

The Only Priest Able To Save

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Hebrews 7:20-28
Preached on: Sunday, March 12, 2017

Let's take our Bibles now and turn to Hebrews 7. For those of you that might be visiting with us, we are continuing to make our way verse by verse through this epistle and this morning I have entitled my discourse to you "The Only Priest Able To Save." Let me read the text this morning, it begins in verse 20 and it goes through verse 28. Hebrews 7:20, referring now to the new covenant he says,

20 And inasmuch as it was not without an oath 21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever'"); 22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. 23 The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, 24 but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. 25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

We have before us, once again, another amazing passage of Scripture from the word of God. This is a passage that should stir the hearts of all believers if you understand it and if you know where it fits into God's redemptive plan, and it's very important for us to be reminded from time to time concerning God's perfect plan to bring glory to himself so that we can understand the why, where and how a particular text such as this fits into that plan. Too often a passage such as this is like trying to discern a single piece of a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle without knowing what the completed puzzle looks like, so if you were to look at the that one piece, you would just have no idea how it fits into the whole.

So before we look closely at this text, let's back up a bit and think for a moment about the big picture of what God is up to in the world and where history is headed. Hopefully this will bring some comfort to each of us as we look at the chaos around us in the world. And the best way to do this is to understand that the grand and glorious, and I should even say the central theme of Scripture is, the kingdom of God, a concept that for most Christians

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is so lacking in biblical substance and has been so over-spiritualized that it has become something that is, frankly, rather abstract and meaningless yet it is the kingdom that Christ wants us to pray that the Lord will hasten its coming. Kingdom promises are those things that give us that blessed hope as believers.

Now, biblically as we look at the kingdom, we see that it encompasses all the other themes in Scripture because the ultimate purpose that God has in history is to bring glory to himself, and he does this most perfectly and profoundly through his kingdom program. So the kingdom of God is the central, it is the unifying theme of the Bible with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the nation of Israel at the very center of God's plan to bring in his kingdom. As a footnote, in Deuteronomy 30, the first 10 verses, God reveals the big picture plans for Israel using themes of dispersion and gathering and restoration, themes that are mirrored in numerous Old and New Testament prophecies that speak of both spiritual salvation and physical blessings. There God promised Israel that after she was dispersed among the nations in captivity and banishment, she will once again be restored and saved in the latter times.

Now, bear in mind that there are two separate but not distinct kingdoms revealed in Scripture. First of all, there is the universal kingdom which refers to the extent of God's eternal rule over all of his creation but, secondly, there is what we could call the mediatorial kingdom which refers to the method of God's rule by which he chooses men to act as his representatives. And throughout Old Testament history, we witness the divine government upon the earth through a variety of mediators, men who served in three offices in the theocratic kingdom of Israel, that of prophet, priest and king; men that were consecrated, they were set apart as God's special representatives in these offices, all being mediators between God and man. You will recall that the prophets spoke God's truth to man; the priests brought man's burdens and sins to God and interceded between God and man, he provided the sacrifices and so forth. Then, of course, the kings ruled man for God, mediatorial rulers in the theocratic kingdom, And, of course, these three offices all pointed to the Messiah, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the anointed one, and they are all merged together in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the perfect embodiment of all three.

Now, think for a moment, think of the storyline in the Bible. Obviously we have to begin in Genesis. Genesis begins with God as the Creator-King of his universal kingdom and he creates man in his image and commands him to do two things: to rule and to subdue, to rule and subdue his creation on earth for his purposes and for his glory, but God also ordained to allow Satan to temporarily build his kingdom. So in the garden, Satan tempts Adam and Eve to sin resulting in man's failure to rule and to subdue as God's mediators, and consequently God cursed both his image bearers and all of his creation.

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So man's relationship with God and with other human beings and even with creation all suffer greatly, however, this was all part of God's sovereign plan, a plan that cannot be thwarted. Therefore in Genesis 3:15, he promised that a coming seed of the woman would eventually defeat Satan and reverse the curse. There God promised a Deliverer that would come who must rule from the same realm as Adam, the last Adam as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:45, who must rule over an earthly kingdom. But man continued to sin so we read how God judged man by reversing his creation with a global flood and then in Genesis 6:18, he establishes his covenant with a new representative, a man by the name of Noah. Noah would then function much like Adam, a man through whom God's kingdom purposes would proceed and God even promised to never again destroy the earth with water in Genesis 9:11.

Then we come to Genesis chapters 10 through chapter 11. There God reveals the development of the nations and their importance in his kingdom program, especially a coming nation that would come from the loins of a man named Abram, who later was called Abraham, who would be yet another mediatorial ruler.

Then in Genesis 12 and chapter 15, the kingdom mandate that was given to Adam and then Noah is given to Abraham and given to his descendants. And there God made an unconditional, unilateral, irreversible, everlasting covenant that contained four elements. He promised, first of all, that a seed would come from him, referring to the Messiah-Christ. He promised him and his descendants a land, a specific geographic territory that would be set apart by God for his people where he could one day dwell with them as their messianic King. Even today both Israel and Israel's land continue to function as microcosms of what God will one day do to all the people groups of the world. He also promised that they would be a great and mighty nation, that they would be a witness nation that would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth and also that God himself would protect and preserve them. We even see in Genesis 17:6 that he promised that "kings shall come out of thee," and as we look at history in the Bible, we see that the first kings that came from Abraham were the Edomite kings from the line of Esau. In fact, Abraham himself manifested the traits of a king and he was treated as such by his contemporaries. You will recall from our previous studies in Hebrews that it was during this time that Abraham met a strange and fascinating figure in Genesis 14, the king/priest Melchizedek, the righteous king of pre-Israelite Jerusalem, a type of Christ who foreshadowed the far superior, the greater antetype, the king/priest Jesus, the Messiah.

Six hundred years after Abraham in 1445 BC, God made Abraham's family into a nation when he gave them his law through Moses, and at that point Moses became the new mediatorial ruler in the theocratic kingdom of history and he was authorized to stand

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before Israel "instead of God," Exodus 4:6. In fact, Moses also is represented in Scripture as a type of Christ who alone will eventually become the perfect embodiment of God's mediatorial ruler in the messianic kingdom. And there at Mount Sinai God said to the people of Israel in Exodus 19:6, "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." You see, there he commissioned Israel to be the ones to mediate his blessings to the whole world, a witness nation, the custodians of divine truth. The Mosaic covenant with its Levitical priesthood and sacrifices served to demonstrate God's righteous standard, to expose man's sinfulness and help him see that he was in desperate need of a Savior and a righteousness that was not his own. It was also the means through which Israel would be set apart from all of the other nations for God's purposes and experience the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant. In fact, we read in Exodus 19, beginning in verse 5, "'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." However, bear in mind that under the Mosaic covenant, we see that that was not an eternal and unconditional covenant. It required obedience and Israel violated that covenant with their rebellion, with their idolatry. In fact, no one could possibly live up to the Mosaic law. Because of our own depravity, we have an innate inability to conform to the moral character and desires of God so therefore we need a Savior.

So what we see in history is God judged Israel for their disobedience and he allowed them to be taken captive in the land of their enemies and as his kingdom plan continued to unfold, in 1000 BC, he made another covenant with a new mediatorial ruler, one of Abraham's descendants, a man named David. In 2 Samuel 7, we see God promising him an eternal kingdom whereby David's throne would ultimately belong to his descendant, the greater son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah. Then we can come, for example, to 1 Kings, the first 10 chapters, and we see how Israel thrived under David and thrived under his son Solomon, with the kingdom promises of land and seed and international blessings being on the very verge of fulfillment, but with Solomon's idolatry in 1 Kings 11, all that came to an end, all of it stopped. The tribes of Israel were taken captive by Assyria and then by the Babylonians and we read how the glory of the Lord departed from the temple in Ezekiel chapters 8 through 11, signifying the end of the mediatorial kingdom in Israel. And with the demise of the kingdom in Israel, then we see God raising up prophets who would become his new representatives to not only proclaim judgment for covenantal disobedience, but also to proclaim a time of future restoration in a kingdom that would be ruled by David's descendants, a ruler that God would raise up, the perfect prophet, priest and king, one who will restore the nation Israel and bring blessing to the Gentiles.

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Then later in 600 BC, God gave Abraham's descendants a fourth promise, one that I read part of in our Scripture reading this morning. He gave them a new covenant, a new covenant of redemption and restoration. We read about it in Jeremiah 31 through 33 and Ezekiel 36 and 37, and there we read how he promises that he would give the people a new heart, the indwelling Spirit, the forgiveness of sins. There God promised to mediate a new covenant through Israel that will transform hearts and result in the Holy Spirit indwelling God's people causing them to obey God and resulting in allowing them to experience the blessings of the kingdom. He promised that through Israel God's very Son, the perfect and eternal prophet, priest and king, would purchase their redemption and restore them to their land. Also in that era of Old Testament history, we see how God spoke through his prophets concerning a coming day of the Lord, a time when he will judge the nations of the earth and purify his people Israel through unprecedented judgments, judgments that will be followed by the glorious coming of the Messiah when he will come to establish the Davidic kingdom on earth as promised, a time when the Messiah will rule and reign from his throne in Jerusalem, a time when both Israel and all of the nations of the world will be God's people.

But we know that when the Messiah came the first time, they rejected him and God set them apart temporarily as a nation. Because Israel rejected her Messiah, according to Ephesians 3, the mystery phase of the kingdom was ushered in as the church became the temporary replacement of Israel as the new custodians of truth; the church, the body of Christ, where Jews and Gentiles would come together as heirs, joint heirs, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. But I must add, I believe that Israel is never absorbed into the church. It remains distinct from the church as an ethnic people and as a nation, it has a prophetic future. And we can see that today as we look at Israel, the state of Israel, the nation of Israel, how it rose out from underneath the ash heap of the Holocaust and how they are returning to the land in record numbers in unbelief as the prophets predicted, despite experiencing amazing oppression. It's fascinating as you look at it, the Jews remain the most persecuted people on earth. Historically that has been the case. You have in Israel today 8.3 or so million people, a little place about the size of New Jersey, and it is surrounded by 22 Arab nations with 5 million square miles and these Arabs are aligned with the whole Muslim world of 1.6 billion people and they all want to destroy Israel. So God remains faithful to his promise to protect Israel even in her unbelief. What a magnificent picture of undeserved mercy.

So I do not believe that the church is replacing Israel, therefore as we look at it, the present church age must be seen as part of the ongoing fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy that culminates in the messianic kingdom. And I might add, I humbly reject the position that the New Testament somehow reinterprets or transcends the Old Testament expectations; that we should see nonliteral fulfillments of Old Testament promises; that

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the Old Testament prophecies are merely types and shadows that point to greater spiritual realities. Instead, I believe the New Testament continues and expands upon the storyline of the Old Testament and therefore it affirms literal fulfillments of the Old Testament prophecies and covenants as understood by the original Old Testament authors and audiences, and this would include, therefore, the literal fulfillment of an earthly kingdom and the national and physical blessings for ethnic Israel and the promised blessings for all Gentiles. Therefore I believe Scripture teaches that the church shares in the promises of Israel but not in her unique identity as a chosen nation. Paul described Israel in Romans 11:16 through 24 as "the natural branches" from "a cultivated olive tree," some of which, he says, have now been broken off for the present time due to "a hardening of heart." And he describes the Gentile church who we are, as the wild olive branches that have been grafted into the rich root, that is, the covenant privileges originally promised to Abraham. Indeed, the church shares in the promises that God gave to Israel but never takes her place as a nation. I believe Romans 9, 10 and 11 make that very clear.

So now we await the pre-kingdom judgments that Christ described in, for example, Matthew 24 and Luke 21, and then are rehearsed yet again in the book of Revelation. We await the second coming of Christ to fulfill his kingdom promises by establishing his earthly kingdom upon the earth for a thousand years which will be the consummating bridge between history and the eternal state; a time when according to 1 Corinthians 6:2, the saints will judge the world, something that we cannot successfully do right now because of sin which separates us from God. We cannot successfully rule and subdue in a way that honors him but Jesus fulfilled the creation mandate to rule the world, and as we read in Hebrews 2:5-8, he will empower those who belong to him to do the same. Jesus is the only ones that can defeat Satan. Jesus is the only one that can deliver man from the power of death and claim his kingdom.

And this is precisely what God said through the prophet Daniel. Remember when he revealed his plan of the ages, you will recall Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and remember that colossal and daunting image that Nebuchadnezzar saw, and obviously God revealed to Daniel, that image representing a succession of world empires. We read about it in Daniel 2, and there we read that at the end of human history, God himself will establish a kingdom, his kingdom, and he will personally shatter all of the other empires. We read in Daniel 2:44, "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

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Dear friends, this is why John the Baptist who was the last of the Old Testament prophets, announced the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah, preaching, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is why Jesus preached, "Repent! The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is why he instructed the 12 to do the same. In fact, in Matthew 24, Jesus described his message as "this Gospel of the kingdom." He said in Luke 17:21, "The kingdom of God is in your midst." Mark 4:11, "To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God." Beloved, this is why in Acts 19:8, the Apostle Paul "entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God." This is why Jesus has asked us to seek first his kingdom. This is why he has asked us to pray, "Thy kingdom come."

Now, to be sure certain spiritual aspects of the kingdom have arrived and we rejoice in that, but the greatest fulfillment of the kingdom promises, the material and physical fulfillments are yet future. Dear Christian, the King is coming, right? He is coming and his kingdom is coming with him and his will, will indeed, been done on earth as it is in heaven. It's for this reason that the Apostle Paul celebrated this in Romans 11:25. He spoke to the Gentiles and therefore to us as well saying, "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.' From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." What a picture, dear friends, of God's unfailing faithfulness to do exactly what he has promised, what he promised to Abraham in that unconditional, unilateral, eternal covenant that God made with him, promises that did not depend upon Abraham's faithfulness but depended solely upon the faithfulness of God himself.

Well, with this overview of the kingdom, we come now to Hebrews and, remember in Hebrews, we have an epistle that extols the superiority of Jesus Christ and his priesthood and reveals the temporary nature of that old covenant, the one given to Moses that is now being replaced by the superior new covenant. And Hebrews, I might add, has much to say about the kingdom. You may recall in Hebrews 2:5 through 8 it reveals how the ruling mandate will be fulfilled "in the world to come." And in chapter 13 and 14, in the city to come. It reveals in Hebrews 10:12 through 13 how Jesus currently serves as our great high priest. He sits at the right hand of the Father. He awaits that day when he will reign as the messianic King, putting his enemies under his feet. In Hebrews chapters 11 and 12, we read how the future kingdom is already a present possession that we have but it's

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going to be fully materialized in connection with future divine judgments as we read about in chapter 12:26 and verse 28. We read also there how we as believers join with Abraham in looking for a coming heavenly Jerusalem, a literal city that will exist on a renovated earth.

Dear friends, this is where history is headed. Neither the Republicans nor the Democrats are going to be able to bring in utopia, only the Lord Jesus Christ can do that, yet the great philosophers and politicians of the world know nothing of these things and they scoff at them when they hear them. I might add, were it not for God's saving grace, we would stand among the scoffers.

Now, we can more clearly, I believe, understand the writer's words here in our text in Hebrews 7:20 and following as he extols, again, the superiority of the new covenant over the old by describing my favorite subject which is the unfathomable riches of Christ, the nature, the character, the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only priest able to save. And I want to look at these for a few minutes here this morning under three very simple headings. First of all, we're going to see that he is the guarantee of a better covenant; secondly, he is the permanent priest who is able to save forever; and finally, we will see that he is the exalted Savior of all who draw near to him. Now, bear in mind these truths would have brought great encouragement to these Hebrew Christians who were struggling in profound ways because of the persecution from their family and their friends telling them, "Leave that Jesus of Nazareth cult and come back to Judaism." But he argues here, first of all, "No, no, no, no. He is the 1, guarantee of a better covenant."

Notice verse 20, "And inasmuch as it was not without an oath (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, 'The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever"'); so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant." Now, this is a bit confusing. Maybe I can straighten it out for you a little bit. You see, this is an ironclad argument. Now, bear in mind the Jews thought that the Levitical priesthood was permanent and therefore it was superior to the priesthood of Jesus but there is not one shred of evidence anywhere in Scripture that says that God established that priesthood with an oath and made such a promise. That's what he's saying. So they have no way to validate such a claim. However as he has been arguing, the new priesthood under the order of Melchizedek to which Jesus belonged, was established by an oath and the writer quotes David's words in Psalm 110:4, from their own Scriptures. He says, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever.'" So the argument is: therefore because of God's oath, Christ's priesthood is obviously superior. It is perfect. It is permanent. God sealed it with an oath, the one who will never change his mind swore saying, "You are a priest forever."

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Now, you will recall that God did the same thing with Abraham in his unconditional and eternal covenant promise to Abraham. Hebrews 6:17 tells us about that. There we read, "God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath." In other words, God wanted Abraham and all of his descendants to understand that he absolutely meant what he said. And as John MacArthur has aptly stated, quote, "It was through Abraham that Messiah came and therefore the blessings that every believer will experience throughout all of eternity is a perpetual fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant." Dear Christians, don't miss this: Jesus has become our surety. All of the promises of God in the new covenant are guaranteed to us by Christ himself because he paid our sin debt in full. He became responsible for our guilt. He sealed that covenant with his blood. He was the perfect sacrifice proven by his resurrection from the dead, therefore according to Hebrews 8:6, "He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises."

So, folks, this is the profound truth in the argument here in verse 22: Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. The old covenant was temporary, the new covenant is eternal. The old priests were sinful and they died, as we are going to see, the new and the only priest is sinless and lives forever. He is therefore superior in every way. But he is not only the guarantee of a better covenant, secondly, he is the permanent priest who is able to save forever.

Notice verse 23, the writer says, "The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing." Now, let's stop and think about what he's saying here. This is so graphically illustrated in Numbers 20. I want to take you back there for a moment, an incredible story beginning in verse 23. Here's what God reveals, "Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, 'Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up to Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered to his people, and will die there.' So Moses did just as the LORD had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days." And we know biblically, therefore historically, that soon after this Moses died. It's fascinating, isn't it? Here we see that Moses, who represented the law, neither

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Moses nor Aaron, who represented the priesthood and all of the sacrificial system, neither one of them were allowed to enter into the Promised Land.

Well, what does this picture? Dear friends, don't miss this: what it pictures is that neither the keeping of the law nor the making of sacrifices can rescue man from the wilderness of sin and bring him safely into the eternal blessings of the Promised Land. Only saving grace through Christ alone can accomplish such an astonishing reality and that, dear friend, is at the very heart of the new covenant, at the very heart of the Gospel. So indeed, verse 23, the former priests were prevented by death from continuing, but, verse 24, "Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever." The term "forever" carries with it the idea of not just unending but also altogether or perfectly, to utter completion and perfection. In fact, the King James version translates it, "to the uttermost." To the uttermost.

So he saves both eternally and completely, to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, "since He always lives to make intercession for them." And I must ask you: have you drawn near to God through Christ? I hope you have. Have you ever been broken over your sin and acknowledged him as your only hope of salvation? This is why Jesus said, "I am the way." The idea that, "I am the only way. I am the only truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

Whenever I come to that passage, I remember leading a men's group down in Nashville years ago and I remember one of the young men very angrily picked up on something that I said and he basically asked me this, "Do you believe that unless you believe in Jesus as the only way of salvation, you will be damned?" I said, "Well, absolutely. God has made that abundantly clear," and I quoted him this verse, "I am the way and the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but through Me." I also quoted him 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." And I remember him standing up and he began to scream at me and use all kinds of foul language and then he stomped out of the room. I never heard from him again. And this is a very common reaction, right, especially in our pluralistic world in which we live where all religions basically will take you to heaven. My friend, you either believe the word of God or you don't, and by God's grace I do. I know most of you do. And therefore my Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is my great high priest and he is able to save me to the uttermost. So I will draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for me and for you, and because of his perpetual intercession, we will never be separated from the love of God. What an amazing thought.

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You know, I would tell you to ask the young men from the Mormon church who come pulling up to your house on their bicycles wearing their little white shirts and black ties, the ones who call themselves elders from the order of Melchizedek, ask them if you can draw near to God through them. Ask them if they can save you to the uttermost. Ask them why they are not seated at the right hand of the Father, forever making intercession for other people. Ask your Catholic priest this. Ask a Bishop, some Cardinal, ask a Pope or any other priest, any of these other same questions because the answer has to be no. Only Jesus can do this. That's the point. Dear friends, Jesus alone can save forever and can keep us saved. Jesus alone can intercede on behalf of all who draw near to God through him because Jesus alone bore the sins of all who will believe in him in his very body and then he rose from the dead and he is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

So he is the guarantee of a better covenant, he is the permanent priest who is able to say forever, and finally, he is the exalted Savior of all who draw near to God through him. Verse 26, "For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest," and then he goes on to describe him. He says that he is holy. The term here is one different than we would normally see used to interpret this word. In Greek it is "hosios," and it means he was perfectly consecrated to do the will of the Father. We have a high priest that was perfectly consecrated to do the will of the Father. He was also, he says, innocent, which means free from sin. There was no guile in him and he was utterly harmless to anyone. It also says he was undefiled, in other words, none of the temptations that he encountered, that he was exposed to, left any stain of sin, of evil on him. It would be like taking a diamond and dropping it into a septic tank and then taking the diamond out of it and you would see that the diamond remains as pure and glorious as before it was dropped into that filth. He was also separated from sinners. Now, although he was constantly in the company of sinners, because of his holy nature he was utterly different from any of them. And it says he was exalted above the heavens, he is exalted above the heavens. Now, these are characteristics unlike any other high priest.

Verse 27, "who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever." And so the argument goes this way: because of this, dear Hebrew believers who are struggling with your faith because of persecution, who are tempted to fall back into Judaism, understand that the new covenant now with the new priesthood of Christ, has completely abrogated the old. The old is nullified. It is annulled. It is canceled. It is null and void. It is abolished. Therefore don't fall back into Judaism. Embrace Christ wholeheartedly. Worship and enjoy him forever.

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The Only Priest Able To Save

By David Harrell

Bible Text: Hebrews 7:20-28
Preached on: Sunday, March 12, 2017

Now, in closing, think how this applies to your life. First of all, if you've never confessed your sin and come to Christ in repentant faith, if you therefore continue to just live for yourself and you reject the Gospel that God has provided, a way for you to be reconciled to him through faith in Christ, then by all means I would plead with you as a minister of the Gospel to trust Christ today as your Savior, to experience that miracle of the new birth knowing that he paid for the sins for all who will believe in him. He is your only hope of salvation. Otherwise, you will pay for your own sins in the solitary confinement of an eternal hell.

So I plead with you today to draw near to God through Christ. But for those of us who by God's grace have experienced the miracle of the new birth, who have been born again, I would challenge you to get serious about two things and this is going to be real quick, a two-part outline. That kind of shocks you, doesn't it? There are usually three or four or five. Just two, very simple. First of all, number 1: I would challenge you to get serious about learning the kingdom, learning about the kingdom through careful study. Imagine if somebody called you from an attorney's office and said, "We need to talk with you because your fabulously wealthy uncle has died and has willed his entire estate to you." What would your reaction be? "Whatever." No, it would be, "What?!?" You would want to know what would be in that will. Well, dear friends, we need to know what the kingdom is all about and sadly many Christians don't understand these things. In fact, I would humbly say that most Christians are dumber than a stump when it comes to understanding the kingdom, and when you are dumb about something, you are ignorant about something, you are apathetic about it and today what I have given you is just the very top snowflake on the proverbial tip of the iceberg. There is so much more. This is such a vast and glorious subject.

John MacArthur has said that one of the books that has had the greatest influence on him, on his life and ministry, was the one written by Dr. Alva Jim McClain called "The Greatness of the Kingdom." McClain was the founder and first president of my alma mater, Grace Theological Seminary. I would encourage you to get it and read it. You will recall, some of you men, I took about 15 of you through that book for about two years a number of years back. But now I would add a second book, another work that has just been published that expands upon McClain's treatment and it is absolutely fabulous. It's a fantastic biblical treatment of the kingdom. It's written by Dr. Michael J Vlach, one of the professors at the Masters Seminary, and it is called, "He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God." Folks, get it and read it. Learn about the kingdom through careful study.

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And finally, secondly, anticipate the King, the kingdom by serving the King. Beloved, we must begin to live with a sense of urgency and a sense of excitement because the King is coming. Yes, I know it's March Madness but the King is coming. It's far more important. And how can we possibly pray for his kingdom to come if we don't understand it and we're not living in anticipation of it with great passion? I cannot wait to see the King. I cannot wait to see Jesus face-to-face. I cannot wait to see every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. And folks, we've got to see God's big picture of what he's up to and rejoice in that and celebrate that, and when we share that passion, then we will serve the King and there are so many ways to do that.

So my challenge to you is twofold: study the kingdom and serve the King, all right? Study the kingdom and serve the King and then experience the exhilarating joy of his presence and his power in your life.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May they bear much fruit in each life that we might enjoy all that you have for us in Christ. I pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

We pray you've been edified by this presentation. You've been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.

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