

Changes Are Necessary

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[0 : 00] All right, little church, you are dismissed at this time if you are sticking around and you're not one of those who are leaving. Please take your Bibles and open up to Hebrews chapter 7.

It's hot. Wow, it's hot. So I hope you guys are enjoying the fans.

But so Hebrews 7 verses 11 through 28. And I've titled this Changes Are Necessary.

Changes Are Necessary. So it's a big chunk of Hebrews 7. I could have broken it down to three or four different sermons. But I felt to take the larger chunk and grab the greater context and its implications would be more beneficial.

So Henry Ford has been credited with saying, if I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses. Now there's no proof that the man ever actually said these words.

[1 : 33] But if he had, it would show that he understood something at the very heart of invention and innovation that has shaped our world really since the world began, since God created it.

And that is that change is inevitable. Changes are necessary for growth and advancement. And that's important.

Carl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler, sorry. German names, not really great with that pronunciation.

They both submitted patents for a gas-powered automobile on January 29, 1886, in two different German cities.

Benz's three-wheeled vehicle was the first to combine an internal combustion engine with an integrated chassis. Daimler's motorized carriage was the world's first four-wheeled automobile and featured the first high-speed gasoline engine.

22 years later, Henry Ford rolled out his Model T. It was one of the first mass production vehicles, which made car ownership a universal possibility.

[2 : 44] By 1921, the Model T accounted for 57% of all cars in the world. Why was the Ford Model T so successful and relatively inexpensive?

Because it was a Ford. Thank you, Dawson. There we go. I had to expect something. I'm just going to talk about Ford.

Well, it was because Henry Ford marketed the product to the middle class, and he continually worked toward improving production techniques and sought to make the cars inexpensive, that more people could own them.

Up until that point, pretty much the only ones who owned vehicles, automobiles, were really rich. It was because of the way that they were manufactured, was high in labor cost.

And the automobile industry is just one of many that you can see this kind of success story. For instance, remember when computers needed entire rooms to be set up in? And I don't remember that, but I know some of you do.

[3 : 52] But it just shows how far that has come. I remember when Netflix used to mail you a DVD to watch, one at a time? Yeah, not anymore. I don't know if they still do that, mailing DVDs.

Or, this is what I was thinking about. Remember when Dick Tracy was the only one using a watch to communicate? Now, that's way before my time, but I remember Dick Tracy because I read the comics when I was little.

So, anyway, I was just thinking about that. I'm like, all these things that, you know, remember when this, and now it's so much different. Remember when you never could carry around your phone, and now it's your computer at your hand.

Right? I mean, there's so much advancement, so much that takes place, so much change happening. And in so many fields. We're truly blessed and spoiled.

We're a truly blessed and spoiled group of people. Not just in this room, but just to be living today, especially in the United States of America. And all these advances to our benefit have come about

because someone saw a need for change.

[5 : 02] Now, last week we looked at the first 10 verses of chapter 7 of Hebrews and examined how Melchizedek, an obscure Old Testament character from Genesis 14, is a type of Christ.

Specifically, we saw the comparison of how he is a king of righteousness and peace, Melchizedek. King of righteousness and peace. He's without beginning or end. He received tithes from the patriarch Abraham, indicating the superiority of his priesthood over any priesthood that could descend from Abraham.

We saw how he blessed Abraham, indicating his overall superiority over him. This week, as we continue in Hebrews 7, we'll see how this comparison between Melchizedek and Jesus perfectly sets up Jesus to make some necessary changes to what the Jews understood as to how God handles matters pertaining to righteousness.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this time as we come to your word. We ask for your understanding. In Jesus' name, amen. So I'm going to just take it sections at a time from the section here and just address it as we go.

In verses 11 and 12, we see the need for a change in the law. We see a need for a change in the law. Hebrews 7, verse 11. Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, for under it the people received the law, what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek rather than one named after the order of Aaron?

[6 : 46] For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. Now this passage doesn't shock us like it should because we're so far removed from its original culture and context.

The author of Hebrews sets the superiority of Christ. That's the intent and purpose behind the writing of Hebrews is to show the superiority of Christ over all things that Judaism proclaimed and exalted at the time.

And so he's setting up the superiority of Christ as our great high priest over the entire Levitical priesthood. He's proclaiming that Christ brings an end to that priesthood, which was the backbone of Jewish society and a major feature of God's covenant with Israel.

You read through the law, you go Genesis and on, and you're reading through the law and Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and you're coming across things that just don't make any sense to us.

You come across the sacrificial system, come across priests and what they wore and how they functioned and what they did and different festivals that took place in honor of different things and remembrance of different events.

[8 : 00] All this is taking place. Well, the priesthood is the backbone of Jewish society. They're the ones who carried out all these different matters. They're the ones who carried out the sacrifices.

They're the ones who carried out the praying for the nation. They're the ones who saw that the festivals were done according to God's expectation. And since the Levitical priesthood was so ingrained in the law, yet it could not accomplish God's salvation, a change needed to take place with the law.

That's why it says in verse 12, when there's a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law because according to the law, in order to be a priest, we covered this last week and a few weeks back before that, in order to be a priest according to Jewish law, you had to be descended from the tribe of Levi.

And so if there's going to be a change in the priesthood, that is not from the tribe of Levi, then there must be a change in the law as well. Makes sense. Now look at verses 13 through 17, we see a change in the law with a new priesthood.

So that's where he kicks off after this point. Verse 13, For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe from which no one has ever served at the altar.

[9 : 23] Pause. Because priests who serve at the altar from the tribe of Levi. There we go. Verse 14, For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah.

And in connection with that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests. This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest not on the basis of legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of him, you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. I don't want to jump too far. I don't want to keep jumping back to Melchizedek.

Obviously, he's mentioned in the passage. We did a pretty good study on it last week. But we see the distinction between tribes, as I mentioned before, the distinction between tribes and their societal functions in the nation of Israel, you need to understand it as you're reading through this text of Scripture.

distinct and definitive lines were strictly drawn in Israel between the roles of the priest and the king. The priest was not to be a king and the king was not to be a priest.

[10:35] The tribe of Levi produced the priest and the tribe of Judah, the tribe primarily remembered as the tribe of King David, were the ones who produced the kings. And so the new priesthood is different, not only because it is exercised by one who came from a tribe other than Levi, but also because it's not exercised on earth.

It belongs to an eternal order, not to the material world. You notice in verse 16, talking about the one who's become a priest not on the basis of legal requirement, that is according to the law, because that would have been a Levite, but by the power of an indestructible life.

And you remember what we said about Melchizedek and how he's a type of Christ and how they both have no apparent beginning or end. And that's not to say that Melchizedek is eternal, but that we know nothing of his origin and nothing of his death.

And we know Jesus is eternal because he is God forever past and forever future. And Christ's priesthood is founded on the power of an indestructible life.

It's one of the fundamental differences between Christ's priesthood and the Aaronic priesthood of the Levitical priesthood. Levitical priests died. Not one of them could fulfill the responsibilities in his work as a priest forever.

[12:02] Yet the priest who arises according to the order of Melchizedek, Jesus, endures forever. So the proclamation of Jesus being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek is the official establishment of a new priesthood.

So that's change in the law. Number one, new priesthood. Number two, change in the law, a new guarantor. Verses 18 through 22.

For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness. For the law made nothing perfect.

But on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath.

But this one, the new one, the new priest, new priesthood, 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.

[13:13] This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. It's hot. So the author of Hebrews again makes a statement about perfection.

And the time that he, sorry, this time he highlights the inability of the law to perfect anything.

Catch that in verse 18, or 19. The law made nothing perfect. It never made anyone perfect. It reveals sin and ultimately sin kills.

the law cannot save, for it was never intended to do such a thing. So we think about, when you think about salvation, you think about Judaism and how were Jews saved, and there are people who go to the argument, well, Jews were saved by keeping the law.

That is a farce. That is completely false. Because the whole point of the law was to show them that of their inability to keep the law. the fact that sin is so rampant in them as individuals that they could not perfectly keep what God had given them to do.

[14:31] They needed someone else, that is, God, to do it for them. So the law exposed the pervasiveness of sinfulness of man as a result of the great need for a Savior.

Jesus, however, does precisely what the law could never do. He saves. He accomplished our salvation and gave us a new hope. A hope through which we now draw near to God.

The end of verse 19 there. And I think that in itself is really cool. That's something I could have really expounded on here. The fact that we have an opportunity to draw near to God through Jesus. God is not a far-off concept or being. He's not a, he doesn't choose to not associate with his creation, but rather at the time of Jesus, his birth, his life, he interacted with and engaged and lived among his creation so that through his life, his perfect life, his death and his resurrection, we could be reconciled to God.

What we once had in Genesis chapter 3 or Genesis 1, 2, and 3. Thank you. He found something on the web for me.

[15:58] Sorry. So what we found in Genesis 1 through 3 is that mankind had a relationship with God. You see in Genesis 3 that Adam and Eve sin, they hide themselves from God and he's walking in the garden.

There's indication that there was a face-to-face relationship and that was broken because of sin and man was cast out of the garden. There was no longer that direct connection.

And even going through the Old Testament, he interacts with Abraham and other patriarchs and other folks, but it wasn't what it was.

It wasn't what it used to be, a direct one-to-one connection until Jesus. And then it's through Christ that we have access to God and we can draw near to Him because of what Jesus has done.

In verse 22, the author connects priesthood to covenant, hinting at the fact that not only is Jesus a better priest, but His priesthood is actually part of a better covenant. Jesus is the guarantee of the new covenant.

[17:06] The new covenant is spoken of in Jeremiah 31. And you know, at the last supper when Jesus breaks the bread and gives the cup, and He says, this is my body, this is my blood, this is my blood which is shed for you, it's the new covenant in my blood.

So He institutes the new covenant before He goes to the cross, or He's saying, when I go to the cross and shed my blood, the new covenant is going to be established. So the old is gone, the new has come.

He's a priest of a better covenant, a new covenant. And because of that, Christians, we can be assured that all the blessings of the new covenant will be applied to us. See, the Jewish folk, they didn't have that promise of the old covenant, because the old covenant system focused so much on the priesthood, the priesthood which was imperfect man, which were men who died and had to be replaced, died and had to be replaced, and so on and so forth for hundreds of years.

But God's covenant promise cannot fail, new covenant promise cannot fail because God's priest, Jesus Christ, cannot fail. He endures forever as a priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Verses 23 through 25, another change in the law, you have an eternal intercessor. An eternal intercessor.

[18:34] Verse 23, 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.

Consequently, he's able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Christian, we are dependent on Christ not only for his past death and resurrection, but also for his present intercession at the right hand of the Father. Father. He intercedes on our behalf.

He steps in when we make a mistake and reminds the Father that he paid for that sin. I think having a priest who intercedes for us when we sin, he provides help in time of need.

I recall a couple weeks ago when I was at my grandfather's funeral and I was among my family, I did not know how to pray.

[19:51] I did not know what to pray. and I said, Lord, pray for me. Have you thought of that?

When we think of prayer, we think of our conversation with God. We think of how we can intercede and how we can pray for others. Have you considered the fact that you can ask God himself to pray for you?

And you know his prayer for you is going to be perfectly what it needs to be. I know it was for me during my time. When I was asking God, I don't know what to pray.

Pray for me. I don't know how I should feel about my family. I don't know how I should feel about the situation. I don't know how I should feel about what that priest just said. Pray for me, Lord, and pray for my family.

My prayer, the one thing that was really interesting to me, like I said, it was my first ever Catholic funeral.

[20:56] I didn't know what to expect. But one thing I noticed was that despite the tradition and the walls and everything that they do, the word of God was still present at times.

They read from Scripture. They read from John 14, verses 1 through 6. Now, those of you who've gone to enough funerals and have a good memory, you may recognize John 14, 1 through 6 is like the go-to passage at funerals.

God's and they went to it. And this afternoon, I'm going to be doing a graveside service for a family that I've been in touch with for a few months.

And John 14, 1 through 6 is the passage I will be utilizing this afternoon. But in that passage, you get a glimpse of the gospel.

You get a glimpse of the peace that only Jesus provides. You get a glimpse of the fact that he has an eternal destiny in mind for those who are going to commit and come to him and believe in him.

[22 : 08] He says he goes to prepare a place. And then you've got Thomas piping up. Good old Thomas. Not Richard's. You've got Thomas.

He said, how do we know where you're going? How do we know how to get there? How do we know the way? And of course, John 14, 6, Jesus says to him, I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the father but by me.

Those words were spoken at a catholic funeral in a catholic church. And it will be in spite of and not because of the religious practices at that event and in that building that people will get saved.

I believe God can use even just the reading of six verses of scripture in that setting to bring people to himself. And that's my prayer. God, use it.

I don't know how you will, but use it. Jesus is able to sympathize with humanity because he was tempted in every way that we are, yet he remained without sin.

[23 : 13] That's Hebrews 4, 15. He represents us before the father. He intercedes for us and he speaks on our behalf so that those who have drawn near to the father through him are now united to him.

Jesus is the guarantee of a new and better covenant and remains the permanent high priest who intercedes for his people. That, it still just boggles my mind to think about that.

Finally, verses 26 through 28, the final change in the law we see here in this section is that we have a perfect high priest. You got a different priesthood, now you got a different high priest as well.

Verse 26, where it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens. He has no need like those high priests, the Levitical 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.

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.

[24 : 33] The Levitical priests offered their sacrifices every day because their priesthood was temporary, because they were sinners and needed to atone for their own sin as well as those of the nation.

Their sacrifices anticipated what would come. Remember I talked about typology a little bit? Well the sacrifices were a type of a Christ sacrifice.

They pointed to, you know, you had sacrifices every day taking place. And they realized that we need one sacrifice for all and that's what Jesus gave.

Sacrifice of Jesus. Their sacrifices were incomplete themselves. the priest needed to repeat both the daily and the annual sacrifices. Christ had no need to offer sacrifices repeatedly.

He accomplished the full forgiveness of sins in his one and only sacrifice when he offered himself on the cross. So under the old covenant, aging priests performed daily sacrifices knowing they'd have to do so again and again.

[25 : 45] And when God made the perfect sacrifice, Jesus uttered the words, it is finished. The work was done.

No more is needed. The old covenant brought the conviction of sin and showed the need for a savior. Without the law, man would not know of his need for a savior.

You read that in Romans 6, 7, and 8. The purpose of the law in the life of Paul there. And that savior, who was witnessed by the old covenant through the prophets, through the life that he lived, death that he died, and the resurrection that he experienced, is the perfect high priest who fulfills the expectations of the old covenant by being for us the great high priest of the new and better covenant.

God. So folks, there's a lot, right? I get it. There's a lot. It's hot. And it's not particularly the most interesting stuff because we're so far removed from the culture and context there.

But the reality is this, is that the Jewish folks had a system in place that they depended on for their access to God. And that is gone.

[27 : 04] That is no longer needed because of Jesus. And there are still people today who have something in place that they think they need in order to access God other than Jesus.

And I'm telling you, this passage right here tells me otherwise. We can draw near to him because of the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

My encouragement to you is that if you don't know that yourself, that you figure that out. You come talk to me, you come talk to someone else to understand it better.

And if you know somebody in your home, in your life, that doesn't know it, I encourage you to introduce them to Jesus through the love and compassion you have for them as an individual and through sharing of the truth of the word of God with them.

And let God work in their hearts. Let's pray. Father, I thank you. Oh, Lord, I thank you so much for your word. I thank you for what we can glean and understand from it.

[28 : 16] I thank you for as much as there is to learn and know. Lord, I thank you for Jesus. Thank you that he is the sacrifice for sin.

He is the priest who intercedes forever. And he is the guarantee of the new covenant promises. We don't have to worry about losing them. We don't have to worry about them not being granted because our priest is serving forever.

And I thank you that we have access through him to you. And I thank you that he does intercede for us when we need him to. Lord, I pray for anyone here.

Maybe people are questioning or wondering who is Jesus? What's it mean to be saved? What's it mean to have access to God?

Or maybe they've had people ask them and they didn't know how to answer. Lord, I pray that you would give clarity in their hearts and minds before they leave here today. Help us to glorify and honor you.

[29 : 19] I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.