

The Great High Priest

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Date: 14 July 2019

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[0 : 0 0] turn back to Hebrews chapter 7 and we're going to look at the words that we have in verse 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. Now, in this chapter, we see that the priesthood of Christ is after the order of Melchizedek, which meant that the priesthood after the order of Aaron has now been set aside. And the writer gives us several reasons why the priesthood of Christ is far superior to that of Aaron. And the primary reason that it's superior to that of Aaron's is surely because his priesthood is by oath, which surely surpasses any priesthood. In verse 21 we read, but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, you are a priest forever.

Now, Christ being our guarantor or our surety, also places the new covenant above the covenant that was made with Moses. In verse 22 we read, this makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

Now, the covenant that was made with Moses was good in that it revealed God to us. It revealed God's requirements of us. But it also revealed that we could never attain to these requirements. We could never fulfill the law that we have contained in the covenant made with Moses. But the covenant made with Moses also revealed to us that there was provision made for sinners who couldn't attain to these requirements. And we see that in the sacrificial system that was part of that covenant. That was shown in the types and the shadows of the ceremonies and rituals that they had to perform. Now, Christ as our guarantor is the one who fulfilled the law on our behalf. And not only did he fulfill the law on our behalf, but he also paid the penalty on our behalf. So therefore, he is able. And that's the first point that we want to consider.

[3 : 1 7] Consequently, he is able. Or therefore, he is able. It's as a consequence of showing us everything that is true concerning Christ that we see that he is able to save to the uttermost.

Consequently, as a result of God taking an oath which cannot be altered. Because God has to keep his own word.

As Paul reminds Timothy, he remains faithful even when we are unfaithful. God cannot change his mind.

It's something that's impossible for God to do. So there are things that are impossible for God to do. And this is one of them.

It is not possible for God to change his mind. Once he gives his word, that word will be fulfilled. And there is absolutely nothing in heaven or on earth or under the earth that can alter that word.

[4 : 3 9] So he is able because God has sworn that he will be a priest forever. And therefore, it is a better covenant.

It is a better covenant because Christ taking our place has become the guarantor. Our surety. And therefore, because the priesthood continues forever.

And because it never changes and the personnel never changes. We have an unchangeable priesthood. And therefore, we can be sure that he is able to save to the uttermost.

Because the consequently or the therefore at the beginning of this verse connects everything prior to verse 25 to give us the reasons why we should believe that he is able.

He is able, as our high priest, to accomplish by his grace the fulfillment of all of God's plans.

[5 : 5 6] This is the second time in this letter that we are reminded of Christ's capabilities as our high priest. The first mention of it is made in chapter 2 where it said, For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted.

He is all sufficient. He is able, as our high priest, to give us the necessary help that we need when we are being tempted.

He is able, as our high priest, as a result of God himself taking an oath that he will be the high priest of his people forever.

He is able to save to the uttermost. Now, his ability as the second person of the Godhead is not what is in focus here by the apostle.

It's his ability as high priest. Although we cannot disconnect the two from one another.

[7 : 17] It is because of who he is that makes the office effectual. And it's because we need that office in order for us to be reconciled to God that he is able to bring us into communion to God.

He is superior to all the high priests that preceded him. He is superior because of who he is. He is superior because his term in office will never come to an end.

And because unlike those who were in office before him had to leave their work as a result of death to those that would follow him, he is not like them.

He is able to finish what he starts. He doesn't leave it to anybody else. He is able to see through from beginning to end the work that is necessary for us to be brought into a saving relationship with God.

He is able to meet all the needs of his people. Just as in all of his offices of prophet, priest and king, he perfectly answers everything that is necessary for our salvation.

[8 : 51] Because our salvation, our redemption, and everything concerning our redemption is all dependent upon this person being our high priest.

He is the one who is the one who is the one who is the one who protects us.

He is the one who provides grace in our time of need. He is the salvation of the church. He is able.

Which brings us to the second point that we want to bring from the verse. What is he able to do?

Well, he is able to save to the uttermost.

What does he save us from? He saves us from the biggest problem that confronts mankind. It is not global warming.

[9 : 54] It is not wars. It is not famines. It is not greed. It is sin. Because if you are saved from sin, you strike at the root of all the problems that we experience in this world.

He saves us from our sin. That is why the name of Jesus is so sweet to sound in the believers here. Because he is the one that saves us from our sins. Because it is our sin that brought us into the depravity and pollution that we now experience in our hearts.

It is sin that brought us under the curse of the law. It is sin that brought us under the control of Satan.

It is sin that brought us under the anger. It is sin that brought us under the curse of the law. It is sin that brought us under the law. It is sin that brought us through the love. But Jesus, who is able, has come to save us from all that.

[11 : 09] He saves to the uttermost. That means that he saves us completely. He saves us perfectly. as we well we didn't sing that verse in Psalm 89 but it's in Psalm 89 where the psalmist prophesied that God laid help upon the one that was mighty he is mighty to save to the uttermost we are saved by grace and we're saved continually by the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ he is continually bestowing grace upon those in whom he has begun the good working because where Jesus begins this good work he will bring it on he's not like us who begin something and grows tired of it he will see it through to the end where he begun this good work he will continue it until he comes again where we will receive the fullness of our salvation so although we are saved we are being saved and we're yet to be saved because Christ does not do a partial work in anything he doesn't start something like the priests that preceded him and have to hand it over to somebody else to carry on that work he sees it through to the very end he doesn't have to stop his work or to leave his office he ensures that he will save us to the uttermost he will save us completely and this is the way that God has planned to save sinners it is by the priestly office of our Lord and Saviour

Jesus Christ this is how John the Baptist the forerunner of Christ introduced him behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world why did John focus primarily on his office as priest well that's where we need him first and foremostly because until we are forgiven for our sins until sin is dealt with in our hearts then hearing his word or having him as our king will be of no effect but once we are reconciled to God that word will become very precious to us and we will want to hear Christ as our prophet we will want to follow him as our king but first and foremostly we must recognize that we have a problem and we all have this problem and until that problem is dealt with then we are not going to proceed any farther than where we are

Christ is our high priest and when people reject Christ it is because they believe that they don't need to come to God in that way they trust in their own efforts or in some other religious method that they think is going to earn them God's favor but this is God's chosen way this is what Jesus himself declared that no one will come to the father but by him that he was the way the truth and the life this is the only way that we can come to God through the mediatorial work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and there is no help that we can receive from anybody else except from Christ himself he is the only one who is able to save there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved that brings us to the third thing that we want to consider and ask the question well who will be saved and we may have already answered that question because the answer is those who come to

God through him he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him to come to God is to believe if we don't believe we will not come to God unbelief is a refusal to come to God and this is the accusation that Jesus brought against the Jews you are not willing to come to me that you may have life they were refusing to believe in him they were refusing to believe that this was the only one who could save them they refused to believe that this was God's

Messiah God's chosen priest they were refusing to believe that he was their savior and as a result of the refusal to believe they couldn't come to God and therefore they couldn't have life because we can't have life in our souls until we commit our souls to Christ our access to God in worship is through the Lord Jesus Christ we come to God through him and whoever comes to God through him are saved there is nobody unsaved that has sought to come to God through Jesus Christ because everybody that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ believes that he is the only sufficient sacrifice to make atonement for our sins they believe that there is no other way that we can approach

[18:27] God they believe that it doesn't matter how much they pray they believe that it doesn't matter how often they go to church they believe that it doesn't matter how religiously they read their Bibles that that is not going to save them they believe that the only thing that can save them is the Lord Jesus Christ and we come because we believe that he is our high priest the high priest that God instituted into this office by oath he has decreed it he is God's anointed he is the Messiah the only saviour who is able to save to the uttermost or who is able to save perfectly and every other way of salvation is imperfect and it will not be a salvation to the uttermost a person can appear to have come very close to

God and still be outside of the kingdom he can appear to show that he has all the fruits of being a Christian because as I said he prays he reads his Bible he goes to church and he can still be outside of the kingdom because he hasn't committed himself to the only one that can permit him to enter into the kingdom the Lord Jesus Christ well that brings us to our final point how does he save well he saves because he ever lives to make intercession for us the comfort that the Christian church have is that Christ has ascended into the heavens and that he is now appearing in the presence of God on their behalf and that

God is going to hear not their prayers but his prayer he learns to intercede on our behalf that we will receive the benefits of salvation he learns to intercede on our behalf that the Holy Spirit would be sent to us to apply these benefits to us he learns to make intercession so that the Holy Spirit will give us the necessary grace the necessary gifts to enlighten our minds and to help us to grow in our knowledge not just head knowledge but in our relational knowledge to God coming to know God it's not coming to know about God there are plenty of people who know more about God than God's own people because they are scholarly they are able to retain a lot of knowledge and they have retained a lot of knowledge about

God but they still don't know God and there are others who are God's people who don't really have that much knowledge but they have the knowledge that is essential that they need to live in dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ and they are coming to know God personally for themselves they are in a living relationship with him there is life in their souls they are not walking about with a dead religion there is life in their souls they know that they are alive because they are in communion with God and this is why Jesus is ever living to make intercession for his people so that he will give them that life now this intercession was foreshadowed in the old covenant by the fire that was always alive in the morning and evening sacrifice the line was forever burning upon the altar and for the people the priests were continually burning incense offering a prayer in the holy place which is foreshadowing for us what Jesus is doing on behalf of his people he is the sacrifice

that is ever alive before God he is the one who is ever living to make intercession for his people the incense is always a sweet smelling savor to God he ever lives to make intercession for us the sacrifice which was once offered is always before God and his intercession is always heard by God now sometimes we get stuck at the elementary pictures that have been presented to us in the Old Testament and sometimes we present pictures of that nature to our own minds and sometimes we get stuck with our own experience but let's not for one moment imagine that Christ is praying to the Father on our behalf using words there is no need for words we need words to express ourselves but there is no need for words for Jesus to express himself to the Father because Jesus is ever in the presence of his Father he is in the midst of the throne in other words he is in the bosom of the Father so how does the

[25 : 14] Father see our high priest well our Father sees our high priest just as John saw him in the revelation as a lamb slain he sees the perfect sacrifice sacrifice it is ever before him he doesn't need to hear any words it is always in his presence he is in the bosom of the father and he sees in that perfect sacrifice the church redeemed and clothed in the righteousness of their savior the father sees the efficacy the worth of that sacrifice that is ever before him and he's moved by love for the church that was purchased by the precious blood of his own son that's what's contained in the intercession it's not necessary for

Jesus to say anything just as people who might be in a close relationship with one another don't always have to speak to express what's on their minds they just know by looking at them how they're feeling and what their desires are there is no need for words there is no need for words for the one who is ever in his presence as our high priest and the fact that he occupies this office says everything the Lord Jesus Christ lives in heaven and therefore he could assure his people as we have it in his words in John chapter 14 because I live you shall live also and the only thing that could jeopardize our salvation is the possibility of

Christ ceasing to live there is never going to be a possibility of Christ ceasing to live he ever lives to make intercession for his people and therefore because I live you shall live also and that's the comfort that we have of having Christ as our high priest that's why we can be assured that he is able able to save perfectly to the uttermost all those who come to God through him though sometimes we can spend a lot of time meditating upon the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is vital to our salvation but we need more than the death of the Lord Jesus Christ he needed to rise he needed to ascend into the heavens because if he hadn't risen and if he hadn't ascended into the heavens as Paul said to the Corinthians if Christ is not raised your faith is in vain and you're still dead in your sins we need to look beyond the death we need to look beyond the resurrection itself we need to look to the ascension to the one who is sitting at the right hand of God the father ever living to make intercession for us and that's what makes him the perfect high priest there was no perfect high priest until Jesus came on the scene he is the great high priest who could present the perfect sacrifice and as a result is now able to send to his church here in this world everything that his church will ever need to experience

God's blessings whilst we're still here we don't need to wait until we get to heaven we receive a down payment here of what Christ has earned for his people we receive a foretaste of heaven we can experience the power of the resurrection enabling us to get over the deadness that is true concerning ourselves our spirits can ascend into the heavenly realm we can view the glory of God even or to us through a glass darkly we can still view it we can have a full taste of what is yet to come as a result of what Christ has achieved for us and he ever lives in order to continue to send forth the Holy Spirit to carry on the work that he has begun in this world and it's being carried on it's being carried on through his church as we mentioned this morning we receive

[31 : 10] God's blessings until so or other that we can become a blessing to others we affect this world we are the light to this world we are the salt that will prevent the corruption of sin in this world we are a blessing to this world because Christ has made us a blessing to this world and we should go forth to bless this world and if we understand the importance of this intercession then we will look to him and we will seek to plead with him that he would rend the heavens and that he would send forth his Holy Spirit because without the work of the Holy Spirit nothing can be achieved we can be very orthodox in our preaching we can be very orthodox in our beliefs but unless the world is accompanied by the power of the

Holy Spirit it is futile it is of no value to us we need God's Spirit and we need it today possibly more than several generations before us because the work that needs to be done in our society will not

be done by us unless we receive the power of the Holy Spirit and unless Christ brings on his own work then we can achieve nothing but if we're committed to him and if our faith is truly in him if our faith is truly in the intercession that's going on in the presence of God the Father then we can experience

God's blessings it's not because God's arm has been shortened that we're not experiencing the spiritual blessings that former generations experienced God has not changed if we're not experiencing them it's not because God grouches to give us these blessings nothing would give God greater satisfaction than to honor his son and to bestow the blessings that he earned for his church on the church but the church must come to him and recognize that it's not dependent upon them that it's wholly dependent upon their high priest whoever lives to make intercession on their behalf so that he will send forth his Holy Spirit and that we might begin to see the blessings that former generations experienced may

God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts let's pray