

Hebrews

Guaranteed Salvation

Hebrews 7:20-28

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INTRODUCTION:

As I have told you for the last couple of weeks, this sermon is rated **MC** for Mature Christians.

ILLUSTRATION:

Money-back guarantees are a great thing! If you buy a product and it fails within the timeframe of the guarantee. You can take it back to the store and they will either give you your money back or replace the product with one that works. Such a deal!

Sometimes the guarantee is worthless. Perhaps you were guaranteed a seat on a flight, but you got to the airport at the last minute and discovered that the airline had overbooked the flight and your seat was gone. The more important the situation, the more important it is that you have an irrevocable guarantee.

The most important occasion where you need a certain guarantee is your eternal destiny. This life is brief and uncertain, but eternity is forever!

James 4:14 (NASB95)

¹⁴ ...you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

You do not want to show up at the pearly gates and hear, “We do not have a reservation under your name. When did you book it?” If there is anything that you want to be certain about, it should be your salvation. The author of Hebrews wants us to know that because Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, He is the guarantee of a better covenant that ensures our salvation.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Hebrews 7:20-28 (NASB95)

²⁰ And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath ²¹ (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him,

“The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever’”); ²² so much the more also Jesus has become the **guarantee** of a better covenant.

²³ 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 also to save forever those who draw near to God** through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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.*

Prayer

The heart of the text is found in verse 25

Hebrews 7:25a (NASB95)

²⁵ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him,...

To understand that sentence, we need to be clear on the meaning of “save.” Salvation is a radical term. We consider saving someone to be that you pulled them out of the water and prevented them from drowning. Or when you rescue someone has walked into a remote area and has broken a leg or got lost in very cold weather. Or when a coal mine collapses and traps miners inside and you dig into the area where they are trapped and get them out. All of these are physical examples of saving people who are **alive** and in danger of physical death.

But Jesus offers a different kind of salvation. We have all sinned and are dead in those sins. His is a spiritual salvation. He is able to **spiritually save** those who are **already dead** in their sins and are incapacitated and in immediate danger of perishing. Without Jesus we cannot survive. We cannot save ourselves, nor can **we** bring life to someone who is spiritually dead. If we die or Jesus comes again while we are spiritually dead, we will be eternally separated from God regardless of how moral we have been in our lifetime.

John 3:36 (NASB95)

³⁶ He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Spiritually, every person needs to be saved. What do we need to be saved from? The biblical answer is, “We need to be saved from God’s wrath and eternal judgment.”

1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NASB95)

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Either we are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, or we will face God’s wrath because of our sins. In order to satisfy God’s justice, He demands that the penalty of our sin must be paid. In His love, God sent His own Son to be the perfect high priest, offering the sacrifice that we needed to escape His wrath. But amazingly, rather than offering an animal sacrifice, He offered Himself!

The author wants us to see the superiority of Jesus as our high priest. He did not want his readers to return to Judaism under the threat of persecution, so he is showing how Jesus is superior to the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system. Not only was that system unable to save you, now it has become obsolete. You do not want to return to a system that is obsolete. Jesus has fulfilled the law and the prophets from the old

covenant. It is through Jesus that even **they** have been saved. The old covenant merely pushed their sins forward to Christ through the earthly high priests.

Although we may not be tempted to give up Christianity for Judaism, we are easily tempted to turn away from Christ when trials or disappointments hit. Or when we are lured back into seeking material comforts or worldly pleasures. What we really need to understand is the urgency of recognizing the supremacy of Jesus Christ as our high priest, who is able to eternally save us from our spiritual death. We must believe and draw near to God through Christ and be born again.

The author is continuing his argument that as a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, Jesus is far superior to the Levitical priests. In our text, he shows that Jesus is superior as our high priest because of four things. The first is **because of God's oath**.

I. Because of God's Oath.

Hebrews 7:20-22 (NASB95)

²⁰ And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath ²¹ (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever'");

²² so much the more also Jesus has become the **guarantee** of a better covenant.

The author is contrasting the Levitical priests with the priesthood of Jesus according to the order of Melchizedek. In regard to the Levitical priests, God did not make an oath that the priest would serve forever. But when it came to the priesthood of His Son, He says "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever'". This is a quote from Psalm 110.

Psalm 110:4 (NASB95)

⁴ The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

God's word, in itself, is enough to make His promise certain. But when He adds His oath, it is like underlining the promise, highlighting it, and putting it in brackets with multiple exclamation points after it! And then He adds, "**and will not change His mind**"! You get the impression that God wants us to take note—Jesus is a high priest forever!

As such, he adds "**so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.**" Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant, and in this has provided us with eternal life. But He does more than mediate the covenant; He also guarantees it. All of God's promises in the new covenant are guaranteed to us by Jesus Himself. He guarantees to pay all the debts that our sins have incurred, or ever will incur against us

Secondly, Jesus is superior as our high priest **because of His eternity**.

II. Because of the Eternality of Jesus.

Hebrews 7:23-24 (NASB95)

²³ 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.

The author continues his contrast between the Levitical priests and Jesus, our high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. The Levitical priests existed in greater numbers because they died and had to be replaced. The Jewish historian Josephus says that there were 83 high priests from Aaron to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. The point is that they were not perpetual. They all died and were replaced. But Jesus, "because He continues forever, **holds His priesthood permanently**".

To put this in modern terms, human pastors come and go, but Jesus is always in heaven for you. Of course, a pastor is not like an Old Testament priest, in that I do not represent you before God. You can go directly to God through Christ. My role is to proclaim and explain God's truth to you, but in that role there is always the danger that you might depend too much on me. I began my ministry at this church a little over 9 1/2 years ago. But the fact is, I could be in heaven by next week, because I am mortal. While I pray that God will use my ministry as long as He keeps me here to equip and encourage you in your walk with God, do not look to me or become dependent on me. Look to Christ! He **holds His priesthood permanently.**"

Third, we see that Jesus is superior as our high priest **because of His eternal intercession for us.**

III. Because of the Eternal Intercession of Jesus.

Hebrews 7:25 (NASB95)

²⁵ 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.

Once again we see the word "Therefore". What is it there for? It is taking us backwards to His unchanging eternal priesthood. The reason He can save us to the uttermost is because He is a forever High Priest. He can take us all the way because His priesthood is eternal. Other priests fell short because they kept dying. But based on His unchanging priesthood is His ability to save us to the uttermost.

I want you to notice the fourth word..."able". Jesus is able to give us eternal salvation. The high priests from the old covenant were not able to provide eternal salvation. If they could there would not have been any need for Jesus to die on the cross. I am sure that they **wished** that they could. But when it comes to Jesus, not only is He willing, but He is also **able!**

The words "save forever", according to Titus, has three parts: past, present, and future. Three tenses to salvation. The past tense has to do with deliverance from sin's guilt; the present tense has to do with the deliverance from sin's power; and the future tense, deliverance from sin's presence. The first is done at the cross; the second at the throne as He intercedes and continues to cleanse us; and the third at the second coming, when He comes and transforms us.

Titus 2:11-13 (NASB95)

**¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (That is past tense)
¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, (That is present tense) ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, (That is future tense)**

It is salvation past, present, and future. That is ours in Christ. Then we are told who can receive this salvation. It is "**those who draw near to God through Him**".

Perfection is open and available to anyone who comes unto God by Him. There is no other way. Jesus said, "**No one comes to the Father**" – but how? – "**but through Me.**"

Then comes the guarantee of His salvation. "**since He always lives to make intercession for them.**" Not only does He save you initially, but, but because He is eternal, He keeps interceding on your behalf. He will give you eternal life in the future.

Romans 5:10 (NASB95)

¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, – stop right there. Now, that is a negative thing, bringing about a great change. What is the negative thing? Death. Death is a negative. True? Christ did a lot with His death. He took a negative and did a tremendous work. By a negative, His death, He reconciled us to God. If a negative could accomplish that much how much more could a positive living Christ do? Listen to the rest of the verse, "much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His**"– what? – "**by His life.**"**

If the **death** of Christ has provided past, present, and future salvation for us consider how much more His life must be doing for you.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NASB95)

²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

What does it mean to be the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus? It simply means that when God looks at us, He sees us through Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross. Christ took on our sin and replaced with His righteousness with us.

He continues to intercede in tender, compassionate love, to present us ultimately to God with His righteousness. What a Savior! What a High Priest!

Finally, we see that Jesus is superior as our high priest **because He was willing to sacrifice Himself** on the cross for us to pay to price for all of our sins.

IV. Because of the Perfect Sacrifice of Himself.

Hebrews 7:26-28 (NASB95)

²⁶ For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; ²⁷ 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. ²⁸ 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.

"**It was fitting for us**" points to how Christ was perfectly suited to perform His saving work. He met all of the requirements necessary to pay the debt for all of the sins committed by mankind for all time. The Holy Spirit lists five characteristics that made Him perfectly suited for our salvation.

1. "**Holy**". This points to His character as set apart unto God, without any sin. It has a messianic connotation. It was prophesied that Jesus, as God's Holy One, would not see corruption.
2. "**Innocent**". This points out that He was entirely free from all that is evil and harmful, both in action and in motivation.
3. "**Undefiled**". This points to Jesus' moral purity, in contrast to the outward ritual purity of the Levitical priests. Though they may have seemed pure outwardly, inwardly they were defiled as sinners. Unlike the Levitical priests, who had to keep themselves away from anyone who would defile them ritually, Jesus could mix with sinful people and yet their defilement did not affect Him. He could touch lepers, the ritually unclean, and even the dead without taking on their defilement. Instead, His purity and life-giving power were imparted to them! But Jesus was completely pure throughout.
4. "**Separated from Sinners**". This does not mean that Jesus refused to be around sinners. Rather, although He was the friend of sinners, He kept Himself separate and undefiled from their sins.
5. "**Exalted Above the Heavens**". Since Jesus was Holy, innocent, undefiled, and separated from sinners, God has exalted His name above every other name in heaven and on earth.

The author adds that Jesus does not need daily, like those Levitical 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.**" The priests in the old covenant were weak sinners standing before God. They had to deal with their own sacrifices for sin before they could represent other sinners. But Jesus did not need a sacrifice for himself because He was without sin.

Conclusion

Have you ever gotten a promotional letter that said in fine print, "Actual results may vary"? Or, "Amounts used in this letter are for illustration purposes only; actual earnings may be different"? Those statements greatly limit the promises of the offer!

But God promises that because Jesus is our superior high priest, salvation is guaranteed for all who draw near to God through Him. There is no fine print stating, that the sinner must clean up his life first." It does not say, "Offer does not apply to really bad sinners." You do not clean up your life in order to come to Jesus. You come to Jesus to let Him clean up your life.

Jesus promises...

John 6:37 (NASB95)

37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

He guarantees salvation for all eternity if you will come to Him!

Seek to draw near to God!

What A Day That Will Be.