

Hebrews 7:20-28; "Our Perfect High Priest" January 12, 2025

- I. Welcome & Review
 - A. Good morning! Ohayougozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni.
 1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*
 - B. Before we continue any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School classrooms.
 1. *(2nd Service; Remember to dismiss the Bible English class.)*
 - C. As the kids make their way out, will the rest of you please open up your Bibles and make your way to Hebrews chapter 7?
 1. This morning we're going to resume our study of the book of Hebrews by continuing with an argument the author of Hebrews has been building up to regarding the priesthood of Melchizedek and how it is a better priesthood than the Levitical priesthood.
 2. Throughout our study of Hebrews chapter 7, the author has highlighted how Melchizedek and the priesthood associated with him, is greater than Aaron and the priesthood associated with him.
 3. Last week we noted a few reasons why this was true.
 - a. We noted how the Levitical priesthood could not bring about God's ultimate desire and design for us. It could not perfect us; mature us, bring us to our intended goal or end.
 - b. We also noted how Jesus Christ came and fulfilled the law, thus changing its purpose. And because Jesus fulfilled the law, there was no longer a need for the Law, nor the Levitical priesthood which was based upon the Law.
 - c. Another way in which the priesthood of Melchizedek was greater than the Levitical priesthood was seen in the qualifications needed to serve within these priesthoods. For the Levitical priesthood all you had to do was be born to the right parents and you were in. But the priesthood of Melchizedek, the one Jesus qualified for was based upon an eternal life. In order to be part of the order of Melchizedek you had to have an endless life; something only Jesus qualifies for.
 - d. We also noted how the Law and the Levitical priesthood was weak and unprofitable for us. It could only show us our weaknesses, but could never do anything to fix our weaknesses. But Jesus provided a way for us to be perfected; a way for us to come to the Father through His death and resurrection. Making Him not just our better hope, but our only hope.
 4. Today, as we continue in our study, the author is going to focus in upon Jesus Christ Himself and how He is "Our Perfect High Priest". What is it that makes Jesus a better priest than Aaron and the rest of the priests that served with him and after him? What sets Jesus apart, how is He Our Perfect High Priest?
 5. Our title this morning is going to be "**Our Perfect High Priest**" and our text will be the remaining portion of chapter 7, verses 20-28.

6. And once you are all there, I'd like to invite you all to rise to your feet in honor of God and His Holy Word. I'm going to read our text from my Bible. I'm reading from the NKJV of the Bible, if you are reading from a different translations that is fine, just do your best to follow along in your Bible as I read from mine.
7. The author of Hebrews continues his case, turning his focus upon Jesus and His service as "Our Perfect High Priest" with the following in chapter 7 verse 20... (R & P)

II. Intro;

- A. The author continues to build upon this incredible case of the supremacy and superiority of Christ as he wraps up chapter 7.
 1. The author started the chapter off by looking at the person of Melchizedek, then transitioned to the priesthood of Melchizedek.
 2. He then brought in the prophecy concerning Melchizedek and now here at the end of the chapter he focuses in upon the actual priest from the order Melchizedek; Jesus Christ.
 3. This building up of his case comes to this very important point of how Jesus is the priest who fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 110. He is the Messiah who came and has established a better priesthood with a better hope.
 4. And in these last nine verses of the chapter, the author focuses in upon how Jesus is better than the Levitical priesthood; how He is "Our Perfect High Priest".
 5. As we go through our text today, the points we will bring out will all have to do with facts that make Jesus our perfect High Priest. What is it about Him, in contrast to the Levitical priesthood and the old system that makes Him so much better? What is it about Him and what did He do that set Him apart from all the other priests who ever served within the Levitical priesthood.
- B. As we go through our text, we'll note seven different things that distinguish Jesus from every other priest who served the Lord. Let's jump back into our text, in verses 20-22 where we will not the first two things that set Jesus apart from the rest of the priests. Read vs. 20-22 again with me.

III. Hebrews 7:20-22;

- A. The first thing that set Jesus apart from the rest of the priests who served in the Levitical priesthood is the fact that Jesus **was appointed as a priest based upon the oath of God.**
 1. You see, none of the priests from the line of Aaron were ever appointed to serve as priest based upon a sworn oath by God. God never swore an oath to Aaron or any of his descendants that they would serve as priests.
 - a. Sure, God appointed Aaron and his sons to serve as priests, but it wasn't something that was put in place based upon an oath.

- b. It's interesting, if you go back and read through the Exodus account and the book of Leviticus, there was nothing special about Aaron and his sons that set them apart. God simply chose them and appointed them based upon His own sovereign choosing.
 - c. The priesthood wasn't something promised to them, it was just something that God gave to them and consecrated them for.
 - d. And after Aaron, every other priest became a priest by simply being born into the line of Aaron. It didn't have anything to do with character, integrity, or moral standards; it was all based upon birthright and birth order; that is what made someone a priest.
2. But Jesus was made a priest based upon a sworn oath of God. Jesus' priesthood was promised to Him some 1,000 years before He ever came to this earth as the Messiah.
- a. In Psalm 110, King David, the sweet Psalmist, wrote regarding the coming Messiah, "The Lord has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek'" (Ps. 110:4)
 - b. For God to swear an oath like this gives to Jesus and His priesthood a greater sense of permanence and assurance than that of the Levitical priesthood.
 - i. "The Lord has sworn"; He's taken an oath; He's promised. "And [He] will not relent"; He will not change His mind, He will not change this promise ever. It is an everlasting promise of God.
 - ii. God's promises are sure. God is faithful and He cannot lie. Even when we are faithless and we fail to keep our promises; God is always faithful. It's part of who He is, it's part of His nature. God is faithful, He cannot deny Himself.
 - iii. That's what Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy. He wrote, "If we are faithless, He [God] remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself." (2 Tim. 2:13)
 - iv. God swore this priesthood would be given to Jesus and He promised that it would never ever change.
 - c. There was no such assurance under the Levitical priesthood. In fact, we know that the Levitical Priesthood was never meant to be a permanent thing. It was created with a time limit in mind, it was only a stop gap until the Messiah would come. Until the prophesied priest of the order of Melchizedek came and served as priest forever. After that, it was going to be done away with.
3. And so we see that this oath that was given to Jesus set Him apart from the other priests, but there's more here I want to note.
- B. In verse 22 we have another thing that set Him apart from the other priests. It reads, "by so much more **Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant**.
- 1. The word surety is a word that was used to describe someone who served as a guarantor.

- a. Here in Japan the idea of a guarantor is very prevalent. If you want to rent an apartment out in town you usually have to have a guarantor. There are actual companies that will serve as a guarantor for you, but you will have to pay fees to get them to do so. It's a bit of a headache at times, but it is a way for the owner's to protect their properties.
 - b. A guarantor is someone like what we in the states would consider a "co-signer". The guarantor is jointly held responsible for any liabilities a person may owe to the landlord.
 - c. And that is the sense of the word as it is used here. A "surety", or "guarantor" your translation may even read, is a person of sufficient means who offers his belongings, freedom, or often his very life as an assurance that another person will meet certain specifications or requirements
2. In this case, Jesus is a surety, a guarantor of a better covenant. He is the guarantee of a better covenant than what was previously followed under the old covenantal Law.
- a. You see, the old covenant had a mediator in Moses, but it did not have anyone to serve as a guarantor to guarantee the people's side of the covenant. God would obviously keep His side of the covenant, He would not break his own agreement, but the people didn't have such a guarantee. And as a result we read over and over of their failure to keep the terms of the covenantal agreement.
 - b. But the new covenant is different. According to Hebrews 8 Jesus is the Mediator of this better covenant. (Heb. 8:6)
 - c. And according to verse 22 here in our text, Jesus is also the guarantor of the better covenant. Jesus serves as both Mediator and Guarantor of the new and better covenant.
 - d. Therefore, the new covenant does not depend upon us and our ability to keep any terms of the covenant.
 - e. The New covenant is based purely upon what Jesus did, NOT upon what we do. He is the surety, we are not. He is the guarantee of this new covenant. It isn't dependent upon us, it is solely dependent upon Him and guaranteed by Him.
3. Another interesting thing to note regarding this word covenant is the way in which it is understood. The literal meaning of this Greek word is closer to the idea of a "testament" in the sense of a "last will and testament" over a covenant that is agreed upon between two parties.
- a. It makes me think that the author purposefully used this word to make us understand the difference between a covenant and a last will and testament. A covenant carries the idea of two parties negotiating the terms of a covenantal agreement and then coming to a final decision both agree upon.
 - b. But a testament has a testator that simply lays out what His ultimate desires are. This is how the word is used in this case.

- c. The agreement under which we meet with God is not something that we sat down with God and negotiated with Him about. He has dictated the terms of the covenant, His will and testament, and we can either accept them or reject them.
 - d. God made the terms Himself. The new covenant is God's testament, His desire for us. And Jesus serves as both mediator and guarantor for both parties. It's all bound up in Jesus and what He did to reconcile us to the Father.
- C. Let's move on in our text by looking at the next two verses and noting another thing that set Jesus apart from the other priests. (*Read 23-24*)

IV. Hebrews 7:23-24;

A. Here we see that Jesus is better than the priests in that **He has overcome death and continues to live eternally.**

1. The priests of the Levitical system all died. Each and every one of them was limited in their service as priest based upon the limitations of their own lifetime.
2. There were many people who served as priests throughout the years of the children of Israel. Some were good priests, others were not so great. A good priest was limited by his own life. It didn't matter how great they were, eventually they would all die.
3. And there was no guarantee that the next priest would be as good as the previous one. Often times it would ebb and flow throughout the years; sometimes the priesthood served and honored God, at other times in their history they served idols and themselves. It was not a system that had a lot of stability to it.
4. But Jesus' priesthood is different. He has an eternal priesthood. Because He continues forever, Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood.
 - a. The Levitical priesthood would change based upon whomever was serving as priest at the time and was very unstable. But Jesus' priesthood is constant. It never changes. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." (**Heb. 13:8**)
 - b. The Greek word translated "unchangeable" is only used this one time in all the Scriptures and it carries the sense of something being inviolable. It cannot be violated; it cannot be infringed upon.
 - c. It carries a sense of permanence to it. This priesthood of Jesus' is not going to be changed, it is not going to be passed on to a successor who may or may not be as good as Jesus. It is a permanent priesthood, an unchangeable priesthood, it cannot be altered in any capacity whatsoever.
 - d. Jesus will forever serve as our Great High Priest and that ought to bless each and every one of us.

B. Let's continue in our text by looking at our next verse and highlighting yet another thing that separates Jesus from the priests of old.

V. Hebrews 7:25;

A. Here we see the author come to a conclusion regarding Jesus and His unchangeable priesthood. And we will pull out two things from this one verse that separate Jesus from the other priests.

1. First of all, Jesus is better than the priests of old because **He alone has the ability to save us from our sins completely.**
 - a. When the author writes that Jesus is able to save to the uttermost we have to understand what exactly the author is saying. It is so vital that we not miss this.
 - b. The word "uttermost" means completely, wholly, entirely. It means that nothing can be added to or taken away from Jesus' work of salvation. It is whole, complete, lacking nothing. Our past, present, and future sins have all been dealt with through the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary.
 - c. Going to church more regularly, reading your Bible more consistently, praying more fervently, serving more frequently, giving more faithfully, none of these things will have any impact upon Jesus' work of salvation upon your life.
 - d. And this is so important that we realize this. Our salvation is not based upon what we do, it is based completely and wholly upon what Jesus did on our behalf. He went to the cross of Calvary, He laid down His perfect sinless life in exchange for ours.
 - e. We deserved death, but He took our place. He bled and died for us. He took our place, He took the penalty for our sins and placed them upon Himself. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (**Isa. 53:5**)
 - f. Jesus paid the penalty for each and every sin you've ever committed. No sin is too great, no sinner is too far gone, that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot wash and forgive.
 - g. The priests of old had no ability to remove the stain of sin upon us. All the OT priests could do was offer up sacrifices for us in hopes that the blood of bulls and goats would cover up our sins, but none of them could remove our sins. Jesus alone has the ability to remove our sins completely, wholly, eternally.
2. But note with me something very important. Just because Jesus paid the penalty for our sins does not mean that all will be saved. Jesus is able to save to the uttermost *those who come to God through Him.*
 - a. While Jesus' work of salvation was complete and independent of our own efforts, we still have a responsibility to respond to Jesus' sacrifice.
 - b. Salvation is a gift from God given through Jesus Christ, but it must be received. It must be acted upon. Salvation will only come to those who come to God through faith in Jesus Christ.

- c. Coming to church won't save you. Coming to your senses will not save you. Coming to age won't save you. Our only hope is to come to God through Jesus Christ.
 - d. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**Jn. 14:6**)
 - e. The only way to come to the Father is through His Son. Some people think that is narrow minded. They like to believe that there are many paths to God, or that all roads eventually lead to God.
 - f. But nothing could be further from the truth. There is only one way to God and that is through His Son. Some people don't like that, but I for one am grateful. I'm grateful to God for making it so easy.
 - g. God didn't make getting to Him a multiple-choice type test. There's only one way, not many ways. And Jesus is that one and only way.
 - h. Jesus Christ is our Mediator, He is the one who bridged the gap between sinful man and the Holy Father.
 - i. 1 Timothy states "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all..." (**1 Tim. 2:5-6a**)
 - ii. Acts 4 talks about how Jesus is our chief cornerstone and how there is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (**Acts 4:12**)
 - i. If we want to be saved from the penalty of our sins and enjoy the salvation that is offered to us freely, we must put our faith in Jesus Christ alone. We must come to God through Him.
 - j. If you haven't done so yet, today could be the day you do. According to the book of Romans all you have to do is confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead and you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (**Rom. 10:9-10**)
 - k. "For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (**Rom. 10:13**). That is God's promise to us. That is how we come to God. Through placing our faith in His Son for salvation.
- B. Before we continue on, there is a second thing we need to point out here regarding Jesus and how He is better than the priests of old. The end of verse 25 mentions how **Jesus always lives to make intercession for us**.
1. One of the amazing things about Jesus Christ is that He just didn't die upon the cross, raise Himself back to life and then ascend back to heaven where He sits idly by waiting for us to die and enter into heaven.
 2. Not only did He secure our eternal salvation, but He also lives to make intercession for us that we might succeed and do well in our temporal everyday lives.

- a. Jesus isn't just concerned about us making it to heaven and our eternal lives, but He is also concerned about how we live here on earth during our temporal lives. He is up in heaven right now interceding on our behalf.
 - b. The priests of old would intercede on behalf of the people once a year on the Day of Atonement. They would enter into the Holy of Holies behind the veil in the Tabernacle, and later on in the Temple, once a year to intercede for us and to make atonement for us.
 - c. But Jesus Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (**Heb. 9:24**)
 - d. While the priests of old entered a copy of the heavenly sanctuary once a year, Jesus Christ has entered heaven itself and is set before the Father interceding for us always. Such a stark contrast.
3. Now, this idea of intercession is an important one. I want to make sure we have the right kind of idea in our heads about what this looks like.
- a. The idea of Jesus always living to intercede on our behalf is not to suggest that the Father is looking down upon us and is angry with us, so Jesus has to constantly intercede on our behalf; as if Jesus is constantly having to placate the Father on our behalf.
 - b. That isn't it at all. The Father looks upon us and He sees the righteousness of His Son credited to our account. So that isn't it.
 - c. But the Bible does speak of another who does like to bring accusations against us to the Father.
 - i. If you are familiar with the book of Job you will know what I am talking about. For in the book of Job we see an example of what it is like in heaven.
 - ii. God was lovingly looking down upon His servant Job when Satan entered the scene and God asked Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" (**Job 1:8**)
 - iii. "So Satan answered the Lord and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!'" (**Job 1:9-11**)
 - d. And that is what Satan loves to do. He loves to bring accusations against us to the Father. He tries to turn the Father against us. Satan wants to come against us and oppress us and confuse us and condemn us and cause all sorts of difficulties for us in our lives that we may stray from the Lord, that we may curse God and abandon our hope in Him.

- i. But Jesus is there before the Father interceding on our behalf.
- ii. Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (Lk 22:31-32)
- iii. Just as Jesus prayed for Simon Peter, so too He prays for you and me.
- iv. As the enemy of our souls stands continually bringing accusations against us, we have Jesus Christ as our Advocate before the Father interceding for us. And there is no sin the devil could highlight that Jesus did not pay the penalty for.
- v. The accuser of the brethren brings his accusations, but to no avail, because Jesus Christ ever lives to intercede for you, and for me, for all of eternity. What an amazing high priest we have.

C. Let’s continue in our study and look at the next two verses where we will note another thing that sets Jesus apart as our perfect High Priest. Read verses 26 7 27 with me.

VI. Hebrews 7:26-27;

A. Verse 26 starts out “For such a High Priest was fitting for us”. The Greek verb translated “fitting” is an interesting one. It means to be becoming, or seemly, or fit. To be proper or appropriate. Jesus Christ was appropriate for us, He was fitting for us.

- 1. Some of the newer modern translations make the meaning of this Greek verb very clear in their translations.
 - a. The NIV reads, “Such a High Priest truly meets our need...”
 - b. The CSB and the NLT both mention how Jesus is “the kind of High Priest we need.”
- 2. That is the essence of what is meant here. **Jesus is the kind of High Priest that meets our every need.**
 - a. And as we noted last week, the old covenant along with the Levitical priesthood were unable to meet our ultimate need. The Levitical priesthood wasn’t able to bring us into God’s full desire and design for our lives. But Jesus meets our every need.

B. In the rest of verse 26 and 27 the author highlights six different things that make Jesus the kind of High Priest we need.

- 1. He starts off by speaking of how Jesus is holy.
 - a. The Greek word used here is not the typical word used for holy which is “hagios” which is used some 220+ times. Instead the author chooses to use the word “hosios”, which only appears 8 times.
 - b. “Hagios” is usually used to describe something that is set apart for God, something consecrated to God and His service. But the word “hosios” which the author uses here is a word that speaks of

something being unpolluted with wickedness, undefiled by sin, religiously observing every moral obligation.

- c. Jesus is the High Priest we needed because He alone is holy, undefiled by sin, who perfectly kept every single aspect of the Law. Anything less than this would not have been sufficient for our needs.
2. Next, the author highlights how Jesus is harmless. Your translation may read “blameless”, or “innocent”.
- a. Jesus was an innocent Savior who suffered for us. He suffered as if He were a criminal, but there was nothing that He did that made Him guilty or worthy of the cross.
 - b. Consider the various statements and conclusions reached by those surrounding His crucifixion:
 - c. The religious elites tried to accuse Him of all sorts of things and they couldn’t even get two witnesses to agree upon something He did that was deserving of death. Even when the witnesses lied, they couldn’t even agree upon a lie to give. (Mk. 14:56)
 - d. Judas who betrayed Jesus later confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood. (Mt 27:4a)
 - e. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor who oversaw the trial against Jesus and three separate times in John’s gospel he declared that he had found no fault in Jesus. (Jn. 19:4)
 - f. Pilate’s wife sent a message to her husband requesting that he have nothing to do with Jesus for He was a just man. (Mt. 27:19a)
 - g. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod and Herod found nothing in Jesus worthy of death. (Lk 23:15)
 - h. When the trial was all said and done, Pilate washed his hands still proclaiming the innocence of Jesus as a just man. (Mt. 27:24)
 - i. One of the thieves on the cross recognized his own guilt, but proclaimed the innocence of Jesus while rebuking the other criminal alongside Jesus. He spoke of how the two of them were being crucified justly, but this Man has done nothing wrong”. (Lk 23:41)
 - j. Even the centurion at the cross proclaimed, “Certainly this was a righteous Man!” (Lk. 23:47)
 - k. Jesus had to be innocent in order to meet our needs and that is exactly what He was; an innocent, harmless Savior.
3. Jesus is also undefiled. Your translation may read “pure”, or “unstained”.
- a. Though He mingled with sinners and touched the lives of many who were sick and diseased, Jesus remained undefiled, unstained by sin.
4. Jesus is separate from sinners.
- a. The idea here is that though He lived among sinners, He was separated from them. He knew and experienced the same things

that other sinners experience, but never fell into sin or committed any sin. In that manner, he was separate from sinners, though He spent His whole life on earth amongst sinners.

- b. As we already read in Hebrews 4. "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (**Heb. 4:15**)
- c. Jesus knows what it is like to live a life amongst sinners, to live with and face temptation. He successfully navigated this sinful world without ever sinning Himself.

5. Jesus has become higher than the heavens.

- a. Jesus has been exalted above all else. He currently sits at the right hand of God where He intercedes on our behalf.
- b. Jesus is greater than any other priest because He represents us before the very throne room of God. And this is what we need. We need an Advocate with the Father interceding on our behalf.

6. Lastly we see that Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice.

- a. Unlike the other priests who needed to offer up sins repeatedly day after day for themselves and for others, Jesus made a once and for all final sacrifice when He offered Himself upon the cross of Calvary.
- b. "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" according to Hebrews 9:12. (**Heb. 9:12**)
- c. This is what we needed and this is what Christ did for us.

C. Let's look at our last verse and the last thing that set Jesus apart from the other priests and then we'll wrap this up. Read with me verse 28.

VII. Hebrews 7:28;

A. The point the author makes here is that Jesus Christ is different from the priests of old in that they were men appointed by the law with weaknesses and as such they were incapable of serving our greatest needs.

B. Jesus on the other hand, has been appointed by the Lord and **He has been perfected forever.**

1. It's that same word we looked at earlier in our study of chapter 7. The idea of being perfected means that something was brought to its intended purpose and goal.
 - a. The law and the Levitical priesthood could not bring us to perfection, to our intended end.
2. Jesus has been perfected forever. His work is complete. All has been accomplished in and through Him.
3. And this is such an important point to make considering the audience the author is writing to.
 - a. They were Jews who were considering going back to their old ways of Judaism. Going back to the law and the priests. But Jesus has

completed the law. He has fulfilled everything that the Law pointed to and looked forward to. He is the answer. To turn from Him and to go back to the law would be returning to a place of weakness and imperfection. In Christ they had everything they would ever need.

- b. And the same is true for us. We have everything we will ever need in and through Jesus Christ. Christ has provided the one and only way for us to be perfected. He is our perfect High Priest and to look to any other thing would be foolishness on our part.
- c. Let's pray.