

Text: Hebrews 7:25-28

Title: The Right High Priest Saves Completely

Date/Location: March 20, 2011 at FBC

Introduction

If you are wondering how to be on good terms with God, and you are considering the Christian faith and Jesus Christ, then you have come to the right place. In fact, there is no other religious faith that has what Christ offers. He not only provides forgiveness of sins—past, present, and future—but He also provides ongoing cleansing from sin, and help to live each day. Who would you rather have praying in intercession for you than Jesus? What would you rather have—no priest, a priest that is temporary, has to keep making offerings for your sin and himself has sin—or a priest that is permanent and made one offering for sin for all time, never to be repeated?

I. The High Priest that Saves Completely, v. 25

This verse raises several extremely important concepts:

- A. An important concern of the Lord Jesus Christ is to save people. Evidently we need saving. And in fact, we know from other Scripture we do need to be saved from the wrath of God against sin and against the eternal punishment that is due to sin (John 3:36), because all people have sinned and do sin (Romans 3:23). These days the idea of sin and eternal punishment is exceedingly unpopular. The Jehovah Witnesses teach that unbelievers simply cease to exist after they die. Punishment for sin is not acceptable to the sinful mind. But it is the truth, and there is something terrible to be saved from.
- B. Salvation happens when someone comes to God, that is, when they turn from running away from God and starting believing in God (Heb. 11:6).
- C. This coming is “through Him” means “through Jesus.” There is no way to start believing in God unless you start believing in Jesus Christ. Said another way, Christ is able to save those who come to God through Him; but the Bible also teaches that, in effect, He is *unable to save those who do not come through Him*. This is not an attack on His omnipotence, for we could imagine that there might have been other ways that God could have used to deal with the sin problem, but in reality, there is only one way that is sufficient, and only one way that God implemented, and that is the singular way of Jesus Christ. Only Christ made the infinite payment for sins; and only Christ has the power of a perfect life to offer righteousness to those who are unrighteous.
- D. Jesus is alive right now, and will be forever alive. That is true despite the fact that He died on a Roman cross almost 2000 years ago and was buried in a nearby rock tomb. He was raised again from the dead, never to die again (Romans 6:9).
- E. In His ongoing life, Jesus “makes intercession” for his children. This is taught in several other passages of the Bible (Romans 8:34, 1 John 2:1).

1. The general idea of intercession is clear enough, namely, that Christ intercedes or works as an intermediate to reconcile people to God. We often think of this in terms of our acts of sin, so that when we sin, Christ pleads His effective cross-work on our behalf to cleanse us and keep us from being zapped by God or keep us safe from the accusations of Satan.
2. We should not, however, think of this intercession as Christ groveling before a stubborn Potentate and barely receiving the request of his intercession, if at all. Nor should we think that Christ has to remind the Father of what He did on the cross.
3. Rather, Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22), the place of the Father's favor and power. He always gets what He asks of the Father since He always asks in accordance with God's will (cf. 1 John 5:14-15). Christ's cross-work was so overwhelmingly powerful that when someone is in Christ, there is no doubt that His intercession will achieve its requested goal.
4. The intercession is more like what Christ did for Peter in Luke 22:32. Jesus told Peter he prayed that Peter's faith would not fail and that he would strengthen his brothers. In other words, the intercession is more of a positive character than negative—to have strong faith and positive ministry to others. This kind of intercession is perfectly in line with the message of the book of Hebrews, that we need a persevering faith.

F. Christ fully saves His people.

1. The big idea of verse 25 is that “as a consequence of Christ's unending life and unchangeable priesthood (v. 24), he is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him. This is because he never dies and thus his intercession never ceases.” If He died, then He would not be able to save anyone.
2. This verse is talking about salvation not only in its initial blessing on those who come to faith in Christ, but also it is concerned about what we call *final salvation*. What I mean by that phrase is that there is more to salvation than simply “getting saved initially.” There is something beyond the foreknowledge, predestination, calling and justification that are mentioned in Romans 8:29-30. The “more” includes final freedom from sin and the curse and death; participating in the kingdom of Christ on earth and ultimately in the eternal state.
3. The final step that we experience to bring us into these blessings is called glorification, and Christ's continuing life and intercessory ministry guarantee glorification or *final salvation* for all who are born again.
4. There is a slight issue in understanding the idea of being saved to the *uttermost* – it can mean completely or forever. I think the single idea of completely encompasses both meanings and is the single meaning that

makes the most sense here. The author is talking about the wholeness of salvation and, indeed, that it lasts forever, along with its High Priest. Salvation is not a half-measure; Jesus does not start the work and then slack off on the finishing of it.

II. The High Priest that We Need, v. 26-28

What the author is saying is that this kind of High Priest is *exactly what we need*.

The NIV indicates this: “meets our need.” The other major English translations all use “fitting” which may not convey the idea as clearly. *Fitting* means proper or suitable. Given our weaknesses, there was no one more suitable than Christ to bridge the gap.

The text explains why He is so fitting, because of His perfect personal qualifications and His singularly excellent work. He is quite the opposite of us in several key regards. The first four of these have to do with His purity from sin.

- A. He is holy. This means He is without fault relative to God’s perfect standard.
- B. He is harmless. This means without guile or innocent or blameless. It is not that He is a dove or lamb that wouldn’t hurt a flea—in His place as the lamb of God He gladly receives sinners, but He has also been appointed judge of the earth and will carry out the terrible penalty against sinners in the Day of the Lord (Acts 17:31, Rev. 19:15).
- C. He is undefiled. He is pure and has no stain of sin.
- D. He is separate from sinners. He is fundamentally different from sinners, as the previous phrases indicate.

Transition: Because of these qualities of separateness from sin and sinners, Christ could make a pure offering for sin, and He has been highly honored.

- E. He has become higher than the heavens. From other Bible verses we know that He is seated in the heavenly places at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20, Heb. 8:1). The meaning of this is that Jesus is exalted to a greater height than the highest star or universe.
- F. He made a single and final offering for sin, v. 27.

The old priests are described with three phrases: 1) daily, 2) offering up sacrifices for their own sins, and 3) offering sacrifices for the sins of the people. Christ is very different in the first two of these three.

- 1. First of all, he does not need to offer anything for His own sins because He has no sins.
- 2. Second, He did so once at the cross. There is no more daily stuff going on. This “once for all” means “taking place once and to the exclusion of any further occurrence” (BDAG).

3. We could say that the OT priests were consumed with the ongoing sins of the people. They had quite a task keeping up offering sacrifices for the people and themselves. However, now that Christ has dispatched that problem once and for all, He can focus His attention on the fuller salvation of His people.

G. He is perfect, v. 28

1. This point actually further expands upon verse 27. It explains that in the Mosaic Law, men were appointed as priests who were fallible and subject to death. But the oath that God made about the Melchizedek priesthood came after the Law, superseding it, and made the Son a perfect priest forever.
2. There are two previous verses that mention this concept of Christ being perfected: 2:10 and 5:9.
3. So what about the present context? This *perfect* does not have to do with personal sin or immaturity. This perfection is the opposite of the weakness of the human priests and their repetitive ministry of offering for sins. Christ's perfection comes in that He was appointed to the priesthood, took on human flesh, lived a perfect life, suffered as a human, and died in offering up himself as a sacrifice to God. He rose from the dead and ever lives. So, He is the *perfect* high priest. He has none of the weaknesses that we have, nor that the Levitical priests had.

Conclusion

Admit it—you need to come to God through Jesus Christ because you have not walked with God. You need to come through Jesus because there is no other way to come but through Him.

Believe it—that Jesus lived a sinless, perfect life and offered as a sacrifice Himself, once for all, to pay the penalty of your sins. He rose again from the dead and lives forever.

Confess it – Call upon the Lord Jesus to be your Savior. Put all your confidence in Him because He will intercede before God for you and will save you utterly completely.

MAP