

The Ultimate Savior Hebrews 7:23-28

Introduction

Hebrews 7 points us to Jesus Christ as the supreme high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Both King and Priest. King of righteousness—that's the meaning of his name. King of peace—he was king of the city of Salem (later Jerusalem), which means "peace." As such, Jesus is the guarantor of a better covenant than the old one. He is the ultimate Savior. There is none greater. If you have Jesus, you have everything. Anywhere else you go is inferior to Him.

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high

priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

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2. He is perfect (26-28).

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One of the hardest realities of life on earth is how transient/temporary everything and everyone is. But Jesus is not so.

Permanently

Continues forever

7:16 The power of an indestructible life

When Aaron died, Eleazer took his place.

When Eleazer died, Phinehas his son succeeded him. And on and on it went.

But Jesus Christ lives forever and will never die again. There is no need for a successor.

It's not that Jesus never had to face death. As a human being, He experienced it and conquered it. That's what a resurrection is. He made a way for us to be resurrected as well. *Jesus will not just end death. He will reverse*

it. He will free those conquered by it. If they have put faith in Him. "He that believes in me shall never die" (John 11). "Everything sad will become untrue" (Tokien). Jesus died and rose again and is alive forevermore to make this miracle possible for us.

So what difference does the eternality of Jesus' priesthood make?

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Remember what Ted taught us last week about the function of the priesthood: priests help people approach God in a way God accepts.

Because Jesus is alive forevermore as our high priest, He has the unique power to save us to the uttermost. There is no one who trusts in Him that He cannot save. There is no point in time when He will lose His power to rescue them. Unlike every other mediator, every other leader, every other person who has made us feel safe and secure. 100 years after we're gone, there will be few if any who even know our name. And whatever stories survive may or may not be true. Once we're gone we can't actively help anyone here.

A year of many funerals in our church family. We've had to say goodbye to those we love and value deeply, people who have taught us, led us, helped us, those who've actively served the people of God along with their own families for years. Losing people like these is rough. It reorders what our lives look like. For a while it can be hard even to imagine what life will be like without them.

In His kindness God brings such people into our lives who have profound positive effect on us. Christ gave the prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastor-teachers, along with all the other gifted members of the body. It is easy to transfer our sense of security to their presence with us, their help, their wisdom. But every single one of them will end up passing off the scene. They get cancer. They get COVID. They get heart disease. They are injured. They grow frail with age. They die. If you're security is wrapped up in these good gifts from God in the shape of persons you love and who love you, you will be shaken when they pass off the earthly scene.

Move your trust from the good gifts to the Good Giver of them. Their goodness, their effectiveness, their impact came through them to us from God. He is the Source.

Hebrews was written during the decade that both Peter and Paul were executed. The

twelve apostles were all martyred, save for John, who survived torture and exile. Would Christianity even survive. Would Christians survive?

Hebrews 13:7-8

⁷ Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. (Reliance on Jesus—that's where they point us.) ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

We draw near to God through Christ alone. He is the ultimate Mediator, the supreme High Priest. He has done everything that needs to be done to make a way for us. There's nothing we can add. There is no one else to turn to who can get us there in place of Jesus. No ceremony. No to-do list. No devotion to some social cause. No educational achievement. No priest. No guru. No pastor. No family member. No saint from years gone by. Not even Mary herself. None of these can absolve us from our sin. None can pave our way to God's presence.

1 Timothy 2:5

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

John 14:6

I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.

Our sin bars the way to God. Jesus removes the barrier by bearing for us the wrath on sin we deserve. That makes it possible for us sinners to draw near to a completely holy God. There is nothing we can do to remove our own sin. Only Jesus can do that for us.

Phillips, 301-02: "All other philosophies or religions have one thing in common: they rely on the performance, the work, or the power of man. Whether the hope is education or social action, New Age mysticism or some other solution, salvation depends on what you do and how well you do it. The answer is found in having the right technique or desire."

1 John 2:1-2

If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. ² He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus saves to the uttermost because he ever lives to do what? To make intercession for us. He never stops. Jesus continues to this day interceding for us. Jesus is praying for you today. He is your advocate today. And always will be. He is forever and so is His priesthood—His work of being your mediator interceding with God for you.

What kind of intercession does Jesus make for His followers? What does Jesus pray when he prays for us?

Luke 22:32 For Peter, that his faith would not fail, even though Satan desires to sift him as wheat.

John 17: what Jesus prayed in His intercession for His disciples in their hearing. **11** And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

13 But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

20 "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, **21** that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me

because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Kept in His name, unified
My joy in them
Kept safe from the evil one
Sanctified in the truth
One in the triune God
With him to see his glory

Jesus is forever the bridge to God Himself. Jesus is forever your advocate. He is forever for you. He will not fail to complete what He has begun in you. He is yours forever. You are His forever. He makes all of us who believe His forever family.

Life on earth is full of changes—some desired, many not. Wherever you are on your journey, Jesus is there for you. He always will be. He is forever. Rest in that. Trust Him. Find your strength and your joy in Him. He is forever.

2. He is perfect (26-28).

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints men in their weakness as high

priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

“It was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest.”

Another way to say it, “Such a high priest was fitted to us” (Phillips). Jesus is perfectly fitted for our need of salvation, for filling the role of our Savior.

We all long to be known, to be loved, to be freed from sin and guilt, to be empowered with purpose and ability for life. Jesus gives that to us. He fits our need, our heart desires perfectly.

Note how Hebrews describes His perfection: holy, innocent, unstained.

The first describes his perfection in relation to God, the second in relation to other people, the third in relation to himself (Philip Hughes, as referenced by Richard Phillips).

Jesus did not withdraw from sinners—not that kind of separation. He was a friend of sinners. He spent time with them. He ministered to them. He rescued them. But in all this contact He remained sinless—separated from sinners in the sense that he never joined them in sinning. He bore temptations to sin to the nth degree but He never gave in to even one of

them. He didn't drown in our sin problem. He rescued us from it.

Sinning priests had to use animals as their substitute. Jesus was untainted by sin. He did not need to make sacrifices for his own sin. So He alone could cover ours by sacrificing Himself. He was the only human being who could do so because He had no sin of His own. He is the ultimate substitute for us—fitting for us, matching us. Fully human as well as being fully God.

So many of the so-called saviors of the world don't fit us. Everybody is trying to find the solution to sin, even if they deny its existence. They're guilt-ridden about what they have done. They're angry about what others have done to them. They rationalize sin. They minimize it. They redefine it and then even celebrate it. They blameshift.

These savior frauds don't fit who we are as made in the image of God and plagued by sin right down to the core of our being. They aren't able to understand our problems and our heart condition. They aren't able to rescue us from what we most need rescue from. Most of their promises are calculated pandering. The rest are incomplete or misdirected.

Jesus knows us better than anyone else does. And He loves us more. He is the only perfect Savior for us. He completely absolves us from our sin guilt. He created us. He sustains us. He redeems us.

Note that the writer of Hebrews returns to his designation of Jesus as the Son—superior to angels, superior to Moses. He is at the right hand of the majesty on high (Hebrews 1, Hebrews 8). There is no court of higher appeal.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Jesus' words are in answer to Thomas' question, "How can we know the way?"

Don't miss Jesus' reference to God as the Father—His Father. He has a relationship with God the Father we cannot have apart from Him.

1 John 1:1-4

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— ² the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to

you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Verse 28 declares that God the Father appointed Jesus to this role by oath. He has made it official. According to Psalm 110 Yahweh has sworn and he will not change His mind. The Father is not reluctant to forgive us. He appointed Jesus to make our forgiveness possible. And that will never change.

Romans 8:33-34

³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Where are you seeking your fulfillment, your peace, your freedom from guilt, your fulness of joy? Anything or anyone other than Jesus is a mirage. They are timebound and imperfect. He is forever and perfect—the Ultimate Savior.

Conclusion

1. He is forever (23-25).
2. He is perfect (26-28).

When many were turning away from Jesus because of the difficult concepts He was teaching, He turned to the twelve and asked, "Will you also go away?"

Peter answered, "Where else can we go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life."

And so it is to this day and forever. Jesus Christ, our great King-Priest, is the Ultimate Savior.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important to us who live 2,000 years after Christ walked the earth that His priesthood is "permanent" as He "continues forever" with "the power of an indestructible life"?
2. What do you think "saving to the uttermost" includes, and how does it connect with His resurrection and ours?
3. Who are some of the individuals God used to impact you spiritually, and what are some of the ways they did so?

4. Hebrews 13:7 calls us to remember our leaders who spoke the Word of God to us, considering their way of life and imitating their faith. What is the significance of the declaration in the next verse that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever?
5. What does our need of a permanent mediator and intercessor tell us about ourselves and all systems or religions that rely on our performance?
6. Kept, unified, joyful, safe, sanctified, destined to join Christ in heaven to see His glory—in what ways could knowing Jesus prayed in John 17 for us to be blessed these ways help you in your daily living?
7. What are some ways Jesus is perfectly fitted to us in our need, unlike all other mediators or saviors?
8. Why is it significant that Jesus is not only King and Priest, but also the Son appointed by the Father forever to be our Savior, sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high?