

Hebrews 7:20-28

“The Last High Priest”

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I. Introduction

This morning we come to one of the most amazing sections of scripture in all the Bible as the clarity of Jesus as our Great High Priest is on display. I suppose that when ever we open our hearts and our Bibles to the power of the Holy Spirit we are on Holy Ground but in this section it just seems to be a little higher holy ground!

II. Vs. 20-22 Guaranteed

Vs. 20-22 One of the things that is immediately apparent is that the writer was very aware of the knowledge that the reader would have had at Jewish tradition. Take for instance his argument here that deals yet again with the superiority of Jesus as High Priest because His priesthood is in the order of Melchizedek. The reference is to the fact that Aaron and the sons of Levi never took an oath in Exodus 29 at their ordination. That’s not a well known fact to you and I, is it? Yet the writer naturally assumes that his readers would have known that. Because there was no oath we realize that God never promised to Aaron or his descendants that their priesthood would be forever, this fact alone suggest that the Levitical priesthood was temporary. There in doubt that many if not all of Israel assumed that the priesthood was permanent but they would have not of come to this conclusion based upon the word of God. Had God made an oath as He had with Melchizedek than t would have been permanent. In Jesus the permanent plan has come, that is why His ministry was confirmed with an oath. God is saying through the oath, “**I**

will never change my mind. You will never be able to find any other program that works. Never!” Because this is permanent, there is no shut-down, no change of plans, which means we can have complete confidence in Christ’s work as High Priest because He will never become obsolete! In Jesus we have a Great High Priest who is never out of fashion, never off duty, will never wear out, move away or anything else that would render Him ineffective. He can work from the “gutter-most to the uttermost”. Four times in this letter the writer makes reference to Psalm 110:4, it’s his proof text! There were four distinct disadvantages that the Levites had in their service that Jesus doesn’t have in His:

1. **The Levites served in the temple on a temporary and repetitive basis**: Their service was temporary for three reasons:
 - They could only serve for 25 years
 - They were mere mortals, died and their sons had to replace them
 - There was no oath making it permanent

Further more what they offered in service was not permanent as they had to continue to offer the sacrifices, where as according to verse 27 Jesus offered Himself once for all!

2. **The Levites themselves were sinful**: According to Exodus 29 they had to daily offer sacrifices for themselves before they could for others. This pointed to the reality that they were just as much in need for atonement as those that came to them.
3. **What they offered was temporary**: There was no permanence in what they offered as they had to continually, repetitively had to offer the same thing over and over as it was a temporary fix not a permanent cure!

Though not a part of the text the question lingers as to why set up a temporary priesthood if you want a permanent? What was the purpose of the Levitical priesthood? First it is important to realize that according to Exodus 29 that God is the one who instituted the Levitical priesthood and His plan included replacing it not because it wasn’t His idea or that it was bad. It was replaced because its design was temporary. When looking at the Levitical priesthood you can see three reasons why God ordained it:

1. ***It promoted God's wisdom and will:*** It was the Levites responsibility to distribute the Word of God to the people of God so that they would come in continual contact with the wisdom and will of God for their lives.
2. ***It aided in the restraint of sin and promotion of godliness:*** Paul said that he would not have known sin if it wasn't for the law and neither we would have known what God plan for us was as His word says be holy for I am holy.
3. ***It pointed them to Jesus the permanent solution and prepared them for Him:*** The law and the Levities unknowingly were the very things that God had designed to point people to the Lamb of God our great High priest.

“Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant”, the oath made by God to Melchizedek about his priesthood was consummated by Jesus coming as He is the guarantee that He offers a better agreement than the Levitical one that wasn't designed to be an everlasting agreement. Jesus isn't just a mediator of a better covenant He is a guarantee of one! He has guaranteed to pay all our debts, past present and future.

III. Vs. 23-25 Last One

Vs. 23-24 The Levitical priests had the ultimate disqualification from permanent ministry, DEATH! There would never be one priest from the lineage of Aaron that could serve indefinitely, each was succeed by another priest for the priesthood to continue. The Hebrew reader would only need to look at the ordination of Aaron and his sons in Exodus 29 by Moses and then read in Numbers 20:23-29 as Aaron the first High Priest is about to die and Moses brings his son Eleazar to Mount Hor. There God reminded them that neither Moses nor Aaron would see the Promised Land. At that moment all the nation would realize that neither Moses the Law Giver nor Aaron the father of the priesthood would ever enter the land of promise. Had they understood they would have realized three things about the old covenant:

1. It was not permanent
2. It could not bring them to the promised land
3. It could not save them

This is contrasted in verse 24 with Jesus who “*continues forever*” and has an “*unchangeable priesthood*”. He never needed a successor, did bring us into the promised land and does save us! He is the last High Priest!

Vs. 25 Here we read that Jesus’ priesthood is: Eternal, Unalterable and Unlimited. The 25th verse is one of the most beautiful verse in all the Bible right up there with John 3:16.

And like John 3:16 we see four truths about our salvation:

- A. **He is ABLE: Person of our salvation!** Other priests might have been WILLING to save but Jesus alone is not only WILLING but ABLE! The old sacrifices temporarily covered sin but they NEVER removed sin. Psalm 103:12 makes the promise that, “*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.*” Jesus said in John 14:6 that, “*No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”
- B. **To SAVE to the utter most THOSE: Objects of salvation!** The objects of those who will be saved are those who come to Jesus to be saved as they are described as those who desire to draw near to God. There are no other restrictions, no other prequalification’s than sinners who want to draw near to God! Jesus said so in John 6:37 “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*” There is no other way to the Father except through the Son but the Son is open to every person who trusts only Him! The other side of that is that Jesus can ONLY save those who come to Him, so He is able to save ALL but not all will be saved because not all will come to Him to be saved!
- C. **Who COME TO GOD THROUGH HIM: Nature of our salvation!** Is to bring people NEAR to God, He does this by delivering them from their sin, which qualifies them to come to God. When looking at the subject of “deliverance from sin” we can find verses that depict this being done in the threefold element of time of each sinner being delivered:
 1. **Past tense: Salvation!** We **HAVE** been freed from sin, so we can say “*I have been saved!*”
 2. **Present tense: Sanctification!** In the present tense we **ARE** freed from sin’s power. So we can say, “*I am saved and am being saved!*”
 3. **Future tense: Glorification!** In the future tense, we will be free from sin’s presence, so we **SHALL** say, “*I am saved from sin’s presence!*”

All these are truths that deal with the nature of the believer’s salvation and together they represent the full and complete way in which a believer is saved!

- D. **HE ALWAYS lives to make intercession for them: Security of our salvation!** The security of our salvation rest upon the perpetual intercession of Jesus for us. The truth is we can’t keep ourselves saved any more than we can save ourselves but **Jesus has the power to not only save us, He alone has the power to keep us!**

Jesus is constantly, eternally, perpetually praying for us before the God the Father! Whenever we sin Jesus says to the Father, “*Put that on my account, as I have already paid for that sin!*” This is why according to Colossians 1:22 “*to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.*” And how we are able to according to Jude 1:24 “*keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*” In Jesus we are now blameless in the Father’s sight and when we are glorified we will be blameless in His presence!

IV. Perfectly Fitted For Us

Vs. 26-28 To start out with the author tells His readers that it was “*fitting for us*” to have a high priest like Jesus. He is the only one that would do for us as He alone is absolutely essential for all humanity if God was going to save us. *The Hebrew’s were rejecting Jesus along the lines that He was not a Levite and the writer says that the fact that He was not from the tribe of Levi is not a liability it is an essential asset!* If Jesus was from the tribe of Levi, then His priesthood would be just as ineffective as theirs. Here we are told that Jesus is five things that a Levitical priest could never be that Jesus was because He was from the order of Melchizedek:

1. **Holy:** Jesus is from the very beginning, because of His nature, eternally HOLY! There is no sin in Jesus that satan could ever use to get a hold over Him and control or enslave Him. **Jesus is not capable of sin.** He was without sin eternally, He was without sin while He walked upon this earth, tempted in everyway like us, and He is without sin now!
2. **Harmless:** There is a **difference of direction** when you compare “*holiness*” to “*harmlessness*” as “*holiness*” direction is towards God while “*harmlessness*” direction is towards their fellow man. Jesus harmed no human, **His whole live was summed up in living for others benefit not His own.** He always acted towards the benefit of others even when others acted towards Him in hatred and cruelty. Instead of harming those who would harm Him, He healed them!
3. **Undeiled:** This word refers to freedom from moral or spiritual blemish. Jesus lived 33 years upon this earth and was in this world with all of its moral and ethical decay, living among sinning humanity, touching them, going among them while they habitually practiced moral degradation. He was being continually tempted without a break from satan to sin like the rest of those in captivity. Yet in all those 33 years never once did he contract the least amount or trace of sin upon Himself. **He was the like the rays of sun light upon a cesspool who in the end only shone the radiance, purity and power of His light upon the mess and never once lost His brilliance or His purity!**

4. **Separate from sinners**: This phrase speaks of being of ***a completely different class***. He wasn't separate from sinners *logistically or geographically*. In fact, everyone He came into contact with were sinners, His parents, His siblings, the religious, even His own disciples. Jesus at with sinners, walked with sinners, worked with sinners and even worshipped with sinners, but never at any time was His nature like those He lived among. ***If He had ever behaved like any of us He could have never saved any of us!***
5. **Higher than the heavens**: He is exalted because of the fur other truths about Jesus just mentioned. It is because of these things that Jesus doesn't offer sacrifices for Himself or like the other Levitical priests. Jesus only offered one sacrifice (Himself) one time for all of humanity! The Priest was and therefore so was the sacrifice He offered, so it was once for all time! Instead of rejecting Jesus as being different than the Levitical priesthood of Aaron they should of thanked God for only Jesus could offer them what Aaron and the Levitical priesthood pointed towards!