

Hebrews 7:11-28

“A Surety Of A Better Covenant”

If you're just joining us for the 1st time today or you happened to miss out on our time together last week we couldn't be more excited at the fact that you're with us today. But it might take you just a moment to get adjusted because it's sorta like you're tuning in to the 2nd half of a feature film here regarding where we left off last week. and You may find yourself thinking, “What's going on, what did I miss, what in the world are you talking about?” But let me encourage you to stay tuned and we'll do our very best to bring you up to speed. (You just might want to pick up a copy of last weeks study in order to get the back story).

We left off being blown away by the magnitude of the ministry of this mysterious man by the name of Melchizedek. He flashes onto the pages of scripture back in Gen Ch 14 like a falling star streaming across the midnight sky. He was there; he intercepted Ab on his return from the slaughter of the kings, shared with him, strengthened him to resist and refuse the temptation of the king of Sodom, blessed him, Ab tithed to him and then he just disappears from the pages of scripture never to be seen or heard from again. Remember it was like, “Who was that masked man?” and Yet the picture that he portrayed, the role that he played was one that is absolutely critical to you and me. Because the author here is taking the time to point out in painstaking detail that God was giving to mankind a “sneak peek” of the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ in the ministry of Melchizedek. and How much greater *His* High Priesthood is than that after the order of Aaron, in that it's not based upon genealogy, it's eternal in it's nature (remember we don't have any record of beginning or ending for Melchizedek, no record of a father or mother, he's just there, no record of him after the encounter with Ab, no beginning no ending just a picture that points to an eternal nature). and When Melchizedek initiated a blessing upon Ab, and Ab received the blessing they were both mutually consenting to the fact that Melchizedek was greater than Ab. and That's incredibly significant because it was out of Ab that the entire nation of Israel (including Levi from which came the priesthood) would be born. So by default Ab was saying (in receiving that blessing) that Melchizedek was *greater* than him and anyone who would come after him *through* him. and What makes that so amazing is the fact that God gave to Ab a blessing that through him all of the nations of the earth would be blessed (Messiah would come through him) yet Melchizedek was greater than Ab through whom the Messiah was promised to come.

Now in all fairness I should probably point out that even though Messiah came through Ab, Jesus was exempt from being lesser than Ab in the Patriarchal sense. How so? Well, because Ab wasn't His father, God was His Father; He was conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Ok, Melchizedek drops off the scene never to be seen, heard from, or mentioned again. Then one day about 1,000 yrs later David (inspired by the Holy Spirit) seemingly from out of nowhere utters the words of what would become Ps 110 in which he declared, “*The Lord has sworn And will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’*” Ps 110:4 and Then just as quickly Melchizedek is dropped again until we come to this point in the book of Heb 1,000 yrs later. But I bring that up because it’s pivotal to the point that the author was in the midst of making when our time came to a close last week. It’s like we’d been climbing and climbing up to the summit peak of Mt Melchizedek and just as we got to the top and was about to take a look at the view, the fruit of our labor, get to the point, the credits started to roll and the movie was over.

But you have to remember that he’s writing here to a group of downtrodden and depressed Hebrew believers. They’ve come to Christ, but they’re considering walking away and returning to the Levitical law, some familiar old stomping ground, comfort and security. and He’s pointing out to them that to do that would be a mistake of paramount proportions, because Christ has become our High Priest, a surety of a much better covenant. Because He’s become our High Priest *not* after the order of Aaron (who came through Ab) but after the order of Melchizedek who was *greater* than Ab. Listen, we need to just dive into this, look at Vs 4 of Ch 7 (read) now look at Vs 7 (read), now look at Vs 9

Vs9-11

Now we’re familiar with this word “therefore” it’s a small word of giant significance. It’s the hinge upon which the door swings taking us out of a principle and into something practical. The principle that’s been developed is that Melchizedek is *greater* than Ab, and it was through Ab that the Levitical priesthood would come. and He’s saying here that it only makes sense (practically speaking) that if we could be made perfect through the Law of Moses, (the Levitical law) that God wouldn’t have set His Son as High Priest according to a different order. He would’ve simply said, “The Lord has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Aaron.’” But He didn’t say that, and it wasn’t until some 600 or so yrs *after* the law had been given that the Holy Spirit inspired David to utter the words that the High Priesthood of Christ would be after the order of another, namely Melchizedek and not Aaron. The point being that, that alone should be speaking to them of the temporary nature of the Law and the insufficiency therein to make one acceptable to God, so why return to something that can’t gain you acceptance in the sight of God?

Now remember the Law says, “Do” Christ says, “Done” and so the idea is that we can either rest in the finished work of Christ upon the cross, (the cleansing flow of His sacrifice). Or we can try to work for our own acceptance before God by a set of “do’s and don’ts” rules and regulations being constantly frustrated and exasperated because it’s impossible for us to do something that will make up for the fact that we have a sin nature. We have an innate problem and it’s the fact that we’re sinners, and doing something good doesn’t change that fact, sacrificing certain things doesn’t change that fact.

You see it's not a matter of what we do or don't do outwardly. It's a matter of who we are inwardly in the heart, and that's the problem, God is searching our hearts, and doing something good outwardly, or not doing something bad outwardly doesn't change who we are inwardly. Christ cleanses the heart, makes us clean in the sight of God, accredits to us *His* righteousness, by faith. So if perfection (completion in the sight of God) could come through the Levitical Priesthood, through the legalism of the law, then why did David say 600 yrs after the law that the Messiah's High Priesthood would be after another order, and not that of Aaron?

Now I want you to notice that there's never even an indication that mankind doesn't need a priest. We've discussed this before, some people think they're pretty good people they'll represent themselves before God. But it comes back to that sin nature thing, as long as you're represented by a sin nature you'll never be accepted before God because sin separates us before God, He's holy, He's righteous, and with out sin. We need someone who'll bridge the gap, who'll be a Mediator between who we are and who God is. But equally important is it to realize that it can never be another man with a sin nature who can be that go between. How can one man with a sin nature represent another man with a sin nature before God?

So another earthly priest is not only insufficient, it's unbiblical. Even Job (the oldest record we have in the scripts) recognized back in Ch 9 of the book of Job that he needed someone who could put one hand on him and one hand on God and bring them together, but there was no one qualified. Sinful man can't bridge the gap for sinful man...we need a sinless man, one who can go before God on behalf of humanity and bridge the gap. and Of course as you know that's where Christ comes in who was in all ways tempted as you and I are tempted and yet with out sin. Yet He laid His life down on the altar of the cross offering up Himself as the sacrifice for the sin of humanity. and Now having risen 3 days later He officiates as the High Priest, the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls. He's become the go between, the One to bridge the gap between sinful man and a Holy and righteous God. There's no earthly priest who can do that for you, the bible says, "*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all,*" 1 Tim 2:5-6

So we need a priest, a go between, but a High Priest according to the order of Aaron would never suffice, or else God wouldn't have spoken of another order, the order of Melchizedek. But in calling His Son a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek He was declaring that there would come a day when the Levitical order of the Priesthood would come to an end, there would be a change in the priestly order.

Vs12

Or to understand that another way, the law is a "linked" system, it's linked to the priesthood that officiates it. The priesthood isn't linked to the law; the law is linked to the priesthood. So that if the priesthood changes, the law has to change as well.

Vs13-14

Now we're rehashing some already established ground from last week's study here. The author here is saying, "We realize that you could have a hang up considering Jesus to be a High Priest." Because the law was clear that the priesthood was of the tribe of Levi, and that the High Priest was to be of the lineage of Aaron. Well, everybody knows that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, of the lineage and offspring of David. So Jesus is going to need some biblical backing if He's going to officiate as our eternal High Priest, how can He do that?

Vs15-17

Jesus *doesn't* officiate after the order of a physical law, after the order of Aaron, but rather according to the power of an endless life according to the order of Melchizedek. He saying that it's obvious that Jesus didn't come from Levi, (no one is trying to pretend that He did) but from Judah. But it's even more obvious that if His order is after that of Melchizedek that it's not predicated upon the law (which came over 400 yrs after the encounter of Ab with Melchizedek) but rather it's predicated upon the power of an endless life as seen in the picture portrayed *in* Melchizedek.

Or let me say it another way, Jesus' priesthood isn't after any order of *this physical* life, but rather it's after the order of God's *endless, eternal* life. Now to which of the high priests of Aaron's order could that *ever* be said? Not a single one, those guys had a very finite, a very limited priesthood, because they died all the time, and when they died they relinquished their position in the priesthood. Their bodies decayed, their spirit either went to heaven (ultimately) or in some cases perhaps even hell. Believe me when I tell you that the OT is very clear in it's testimony that not all who were of the priestly order were righteous. They didn't come into the priesthood on the basis of a moral or spiritual purity. They came into the priesthood on the basis of physical heritage and a verifiable lineage.

But not one of them came into the position according to the power of an endless life. and You can't give what you don't have, the priesthood after the order of Aaron could never offer endless, or eternal life, because it wasn't according to the power of an endless life. Yet we find Jesus (during His earthly ministry) all the time saying things like, "*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.*" John 6:33 Now I'm only going to give you one guess as to what that word "life" means there in John 6:33... It means, "Life as God has it," or to understand that another way, "endless, eternal life." He said, "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever;*" John 6:51 and Again, "*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*" John 10:9-10 Now, how could Jesus make that kind of offer? Because He came *not* according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life and He proved it via the resurrection whereby He defeated death, never to die again. He's not serving a limited term but rather He is a priest *forever*.

The author is just continuing to hammer home the point of the greater nature of the High Priesthood of Christ, why would one ever want to leave that which is eternal, for that which is temporary, that which is more than sufficient for that which is completely *insufficient*, that which causes you to be seen as *perfect* in the eyes of God, for that which could never show you as anything but *imperfect* and full of fault? Notice Vs 18

Vs18-19

You see not only did God plainly declare through the mouth of David that He was going to do away with the order of Aaron and establish His Son's priesthood according to the power of an endless life, not only did He *say* He would, it was absolutely *necessary* that He do it. Why is that? Because the commandment (the law) was #1 Weak, and #2 Unprofitable, it was weak in that it had no ability to save my soul and it was unprofitable in that it had no ability to give me *power* over sin in my life. The law says, "Thou shall not covet," or want something someone else has. Now who here has never coveted? Or, "Though shall not bear false witness" who here has never lied? and So it sets the standard, but it doesn't give me any ability to meet that standard, it leaves me hopeless. Now understand that the problem wasn't with the law, the law in and of itself is holy and righteous and good. The problem lies with in me, because I'm sinful, unrighteous, and corrupt. and So the law holds up before me the holy and righteous standard that God demands, and it shows me in all my insufficiency and depravity, but then it does nothing for me but leave me in desperate need. It's like a doctor who's excellent at diagnosing the problem, but has no ability whatsoever to remedy the problem. and So you go to doctor law and he says, "I see the problem, you're filled with the cancer of sin and you're going to die." and You say, "Doctor law do something for me, help me!" and He says, "Sorry I can't do anything for you, but I can tell you that you're filled with the cancer of sin and you're going to die."

So the law leaves us with out hope, with an inability to draw near to God, the law says, "Keep your distance from God," and it's not that we don't need the diagnosis, we need to see the fact that we have a problem, that we need a Savior, but you guys that's the key. The answer isn't found in doctor law; it's found in the Great Physician Jesus Christ, the Lord our Healer. "For the law made *nothing* perfect." Underline that, highlight it, somehow draw attention to it, legalism is a dangerous trap, but the law made nothing perfect. Nor was it ever intended to, it was meant to point us *to*, and show us our need *for*, Jesus and once we're in Christ, the law has served it's purpose. But so many people (and I have to confess I struggle here to) seek to lead their lives on the principle of law, but the law made nothing perfect.

You say, “What are you talking about Jeff, I don’t try to lead my life by the law.” Oh maybe not the Levitical law, but I would dare to say that more than a few of us here have been ensnared by the thought something to the effect of, “God likes me as long as I’m a good boy, or a good girl, but God doesn’t like me when I’m bad.” That (my friend) is thinking according to the principle of *law*, that’s legalism. “Earning” and “deserving” are the watch words of the law. “God will bless me when I’m good, but He won’t bless me when I’m bad.” You see if you spend your time trying to earn God’s love, trying to give God a reason to love you or bless you based upon what you do or don’t do, that’s legalism, that’s law. and It’s like a hamster on it’s treadmill, you’ll never get to your destination. “Earning and deserving” are the watch words of the law, “Believing and receiving” are the watch words of God’s grace. It’s not about what I do, it’s about what He’s done, I believe in Jesus Christ and receive God’s goodness and His grace by faith.

You see the former commandment had to be annulled, it was weak and unprofitable, could make no one or no thing perfect. “On the other hand God has brought in a better hope through which we draw near to God.” You see the law, the old covenant said, “Keep your distance” the new covenant, Christ says, “Draw near to God,” in Christ we draw near to God, and He draws near to us. So we don’t hope in legal dos and don’ts, doing this, not doing that, we hope in Christ. He’s our guaranteed certainty, our assured expectation, the one through whom we draw near to God. Remember Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* John 14:6 We draw near to God through faith in Christ.

Vs20-22

It’s simply staggering to realize the magnitude with which the priesthood of Christ dwarfs the priesthood of Aaron. He’s both a King and a High Priest, Aaron was never king of anything, His priesthood gives us positional perfection in the eyes of God. Aaron’s could never make anyone perfect, Christ’s priesthood is according to the power of an endless life, Aaron’s according to a limited fleshly (or physical) commandment; repeatedly brought to an end through death. Through Aaron’s ministry we were made mindful of our sin, given no hope for help, made to keep our distance. Through Christ we’re cleansed of our sin, made righteous in the sight of God and are beckoned to draw near to God, Aaron’s order was inherited by lineage, not moral or spiritual integrity. Christ was “sworn” into office, God sealed His calling of Christ as the High Priest and Overseer of our souls with an oath. and As we’ve seen and *will* see Aaron’s order had no ability to deliver from sin, Christ is more than able to deliver us, to save us and to keep us saved. He’s saved us from sin’s penalty, He’s saving us from sin’s *power* and one day He’ll save us from sin’s *presence*, He’s able. Aaron’s priesthood was marked by fallible, sinful men; Christ’s priesthood is one of infallible, sinless perfection. Or as the author puts it here in Vs 22, “...by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a *better* covenant.” The order under which Aaron served placed the responsibility upon man to uphold their end of the covenant; therefore it was doomed to failure, because man couldn’t keep his end of the deal. The new covenant has nothing to do with man’s ability but everything to do with Christ’s therefore it *can’t* fail. It’s a *better* covenant.

There where it says Christ has become a “surety” that word “surety” speaks of something that we would liken to a “co-signer.” So that if I went to a bank and wanted to borrow a million dollars, they’d look at my stats and laugh me out of the bank. But if I went in and had a co-signer who was a *billionaire* they’d be more than willing to do business with me, why? Because the deal wouldn’t in reality depend upon me at all, I might default on my payments, flounder in transactions and all the rest, but as long as the billionaire had signed the line, they’d get their money because they’d simply bypass me and deal with him, the payments would be sure. Christ has “co-signed” for your soul, the payment has been made.

He’s the surety, the guarantee of a better covenant.

Vs23-24

You may have a wonderful high priest, things are going well, then he dies and the next guy is a low life who’s only there because of his lineage but he’s ripping *off* the people, doesn’t have heart *for* the people and life’s miserable. But because Christ continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood, you will always have a High Priest who’s acquainted with your weaknesses, who’s heart beats in the same rhythm that your’s does, who has compassion upon you and will never leave nor forsake you. and Unlike the law He’s able to help you.

Vs 25

The basic thrust of this Vs is to say that since Christ is eternal, the life that He gives is eternal as well. “He is able to save to the utter most those who come to God through Him since He always lives to make intercession for them.” There’s just so much here, 1st of all note that it’s Christ who saves, “He” is able, and notice He has the ability to save, the law has no ability, Christ can and will save all who come to God *through* Him. He’s the only way, there’s no other way, good works won’t do it, other “religions” won’t do it. If there was another way for mankind to experience salvation, Christ wouldn’t have come, but He came. (Garden prayer) and So salvation is offered exclusively to all who come to God *through* Him. and Though the *application* has been made from this Vs that God is able to save *from* the uttermost and at times we’ll say “...even from the *guttermost*” to show how there’s no sinner beyond the reach of the Savior, the *interpretation* of this Vs has nothing to do with what God saves us *from*. It’s what God saves us *to*, it doesn’t look back, it looks forward. It’s saying that Christ saves, and is able to keep us saved eternally, since He ever lives to make intercession for us, the life that He gives us is as eternal as He Himself is, your salvation is unchanging, sure and secure *in* Christ. As long as you abide in Christ, your eternity is secure.

Now when it speak of His interceding for us, don’t think of Him as up there praying and placating an angry Father keeping Him pacified so as not to crush us. God doesn’t want to crush you, it was His plan to save you. and It’s not the *words* of Christ that intercede, it’s the *wounds* of Christ that intercede and testify to the Father the purchase price of our salvation has been paid in full.

I agree with Spurgeon who once said something to the effect of, “If Christ appears in heaven for us, be glad to appear on earth for Him! - If Christ pleads with God for men, let us plead with men for God. – If He by intercession saves us to the uttermost, let us hasten to serve Him to the uttermost. – If He spends eternity in intercession for us, let us spend our time in intercession for His cause.”

Vs26-27

You see he continues to pile high the better qualities of Christ as opposed to the Levitical priesthood. It’s a better covenant based upon the His character, He’s Holy, harmless (or with out guile or deceit), undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become exalted higher than the heavens. To which of the priests of the Levitical order could *any* of these things be said? Intrinsically holy, completely continually free from impure motives, separate from sinners, (now Jesus hung out with sinners all the time, yet His life was sanctified, or set apart, He didn’t contract sin through being around a sinner, sin doesn’t rub off on you), exalted above the heavens. Who but Christ has such a character? The high priest under the law had to offer sin offerings for himself before he could even think of offering one for another. Jesus had no sin, so He offered Himself *once for all* and the work is done, He doesn’t need to do it over and over again, the purchase price of our salvation is paid in full through the cross of Jesus Christ You might say He died to save us, and lives to keep us saved, it’s an eternal work He’s completed.

Vs28

You are the recipient of the promise of a better covenant, life in Christ. Under the Old covenant high priests were appointed who had weaknesses, they had a sin nature, they weren’t always available, had bad days, couldn’t always meet your need.

Christ is the surety of a better covenant, you’ve been appointed a High Priest in Him who is perfect, sinless in nature, is always available, never has a bad day, can always meet your deepest need, don’t turn away *from* Him, don’t refuse to come *to* Him, turn fully *toward* Him, learn to trust *in* Him, your salvation, is safe and secure *through* Him.

I would just encourage you that if you’ve not placed your trust in Christ, maybe you’ve gone to church, or you’ve sought to lead a good life, but you’ve never sensed or seen a need for Jesus. and Today your eyes are open, you can’t be right with God through your own standard of do’s and don’ts, the law, legalism makes no one perfect. On the other hand there’s a better hope offered to you, One through whom you can draw near to God, by saying “yes” to Jesus and giving your heart to Him you can be sure of a right standing before God and the forgiveness of all your sin. It doesn’t matter where you’ve been or what you’ve done God loves you and longs to forgive you and you can be sure that Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him because He ever lives to make intercession for them. Why not let Him stand in the gap on your behalf today? Let Him cleanse your heart and draw you near to the Living God.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for Your Word, the certainty *of* it, the security we find *in* it, may we be encouraged more and more *by* it to serve You and trust in Your Son in whom we have life. and Jesus we thank You that You were willing to become the Son of Man that we might be made the sons, and the daughters of God. We look to You as our faithful and compassionate High Priest to meet our every need, we pray that Your hand of blessing would be upon us, not because we've earned it or deserve it, but because we simply believe in You and receive by grace through faith Your favor toward us.