

OUTLINE OF THE HEART OF HEBREWS:

Chapter 7	A Better Priesthood
Chapter 8	A Better Covenant
Chapter 9	A Better Sanctuary
Chapter 10	A Better Sacrifice

HEBREWS 7 – Jesus in the priestly order of Melchizedek

**The Historical Argument (v. 1-10)**

Righteous, like Melchizedek  
 Peace, like Melchizedek  
 Royalty, like Melchizedek  
 Outside humanity, like Melchizedek  
 Eternal, like Melchizedek

**The Doctrinal Argument (v. 11-22)**

Imperfect made perfect (v. 11-14)  
 Temporary made eternal (v. 15-19)  
 Unsecured made secure (v. 20-22)

**The Practical Argument (v. 23-28)**

Lives forever - providing the consistency of one priest (v. 23-24)  
Saves forever – providing continual intercession (v. 25)  
Perfect forever – providing absolute purity as the Son of God (v. 26-28)

**OUR TEXT: Hebrews 7:23-28**

*The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

*For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The word “forever” comes up often in our day to day conversation. For instance: “I’ve been working on this project forever.” Or, “This water is taking forever to boil.” Or, “It’s been forever since I’ve seen my distant relatives.” But, of course, in all these uses we mean that “forever” is a very long time, or at least seems like a very long time. But how often do we really use the word “forever” in its true rendering, to mean “forever and ever” as in “to never end”? Seldom, I think.

Well, our Bible uses the word “forever” often – and usually to denote the forever, eternal nature of God and His kingdom. This is what we would expect from a book about the eternal God.

In the New Testament “forever” is used about 50 times. The largest use of “forever” is in the book of Revelation, as you would expect. There it is used 13 of the 50 times. But the New Testament book in which the word “forever” is used the second most often is Hebrews, where it is used 10 times. (tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> is John and Romans with 5 uses). And the greatest concentration of “forever” in Hebrews is in chapter 7 where 5 of the 10 are used (or 1/10 of the New Testament uses). And here

“forever” is not used in the sense of “a very long time”, but meaning never ending, i.e. forever and ever.

It is in Hebrews 7 where Jesus is said to be in the priestly order of Melchizedek. But the name of Melchizedek is not mentioned in this final part of the chapter. Now the emphasis is fully on Jesus, the successor of this far superior, new priestly order. And as seen earlier, our outline is very simple, around the three uses of “forever” in this section:

**Jesus LIVES forever (v. 23-24)**

**Jesus SAVES forever (v. 25)**

**Jesus is PERFECT forever (v. 26-28)**

Here we will spend our time today and ponder - feasting on the “meat” of the Word and growing deeper in our faith as we do so.

## **JESUS LIVES FOREVER**

How many pastors have you had in your lifetime? How many counselors? How many mentors? Hopefully each has had some positive influence on shepherding you in your Christian walk and helping you to come a bit closer to God. But each was also human, and therefore flawed in some way – deficient in being able to help you fully. But imagine a perfect pastor/mentor – unflawed and able to accurately advise you through every twist and turn of your Christian walk – one who always brought you close to God. What a find! What a friend! Keep that one!

The emphasis in Hebrews 7:23-24 is on the CONSISTENCY of what Jesus offers as this perfect, forever priest. The author uses the technique of “on the one hand, and on the other hand” – offering an obvious contrast. The Levitical priesthood offered a continuing parade of hopefully well-meaning, but nonetheless imperfect guides to the Heavenly Father. On the other hand, Jesus – of the never-ending Melchizedekian priesthood – offers the CONSISTENCY of a priest that will be there for us forever, drawing us ever close to the Father.

Clearly Jesus lives forever as the eternal Son of God. But note that the emphasis here is that He is a PRIEST FOREVER. And the implication of “forever” is not that He is only our priest until we die in this life, but beyond. “Forever” is a word that is associated with TIME, unlike the word “eternal” which refers to being outside of time. And the implication is that while we are bound in time in this life, and extending beyond this life until “forever,” Jesus is our priest.

So will we need a priest in heaven? I thought that we were made sinless and perfect when we see Jesus, and would therefore no longer need an advocate. No, no, my friend. We will be in heaven by the grace of God. Our perfection will be HIS perfection granted to us by His advocacy. The Lamb of God, our provision for sin and salvation, will ever be praised in heaven for allowing us to stand before the throne of God in a sinless state that we never deserved. FOREVER Jesus and Jesus alone will be the One who allows us free access to the throne of God. No earthly priest – even Levi or Aaron himself – could do that. Jesus lives forever as our forever priest, and therefore we will live forever enjoying unhindered access to God!

## **JESUS SAVES FOREVER**

Verse 25 is an especially powerful verse – what I call a “Biblical Biggie” because it says succinctly what no other Bible verse gives us so clearly. What does it teach us?

1. Because Jesus LIVES forever, He is able to SAVE forever (note the “therefore”)
2. We can only draw near to God THROUGH JESUS (implication: now and forever)
3. Jesus forever INTERCEDES on behalf of each of His followers

Salvation is not only a lifetime event – it is an eternal event. Revelation 13:8 tells us that Jesus was slain from the foundation of the earth – which at the very least means that my salvation was determined long before I knew about it! Romans 8:29-30 gives us what is often called the

### **FIVE STAGES OF SALVATION (Romans 8:29-30)**

#### **1. Foreknown, 2. Predestined. 3. Called, 4. Justified. 5. Glorified**

Forget not that the angels in heaven, including pre-fall Lucifer and pre-fall demons were made perfect – that is, without sin. And yet, clearly, they were given a free will, for the Bible teaches that Lucifer rebelled and apparently took with him about one third of the angels who rebelled with him, who became Satan's demons.

We will be made perfect ("like Him") in heaven when we see Jesus (1 John 3:2) and we are taught that the power of sin over us will be destroyed so that we will not sin again. But how is that to be accomplished? - is it not through the forever-saving of our Savior/Priest Jesus?! By His saving power He will keep us from ever rebelling, as did the demons. Our glorification will be an everlasting, ongoing process of Jesus SAVING FOREVER.

And though we will be in heaven forever in the very city of God, we must evermore choose to draw near to God. And we will, because our sin nature will be rendered powerless. But this drawing near will only be possible, even in heaven, because of the FOREVER PRIESTHOOD of Jesus. We must then, as now, draw near to God THROUGH JESUS – as this verse teaches us.

And the last indication in verse 25 is that Jesus forever lives (and will live) to make intercession for we who draw near to God. Does this mean that we will continue in our prayer life, bringing intercessions for others to the Father through the Son? Apparently so – otherwise this verse is only talking about this life now, which doesn't fit the meaning and implication of "forever."

So, Jesus: FOREVER SAVES, FOREVER DRAWS US NEAR TO GOD, and FOREVER INTERCEEDES for us. This will be His ongoing role as FOREVER PRIEST – our "bridge" to our Heavenly Father.

### **JESUS PERFECT FOREVER**

Verse 26 gives us five words describing the wonder of our perfect Jesus:

#### **1. holy, 2. innocent, 3. undefiled, 4. separated (from sinners), 5. exalted**

"Holy" indicates His being "set apart" from all else by His absolute perfection. "Innocent" indicates His being perfectly pure in conscience and motive. "Undefiled" indicates His being absolutely unstained by any sin of commission or omission. "Separated" indicates His unique distinction from man in not having a sin nature. And "exalted" indicates God the Father's acknowledgement of the Son's perfection. All five of these designations point to His Deity.

Thus this High Priest never had to offer up a sacrifice for His own sin, as did every other earthly priest before Him. And the one sacrifice He did offer up – Himself, on the cross – was a once only sacrifice that was sufficient for all men, for all time – once for all. This theme will be amplified in Hebrews, chapter 10.

The final thought in verse 28 is to compare the weakness of the Levitical priesthood, because of sin, with the perfection of the Melchizedekian priesthood (implied) in the person of the Son, Jesus. And the implication of this forever perfection of Jesus is that we therefore will be perfect forever.

That's a big WOW, AMEN or PRAISE GOD – or all three together!