

## JESUS IS HIGH PRIEST FOREVER

Hebrews 7:1 – 8:13

Key Verse 7:25

„Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.“

This is 4th Lectures among 7 Hebrews Bible Studies. In previous chapters, the author has declared Jesus as the High Priest -The merciful and faithful High Priest; The great High priest. However, to Jewish believers it was unthinkable one. It was against their most important and sacred tradition, the priesthood. According to the Levitical law, Jesus could not be a priest for he was not from the tribe of Levi, nor a descendant of Aaron. “Jesus is High Priest Forever.” To the Jews, this message is a revolutionary truth which will change their life upside down. It will make “The day of Atonement” – one of the sacred day of year – obsolete. It will make such massive and marvelous temple building useless. It will make their regulations and traditions outdated. So, many Jewish believers were stumbling on this truth. To help them, in chapter 7 and 8 the author logically proves “Jesus is High Priest” to be true based on the facts from the Bible. Moreover, he teaches the superiority of the ministry Jesus’ priesthood over the Levitical one. Finally he challenges them to make a decision of faith.

Through this bible study, we may accept the truth “Jesus is our High Priest Forever.” We have such High Priest, Jesus, who is able to save us completely; who guarantees “New Covenant” with the better promises. The word of God may break down the strong hold of sin such as pride, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, doubt and unbelief, so that we may experience Jesus’ saving power that forgives all our sins completely and perfectly forever.

We may put down our sinful-old-self, but live with new identity as a kingdom of priest for our generation!

### I. Jesus is High Priest in the order of Melchizedek

Look at verse 1-10. The author first introduces the mysterious priest Melchizedek to introduce Jesus’ priesthood. Based on the first encounter of him in Genesis 14, the author proves that Jesus is High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. Then, who is “Melchizedek”? He was not an imaginary person, but a real historical person recorded in the Bible. First of all, he was a King and a Priest of God most high. Look at verses 1-2. He was “king of Salem” which means king of peace. His name “Melchizedek” means “king of righteousness” He was also the priest of God most high; the first priest at the on earth mentioned in the Bible. No one served both roles King and Priest at the same time, but Melchizedek.

Secondly, Melchizedek remains a priest forever. Look at verse 3. “Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the son of God, he remains a priest forever.” It means that we cannot trace his human origin for there was no genealogy of Melchizedek. Since priests in Aaron’s family succeeded upon the death of the prior priest, marking the date of its death extremely important. But, Melchizedek had no record of his beginning.

It means he became a Priest of God Most High not by heritage, but God appointed him. Also, he had no record of his death as if he never died, he is declared to be living, so he remains a priest forever. For these facts are from the Bible, no one can deny that Melchizedek is the High Priest of God Most high.

Look at verses 4-10. Here, the author emphasizes that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, and by extension, greater than Levi, a descendant of Abraham. To the Hebrew people, it was shocking that anyone would be greater than Abraham who was the father of the nation Israel. But, the author gathers facts from the Bible again. The first fact is that the great patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth. (2,4,6) It means that Abraham acknowledged him and honored him as God's servant. The other fact is that as the greater person always blessed the lesser person, Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Based on these fact, it is true that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, and thus, greater than Abraham's great-grandson Levi.

Why did the author tells about Melchizedek' priesthood and his greatness over Abraham and Levites? The Jews believed that there was only one priesthood established by the law. However, the author wants them to know that there was another priesthood, Melchizedek's priesthood which was greater or even superior than the Levitical one.

The author established a ground to support his argument "Jesus is High Priest in the order of Melchizedek." How does Melchizedek relate to Jesus' priesthood? Look at verses 11-17. First of all, there was need for a new priesthood because the Levitical priesthood could not attain perfection. Look at verse 11. Here, we need to know the meaning "perfection." It refers to complete reconciliation with God; complete satisfaction of God's holiness and righteousness. When we become perfect, faultless and flawless, we can access to God who is Holy and perfect. In other words, perfection refers to our salvation. This perfection is what we hope for. It is what we really need and want.

However, through "Levitical priesthood" with animal sacrifice, no one was able to obtain the perfection. Therefore, new priesthood which make us perfect should come or be established not on the basis of the law, but on some other way. When it was time for the new priesthood to come, God sent his son Jesus.

In what respect is Jesus' priesthood in the order to Melchizedek? As Melchizedek was king and priest, Jesus was also a king of peace and king of righteousness; and at the same time he was high priests for us. Look at verse 16-17. As he was appointed by God, God appointed Jesus as a Priest with his oath. God declared "You are the priest forever." He had become High Priests not on the basis of regulations, but on the basis of the power of his resurrection from the dead. Since he was raised from the dead, he remains a priest forever Just like Melchizedek. As a result, Jesus was the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

The author said in verse 3 that "Melchizedek resembles the Son of God", not the other way. It actually gives full honor and glory to the Son of God whom Melchizedek resembled. In fact, Jesus is by far greater than Melchizedek who was greater than Abraham and Levites. Jesus is a High priest divinely appointed by God; he remains a priest forever on the basis of his resurrection power. So, Jesus is the high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Now, no one can raise the objection.

## II. The superiority Jesus' priesthood

Then, how is Jesus' priesthood different from the old one? Some key words of this passage answer this question. "Better" "Perfect" "Complete" or "Forever." These words tells the nature of Jesus' priesthood. On contrary, "weak" "useless" "Copy" "shadow" or "fault" tells about the nature of Levitical priesthood. What are the nature of Jesus' priesthood?

Firstly, Jesus, the high priest, brings a better hope by which we draw near to God. Look at

verses 18-19. "The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God." The law helps us to recognize sin as sin, but it had no power to save us from sin or death. The law condemns our sin, but not cleans or forgives the sins. No matter, how hard the Jews tried to keep the law, they fall short of the glory of God. They had to sacrifice animal again and again, hoping that they might be forgiven and free from sin. However, they still remained under the power of sin. Because of shame and guilt, they hid themselves from God just like Adam. Nothing can help us draw near to God.

We truly want to come close to God who is the very source of life. Just as trees come back to life when spring comes after long cold winter, our souls will be revived when we come to God. However, with our filthy garments stained with sins, we cannot come to God. However, let us raise the Lord! In Jesus, we have a better hope to come to God, for Jesus, our high priest wash away all our sins with his own blood. We have a hope to come into God's presence for Jesus take away our filthy clothes, but clothe us with his righteousness. What a wonderful a hope we have in Jesus!

Secondly, Jesus, our high priest, guarantees for us a "better covenant." The "better covenant" refers to the new covenant of Jesus' blood for the forgiveness of sins. It was not like old one which just covered sins temporary by animal's blood. Instead, the blood of Jesus has power to cleans all our sins and makes us holy before God. "There is power in the blood." It cleans our hearts, mind, thought and desires. Jesus, our high priest, guarantees for us this "better covenant" for the forgiveness of sins without fail.

How? Look at verse 20-22. Simply, Jesus' priesthood was established by God's oath. God has sworn that Jesus will be the priest forever. Since God's oath is rooted in his supreme authority and almighty power, this

cannot be reverted nor challenge. Our salvation is guaranteed by God's oath with Jesus. In Christ, we can be sure of our salvation.

Thirdly, Jesus, our high priest, saves us completely. Look at verse 23-25. The priesthood under the law constantly changed, and they were better or worse depending on the priest's character. Such priesthoods were all limited because they all died. According to the early Jewish historian, Josephus, 83 high priests officiated from Aaron to the temple's fall in A.D 70. However, because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Look at verse 24. What does "permanent priesthood" mean? As he lives forever, he serves as our priest forever. This unchanging nature of Jesus' priesthood means that his prayer and his sacrifices he offered for us are also unchanging and permanent; His love, his devotion, and his shepherd heart for us are also unchanging and permanent. As the result of his permanent priesthood, the salvation he gives is also unchanging and permanent. It means he saves us completely.

Look at verse 25. "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." Jesus, our high priest, is able to save us completely. Here, "Completely" means Jesus completely satisfied God's requirement for atonement when he died on the cross for our sins. There is absolutely nothing left undone. Jesus paid full the price our sins once and for all for he offered himself. The salvation we have in Jesus is not just partial nor hopeful nor possible salvation. It is salvation completed. All our sins are removed completely, perfectly forever.

I know that it is hard to believe, so many of sinners will ask back "Really?" Our past sin seems too dark to be forgiven; our sinful habits seems to constantly crop up again and again, laughing at our decision to turn away from sin. My sin of lust and hypocrisy always come back to me. These sinful natures seem to take deep root in my blood and flesh and even my bonds. However, Jesus, my High Priest, saves me completely. Paul also con-

fessed Jesus' amazing grace upon him, saying "where sins abounded, grace abounded much more." (Ro5:20) Jesus saves us completely. This is our assurance we have in Jesus, our high priests. How's this possible? It is because Jesus always lives to intercede for us. Every time we fail, with His nail-pierced hands Jesus pleads with God for our forgiveness! Even at this moment, Jesus pleads for me, saying "father, forgive them for he does not know what he is doing!" Because of Jesus' prayer, I am saved completely.

Fourthly, Jesus, our high priest, meets our need. Look at verse 26-28. What are our needs? We, sinners, need a perfect sacrifice with which cleanse all our sins forever; we need a high priest who is holy, blameless, pure, so that he may come into God's presence and ask for forgiveness on behalf of us. We need a Savior who understands us and look at us with compassion; who teaches us the truth; who gives us strength to fight the spiritual battle and win the victory. Where can we find such a high priest?

Only Jesus meets all our needs. Jesus is the son of God who made perfect forever, who obeyed all the laws; who offered himself for our sins once for all, who was raised from the dead and sit at the right hand of God. This Jesus meets all my need.

Thank God for Jesus, the high priest! This Jesus saves me completely by offering himself. More than 30 years ago, I was a sinner who worshipped Idols; I was a sinner who squandered my life in wild living. However, Jesus led me the bible study and saved me from such meaningless. 20 years ago, I was a sinner who sought a job and money, forgetting his saving grace, Jesus saved me through giving me the words of life "Son your sins are forgiven." 10 years ago, I was a sinner who fall into despaired because of failures of disciple-making. However, Jesus saved me with word of God, "Have faith in God," to challenge the campus mission. 5 years ago, I was a still sinner, but I had made decision to devote my life as a full time servant. It was because his unfailing-saving grace was so amazing. Here I am today, for

Jesus saves me completely. Because of his amazing grace, I am able to serve God's redemptive work. God saves me completely by his unfailing love. This love of Jesus empowers this sinner to grow to be a shepherd and leader for campus students. His saving grace changes our lives.

### III. Jesus, the high priest of New Covenant (8:1-13)

Look at verses 1-2. "The point of what we are saying is this: we do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man." The author summed up the main point of his writing, saying "We do have such a high priest." Yes. We have the priest who is able to save us completely. Then, what about the ministry of Jesus? Jesus, our high priest, serves in the heavenly sanctuary, the true tabernacle where God dwells set up by the Lord.

Look at verse 6. "But in fact, the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one since the new covenant is established on better promise." Jesus' ministry is to mediate the new covenant - established on better promises.

Here the word "Covenant" means an agreement between two parties. As a legal term, Mediators represent two parties. Whenever there are disputes between two parties, we need a mediator who can make a best deal that satisfies both sides. Since each side seek its own interests, it is really hard to bring the agreements and make a legal contract, covenant. Often, failure of negotiation between two parties resulted in strikes or war. The role of the mediator is very important.

Moses was the mediator of the Old Testament between God and man. The old (first) covenant written on stone was given to Moses and the people in the desert after they left Egypt. God made the promises to make Israel 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'

if they obey him fully and keep his covenant.(Ex19:6) What a wonderful covenant it was! So, two parties agreed on the covenant. Then, why do we need a new covenant? Look at verse 7-8. Nothing was wrong with this covenant. However, Israel failed to be faithful to God's covenant. Because of their weakness and inability, they were all going to perish in their sins. It was because this covenant was based on our faithfulness to obey and we failed.

Then, the author teaches about the new covenant which Jesus mediated to us. It is from the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-33. In what way is the new covenant better than the first one?

Firstly, this new covenant is based on God's faithfulness and grace to keep his promises. Since God is faithful and never fails, we can enjoy the better promises that comes with this new covenant.

Secondly, God would write his laws on our mind and hearts. The first covenant was written in stone. But this time, God would write his laws on our minds and our hearts when we simply believe in Jesus. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be born again; we will receive new hearts and become a new creation. We will know the word of God from our heart; obey it and follow it from our hearts. We will love the Lord with all our hearts, minds, and souls. Our relationship with God will be restored and sealed by the blood of Jesus. In the new covenant, God will be our God and we will be the people of God.

Thirdly, this new covenant is that God will forgive all our wickedness and remembers our sins no more. Look at verse 12. This forgiveness is available to everyone based on God's grace alone, without any priests or rituals. This is good news to all because God will no longer remember our sins. What a good news it is! Simply when we accept and believe that Jesus is the Lord; Jesus is the High Priest forever, God forgive all our sins and will not remember our sins forever.

We are truly free forever from the guilt and condemnation of sin, for Jesus, our High priest who sacrifice for our sins once for all when he offered himself. Because Jesus is our high priest, we may boldly approached to God, serve His Redemptive work through 1:1 Bible study and disciple making ministry. For Jesus is our high priest, we can live as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. For Jesus is our high priest who saves us completely, we can live as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Here is the Author's counter punch message for the Hebrew believers. Look at verse 13. "By calling this covenant "new", he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear." The author wants the Audiences to go back to pain topic "Jesus is the great High priest who is able to save us completely by making perfect sacrifice for our sins with himself and who bring the new covenant of God's grace"

What does these mean to Jewish believer? What does this mean to us?

Since Jesus is high priest forever, they do not need go Jerusalem to make another sacrifices any more; They did not need to keep all the rituals or regulations any more; They did not need an earthly high priest to sprinkle animal's blood for their sins any longer. All they need is faith in Jesus alone; All they need is to depend on Jesus alone and lived not by old covenant, but by the new covenant.

Although the old covenant looks beautiful, powerful, it was weak and useless. It worked temporary. But, now it is time to let go of the old system. Instead, they need to hold on to Jesus, High Priest.

"Jesus is the High Priest" What does it mean to us? It means to live by faith in Jesus who saves us completely. Let go our pride, self-righteous, self-confident and judgmental, even self-condemnation and feelings of inferiority. Only one thing we should hold is Jesus' saving Grace! I am always amazed by

Bonn UBF beautiful co-working and life together. How could it be possible? How can I make this happen in NJ? I realize that it is because of God's amazing grace of salvation among them. Because of this saving Grace, German shepherds humbled themselves, put aside all national pride or self-righteousness and worked together with Korean missionaries. Because of his saving Grace, missionaries boldly teach and proclaim the truth, putting down all fear and self-conscious. Because of Jesus grace, young generation listen to the word of God and work together with obedience to the word of God.

Since Jesus is High Priest, the Jewish Christians are not Jewish Christians, but simply Christians who live by the word of God.

Since Jesus is High Priest in our meeting, We all may live as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation; we may put down our sinful-old-self. .

Jesus is the High Priest! Jesus is the Lord. Anyone who accept this truth will experience amazing life-changing power.

Today we have learned that Jesus is our high priest forever, and his high priestly ministry is based on the new covenant sealed in his blood. Jesus became the mediator of God's new covenant through his death on the cross and resurrection. Because Jesus is our high priest, we may boldly serve the disciple-making through our one-to-one Bible study, IBS, and GLEF2022. Jesus' saving grace may change each of us, including the next generation to be a kingdom of priest for the next generation.