

Jesus: Our Great High Priest Forever
(Week 14)
Hebrews 7:11-28
“The Savior We Need”

Introduction

“Now if perfection came through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received The Law), what further need was there for another priest to appear, said to be according to the order of Melchizedek and not according to the order of Aaron?”
Hebrews 7:11

Now THAT is a great question! If *The Old Testament* priesthood were sufficient to forgive sins, then why did God swear with an oath in ***Psalms 110*** that He would one day establish a permanent priesthood to replace the old one? There can be only one answer: the Levitical priesthood was never intended to be the permanent solution because it was woefully inadequate. Everything in *The Old Testament* Law was merely intended to point in one single direction — to Christ, The Ultimate High Priest. It is in Christ that the promises of God are fulfilled. It is in Him that we find true forgiveness, and it is only in Him that we can receive the inheritance that God has for us, eternal life!

There is a very key verse in this chapter that explains for us the necessity for a new and better covenant than the old one. It is the reason that your Bible is divided into two sections: *The Old Testament* (or Covenant) and *The New Testament* (Covenant). Listen to this verse:

“So the previous command (Covenant) is annulled, because it was weak and unprofitable (for The Law perfected nothing), but a better hope (Covenant) is introduced, through which we draw near to God.”
Hebrews 7:18

The most important truth conveyed in this chapter of *Hebrews* is; that because of the New Covenant we are now able to “draw near to God”. This was something that was never possible under The Old Covenant of The Law. For you see, in *The Old Testament*, God was always at a safe distance from the people. If you were to ask people when in the history of Israel was the priestly system functioning at its peak, you would probably get one of two possible answers: During the time of Moses, or possibly during the time of King David. No doubt these two eras of Jewish history are arguably when the office of the Levitical priesthood was functioning at its fullest capacity. And guess what? Even in **those** days, the people were unable to “draw near to God”! Please allow me to explain.

When The Shekinah Glory of God descended into the Tabernacle of Moses to be enthroned upon the “mercy seat” of the Ark, only The High Priest was ever allowed to approach. And this only occurred once a year on the Day of Atonement. And, before The High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, he had to first enter by bringing the blood of a sacrificed bull to cover his own sins. Then, and only then, could he even offer a sacrifice on behalf of the sins of the people. Do you know what would have happened if anyone else had dared enter into the presence of The LORD where The Ark was kept? They would have been struck dead, that’s what. So you see, no-one under that Old Covenant was allowed to “draw near” to God. Do you realize that most of the Jewish people never even got a glimpse of The Ark of The Covenant?

Now I know what you’re thinking. “Didn’t The Ark go before the people every time that they moved the camp?” Yes, but the Ark was covered from their view with three separate coverings! First the priest would cover The Ark with the veil of the tabernacle that led to the Holy of Holies, then that veil was covered again with badger skins, and then finally, the badger skins were covered with a beautiful blue cloth, before The Ark was carried out in front of the people (***Numbers 4:5-6***)! You see, The Ark, which does not even represent God (that would make it a graven image), but only represents the Throne of God, even this was kept from the view of the people by a threefold veil! To touch The Ark meant death, so I think that it is safe for us to say that The Old Covenant was never a means for people to “draw near” to God! Wouldn’t you agree? But here is the good news of The New Covenant: Jesus died so that we may draw near to the very throne of God! He is a better High Priest, Who lives forever, giving us full

access to God... FOREVER! Jesus is **The Savior Who Saves Completely, The Savior Who Speaks For Us, and The Savior We Need!**

The Savior Who Saves Completely

Jesus, unlike every Levitical priest who ever served at the altar, is eternal. The earthly priests that were Aaron's descendants all died and had to be replaced, but Christ, The Son of God, lives forever. He didn't descend from Levi, but rather He was actually born from the tribe of Judah (The tribe of Kings), therefore, He is of an entirely different priestly order. In reality He is the eternal, everlasting God Who was and is before time began. He has no beginning, nor end, and God has sworn that He **is** a priest **forever**. Therefore, we have no further need of the temporary and insufficient Levitical priesthood. Jesus is by far a superior priest and the guarantee of a better covenant (**Hebrews 7:12-24**). And, because Jesus is The Great High Priest Who offers us a better covenant:

"...He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him..."

Hebrews 7:25(a)

I LOVE this verse! For the purpose of today's study, we are going to divide it into two sections, because there is so much truth in this wonderful verse of Scripture. First, it tells us that because of Jesus' superior priesthood, He is able to save... **Completely**. You see *The Old Testament* system of ceremonial sacrifices were inadequate to completely save. Which begs the question, how were people like Abraham ever saved to begin with? The answer, they were saved by grace through faith just as we are, but their faith was looking FORWARD to something. And what was that something? Jesus death and resurrection that's what! We are saved by looking BACK to that, but they were saved by looking forward to it. In other words, if Jesus hadn't come to die for the sins of the world, then father Abraham would have had no hope of salvation. Much the same way, those who strived to live by the Levitical Law were certainly not saved by it. They were saved by grace through faith, looking forward to the promise of a better covenant. The cross was not God's "plan B", but rather, it was ALWAYS the ultimate plan of God to save lost sinners through the hope of a better covenant. Just listen to the words of the prophet Jeremiah (an *OLD Testament* prophet):

"Look, the days are coming' — this is The LORD'S declaration — 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt — My covenant that they broke, even though I am their Master' — The LORD'S declaration. 'Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days' — The LORD'S declaration. 'I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know The LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them' — this is The LORD'S declaration. 'For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.'"

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Did you catch that? God spoke through Jeremiah, in *The OLD TESTAMENT* of a New Covenant that would come. Not one that would just teach the people **about** God, but would save them to the uttermost enabling them to **KNOW** God. This is exactly what the writer of *Hebrews* is talking about when he says that Jesus is able to **SAVE COMPLETELY**. Thanks to Christ, we have been given full access to the throne of God. We can come to Him at any time and offer our prayers directly in His glorious presence. The best way that I can fully explain this wonderful difference is to show you the radical contrast between The Law and our glorious New Covenant that we have in Christ.

Journey back with me in time to Mount Sinai, when God first gave The Law to Moses (**Exodus 19**). The children of Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai in the "third month" according to scripture, and after waiting three days, God gave The Law from the Mountain in the sight of all Israel. The mountain was covered with a thick veil of smoke, but the people could actually hear the thunderous voice of God speaking with

Moses upon the mountainside. The people had been warned not to touch the mountain, nor attempt to climb up into The LORD'S presence, or they would die as a result. So, quaking with fear and awe, they stood and listened as God gave The Law.

Moses tarried upon the mountain for several days, and when he came down to the people, they had already rebelled against The Law of God by making a graven image (golden calf). As a result of their faithless rebellion, three thousand people died (***Exodus 32:28***). Now that is what happened when The Law was first introduced. So allow me to tell you... the rest of the story.

The Law was given to the people 50 days after the first Passover and the Exodus from Egypt. We know this by counting up the days given in the scriptures. Actually we also know from the celebration of the Jewish Holiday known as Shavuot (meaning "weeks" in Hebrew). Shavuot is the celebration of the "giving of The Law" on Mt. Sinai. When the people were given The Law, they broke it almost immediately and death for three thousand of them was the result. Now let us fast forward in time.

Jesus, The Ultimate Passover Lamb was sacrificed upon Passover. Fifty days later was the celebration of Shavuot, which is called by another name in the Greek *New Testament*: Pentecost (*Pentekostos* in the Greek means fifty). When Shavuot, or Pentecost, arrived **after** Jesus' death and resurrection, a New Covenant was ushered in with the sound of a mighty rushing wind as The Holy Spirit filled the believers who were assembled together to pray. God wasn't giving them The Law from a distance upon a mountain, but rather, He FILLED the people with His Spirit, and therefore, put His Law INSIDE their hearts just as Jeremiah had prophesied! Now don't miss this: When God gave The Law at Sinai, the people were unable to live up to it and three thousand of them died. But when God ushered in The New Covenant upon the very same day of Shavuot many years later, what does *The Bible* say happened? Three thousand people were SAVED (***Acts 2:41***)! You see, The Law had brought only death, but The New Covenant through our Lord Jesus Christ... brought... **LIFE!** And **that** is what the scripture means when it says that Jesus is able to save, and save... **COMPLETELY!!** This is why The New Covenant is a **better covenant!** We are no longer held back from touching the Holy mountain of God, for we have been saved to the uttermost (KJV) and can enter into His Holy Presence for His Spirit now lives within us! We, thanks to Jesus, have been saved **completely**.

The Savior Who Speaks For Us

"... since He always lives to intercede for them."

Hebrews 7:25(b)

The second part of this wonderful verse is one of the most quoted scriptures in the entire Bible. I have memorized it in the King James Version which says, "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." What an awesome truth for those of us who have been saved by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ! Just to know that He lives forever more to represent us before the Heavenly Father with petitions on our behalf. Have you ever stopped and considered that if you belong to Jesus that He is continuously praying... for YOU?! If you need a word of encouragement this morning, well there it is! No matter what trials or temptations we may face, Jesus is representing us before the throne of God. Or, as one preacher so eloquently put it, "Jesus came down to earth to save you, then He went back to Heaven to **KEEP** you saved!" That's so awesome. So, child of God, when you think that you cannot go another step, just remember that Jesus is praying for you. If you belong to Him, then He guarantees that you will finish the race. If you want to see what this looks like, then remember when Simon Peter kind of went off the rails and even denied The LORD with an oath. But Jesus had prayed for him, so his return was never really in question.

"Simon, Simon, look out. Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail. And you, when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Luke 22:31-32

You see, Jesus knew full well that Peter was going to mess things up. Satan had actually asked permission to knock his faith around some like the threshing of wheat. Jesus had prayed that Peter would not lose his faith, and I love what He says to 'Ol Pete, **"When you have turned back..."**. It was

never a question of “if you come back”, but rather “when”. Simple truth: Jesus is God, and what God wants... God gets! The devil can hammer at us all that he wants, but we have been saved because Jesus WANTS us. His “prayers” will never go unanswered. That’s what it means to be sovereign. It means that you get whatever you want. You do not have to worry about losing your salvation this morning, child of God. Why? Because our great Savior lives forever to KEEP us saved!

I wish that I were perfect. I truly do. I am being changed from the inside out, and thanks to The Holy Spirit, I am certainly not who I used to be. However, I still have a long way to go. Can I get a witness? But do you know what happens when I mess things up? Jesus stands before the Throne of Grace and pleads my case before The Father. I can just hear Him saying, “Yes, I know that Pastor Scott sure makes a lot of mistakes, but I have paid for his sins on the cross. He belongs to Me now, and I will see him through all of these trials and temptations. He was lost, but he won’t ever be lost again. I will keep him saved!”

Now that, my friends, is what it means to be saved... to the **utmost!** Do you know without a shadow of a doubt this morning that your sins have been forever forgiven and that you belong to Jesus? Have you ever been saved... completely? Then Jesus is praying for you this very moment!

The Savior We Need

“For this is the kind of High Priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every days high priests do — first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once and for all time when he offered Himself. For The Law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the promise of the oath, which came after The Law, appoints a Son, Who has been perfected forever.” **Hebrews 7:26-28**

When I am sick and looking for a doctor, I want to find a good one, not some quack who received his medical school diploma online, or even one who graduated at the bottom of his class. I want a well qualified physician, when it pertains to matters of life and death. Jesus, our Great Physician, is imminently qualified to be our Great High Priest. His credentials are unassailable. He is the sinlessly perfect Son of God. It doesn’t get any better than that my friends. And, what’s even more incredible, He was willing to lay down His perfect life for sinners like us!

We don’t have to concentrate very hard in order to realize that we desperately need saving. Most of us can honestly recognize how flawed we truly are. Even those who refuse to admit out loud that they are sinners, deep down, know the truth. We all were dying of a terminal disease called sin. It starts in us when we are born and will carry us in shackles to an eternal grave of destruction, if someone doesn’t intervene on our behalf. The truth: We **NEED** as Savior, and quite frankly, Jesus is the only **ONE** Who is qualified to deliver us from our wretched and pitiful condition. He is not only perfectly qualified, but He is also perfectly willing to save you from your sins today. If you do not belong to Him, you may have convinced yourself that you don’t really need saving, but deep down, you know that you do.

The good news? Jesus is exactly what you need. You can never please God by “being good” or living according to “the rules”. Honestly, no one can. **But while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)**. Do you know what this means? It means that your forgiveness and salvation are simply a prayer away. Do you belong to Jesus this morning? Are you completely certain that you have been saved from the second death (hell) that awaits every unbeliever when this life comes to an end? Jesus is able to save you... completely. He wants to give you full access to God. You do not have to stand at a distance any longer. You can stand before the throne of grace and make your request known to a Father Who loves you. Jesus has paved the way for you to draw near to God. Just ask Him to forgive your sins and then, surrender yourself to Him completely. He will hold you safely in His arms and never let you go. He came to earth to save you, and He has returned to Heaven to keep you saved. So, You can be saved today, saved... to the utmost! He truly is The Savior that we **ALL** need. So come to Jesus... and LIVE.

And ALL of God’s People said... **TRUTH!!!**