

Hebrews Chapter Seven (vv.20-28)

Hebrews 7.1-3: The **Person** of Melchizedek. 7.4-10: The **Prominence** of Melchizedek. 7.11-28: The **Priesthood** of Christ after the Order of Melchizedek.

- The **perfection** of Christ's priesthood (vv.11-14). After the order of Melchizedek.
 - The **perpetuity** of Christ's priesthood (vv.15-19). For ever.
 - The **promise** of Christ's priesthood (vv.20-22). The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent.
 - The **perpetuity** of Christ's priesthood (vv.23-25). For ever.
- The **perfection** of Christ's priesthood (vv.26-28). After the order of Melchizedek.

The Promise of Christ's Priesthood (vv.20-22)

20 And inasmuch (moreover) as not without an oath he was made priest: **21** (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) **22** By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

The Levitical system was instituted by divine appointment, but it was not accompanied with an oath as God designed it to be temporary and preparatory, pictorial and provisional. That which is connected with God's oath is eternal and cannot be changed, hence the promise in relation to the priesthood of Christ. With the new priesthood comes a new 'testament' or covenant ('placed between two', an arrangement between two parties), a **better** one, of which Jesus is the 'surety'.

The basis of the new covenant is found in God's covenant with Abraham. *Walvoord: It furnishes the key to the entire Old Testament and reaches for its fulfilment into the New.*

Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12.1-3, 13.16, 15.5, 17.7, 22.17-18)		
<i>Genesis 22.18: And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.</i>		
Land (Soil)	Seed	Blessing (Salvation)
Land Covenant <i>(Deuteronomy 30.1-10)</i>	Davidic Covenant <i>(2 Samuel 7.12-16)</i>	New Covenant <i>Jeremiah 31.31-34</i>
National	National	Universal

The **new** covenant shall be made *with* and fulfilled *in* the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Jeremiah 31.31). It was not made with the Church, however, **every** Christian enjoys the **spiritual** blessings of the new covenant because they have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus who is its **Mediator**. Paul was a minister of the **new** covenant (the gospel dispensation) rather than the **old** (the dispensation of law). See 2 Corinthians 3.1-4.6.

Old Covenant (Law)	New Covenant (Gospel)
Written on tables of stone	Written on human hearts
Physical	Spiritual
Pronounces death	Gives life
Condemnation	Righteousness
Passing	Permanent
Glorious	More glorious

There are more differences which will be seen in Hebrews 8-9. For example, the **old** covenant covered sins temporally, whereas the **new** covenant removes sins eternally. As the **Surety**, Christ is the pledge, security and guarantee that the new covenant will never fail or be removed. His precious blood is its seal. Under the old covenant, the people were the surety. They had the responsibility to ensure they obeyed the commandments in order to receive the blessings. Not so with the new covenant! Our Surety has acted on our behalf by paying the cost of forgiveness promised by the new covenant. As **Mediator** He has established the new covenant in His own blood. As **Surety** He guarantees its eternal effectiveness.

The Perpetuity of Christ's Priesthood (vv.23-25)

23 *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: **24** But this (man), because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.*

There have been many Levitical high priests. Josephus records 83 between Aaron and AD70. These high priests could not 'continue' or 'remain alongside' the people because they were subject to death. Aaron died in the sight of 'all the congregation' to show the people the nature and imperfection of the Levitical priesthood (cf. Numbers 20.24-29). He could not lead them into the promised land because of his sin at Meribah. What a contrast to our Great High Priest. He 'continueth ever' or 'remains'. As such his priesthood is 'unchangeable' and cannot be transferred to another. It is unalterable, indivisible and uninterrupted. *Flanigan: Our case and our cause are permanently safe with Him.*

25 *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

On the basis of His unchangeable priesthood (office), He is able to save every believer 'to the uttermost'. The word 'uttermost' combines the ideas of degree and time, i.e. He saves us **completely** and **forever**. His salvation is **total** (body, soul and spirit) and **eternal**. He guarantees that every believer will arrive at their future destination of glory, know salvation from the presence of sin and the redemption of our bodies. *Philippians 1.6: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Note. Not only does He **save** to the uttermost (onyx stones on the high priest's *shoulders*) but He also **loves** to the uttermost (precious stones on the high priest's *heart*, see John 13.1). The emphasis here is **not** the salvation of our *souls* by His death, but the salvation of our *lives* by His constant intercession in the Wilderness journey. As Christ 'ever lives' He makes permanent intercession for us (see Hebrews 2.18, 4.16). Intercession is a 'falling in with' or 'coming together', i.e. approaching God in prayer on behalf of others. The Lord Jesus prays for us!! This is a continuation of the ministry He began on earth (Luke 22.32; John 17.9, 11, 15, 17). *Which of us knows from what we have been delivered by the intercession of Christ? FF Bruce: The ascended Lord still does for His people at the right hand of God what He did for Peter on earth.*

The Perfection of Christ's Priesthood (vv.26-28)

26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy (birth), harmless (life), undefiled (death), separate(d) from sinners (resurrection), and made higher than the heavens (ascension);*

Our High Priest 'became us', or is 'exactly fitting' for our needs (cp. Hebrews 2.10). He is completely suited to helpless sinners such as us. He is all that the holy God requires and all that sinful man needs. His fitness is examined in **five** (number of grace) statements. **First**, He is **holy** (*hosios* = personal holiness, holy in virtue of one's character). The word suggests one *who fulfils all divine obligations both in his character and work (WE Vine)*. **Second**, He is **harmless** or 'not evil'. This describes one who has motives and ways which are entirely free from unkindness or malice (1 Peter 2.22-23). *As holy He loved the Lord His God. As harmless He loved His neighbours as Himself. He lived not for self, but for others.* **Third**, He is **undefiled**, unstained, morally pure and unable to contract defilement (unlike the priests of old). *He touched the leper and the leper was cleansed. He came into contact with death, and death was conquered.* **Fourth**, He is **separated** from sinners. This phrase primarily has reference to the *action* of the Lord's resurrection, by which He was separated from sinful men. His present ministry is in the Holy of Holies in heaven. It is also true, of course, that the Lord Jesus was separate from sinners on earth (Psalm 1.1). He spent time in their company (Matthew 9.10-11, 11.19) but was infinitely apart from them by nature, in character, conduct and motive. **Finally**, having passed through the heavens (Hebrews 4.14) He has been exalted in a position **higher** than all creation. It was only for a time He was made lower than the angels (Hebrews 2.9); now He occupies the highest place of honour.

27 *Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice (first for his own sins, and then for the people's:) for this he did once (for all), when he offered up himself.*

Under the Levitical priesthood there was no daily **sin** offering, except during the consecration of the priests (Exodus 29, Leviticus 8-9). During the period of consecration (eight days) a sin offering was made **daily** for the sins of the priests (Exodus 29.36), followed by an offering for the sins of the people on the final day (Leviticus 9.7). This was **needful** for them; they were characterised by sin. What a contrast to our Great High Priest. He has offered up **one** sufficient sacrifice, not many. He did not make an offering **for** Himself, but **of** Himself on behalf of others.

28 *For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated (perfected) for evermore.*

The perfection of Christ's priesthood is reaffirmed with another series of contrasts. The priests of old were appointed **under** the law and *without* an oath. Christ was appointed **after** the law and *by* the oath. The priests of old were mere **men**; our Great High Priest is the **Son**. They were **weak** morally, spiritually and physically, but the Lord Jesus is **perfected**, referring to His having been exalted and glorified. He has now been brought to the goal determined by God. He has been perfected in His office as Captain (Hebrews 2.10), Saviour and High Priest (Hebrews 5.9, cf. Hebrews 8.1).