

The Guarantee of a Better Covenant

Hebrews 7:20-28

Pastor Jeremy Cagle, October 2, 2022

If you would go ahead and grab your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Hebrews. As you are doing that, I want to say thank you for your worship this morning. It was excellent. We talked about apathy yesterday in the men's Bible study and one way you kill the sin of apathy is by understanding that worship always comes from the heart, and it always comes from your soul. When it does, you sing loud, you may sing off key, that is okay, but you sing from the bottom of your heart. It just overwhelms, overflows within you and you guys were doing that today. I just want to say thank you for that. It was a blessing to sit up front and hear that.

This morning, we are continuing our worship by turning to the Word of God. We are finishing a chapter that we started last week in the book of Hebrews, we got about halfway through and had to stop there due to time. Some passages in Scripture are like that, they are so rich and powerful, you cannot get to them in one hour, you got to break it up into bits and pieces. And this is what we did with this one. It is one of the benefits of expository preaching, that if you don't get to it one week, you can come back next week and have another try, and that is what we are doing here. Our focus is in the middle of the chapter, but I want to read the whole thing to you just to have it fresh in your minds. If you would read Hebrews seven with me, it says this:

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation of *his name*, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these [c]are descended from Abraham. But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected [d]a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is

changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord [¶]was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has

become *such* not on the basis of a law of [¶]physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is attested *of Him*,

“You are a priest forever

According to the order of Melchizedek.”

For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. 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.

We will stop the reading there. The reason I wanted to read all of that to you so early in the message is because this is some rich stuff here, and I did not want to waste time getting to it. I wanted you to have some time to ponder. If you are joining us for the first time this morning, we have been studying the book of Hebrews for several months now as a church. In that time, it has shown us that the theme is the preeminence of Christ, or how Christ is superior to the Old Testament, the Old Covenant. In this book, it says He is superior to the prophets and angels, He is superior to Abraham and Moses, He is superior to the temple, the tabernacle, the sacrifices and all the Jewish system had to offer.

In fact, the way He says this is interesting in the book because he does it all throughout the book by giving you a doctrine and then an application. If you have been travelling with us in this series, you will know the author has a habit of giving you a big meaty truth like this one and following it up with something simple. For example, in chapter one, he tells you Jesus is God, that is the doctrine, that is the big idea you see in the first part of the book. Then in chapter two, he tells you not to drift away from it, that is the application. He wants you to take that principle home with you by not getting lazy. Then in chapter five, it tells you Christ is your High Priest, that is the doctrine there too, that is the big lesson. In chapter five verse 11, he says, you need to stop being dull about it. Here in chapter seven, as you just read, he goes back to the doctrine. You will get into the application again later when he talks about the hall of faith, that is just one big application to the book of Hebrews. We are actually going to go through the hall of faith, looking at those people one by one, so I think you will really enjoy that. But

this passage is very theological, and the point of our message this morning, our focus is on verse 22. If you look at that, in chapter seven, when it says “so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.” Now, what does that mean? This is one of several verses in this chapter that sound a little strange to us. We do not say a lot about covenants today, the word has dropped out of most of our vocabularies. So, it would be good to go back and talk about that some.

I told you last time, anytime you come to the book of Hebrews, you cannot just approach it through 21st century eyes, because you are not the first audience to it, you are not the original audience, it was written to the Jews. So, you always have to go back and ask yourself a question - well, what did they hear when they saw the word covenant? To answer that, the Hebrew word for covenant is the word *beriyth* refers to a covenant or a promise or a pledge God made with someone. The word comes from the root word to bind or shackles something because that is what a covenant did, it shackled your name with someone else's, and it bound your life together with theirs. Because the idea in the Bible is you cannot come to God on your own. We have said a lot about that before. You are too sinful for that. So, this is what God did in his mercy and grace and kindness, He bound Himself to you in order to save you, is not that amazing? What kind of God would do that. This term is so important that in some of the older translations of the Bible, it does not call the two divisions of Scripture, the Old and New Testament, it calls them the Old and New Covenants, that is what they are all about. They describe two different ways that God brought sinners to Himself one way through Israel, and then later through the church. This term is also so important that it was used as one of Jesus' last words to His disciples before He died, when He told them that this cup, which is poured out for you, is the New Covenant in my blood. The reason He did that is because his death was going to be the thing that separated the two Covenants, the Old and the New. It was the one event that would distinguish them from each other, so, it is a very important concept in the Bible. We still have this idea in our world today.

By the way, when you start a business with someone, you sign a what – contract, or you could call it a covenant, in a sense. It is a 21st century way of spelling out the rules of what it means to bind yourself to each other and have a relationship that functions properly. In the similar way, God made covenants all throughout the Bible. In fact, just to show you what this looks like, if you want to take out the handout in your bulletin. Theologians have done a study on this and determined that there are six major covenants in the Bible. There is a little debate about that number, you could add more to that list, it could be fewer, some say there are seven, some say there is eight, I have printed them off so you could follow along with me. Here are some of them: The Covenant God made with Adam, the Covenant God made with Noah, the Covenant God made with Abraham, the Covenant God made with Moses or the Old Covenant God made with Israel, the Covenant God made with David in the New Covenant God has made with us as a church. The reason some scholars include more than that in the list is because the Abrahamic Covenant had two parts in it, it promised land and it promised descendants to Abraham. So, some people have split that off into separate categories. The same thing happens with the old covenant because there were two sides to that as well, it promised one thing to the people, it made other promises to the priests and Levites. But whatever the case, the reason this is so important is because the covenants

are the backbone of the Bible. They are the great turning points in Scripture that show us where history is going and what it is all about because they demonstrate how God is calling a people unto his Name. For example, when God made Adam, first man, He told him from any tree the garden you may eat freely, but from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it, you will die. Why did he say that? Because that the Lord was making a covenant with him. He was telling him in no uncertain terms, this is what it means to follow me. You need to avoid one thing and one thing only in creation, and that is this tree, which you did not do. As we all know, Adam disobeyed that command, and he was thrown out of the garden. But right before it happened, right after the sin happened, the Lord told him there would be a child of Eve who would come and crush the serpent's head. Why did he say that? Because he wanted to let Adam know that your line would not die here. Even though he sinned against the Lord, it was going to continue because God was calling a people unto his Name. The Messiah would come from Adams line, that was promised in Genesis chapter three. Several years later, when the earth was so bad, the Lord had to destroy it through a flood. Genesis nine says right afterwards, God sent a rainbow, and He told Noah, this is the sign of my covenant with you that I will never flood the earth again. That was the next covenant in the Bible. In Genesis 12, He made a covenant with Abraham, where He promised to turn him into a great nation, make his name great. Later on, in Second Samuel seven, He made a covenant with David to put one of his descendants on the throne forever and then right in the middle of that, God made a covenant with Israel, where the Lord promised to take them out of the land of slavery, where they were living, and redeem them and free them and break their chains, in order to give them a law and a temple and a priesthood unlike the world has ever seen.

The point is that the Lord did this to show us that this world is going somewhere because God is building a remnant. Some people have asked the question, why did God do that with Israel? Well, the answer is, why would God do that with anybody? Why did God do that with Adam? Why Abraham? Why Noah? Nobody deserves this. This is all about His grace and mercy. This is all about his kindness and his sovereign choosing, not about our works. And with that in mind, if you read our passage for this morning, I think it will help because it says that the covenants did not end there. Hebrews seven verse 22 says, "so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."

What does that mean? That means that as amazing as Israel's covenant was, God's covenants did not end with them. As incredible as Adams and Noah's and Abraham's promise was, it did not cease with theirs, because you have a promise too, and it is greater. God has made a covenant with His church today, and it is a better one, because you have Jesus who is the guarantee of a better covenant. The word guarantee here, it is an interesting term is the Greek word *engyos*, which refers to someone who does not just promise to do something, but as a way to ensure that the promise is kept in the business transaction, they offered their life on the line as a pledge. They said, you could kill me if I do not keep my end of the bargain. We do not have this today, but they lived in very brutal times back then. So, it was common for someone to give up everything in order to make a deal in the world of commerce because they would say you can take my life if I do not do what I said. The author says that is what Christ has done for you

under the New Covenant. In the church, Jesus did not just make a promise to you, He laid his life on the line and sealed it with his blood, which is something the Lord has done under no other covenant. No one came down from heaven and died in order to make a guarantee with Adam or Noah. No one stepped off the throne and went to the cross in order to ratify it. In that case, God sent a rainbow and that is amazing, but with you, it is so much more than that; God gave you His Son. So, if you ever wonder if God will keep his promise to you, all you have to do now is look to Jesus know that He will. If you ever question whether He will do what He said in the Bible, all you have to do is look to the cross, and He should take all your doubts away. In Christ, God gave you an assurance that no one else in the world has ever had, and no other previous generation has ever experienced. That is what we are going to talk about this morning.

So, if you are taking notes this morning, we are going to look at four ways the New Covenant supersedes the Old in Christ. So, if you are taking notes this morning, this is our outline today. In Hebrews seven verse 20 and following, we are going to look at four ways the New Covenant supersedes the Old in Christ. This is a comparison the author of the book is going to be making for quite a few verses moving forward from here. The Jews were under the Old Covenant previously, so it was a big deal to them to wrestle with these things and try to figure out how this worked, and so he is going to talk about this quite a bit, but this is the first time he brings it up, so we are going to focus on that.

The first way the New Covenant supersedes the Old, is that in the New Covenant, you have a guarantee. I said a little bit about that, but I want to say more, because that is where the passage starts. The first way the New Covenant supersedes the old is that in this New Covenant, you have a guarantee, which means you have Jesus to remind you that God will keep His Word to you. If you read starting in verse 19 of the chapter, it says:

for the Law made nothing perfect, and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. And in as much as *it was* not without an oath for they indeed became priests without an oath.

Now that may be hard to follow, because you are catching the author in his mid-thought here, finding him right in the middle of a subject he has been talking about since the end of chapter six and that is the Priesthood of Christ. If you want to look back in chapter six, verse 19, this is where his thought begins:

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a *hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

In other words, when you read chapter seven, the subject of Christ's priesthood and the New Covenant might seem to come out of nowhere, but it does not, because the author is making a connection between Melchizedek and Christ, in order to show you that Jesus comes from the order or line of Melchizedek.

Back then, in order to become a priest, you could not just step into office, you had to come from a specific group or order that was based on your race or something like that. That is how the Old Covenant was set up. And the passage says Jesus did that, not in the typical way because He did not come from the order of Levi, like the Jewish priesthood, He came from the order of Melchizedek. Which is why He can provide a better covenant for you, the covenant is better because the priesthood is better. We talked about that last week, if you missed it, you could go back and listen, we did a whole sermon on it.

But just to review some of Chapter Seven Up to this point, in chapter seven, verse two, he explains that Melchizedek, or Jesus' Priesthood was better than Israel's because He is the king of righteousness and King of peace. He fulfills both offices as priest and king. In verse three it says He is better because He had neither beginning of days nor end of life, which means He is eternal. In Christ, you have a Savior who lives forever. In verse 11, it says He is better because He is perfect, there is no flaws in Him.

In verse 16, He is better because He is indestructible, He can never be conquered. In verse 19, He better because he can draw you near to God and give you a better hope. And after saying that, verse 20, says "And in as much as *it was* not without an oath for, they indeed became priests without an oath."

That means this is another way that Christ's Priesthood is better than Israel's, because God never gave an oath to the Old Covenant priesthood to keep it around forever. And he never made a promise to them, that they would serve Him as priests for all eternity, but with Christ he did. Now that does not shock you as gentiles, you read that and kind of shrug your shoulders, but Israel had a priesthood for 1000 years. All they ever knew was when they sin, they took a sacrifice to the temple, gave it to the priest, he would offer it and they would be forgiven. Now the author is saying, oh, that is about the end, the temple would be destroyed in AD 70 and they could never do that again. They are not doing it now. But on the other hand, Christ's Priesthood is forever. If you look in verse 21, He gives you the place where this was promised to Christ, it says

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

That is a quotation from Psalm 110. In order to show you that, unlike it was with the Jewish priesthood, God would never take Christ's Priesthood away. He was a perpetual office, it was a permanent thing, which is why he says this in verse 22, He says "so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."

The reason the New Covenant is better here is because it was made with this eternal priesthood. And like I said earlier, the term guarantee is a word that came from the world of commerce back then. It refers to someone who does not just make a pact with you, but instead, they put their neck out there and offer their life as part of the arrangement. So, you could punish them if they do not keep their word. We have a certain phrase in our modern vernacular when it comes to this practice, when we say we are getting our pound of flesh out of someone, that is where you get this idea. When you agree to be someone's *engyos* or guarantee in the first century, you vow to give a pound of your flesh for every

dollar owed if they do not pay, or if you do not pay. There is a couple of times in the Bible where it describes this practice. For example, in the book of Genesis, it says, when Joseph's brothers went to see him after he became a leader in Egypt, he asked him to go back and bring Benjamin with them. But Jacob said no, until Judah said, "I will be his guarantee." That is the same word here. In other words, you can punish me if Benjamin does not return, you can take out a pound of my flesh if I ever lose him. Paul did the same thing in the book of Philemon, when he helped the runaway slave named Onesimus return to his master and as he did that, he says this, "if then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you something, charge that to my account, and I will repay it." What Paul is doing there as he is taking Onesimus' debts on himself and he is saying, I will be the assurance that it gets paid. In a similar way, the passage says, this is what Christ did for you, when he became your High Priest. He did not just make a promise, but He told the father, I will be the assurance of their debt. If these people owe you anything, charge it to my account. If they have any outstanding debts to you, just give them to me and I will take care of it. The reason this is so important in the context of this letter is because under the Old Covenant, they had no guarantee like this. I mean, the Jews sinned, and it was up to them to bring a sacrifice, and they failed, and it was up to them to make it right. But with Christ, it is different, because in Him, every time you fail, you do not bring the Lord as sacrifice of an animal, you go to Him.

If you notice, in this passage, the word "better" here, it is a helpful word, because it is a term of comparison. It is used to put one thing against another in order to show us that the New Covenant is superior to the Old for this reason, because of Christ. It is not because of you. It is not because of the things you do. It is not because you are a good person, or nice person or good citizen. It is not because the church is better than Israel. It is not because Christians are better than Jews. It is not because the 21st century is better than the first century - I do not think anybody should say that. It is just because of Christ, that is it - that is the only thing making the covenant better.

The word covenant, it is also helpful, because that is the word we have been talking about this morning, in order to remind ourselves, this is why you are saved now. It is because of God's covenant with you, not because of your covenant with Him first. It is not because you are the guarantee of the covenant, it is not because you are the assurance, Christ is all those things. This would have struck a chord with the Jews, because they lived in a world where people did this. They would have known what it meant for someone to make a sacrifice or be a guarantee of something like this, because they understood what was at stake. When someone did that it was a one-way street. And all the risk was taken on one individual, it was not shared - that is a good picture of salvation. This is what God has done for us in Christ, takes away all grounds of boasting; this takes away all the place of pride. When you read a passage like this one, it shows you the only thing you have to boast in is the Lord, nothing else.

It brings us to another way the New Covenant supersedes the Old here and that is that in the New Covenant, you have an intercessor. The first one is that you have a guarantee. But a second way the New Covenant supersedes the Old is that in it, you have an intercessor as well, which means you have

someone to go to the Father on your behalf and bring your request before the throne. And as you come to the next part, you can tell the author is going to jump around a little bit. He will bring up something he has kind of alluded to earlier, when he tells us that the priests under the Old Covenant do not live forever. But he says it this way in verse 23, he says

the former priests on the one hand existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing.

Now that means while the Old covenant priesthood served a great purpose in the life of Israel, it had a major drawback and that was death because the priests could not continue in their office because they kept dying. We just alluded to this a moment ago. But the reason there were so many of them is because they had a limited shelf-life. Every time they passed away, you had to keep replacing them, one right after the other like people on an assembly line. I have heard different numbers on this, but some historians say that there were 83 high priests who served from the time of Solomon's temple all the way to the time of Herod's temple. And if you include the other priests in that list, the number goes way into the 1000s. At this time in history, they said there were 30,000 priests serving in Israel or 18,000 Priests and 10,000 Levites to be exact. This is the size of a small army, and it would have impressed the Jews. You could not go on the temple grounds without bumping into one of these guys because the numbers were so large. The author says it should not impress you that much. Because the reason it was so large is because they were simply human, they kept perishing. It was actually a negative thing instead of a positive. But on the other hand, verse 24, says this about Christ, it says

but Jesus, on the other hand, because he continues forever, holds his priesthood permanently. 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.

Now, I have to be honest here, this is a rich verse, and it is the kind of thing you want to spend an entire sermon on. The reason I did not do that is because I want you to see the greater context of the passage, because when he writes the word, "therefore" here, that means therefore, this is the result of all we are talking about regarding Christ and His Priesthood. And that is that since His Priesthood is permanent, so is His salvation. See the connection? Since He lives forever, He is able to save you forever. There will never come a time when His ministry will stop for you. Unlike it was in the Old Covenant, there will never come a day when His work will be over. Just to break this verse down a little bit, if you think about this phrase, "He is able," what does that mean? What is Christ able to do? Well, the answer is anything, right? He can do whatever He wants because He is God. And when it says "He is able to save," okay, well, who can he save? Anybody? He saved whoever he pleases. because He is sovereign. He can save a drunk, He can save a drug addict, He can save a legalist, He can save a hypocrite, He can save a Pharisee, He can save a liar, He can save a blasphemer, He can save a coveter, because He is Lord Almighty. In fact, just out of curiosity, I looked it up. How do you like a priest like that, by the way? How many of you want a priest like that? We all want that, don't we?

In fact, I looked it up this week. And I found that when you do a survey of this phrase, "He is able," It is very interesting because you find that the Bible says Jesus is able to make all grace abound to you. He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly beyond all that we asked or think. He is able to come to the aid of those who were attempted. He is able to keep you from stumbling. He is able to build you up. He is able to give you an inheritance. He is able to present you faultless before the throne. He is able to raise the dead, and it goes on and on and on.

It sums it all up by saying He is able to save you. That is what it is about. He can take a hell bound man and bring him to heaven. As one southern preacher said, "He can take you from the gutter most to the uttermost." In fact, the word save here, it is in the continuous tense in Greek, which means He is able to save you and keep saving you. He is able to deliver you from sin and keep delivering you from sin.

Verse 25, actually, in the full tense, it says this:

Therefore, He is able to save forever, those who draw near to God through him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

This phrase "draw near" should catch your eye. Because if you remember, this is what the priesthood was there for. It was to help men draw nearer to God and come into His presence through the sacrifices. When men sinned, they were over here, God was over here, and the priests brought them together. And this passage says, Jesus does that for you through the work of intercession. Intercession refers to the act of him going to God and making a request on your behalf. When someone intercedes for you, they plead for you. So, when someone serves in this office, we could even call this office like a mediator - this is what they do. They make a supplication on your behalf and the passage says this is what Christ does as your Priest. You cannot draw nearer to God on your own, it is not possible, so, Jesus draws you near for you. It says He always lives to do this, which means He is doing it now. This is something that is taking place right now at this moment in heaven, which is truly amazing. Some theologians refer to this as the unfinished work of Christ. The cross is His finished work, that is where the price of our salvation was paid once and for all. But this is where Jesus takes the fruit of that work and applies it to our lives. There is an ongoing communion taking place between the father and son right now in heaven, and so Jesus uses that for our benefit, which is a mysterious thing.

I mean, to be honest, we don't know a lot about this aspect of Christ' ministry. I looked this up as well, and I found this. There is currently nine things Jesus is doing right now in heaven when you survey the Bible. A few of them are found in this chapter and in chapter eight. Right now in heaven, Jesus is seated at the Father's right hand. And right now, in heaven, He is ministering in the sanctuary there. And right now, He is offering both gifts and sacrifices. And right now, He is making intercession for you. And right now, He is serving as your mediator. And right now, He is serving as your advocate. And right now, He is overseeing the church, like we see in the book of Revelation. And He is sending out the gospel like we see in the book of Acts, and He is preparing a home for you. Is not that encouraging? It is such a blessing to think about this because this passage shows you Jesus is doing that today. Yes, He

ascended into heaven. Yes, he sits at the Father's right hand. Yes, He has left the earth physically, but he did not leave you. He did not forget about your troubles; you are still on His heart. Which means that whenever you are sick or weak or discouraged, Jesus is interceding for you. Whenever you are feeling sad, or defeated or low as a Christian, because life has got you down, He is there at the throne of God doing the work of a priest. The only way to respond to this is to be humble. The only thing you can do after looking at a great doctrine like this one is to kill your pride again and realize you cannot go through life on your own, you are not supposed to. You need to come to Him for help.

Bring us to the next way the New Covenant supersedes the Old and that is that in the New Covenant, you also have a Priest who is holy. We are just looking through, looking at these one by one as they come up in the text. But a third way the New Covenant supersedes the Old is that in the New Covenant, you have a Priest who is holy, which means He is perfect because He never sins. This is what makes the New Covenant perfect is because you have a perfect Priest. And if you look in verse 26, it starts off by saying "for it was fitting." That means for it was fitting for us to have a High Priests who could do all these things, because this is what Jesus is like. It says

for it was fitting for us to have such a high priest who was wholly, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.

And that is such a wonderful list. I do not even want to hesitate, I want to jump right into it. There are five things here to demonstrate how perfect your Priest is now: The first one is He is holy, which means He is undefiled from sin. He was free from any form of evil, wickedness or iniquity whatsoever. Hebrews four verse 15, says

for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.

It also says He was innocent, that means He never broke the law. There was never a time when Jesus failed to do anything God commanded Him to do. He even asked His enemies, the Lord asked His enemies one time, which one of you can accuse me of sin? He did not ask His friends that, He asked his enemies that, none of them could answer Him. Next, it says He was undefiled -means He was without any blemishes. That is something that would have hit home with the Jews under the old sacrificial system because an animal could not have any blemishes to offer them as a sacrifice. You had to give the best animal you had to offer. That is what Christ was, He was the best sacrifice. Next it says He was separated from sinners not separate from them, but separated, He belonged in a different category from sinners. Which is why it says, "He was exalted above the heavens." That means it is as a result of all these things, Jesus was not treated like a normal man. But when He died, He went straight into the presence of God on his own merit. And as a result of verse 27 says

He 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.

It even talked about that a moment ago. But why does He not offer those sacrifices? Because He never sinned. He did everything God wanted him to do in the first place. The Old Covenant law, it had a section in it, that dealt with the sins of the priesthood or the sins of the High Priest. It is interesting because it is so thorough. It said the High Priests had to offer a bull when he sinned. And that was the largest animal they had in Israel at the time, to my knowledge anyway, a full-grown bull could weigh over 1000 pounds. The other Jews were supposed to kill something much smaller, like a goat or a sheep or ram. But when the High Priests sin, because of his high office, he had to give the largest thing that was there, he had to take a bull out of the barn, bring it to the temple, place his hand on its head, to symbolize this animal is dying in my place. It is because of my sins this is happening and then he would cut its throat and he would let the blood drain into a bowl, sprinkle the blood back on the altar, before cutting it up, spreading the pieces back on the altar and burning it, which would have taken an extraordinarily long time. It was not a short procedure due to the size of everything. As such, it would have been a distraction from his ministry. All that effort would have taken away from his work with the people because he could not spend time making sacrifices for their sins when he was caught up with dealing with his sins. The idea here is that Jesus did not have to do that. He had no sin to pay for in the first place, so, He can give all his attention to you, which is what He does, because if you read all of verse 27 it says

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.

Now I want to talk about that phrase, “He offered up himself” in a moment, but I just want you to see how it connects to the thought here. Since Jesus had no sins, and since He was truly perfect, and holy, and innocent and undefiled, He could offer up Himself once for all in the cross, because He could be a fitting sacrifice before God. One commentator said, if Christ had any sins, He would have been disqualified to be either our priest or our sacrifice. Because as our priest, He could not come into the presence of God and intercede for us with sin. As our sacrifice he could not go to the cross and die, because God would reject His sacrifice. So, He was entirely free from blame. That is how salvation works, which should be a comforting thought for you because we have been talking about how Jesus is better than the Old Covenant priesthood and this one flushes that out very well. Because it shows you that Jesus is everything a priest was supposed to be in Israel: A priests had to be godly, so, Jesus was godly. A priest had to be accessible, so, Jesus was accessible. A priests had to be undefiled or undistracted by sin, Jesus was that and a priest had to be willing to die, because He loved His people so much, Jesus was that as well. There was no aspect of this office that He did not fulfill completely. So, if you need him today, He will be with you today. If you need him tomorrow, He will be with you tomorrow. If you need Him as your Priest to intercede the day after that, He will be there as your Priest the day after that, because He is perfect in this office.

By the way, this is why you do not need a Roman Catholic priest. And this is why you do not need an Episcopalian one. This is why you do not need a Hindu one. This is why you do not need a Sikh priest. None of that is necessary. You have Christ, that is enough. I will never forget the time I was talking to a lady in the first town I pastored and who was dying of cancer, who came from a Roman Catholic background. She kept telling me, "I just need to see a priest." I am sitting there in front of her. "I just need to see a priest, I just need to see a priest" she kept repeating that, so, finally I asked her why, I said "you can talk to Jesus now. He can be your priest at this moment. If you call on His name and besides that, I promise you, He is better than that other guy." That is what this passage is saying - brings you to one more way the New Covenant is superior to the Old.

Just to review these other ones that mean the first one is that Jesus is your guarantee. Second, He is your intercessor. Thirdly, He is holy because He is everything a priest is supposed to be. The only one in the world like that, by the way, no one else in history that could claim this, Muhammad cannot claim it, Buddha cannot claim it, the Dalai Lama cannot claim it. Only Christ. He is completely unique. And it brings you to one more way it supersedes the Old and that is because in the New Covenant, Jesus did offer Himself up once and for all.

A final way the New Covenant supersedes the Old is because under it, Jesus offered Himself once and for all, which means in it, He became the priest and the victim, He became the offerer and the offering. This really wraps up the passage. Because if you remember, in this covenant, God did not just make a promise to save you. But he laid his life on the line and sealed it with his blood. And that is how this end. I mean, so far, the author has been telling you why your High Priest or New Covenant is greater than what the Jews had. But now he is taking it up a notch to give you one final reason. And that is because our Priest did not just offer a sacrifice to the Father, He became the sacrifice, He did not just bring the bull or lamb or goat for our sins, He brought Himself. Hebrews 10 Verse four, says "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins," they can't do it. No matter how many times you offer them, they will always fall short of it ultimately because you need more than that, to pay for sin and this is what Jesus does in verse 27. Again, it says,

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.

Now, when it says Jesus offered up Himself, that means He did it freely and willingly. There was nothing constraining Him, nothing holding, forcing him to do this. And it means he did it reverently, this was an act of worship was an offering to God. It means he did it violently. You cannot give an offering without killing something. You cannot make a sacrifice without spilling blood, that is what He did at the cross. Not only that, but to emphasize even more, it says He did it once and for all. That phrase is very important, it is the Greek word *ephapax*, which comes as a compound word from *epha*, or a pawn, and *pax* or all it refers to something that comes upon you all at one time, in a single instant. Never needs

to be repeated again, not now, not ever, not in a million years. That is what Christ's death was like because it took care of everything that was needed to save us. His one sacrifice on the Cross paid for all that was needed to cover our sins. When you think about all those covenants I mentioned earlier, you really get a taste of what this is talking about because this means that through His death on the cross, Jesus paid the price for the sins of everyone who would ever believe at any time in history. Because at the cross, Jesus paid for all the sins of Adam. At the cross, He paid for all the sins of Noah. At the cross, He paid for all the sins of Abraham. At the cross, He paid for all the sins of David, because He did not die multiple times for each of those people and He was not crucified over and over again in order to deal with their sins, He did not have to, one death covered at all. The Roman Catholic idea of the mass where Jesus has to come down and be continually crucified every Sunday in the bread and wine is blasphemous for this reason. I mean, if anyone is saved under the Old Covenant, it will come from this one death. If anyone is saved under the New Covenant, it comes from this one death. If anyone is saved in the days of Adam, it comes from the cross. If anyone is saved in the days of Noah, it comes from the cross. And if anyone has saved in your day it comes from the cross. Because God had a very simple plan to save the world, and that is that he offered up Jesus and that was it, there was no other offering like it. Which is what the author goes on to explain in verse 28. He says

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 when it says the law appoints priests who are weak, it doesn't mean physically weak, it just means spiritually weak. It appoints people who are just people, they're sinners like the rest of us. Which is why the old covenant priesthood cannot ultimately save you. But on the contrary, the word of the oath, or the promise of the new covenant that we've been talking about this morning, offers you God's Son, he was made perfect forever. That phrase made perfect, does not imply that Jesus was somehow imperfect, until the promise made Him perfect. The word could actually be translated finished. And the idea is that God's promise allowed Jesus to step into the world and finish the law for us, because he kept all its righteous requirements. Because the way it works is that under the Old Covenant, the law told you to become perfect or finish the commandments. under the New Covenant, Jesus makes you perfect because he finishes them for you. He takes all your sin on Himself at the cross, gives you all of His righteousness. Under the Old Covenant, the law told you to draw near to God under the New Covenant Jesus brought you near. Under the Old Covenant, the law told you to bring a sacrifice, under the New Covenant, Jesus became your sacrifice. Under the Old Covenant, the law told you to see a priest under the new one, Jesus became your priests, but you get the picture, and that there's been a great change in the way God interacts with the world now. Before it was through the law under the Old Covenant and the commandments. Now it's through Christ. And I don't know if you picked up on this, but the passage started off with the word oath. Way back in verse 20. And now it ends with the word oath and verse 28. And that's actually a synonym for the word covenant. You could translate verse 28, something like this, "for the law appointed men as high priests who are weak. But the word of the covenant, which came after the law, appoints a son made perfect forever." And the author places that in here one more time,

again, to remind you, if you're saved this morning, it will be because of one thing and one thing only, and that is because of the word of the covenant. It won't be because you're good enough or smart enough or holy enough, I can't say that enough. It won't be because you've worked hard enough or tried hard enough, or strived hard enough to make it happen, it will be because of Him and that's all. Which is a good way to end this.

It's a comforting thought, your salvation doesn't rest on your shoulders. Eternal life does not depend on your ability to keep and it rests on God's ability. So, if you're worried about losing your salvation today, you shouldn't, it doesn't depend on you. And if you're scared about messing it up, because this world and this country in this nation, they're the falling apart, you don't need to act that way. God is sovereign. nothing falls through the cracks in His Kingdom. And if He said He will save you, He will save you, He always keeps His promises. It was that way with Adam, and Noah, and Abraham, and David, in Israel, it's that way with you. You stand in a line of godly men who have received the promises before you. And the lesson in each of them is the same, and that is that our God is a covenant keeping God. If the story of redemption tells you anything, it is that he is faithful. He has been that way for 1000s of years. He will be that way forevermore.

Next week, we're going to talk about this subject some more in chapter eight, because the author's not done on this topic yet about the covenants. And so please come back for that. And we will talk about that then. But for now, in my studies this week, I came across the time, again of the time, the pastor H.A. Ironside was visiting with a man who told him he wouldn't believe in the promises of God. So, H.A. Ironside said, "would you believe if a saint gave them to you?" And the man said, "sure." He said, "would you believe if an angel gave the promises to you?" And the man said, "yes," again. So, the pastor said, "well, my friend, I have good news and that is that the promises of God didn't come to you just by a saint or an angel, they came to you by the Son of God Himself." So, you have no reason to doubt them and friends, he's right. That's our message for you this morning. You have no reason to doubt the promises.

Let me close in a word of prayer. Heavenly Father, our hearts are so grateful this morning, that we have a God like you who would make promises with falling sinners like us. There's no reason for you to do that. You didn't look down in the future and see that we were wonderful people, nothing like that we were, we were lost fallen souls and yet you've chosen to save us through your grace, and mercy and kindness. Father, we are overwhelmed by that. Oftentimes, we look at human history, and we're so discouraged because it doesn't seem like it's going anywhere, things are so chaotic right now. But it is going somewhere, you are taking it to your glory. You are calling a remnant. And we are so encouraged by that thought, Father. Lord, I pray that this message today would be a way of encouragement to my brothers and sisters in Christ. May it see them, help them see their high priest as seated on that throne, always thinking of them. Lord, we thank you for where Jesus is right now. Because it reminds us that He's preparing a place for us and where He is He will take us to be there also. We look forward to that day. And Father as we go tomorrow and the next day and go out into a lost and broken world help us to

remember it is our job to call sinners to Christ. Someone did that for us, we need to do that for others, so that they can be part of this covenants as well. We trust in your sovereignty and all these things we rest in that we worship and glorify you; Jesus and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.