

Pentwater Bible Church

Hebrews Message 17

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Resurrection of Christ by Noel Coypel cir. 1700

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Hebrews

Message Seventeen

THE KING AND HIGH PRIEST LIVES

April 15, 2018

Daniel E. Woodhead

Hebrews 7:20–8:5

²⁰ And inasmuch 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. 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. 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.

²⁶ For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 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, when he offered up himself. 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 for evermore.

***8** ¹ Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ² a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. ³ For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. ⁴ For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: ⁵ who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount, ⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (KJV).*

THE OLD COVENANT WAS TEMPORARY

Hebrews 7:20–22

²⁰ And inasmuch 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 (KJV).

The Mosaic Covenant was conditional (Exodus 19:5) and the same was true of the Aaronic priesthood. Which makes the priests and the entire priesthood temporary with no assurance that their offices would continue. So, in the normal manner the Levitical priests including the high priest were appointed to their offices based upon the conditional Law. Jesus however, was made a priest by the *oath* that God the Father had made to Him. The Lord again makes reference to Psalm 110 when He says, “*Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*” Now the Lord who cannot do anything apart from His promises ordained Jesus to the office of Savior. In every way Jesus is superior to any Levitical priest. There is no explicit or even similar oath apart within the Mosaic Covenant that specifically ordains the high priesthood (Exodus 28). The Law was conditional and temporary but as the text says *by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.* This is an unconditional unchangeable covenant that God made with the Son. God the Father confirmed by and oath Jesus as an eternal priest in the Melchizedekian order. Jesus is the most unique priest, a sole individual priest, without time, and a supremely royal priest. The better testament refers to His office of a priest who would provide unique spiritual and material blessings. His office having the foundation of an eternal covenant is far superior to the former priesthood which rested on a temporary and conditional covenant.

JESUS’ PRIESTHOOD IS BASED UPON HIS ETERNALITY

Hebrews 7:23-25

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. 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 (KJV).

As the text says *truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.* They all died as normal fallible men subject to the corruption of the earth that entered at the Fall. When the Babylonian captivity ended and Joshua the High Priest was chosen it was by God Himself. In a heavenly scene from Zechariah 3:1–4, God orders that Joshua be provided with appropriate attire befitting the chosen High Priest. For He says in verse 4, “*And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel.*” This command clearly recognizes the nature of the past and future sins of Israel as represented by Joshua’s “*filthy garments*”. God (desiring a restoration of Israel after their punishment) wants Joshua to have the appropriate High Priest’s outfit representing the spiritual cleansing of the Nation Israel. Therefore, He says, “*Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel.*”

Previously the high priests were to be chosen from the genealogical line of Moses’ brother Aaron. God Himself chose Joshua but the next fifty or so high priests until the second temple was destroyed in AD seventy, many of the high priests were chosen for political reasons. With the disappearance of civil rulers from David’s line after Zerubbabel there was a political vacuum and the high priests were utilized to fill this void. This book to the Hebrews being written just before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple makes the statement

that Jesus *hath an unchangeable priesthood*. The changeable nature of the human condition as well as the finite time any person lives on this earth including the high priests and their different approaches to their office demonstrate the superiority of Jesus to any high priest. Jesus is not in the grave today and He offered Himself to the world instead of a set of rules or some moral code to come to Him as the way to God. He is the only one who proposes that He is God's ultimate and final word on the issue of sin, salvation, and eternal life. Jesus *only* is able to accomplish salvation and a reconnection to God by those who believe the Gospel as He ever lives to make intercession for us (Romans 8:34).

THE UNIQUE SEPARATE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS

Hebrews 7:26–28

26 For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 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, when he offered up himself. 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 for evermore (KJV).

Finishing the previous text, the apostle concludes his thoughts when he says that the Mosaic law was replaced with a final and full sacrifice by Jesus. He Himself is fully capable to be the perfect high priest because of the individual unique characteristics He only has.

1. He is Holy; which means that as God Himself he has no sin. Jesus perfectly fulfilled all that God is and that all that God Himself required in a high priest who would bring salvation to a sinful people (Hebrews 4:15).
2. He is Blameless; Jesus has no evil of any manner and is completely pure and innocent. During the 33 and a half years of His life in the human body he experienced temptation including a bout with Satan but remained completely obedient to God the Father without sinning (e.g. James 1:27).
3. He is Undefiled; Jesus remained pure and unaffected by the sinful condition of the world in which He created then placed Himself in for us. God is perfectly Holy and cannot be in the presence of sin (Isaiah 59:2). But, for the time He was here he remained undefiled.
4. Jesus is Separate for Sinners; Because of Jesus' sin free life He has separated Himself from His sinful creation. Even so it was only through His separation by His sinlessness that He could act on our behalf.
5. Jesus Has the Highest Place of Honor in Heaven; He is greater than any earthly high priest because as a member of the Throne Room of God He represents the people in the very presence of God and the celestial beings closest to God. He is uniquely qualified as no other ever has been.

Philippians 2:10–11

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (KJV).

In this verse from Philippians it says that the three realms of existence will bow down to Him. The three realms are:

1. Heavenly beings-who love and know who He is.
2. Earthly beings- who have a choice to know and love Him or not.
3. Demonic beings-who know who He is but do not love Him

Those who realize who Jesus is and love him, also adore, worship, and bow down to His majesty. Heavenly or celestial beings knew who Jesus was before He appeared on the earth. This is described in chapters 4 and 5 of the book of Revelation. In chapter four the throne room of God the Father is described, and the main focus is God who is sitting on the throne. Also present in the throne room of God are the Seven Spirits, the twenty-four Elders and the four living creatures, also known as the Cherubim. Whereas in chapter four the central character was God the Father, in chapter five it is God the Son, and He is called “a Lamb”, and “The Lamb” (Revelation 5:6,8,12,13). There are also millions of angels who have entered the throne room that weren’t there or described in chapter four. At the beginning of chapter five, it did not appear that anyone was qualified to open “a book written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals” (which is the title deed to the earth) held in the right hand of God the Father (Revelation 5:1). It is a sealed document, rolled like a scroll that requires the seals to be broken as it is opened and unrolled. The lack of anyone meeting the qualifications required to take the command to open the book implies that one must at least be deity-worthy. It is finally realized that because of Christ’s sacrifice (which has fulfilled the Law), He is worthy to open the book. As God the Son, He fulfills the deity quality and receives the legal right to carry out the Great Tribulation on earth.

Not like the other high priests, Jesus does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He was sacrificed for the sins of this world once for all when he offered Himself. Because of the nature of humans, the Law appointed the high priests from among mortal men who were weak; but the *oath* of God, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever. Verse 28 states the elimination of all imperfections from Christ, of which other high priests are subject. Three distinctions are made between Jesus our High Priest and them.

1. First, the frequency of their offerings. These needed to be offered repeatedly for those who brought an offering whereas Christ’s offering was once for all.
2. Second, they only offered animals, but Christ offered himself.
3. Third, they offered up sacrifices for their own sins, but Christ had none of his own sins to offer for.

All these aspects of the Levitical priests described are weaknesses and imperfections in their office. This is the main point of the apostle's argument. The law made nothing perfect. The priests had nothing of their own to offer but had to offer calves and sheep and goats. But the Lord Christ had something of his own to offer, which was originally his own and not borrowed or taken from other creatures. This was himself—a sacrifice able to make atonement for all the sins of mankind.

THE NEW COVENANT HAS BETTER PROMISES

Hebrews 8:1–6

8 ¹Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ² a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. ³ For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. ⁴ For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: ⁵ who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount, ⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises (KJV).

The apostle begins with a summary statement: *We have such a high priest*. This makes clear his main point throughout this section. The Priesthood of Jesus is after the Order of Melchizedek. Jesus is ministering in the *true tabernacle of Heaven*, not in the earthly copy. The earthly Tabernacle Moses made was simply a copy of the Tabernacle already existing in Heaven. Jesus acts in a God-instituted Tabernacle, *which the Lord pitched, not man*, not in the fleshly one of ordinances. Jesus has now taken His seat at *the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*. So now Jesus sits on the Throne of God the Father not upon the Throne of David. David's throne will be the Lord Jesus' ruling throne in the Messianic Kingdom. For now though, He now rules from Heaven not from Jerusalem. Jesus can sit down on God's right hand because the first stage of His earthly work is finished. He still must return to completed the eradication of sinful people, completely evangelize the world and bring the Jewish people to regeneration and recognition of their Messiah.

The apostle explains that the priest's office is to offer sacrifices. Jesus is a priest. Therefore, Jesus must have something to offer. Jesus specific offerings will be discussed in detail in 9:11–10:18.

Since Jesus was never a Levitical priest, He could not minister in the earthly Tabernacle. Therefore, His ministry is in the heavenly one. The earthly Tabernacle ministry was restricted by rigid laws. These laws were so rigid that Moses, the mediator, could not break them. The earthly Tabernacle was merely a pattern of the Heavenly Tabernacle. It was a shadow, and a

shadow is something in contrast to something. It was only a general outline without the details; it was a pattern, a type. Therefore, the earthly Tabernacle must give way to the Heavenly Tabernacle.

The apostle makes his conclusion with the words: *But now ...* Jesus serves in Heaven in a *more excellent* or better ministry. This ministry is based upon a *better covenant*, which is the theme for the rest of this chapter. Jesus has a superior priesthood because of the superior basis on which it rests. The superior basis is *better promises* which are found in the *better covenant*, the New Covenant. Any covenant made between God and man demands a *mediator*. Moses was the mediator of the first covenant and Aaron was the priest. However, Jesus is both the Mediator and the Priest of the New Covenant. The New Covenant is superior to the old covenant because it rests upon *better promises*. For example, the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, was based upon the Law. It brought blessing for obedience, but it brought cursing and even death for disobedience (Leviticus 26). In contrast, the New Covenant is based upon grace, and it is able to impart righteousness and provide the God given capability to keep it.

Next message: CHRIST MEDIATES

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