



## Sermon Outline & Notes | March 13, 2016 | Complete Salvation | Hebrews 7:23–28

### Setting the Stage:

- Can you think of times in your life, or seasons in your life, where you've been really anxious, unsure, or insecure, and then finally something happens, and you're able to exhale and get some peace because you've been given a trustworthy assurance that helps you to put away those insecurities? That's some of what we see happening this week in our passage, as the author of Hebrews seeks to give lasting assurance to his readers and hearers concerning their doubts about their relationship with God, and security in Jesus.

### Biblical Context: Summary, Chapter 7:1–22

- **Melchizedek's name** — means both King of Righteousness and King of Peace.
- **Melchizedek greater than Abraham** — Abraham received a blessing from him, and tithed to him.
- **Jesus came in the likeness of Melchizedek** — Jesus was made an eternal priest, having the power of an indestructible life.

### Primary Sermon Passage | Hebrews 7:23–28

<sup>23</sup> The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,

<sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

<sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

<sup>28</sup> For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of

the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

### **Central Proposition (Big Idea)**

Our only hope for complete salvation, rests in a completely perfect priest.

**Hebrews 7:23** — The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,

- In v.23 then, we have a simple reminder of the humanity & imperfection of the priests that had come before Jesus saying that, among other reasons for them not holding the priesthood forever—the most obvious one is that they just kept dying.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish Historian, Josephus quote concerning the Aaronic Priesthood:

*(227) Accordingly, the number of all the high priests from Aaron, of whom we have spoken already as of the first of them, until Phanas, who was made high priest during the war by the seditious, was eighty-three; (228) of whom thirteen officiated as high priests in the wilderness, from the days of Moses, while the tabernacle was standing, until the people came into Judea, when king Solomon erected the temple to God;*

*(229) for at first they held the high priesthood till the end of their life, although afterward they had successors while they were alive.*

*(231) After those thirteen high priests, eighteen took the high priesthood at Jerusalem, one in succession to another, from the days of king Solomon until Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made an expedition against that city, and burnt the temple, and removed our nation into Babylon, and then took Josadek, the high priest, captive;*

*(232) the times of these high priests were four hundred and sixty-six years, six months, and ten days, while the Jews were still under the regal government.*

*Chapter 10: Enumeration of the High Priests, Antiquities of the Jews  
20.227–232*

**Hebrews 7:23–24** — The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.

- **Two big truth claims in v.24**
  - that Jesus holds his priesthood permanently, and
  - that he continues forever.

- **All together then, between v.23, and 24:** we gain the understanding that by comparison to the Aaronic high priests that were always dying off there is a different kind of priest that has now come.
  - *A high priest who endures completely,*
  - *A high priest who abides and dwells with us forever,*
  - *A high priest who is present with us right now, & always.*
  - *A high priest who is eternal, and as such, a high priest who holds his priesthood forever.*

**Hebrews 7:26** — For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

- **Now what the author of Hebrews is trying to communicate to us, in saying ‘it is fitting’ Jesus is the kind of high priest that truly fits our need.** Which kind? The kind described in v. 24 and v.26.
  - **Looking backward in the text first** (according to v.24 ) **the kind of high priest that truly fits our need is...**
    - the kind that holds the priesthood permanently,
    - and the kind that is present with his people forever, for all eternity,
  - **Looking forward in the text (according to v.26) the kind of high priest who truly fits our need is:**
    - **holy**: meaning devout, pious, and pleasing to God
    - In v.26, this high priest who truly fits our need...**is innocent**: meaning blameless, utterly moral, untouched by evil,
    - This high priest, Jesus, who truly fits our need...**is unstained**: meaning pure, and undefiled.
    - This high priest, who truly fits our need...**is separated from us sinners**, in that he is divine **and** completely other (and separate in kind) from us,
    - and finally, this high priest who truly fits our need: **has been exalted above the heavens**—through his ascension to the the position of ***rule and authority*** at right hand of God the Father...
- **The exaltation language of the author of Hebrews here**, reminds us of what he said at the beginning of his letter back in Heb. 1 where he had already told us in v.3 that:

<sup>3</sup>*After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

- **So what the author of Hebrews is telling us here in v.26 about Jesus' exaltation above the heavens is:** that through his *permanent priesthood* he has made *permanent purification* for sin.

**Hebrews 7:27** — He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

### **Three points of comparison on display here in v.27 contrasting Jesus from the Levitical Priesthood**

- 1) **Sacrifice for Your Own Sins vs. No Sacrifice Required:** The author of Hebrews notes that the Aaronic high-priests, who on the Day of Atonement each year offered not just a sacrifice for the sins of the people but also a second sacrifice for themselves—since they too needed cleansing from sin. But Jesus, on the other hand has no need to offer any sacrifice for himself—because as one without sin, no sacrifice for your sins would be necessary.
- 2) **The One Sacrifice vs. the Many:** The second point of comparison in v.27 is that, on the one hand:
  - a. The sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood had to be offered over & over again, and then even still they remained at best: imperfect, incomplete, and unable to permanently atone for the peoples' sin.
  - b. Whereas with Jesus who holds the priesthood permanently, he only had need to make one single perfect sacrifice, and his work was accomplished completely in that one sacrifice.
- 3) **The Nature of the Sacrifices:** The author of Hebrews doesn't only want us to see the difference in the number of sacrifices required—the one sacrifice of Jesus, the many required of Levitical priests, but he also wants us to see the incalculable difference in the nature of the sacrifices offered. Where the old covenant sacrifices, typically consisted of bulls and lambs, and bread, and drink, what Jesus sacrificed was altogether different.
  - a. **St. Augustine's quote from "On the Trinity"** describes this remarkably different kind of sacrifice in a beautiful way:

*Who then is so righteous and holy a priest as the only Son of God, who had no need to purge His own sins by sacrifice, neither original sins, nor those which are added by human life?*

*And what could be so fitly chosen ...[for this sacrifice] as mortal flesh? And what so clean for cleansing the faults of mortal men as the flesh born in and from the womb of a virgin, without any infection of*

*carnal[ity]?*

*And what could be so acceptably offered and taken, as the flesh of our sacrifice, made the body of our priest?*

**Hebrews 7:28** — For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

- **The Weakness & Usefulness of the Law:** Points out the fact that because the law is weak & useless comparatively, and because it can make nothing perfect, then the priests it produces are weak compared to what Jesus now offers as well.
  - **See also, Hebrews 7:18–19** — For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law made nothing perfect)...
- **Points out the unchangeable promise of God the Father**—which is perhaps the most compelling reason for placing our hope in the person & work of this perfect high priest.
  - **See also, Hebrews 7:20** — And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’ ” *(note quote from Ps. 110:4 here as well)*

### **High Priest Jesus’ Credentials & Resume (vs. 23–24, 26–28)**

- **7:23–24** — Jesus remains forever, other priests keep dying. Jesus priesthood is never ending, because he remains forever.
- **7:26** — Jesus is perfectly fit for our particular needs: he’s holy, innocent, pure, and exalted to God’s right hand in power.
- **7:27** — didn’t need to make atonement for any sin of his own; only need to make one single sacrifice, ever.
- **7:28** — The Father made Jesus a high priest permanently and forever, by divine fiat—an oath sworn by his own name.

### **Why do we need a Priest Today?**

Because our only hope for complete salvation, rests in a completely perfect priest.

- **Additional Support, see Hebrews 2:17** — Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

### **Who is Jesus able to save to the uttermost/completely according to v.25:**

- **See Acts 4:12** — And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

- **See Hebrews 5:9** — And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

**Hebrews 7:25** — Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

- **So why do you & I need a priest today?**

- Because the right high priest is able to save to the uttermost—which is to say that—high priest Jesus is able to ‘save absolutely & completely’ those who draw near to God through him.
- Because the right high priest will ‘truly fit our need’ as sinners, because he can offer a sacrifice that the Levitical priests couldn’t—a self-sacrifice of one who is innocent, unstained, and pure—the self-sacrifice of one, of whom it was said, “Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people,” (Hebrews 2:17).
- **Sin requires a blood sacrifice:** the ugly truth about human sin is that our sin is a great offense to God that it has always required the taking of life and the shedding of blood in order to atone for—and make restitution for sin (i.e. see Lev. 17:11 among others).
- **Levitical Priesthood vs. Jesus High Priesthood:** While the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament’s priestly system could only atone for sin partially and temporarily, God the Father made Jesus a high priest forever, and he did so with an oath (and in concert with Jesus’ once for all blood sacrifice of himself)—for the propitiation of the sins of his people.

- **Support Concerning High Priest Jesus’ Intercession for those who draw near to God through him.**

- **Jesus intercedes for us by helping us, See Hebrews 2:18** — For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.
- **Jesus intercedes for us by giving us bold assurance and hope for complete salvation through Jesus, See Romans 8:33–34** — Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.
- **Jesus intercedes for us by helping us from stumbling, and guaranteeing he will present those of us who draw near to God through him as blameless before God, See Jude 1:24–25** — Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

## **Closing / Application Summary**

- Understanding that a blood sacrifice was required in order to blot out our sins, ought to change the way we think about sin, and draw us into worship of our high priest Jesus who willingly became our ransom.
- Knowing that Jesus permanent priesthood means for us that he is able to save us completely & irrevocably ought to fill us with joy and peace that overflows into all of life,
- Seeing that our high priest Jesus—who lives forever—will never cease from his interceding work on our behalf, ought to lead us into lives of worship and thanksgiving, and boldness, and hope.

## **Discussion Questions | Hebrews 7:23–28**

1. Which of the many descriptions given in this week’s text concerning the nature and character of Jesus is most striking to you, and why?
2. Why does it matter that Jesus is able to “save to the uttermost” (save completely)? How does this shape your understanding of your own relationship with God?
3. Who is it specifically that the author of Hebrews declares Jesus is able to save completely? What does it mean to draw near to God through Jesus? Explain why you would or wouldn’t count yourself among this group?
4. What does it mean that Jesus lives to make intercession for God’s people? What does this mean to you personally?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that all who walk through the doors of Sound City Bible Church would be numbered among those who draw near to God through Jesus in a saving way.
2. Pray that Jesus’ forever presence with us, and his ongoing intercession for us, would change and grow the way we live out our faith each day.