

Session 20 A Priest Who Lives For Ever

Before the Silence: A Study of Hebrews

Session 20 | Hebrews 7:23-28

The Better Salvation (Hebrews 7:23-28)

Session 19 showed that the former priestly regulation could not bring perfection. God introduced a better hope for drawing near to Him and appointed Jesus by oath as surety of a better testament. The chapter now explains why this Priest can accomplish what the earlier order could not: He lives for ever, is without sin, and offered Himself once.

Hebrews directs its Hebrew hearers, living before Jerusalem's destruction, to the living Son in God's presence. Israel's promised hope requires a Priest whose life and work can carry the undertaking to completion.

Follow The Argument

- **Verses 23-24:** Death requires successive priests; Jesus continues for ever.
- **Verse 25:** His enduring life enables complete salvation and continuing intercession.
- **Verses 26-27:** His holiness qualifies Him to represent sinners; His offering of Himself is sufficient once for all.
- **Verse 28:** God's later oath appoints the Son, consecrated for evermore.

Hebrews 7:23-24 - The Priest Who Needs No Successor

And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Exegesis

- **"Many priests"** concerns successive officeholders. Aaron died, Eleazar succeeded him, and Eleazar also died. The office continued through a succession of mortal men.
- **"By reason of death"** identifies the limit of each priest's service. Death ended his tenure and required a successor.
- **"But this man"** turns to Jesus. His priesthood rests upon the endless life already emphasized in verse 16. Death cannot remove Him from His ministry.
- **"An unchangeable priesthood"** means that Jesus Himself remains the holder of the office. His enduring life gives His priesthood its permanence.
- The priesthood's change in verse 12 and its permanence here belong together: the former arrangement changes, but the new Priest needs no replacement. His continuing life supports the conclusion in verse 25.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Numbers 20:25-29; Joshua 24:33** - Aaron's garments pass to Eleazar, whose own death later demonstrates the same limitation.
- **Psalms 110:4** - God's appointment declares a Priest for ever, beyond the term of a mortal officeholder.
- **Romans 6:9** - The risen Christ dies no more; death has no further dominion over Him.

Text And Translation Notes

- **"Suffered"** means allowed or permitted. Death brought their service to an end.
- **"Unchangeable"** translates *aparabatos*, often rendered **permanent**. The contrast with dying priests emphasizes that the office remains with Jesus.

Hebrews 7:25 - Able To Save To The Uttermost

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.

Exegesis

- **“Wherefore”** draws the conclusion from His permanent priesthood. Because Jesus lives for ever, His saving ministry cannot be interrupted by the death of its representative.
- **“To the uttermost”** concerns completeness. The Priest can bring His saving work to its intended goal. His continuing life gives that saving work enduring efficacy.
- **“Them ... that come unto God by him”** identifies those benefiting from this ministry. The promise concerns those approaching God through His appointed Son.
- **“Come unto God”** continues verse 19’s language of drawing near. The living Priest supplies effective access to God.
- In the Hebrew setting, salvation embraces the secure approach to God and final deliverance associated with Israel’s Messianic hope. The promised outcome for those represented by this Priest reaches beyond earthly danger and death.
- **“Ever liveth to make intercession”** describes His continuing representation before God. His living ministry rests upon His completed offering.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Hebrews 4:14-16** - The sympathetic great High Priest supplies the basis for drawing near boldly to the throne of grace.
- **Hebrews 6:19-20** - Hope reaches within the veil, where Jesus has entered as forerunner and Priest for ever.
- **Hebrews 9:24-28** - Christ offered Himself once, appears before God, and will appear unto salvation.
- **Romans 8:34** - Paul grounds assurance in the risen Christ at God’s right hand, making intercession.

Text And Translation Notes

- **“Uttermost”** represents *panteles*, complete or entire. Renderings such as **completely** and **for all time** bring out related features of the assurance grounded in His continuing life.
- **“Come”** is a present participle describing those approaching God through Him.
- **“Intercession”** means acting or appealing on another’s behalf. Jesus represents those who approach God through Him.

Hebrews 7:26-27 - A Holy Priest, One Offering

For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

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, when he offered up himself.

Exegesis

- **“Such an high priest became us”** means that this is the Priest fitting the hearers’ need. **“Us”** retains the Hebrew audience of the argument. The Son’s qualifications answer their need.
- **“Holy, harmless, undefiled”** describes His moral fitness. He is devoted to God, free from evil, and untouched by the pollution He deals with in others.
- **“Separate from sinners”** concerns His purity and exalted position. **“Made higher than the heavens”** directs attention to His position before God beyond the earthly sanctuary.
- **“First for his own sins”** describes the ordinary priest’s need. Jesus is holy and undefiled, so **“this he did once”** concerns His offering for the people’s sins.
- **“Daily”** sets Christ’s work against recurring sacrifices and the ordinary priest’s need for cleansing. Entrance within the veil occurred annually on the Day of Atonement (Hebrews 9:7).

- **“Offered up himself”** joins Priest and offering in one Person. His single self-offering supplies what mortal priests and animal sacrifices could not accomplish. His one completed offering is the basis of His continuing intercession.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Hebrews 4:15; 5:1-3** - Jesus is without sin, whereas ordinary high priests share the weakness requiring offerings for themselves.
- **Mark 2:15-17** - Jesus meets and eats with sinners, displaying His compassion for those needing Him.
- **Leviticus 16:6, 11, 15; Hebrews 9:7** - Aaron offers first for himself and then for the people; entrance within the veil occurs once a year.
- **Hebrews 10:11-14** - Repeated offerings by standing priests contrast with Christ’s single sacrifice and seated position.

Text And Translation Notes

- **“Became us”** means **was fitting for us**, as the older use of **“became him”** in Hebrews 2:10 describes what was fitting.
- **“Harmless”** has the moral sense of innocent or free from evil.
- **“Once”** translates *ephapax*, once for all. The expression marks a single, decisive offering.

Hebrews 7:28 - The Son Appointed For Evermore

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 for evermore.

Exegesis

- The chapter closes by gathering its contrasts: **law and oath, weak men and the Son, temporary service and permanent fitness**. The former priests held a divine appointment and served as men subject to weakness.
- **“The word of the oath”** recalls Psalm 110:4. God Himself announces the Priest who serves for ever. His later sworn declaration authorizes the greater provision after the Mosaic order was already established.
- **“Maketh the Son”** concerns the eternal Son’s appointment to priestly office.
- **“Consecrated for evermore”** describes completed and enduring fitness for His priestly work. His obedience, suffering, and self-offering bring the appointed task to its goal.
- Hebrews 8:1-2 supplies the summary: the hearers have such a High Priest at God’s right hand, ministering in the true sanctuary. Chapter 7 directs their confidence to this living Person and the work He accomplishes.

Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Psalm 110:4** - God’s oath appoints the enduring Priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- **Hebrews 2:10; 5:8-10** - Perfection through suffering concerns the completion of His saving work and fitness for His office.
- **Hebrews 8:1-2** - The seated High Priest ministers in the true tabernacle established by the Lord.

Text And Translation Notes

- **“Since the law”** means **after the law**. The phrase establishes the order of God’s revelations.
- **“Consecrated”** represents a form of *teleioo*, to perfect or bring to completion. Modern **“made perfect”** makes the connection with the chapter’s completion theme clearer.
- The KJV supplies the second **“maketh”** from the first clause. The balanced contrast appoints men under the Law and the Son under the oath.

Session Summary

The Logic At A Glance

- **His life continues:** death cannot end His priesthood.
- **His saving ability is complete:** those approaching God through Him have an enduring representative.
- **His character is holy:** He needs no cleansing for Himself.
- **His offering is sufficient:** He offered Himself once for all.
- **His appointment is secure:** God’s oath establishes the Son for evermore.

Looking Toward Chapter 8

The next chapter develops the Son’s heavenly ministry and the better covenant introduced in 7:22. His position at God’s right hand answers the hearers’ need while Israel’s promised kingdom and covenant outcome remain in view. The following covenant quotation names Israel and Judah as its recipients.

One-sentence summary: God’s sworn, holy Son lives for ever to save completely those approaching God through Him, on the basis of His sufficient offering of Himself once for all.