eternal High Priest there is yet something else.

Notice Hebrews 7:22

Here is what the writer is saying here: Because God entered into an oath when He declared Jesus would be a High Priest forever we can therefore be assured that Jesus is the "SURETY" of a BETTER Covenant. The Old Covenant was temporary. The Law and the priesthood had to be changed but the Priesthood of Jesus Christ would never be changed for it was an eternal Priesthood and Jesus is the "SURETY".

Now we need to look closely at the word "SURETY" because it will truly bless our hearts. Let me show you how Vines defines this word:

"As the Surety, He is the Personal guarantee of the terms of the new and better covenant, secured on the ground of His perfect sacrifice..."

The word "surety" means "guarantee". Jesus is a BETTER Priest because He guarantees our salvation based upon the sacrifice which He offered on the cross of Calvary. Aaron and all the priests who followed him could not take away the sin of the people. The blood of the animal sacrifices could only COVER sin. That is why the sacrifices had to be continually brought time after time.

But the sacrifice of Jesus was the ULTIMATE SACRIFICE and His Sacrifice offered on the cross paid the penalty for ALL of our sin. His PERFECT SACRIFICE is the Guarantee that our sin debt is paid. Let me show you a Biblical illustration of this.

I am going to step you into the book of Philemon but before I do let me remind you of something very important that Jesus spoke in Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:7

⁷ *Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.*

I show you this to remind you that Jesus is the central focus of the ENTIRE Bible and so He is also the central focus of the book of Philemon. Now let me show you the encounter between Paul and a runaway slave called Onesimus and the words Paul wrote to Philemon.

Philemon 1:10-19

¹⁰ *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:*

¹¹ *Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:*

¹² *Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:*

¹³ *Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel:*

¹⁴ *But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.*

¹⁵ *For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever:*

¹⁶ *Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?*

¹⁷ *If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.*

¹⁸ **If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;**

¹⁹ *I Paul have written it with mine own hand, **I will repay it**: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.*

When Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon Paul told Philemon that if Onesimus had wronged him in any way it was to be placed on Paul's account. Paul was the SURETY/GUARANTEE for the DEBT of Onesimus.

This is a picture of how we are GUARANTEED salvation in Jesus Christ. Every time we sin against God the debt is paid by the blood which Jesus shed upon the cross for our sins.

Notice Hebrews 7:22 again.

Because of the oath of God Jesus has been made the ETERNAL GUARANTEE of a BETTER Testament/Covenant. In other words He has provided that which the Levitical priests could never provide and that is by one offering we are perfected FOREVER.

Hebrews 10:14

¹⁴ *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

2. **He is a Savior.**

Notice Hebrews 7:23-24

Here in these 2 verses the writer sets before his readers a contrast. The Levitical priests were many in number because they lived so long then they died. When they died their position was passed on to the next man. But the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is "unchangeable" which means "it will never end".

Now let me pull this together. Because Jesus' Priesthood is "unchangeable" and because He is the "Guarantee" of our eternal salvation there is now a great blessing provided for us. What is the great blessing?

Notice Hebrews 7:25

He is able to save us to the "uttermost". The word "uttermost" means "completely". Jesus is the Guarantee of our salvation and because His Priesthood is continues on and is unchangeable He can therefore save you and I to the uttermost which means there is coming a day when He will complete the salvation which began in us the day we were saved.

Colossians 1:20-22

²⁰ *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

²¹ *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*

²² *In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*

The end of verse 22 is what it means to be saved to the uttermost.

Jude 1:24-25

²⁴ *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

²⁵ *To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

Here we see that Jude also speaks of being saved to the uttermost or being saved completely. Let me define some words in these verses to help us to see what this means for us.

When we one day stand before the Lord **HE WILL PRESENT US:** HOLY (as a saint), UNBLAMABLE (without blemish), UNREPROVABLE (cannot be called into account due to failure) and FAULTLESS (without spot or blemish).

Jesus is the Guarantee that this is how we will one day be presented to God. Every one of our sins is placed upon His account and paid with the blood of His Sacrifice. He is not just WILLING to present us to God this way but He is **ABLE**.

Notice Hebrews 7:25 again.

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He is Able to save ANYONE who is willing to come unto God by Him.

Conclusion:

The Hebrews who received this letter were thinking about going back to the Temple and to the Levitical priesthood. But from this they could see that Jesus was so much better than the Old Covenant. The priests who descended from Aaron were unable to bring them into complete communion with God and the blood of the sacrifices which they offered could only cover sin.

But Jesus is the Great High Priest who was able to eternally Guarantee that they would be saved to the uttermost/completely.

Application:

Is it any wonder that the writer of Hebrews refers to Jesus as our Great High Priest?

Next week we will finish out this chapter and in the remaining verses we will see even more blessings that we have because Jesus is our Great High Priest.