

**Melchizedek's Priesthood Trumped Aaron's Priesthood**  
**Hebrews 7:23-25**  
**Part 4**

When people are saved or in other words are able to gain access to God's presence through Christ they may think that their difficulties in this life have ended or will at least be significantly reduced. But this is not true. God has never promised us any such thing. In fact our lives, after we come to God through faith in Christ, might even become more difficult if we seek through God's power to be faithful ambassadors for Christ in this world. And why is this? It is because this world is under the dominion of Satan who is hostile to Christ and therefore hostile to us. **So when we are saved can we expect that difficulties of this life will disappear? No!**

**This is the bad news. But now let me give you the good news.** If we have in fact truly come to God through faith in Christ and have been genuinely saved or born again we can know that even though our difficulties in this life might continue or perhaps even to get worse, we will not fall away but rather we will continue to persevere until that day when every promise God has made us in Christ will have been fulfilled: the troubles of this world forever behind and the glories of heaven forever in front of us.

And is there anyone working on our behalf to make sure of this? Yes! Based on the text that we will be examining this morning Christ through His intercessory ministry as our great heavenly high priest is making sure of this.

Now hopefully what I have just shared with you will come alive for us this morning as we return back to our study of Hebrews, which was written to a group of struggling Hebrew believers living in Rome who in the midst of a great persecution were actually considering returning back to Judaism. And what did the author choose to do in order to strengthen their faith so that they would not do this?

The author of Hebrews in seeking to strengthen their faith chose to focus on the superiority of Christ.

He began with emphasizing Christ's superiority over the Old Testament prophets, then he focused on Christ's superiority over the angels, then he focused on Christ's superiority over Moses and now he is presently, in our ongoing examination of this book, focusing on the superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other priesthoods. This section began in **Hebrews 4:14** and will continue all the way down in **Hebrews 10:18**. So what have we seen so far?

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In **Hebrews 4:14-16** the author introduced Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry, which he then pointed out in **Hebrews 5:1-10** was according to the order Melchizedek. This was followed by a warning section which extended from **Hebrews 5:11-6:20**. And then after completing this warning section what did the author do next? The author returned back to the subject of Melchizedek highlighting his greatness in **Hebrews 7:1-10**.

And why did he do this? He did this in order to highlight the far more exceeding greatness of Christ and His priesthood since Christ and His priesthood were the New Testament fulfillment of these Old Testament types or in other words the New Testament fulfillment of what Melchizedek and his priesthood were only picturing but were not able to fulfill since they were only a shadow of the true reality, which was Christ and His priesthood.

So after this author highlighted the greatness of Melchizedek and his priesthood for the reason that I just stated what then did the author begin to do?

The author in Hebrews 7:11-28 explained why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be **replaced** by Christ's priesthood which was according to the order of Melchizedek. So why was it necessary? This is the question that we have begun to answer and will CONTINUE to answer this morning.

So what was the first reason that we isolated for why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced by Christ's priesthood? This was the first reason: It was necessary because Aaron's priesthood could not bring about "perfection" (Hebrews 7:11-14) or in other words it was not able to make people acceptable to God in such a way that they gained personal access to God. We saw this in **Hebrews 7:11-14**.

So what was the second reason that we isolated for why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced by Christ's priesthood? This was the second reason: It was necessary because Aaron's priesthood provided a "better hope" (Hebrews 7:15-19). Or in other words it's replacement made it possible for people through Christ and His priesthood to enjoy what they could never have enjoyed under Aaron's priesthood, which was acceptability and accessibility to God. This point was made by this author in **Hebrews 7:15-19**.

So what was the third reason for why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced by Christ's priesthood? This was the third reason: It was necessary because God had sworn to Christ an **oath** that His priesthood would be forever (Hebrews 7:20-22). Or in other words Aaron's priesthood had to be replaced by Christ's priesthood for if Christ's priesthood had not

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replaced by Aaron's priesthood this would have meant that God's oath to Christ would have been broken and of course that would have been impossible since God cannot lie. We saw this in **Hebrews 7:20-22**.

### MESSAGE

And this morning we will be considering a fourth reason for why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced by Christ's priesthood. So what was this fourth reason? This was the fourth reason:

It was necessary because Aaron's priesthood unlike Christ's priesthood could never provide a **permanent** priest (Hebrews 7:23-25). And where do we see this fourth reason? We see it in **Hebrews 7:23-25**. So now let me read these verses for you and see if this is not so and what do these verses say?

They say this, **"The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, (24) but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. (25) Therefore He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."** So based on these verses can we say that another reason why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced with Christ's priesthood was because Aaron's priesthood unlike Christ's priesthood could never provide a permanent priest? I believe we can. So now let us look at these verses more carefully and see if this is not so.

And we will begin with **verses 23-24**. And what did the author seek to accomplish in these two verses? The author in Hebrews 7:23-24 sought to highlight the sharp **contrast** between the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood and the eternal nature of Christ's priesthood.

So how did the author highlight the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood? The author in Hebrews 7:23 highlighted the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood by pointing out to his readers that the greater number of Levitical priests was because **death** kept them from **continuing**.

So let me now read for you **Hebrews 7:23** and see if this is not so. And what does the verse say? It says this, **"The former priests (or in other words the Levitical priests) on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing."** So did the author in **Hebrews 7:23** highlight the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood by

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pointing out to his readers that the reason for their greater numbers was because death kept them from continuing? Yes

So let us now establish this fact from the biblical record. So who was the first high priest of Israel? Aaron, the brother of Moses, was the first high priest of Israel, and he served in that capacity throughout Israel's wilderness wanderings. But then what happened? He died. And who replaced him according to **Numbers 20:22-29**? Eleazar, his son, replaced him. And Eleazar served in that position until he died. And who replaced Eleazar according to **Joshua 24:33**? His son Phineas replaced him according to **Joshua 24:33** until he died. So obviously according to the biblical record, there was a succession of high priests that was necessitated because of death. So how long did this succession of high priests continue?

This succession of high priests continued until the fall of the second temple in **70 A.D.** when temple worship ceased. And how many high priests was that according to Josephus? According to Josephus a Jewish historian, living during that time period, there were 83 different high priests that served the Nation of Israel from the time of the first high priest until the time of the last high priest. So clearly from this information we can see the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood.

So after having established the temporal nature of the Levitical priesthood in **Hebrews 7:23** by pointing out to his readers how death had prevented the high priests from continuing how then did the author go on to establish the eternal nature of Christ's priesthood in **Hebrews 7:24**?

The author in Hebrews 7:24 established the eternal nature of Christ's priesthood by pointing out that because Christ "continues forever" He holds His priesthood "**permanently.**"

So let me now read for you **Hebrews 7:24** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, "**But Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently.**" So did the author in **Hebrews 7:24** highlight the eternal nature of the Levitical priesthood by pointing out to his readers that because Christ continues forever that He holds His priesthood "**permanently?**" Yes! I believe he did.

Israel's high priests were kept from continuing as high priests because they, having only a temporal nature, were subject to death and this from the standpoint of this author was obviously a weakness. But Christ, not only having a temporal nature, but also a divine or eternal nature, is not limited in the same way as the Levitical priests were limited and therefore because He "**continues forever**" Christ is able to hold His priesthood "**permanently**" which obviously from the standpoint of this author was a strength.

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So what was a fourth reason for why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced by Christ's priesthood? It was because Aaron's priesthood unlike Christ's priesthood could never provide a permanent priest and it is for this reason that God replaced the Levitical priesthood with Christ's priesthood just as He had always planned to do.

So is this good news that Christ's priesthood having replaced the Levitical priesthood, has in fact produced a **"permanent"** priest? Absolutely!

And why is this good news? Let me now read for you **Hebrews 7:25** and what does it say? It says this, **"Therefore (or in other words in light of the fact that Christ who 'continues forever' is now our 'permanent' high priest...) He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them."** So is it good news that God has replaced the Levitical priesthood with the permanent priesthood of Christ, based on this verse? Absolutely!

Because Christ "continues forever" and therefore holds His priesthood "permanently" Christ is able to save **"forever"** those who draw near to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25). Isn't this exactly what the author told his readers in the first part of **Hebrews 7:25**. And I believe that it is.

The word translated "forever" in the NASV can also be translated "completely" or **"to the uttermost"** as it is translated in the ESV and KJV.

So what would be the preferred translation? Though there is no doubt that the author wanted His readers to understand in light of the immediate context that because Christ **"continues forever"** that He will, as our permanent high priest, be able to **"save forever"** there is also no doubt in my mind that the author also wanted his readers in light of the book context to understand that because Christ is able to save forever that he is also able to save **"completely"** or **"to the uttermost."**

And therefore I believe that **"completely"** or **"to the uttermost"** should be the preferred translation, which would then imply that Christ's work on our behalf is therefore not yet finished in respect to our salvation.

But how can this be? Hasn't Christ's work to secure salvation for the elect been completed already at the cross, as evidenced by His cry **"It is finished"** in **John 19:30**? Yes, His work of

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securing salvation for the elect has already been completed at the cross. **But what He has secured for us has not yet been fully realized.**

For though we have been saved from the penalty of sin, and though the power of sin has indeed been broken we are still unfortunately, on a daily basis, still having to fight sin, for our enemies; the world, the flesh, and the devil are still very active and are still trying to bring us under their control. And on top of all this, we are still living in cursed bodies and in a cursed world because of the sin of Adam. Things down here are not good. There are many difficulties.

So though we may have been saved from the penalty of sin when we drew near to God through faith in Christ and though the power of sin may have been broken when we drew near to God through faith in Christ, we certainly have not yet fully realized everything that God has promised us in respect to our salvation, or in other words we still as yet have not been saved **“completely”** or in other words we still as yet have not been saved **“to the uttermost.”**

But one day when we are in the presence of Christ in glory in our transformed bodies, everything that we have been promised in Christ, will be realized or in other words we will in respect to the salvation have been saved **“completely”** or in other words **“to the uttermost.”**

And how can we be so assured of this? So let us go back to **Hebrews 7:25** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, **“Therefore He is able also to save forever (or in other words to save ‘completely’ or ‘to the uttermost’) those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”** So how can we be so assured that one day that we will in fact be saved **“completely”** or other words **“to the uttermost”** if we have in fact drawn near to God through Christ? We can be assured of this because:

Until we are saved **“completely”** or **“to the uttermost”** Christ our great forever heavenly high priest will be always living to make **intercession** for us (Hebrews 7:25).

So if this is true then what is Christ presently doing on our behalf? He is interceding for us. And what will he be doing tomorrow? He will be interceding for us? ...

So when the world is calling out to us .... What will Christ be doing? He will be interceding for us.

So when our flesh is calling out to us ..... What will Christ be doing? He will be interceding for us.

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So when the Devil is calling out to us to doubt God ... What will Christ be doing? He will interceding for us.

Can we be assured of this? Yes! And what can we be assured of because of His intercession? We can be assured that we will be saved “completely” and to the “uttermost.”

### CONCLUSION

When people are saved or in other words are able to gain access to God’s presence through Christ they may think that their difficulties in this life have ended. But this is not true. God has never promised us any such thing.

For though we have been saved from the penalty of sin, and though the power of sin has indeed been broken we are still unfortunately, on a daily basis, still having to fight sin, for our enemies; the world, the flesh, and the devil are still very active and are still trying to bring us under their control. And on top of all this, we are still living in cursed bodies and in a cursed world because of the sin of Adam.

Things down here are not good. There are many difficulties. This is the bad news. But the good news is this. If we have in fact truly come to God through faith in Christ and our genuinely saved or born again, Christ our great heavenly high priest, who is now living to make intercession for us, will make sure that we one day will find ourselves in the presence of Christ in glory having been saved “completely” or in other words having been saved “to the uttermost.”

May God give us the grace to understand that because Christ now lives to make intercession for us we can be confident no matter what is happening that we will be saved to the **uttermost**.

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