

6/21/26 Jesus Lives to Make Intercession for Us *Hebrews 7:11-28*
Pastor Doug Scalise, Brewster Baptist Church

Can you remember a time when you discovered a better way to do something? Perhaps, it was a better way to organize your garage, a better way to cook a meal, or a better way to solve a problem. Once you discovered it, you wondered how you ever managed without it. A few years ago, our friend and BBC staff member, Mary Ormon, kindly brought a meal to our home. Along with the food, she gave us instructions for reheating it. She told us to place another plate or bowl over the plate in the microwave. We had never heard of doing that. It heats food more evenly, keeps moisture in, and prevents splattering. It works much better than using a paper towel, for example. Ever since then, we've used that method, and marvel that there was a better way that we didn't know. Discovering something better changes the way you think and the way you live.

That's what the author of Hebrews is doing in chapter seven, showing us something better — not because the old way was bad, but because God has provided something superior in Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 7 introduces us to a new way to think about the priesthood. In the Bible, Levi was the third son of Jacob and Leah, a great-grandson of Abraham. Levi is the patriarch of the priestly tribe of Israel. While the entire tribe was set apart for religious service, the formal priesthood (*Kohanim*) was founded by Levi's great-grandson, **Aaron**, the brother of Moses, who served as the first High Priest. *Hebrews 7* makes the case that the priesthood of a man named Melchizedek, who's mentioned in *Genesis 14*, is superior to the priesthood of Levi. *Hebrews 7* also says that Jesus is not only our high priest, but our king. In the history of Israel, there was a clear division between the roles of king and priest, so a first century Jew would have found it striking and unusual that one person could be both king and priest. That's why *Hebrews 7* uses both *Psalms 110* and the story of Melchizedek to make the case.

Hebrews 7:11-19, “Now if perfection had been attainable through the levitical priesthood — for the people received the law under this priesthood — what further need would there have been to speak of another priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than one according to the order of Aaron? For when there is a

change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. Now the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. It is even more obvious when another priest arises, resembling Melchizedek, one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but **through the power of an indestructible life**. For it is attested of him, ‘You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.’ There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, **the introduction of a better hope**, through which we approach God.”

Hebrews 7:20-28, “This was confirmed with an oath; for others who became priests took their office without an oath, but this one became a priest with an oath, because of the one who said to him, ‘The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever”’ — accordingly Jesus has also become **the guarantee of a better covenant**. Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but **he holds his priesthood permanently**, because he continues forever. **Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them**. For it was fitting that we should have **such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens**. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did **once for all** when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints **a Son who has been made perfect forever**.”

Throughout Hebrews, the writer repeatedly uses the Greek word **κρείττων** (*kreittōn*), meaning “better,” “superior,” “nobler,” or “more excellent”. It appears about **19 times in the New Testament**, and depending on the translation, **12 or 13 of those references** are in the Book of Hebrews. So, **the Greek word translated as “better,” occurs more times in Hebrews than in the rest of the New Testament**.

Kreittōn is rooted in the Greek word **κράτος** (*kratos*), which denotes physical strength, power, and dominion. When something is described as *kreittōn*, it's not just "nicer" or "improved"; it's stronger, more advantageous, and holds an undeniable, dominant superiority. Hebrews constantly contrasts good things with better things. The old covenant was good. The law was good. The priesthood was good. The sacrifices served an important purpose. But now something better has arrived.

Hebrews tells us that Jesus is better than the angels, better than Moses. Jesus brings a better hope. Jesus mediates a better covenant. Jesus offers a better sacrifice. Jesus provides a better future. The entire message of Hebrews is that Jesus Christ is supreme and sufficient. In *Hebrews 7*, the focus is that **Jesus is our eternal High Priest**. Because He is our High Priest, we're never alone, never forgotten, and never without someone praying for us.

Today, I want us to walk through seven movements in this passage that lead us to the wonderful promise of verse 25: **Jesus always lives to make intercession for us.**

1. A Priesthood That Had to Change

Hebrews 7:12 says, "For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well."

The author begins by asking a question. If the Old Testament priesthood could accomplish everything God intended, why would God promise another priest? If perfection could be achieved through the Levitical priesthood, why would *Psalms 110* speak of a future priest, according to the order of Melchizedek? The answer is that the Levitical system was never intended to be the final answer. The priests offered sacrifices repeatedly because sin remained. They could point people toward God, but they couldn't permanently remove sin. They served an important purpose, but they couldn't bring ultimate perfection. The law itself was holy and good, but it couldn't transform the human heart. The old priesthood was not defective because God made a mistake. It was incomplete because it pointed beyond itself. It was a shadow of something greater to come. When Jesus arrived, God was not revising a plan. God was fulfilling it. The priesthood had to change because a better priest had come.

2. A Priest from Judah

Verse 14 says, “*For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.*”

This would have been startling to Jewish listeners. Priests came from the tribe of Levi. Kings came from the tribe of Judah. The two offices were carefully separated. Yet, Jesus came from Judah, the royal tribe of King David. According to the Old Testament system, Jesus had no legal claim to priestly office. And yet, God declared Him priest. Why? Because Jesus belongs to an entirely different order — the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek appears, briefly, in *Genesis 14*. He is both king and priest. He blesses Abraham. Centuries later, *Psalms 110* declares that the Messiah will be “*a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*” In Jesus, these two offices are united. He is both King and Priest. He rules with authority. He ministers with compassion. He reigns over God’s people. He represents God’s people. What no ordinary Israelite could ever be, Jesus is perfectly. He is the King who intercedes. He is the Priest who reigns.

3. The Power of an Indestructible Life

Verse 16 describes Jesus as one who became priest: “*Not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but **through the power of an indestructible life.***”

What a remarkable phrase. **An indestructible life.** The Levitical priests served for a season. Then they died. Every generation required new priests. Every funeral created a vacancy. No priest could remain forever because death eventually claimed them all. But death could not hold Jesus. The cross was not His defeat. The tomb was not His end. On the third day, He rose victorious.

His resurrection demonstrated the power of an indestructible life. Jesus possesses a life that death, itself, can’t overcome. That means His priesthood never ends. His ministry never expires. His work never ceases. There will never be a day when another priest needs to replace Him. There will never be a vacancy in heaven. There will never be a moment when God’s people are without representation before the Father. The same risen Christ who walked out of the tomb continues His ministry today, which gives us hope.

4. A Better Hope

*Hebrews 7:19 says, “There is, on the other hand, the introduction of **a better hope**, through which we approach God.”*

The key phrase is “*approach God*.” Humanity has struggled with the question – **how can sinful people approach a holy God?** Many people assume the answer is self-improvement. Try harder. Be better. Do more good deeds. Become more religious. Obey the law of God. But while the law could reveal sin, it couldn’t remove it. It could diagnose the disease, but it couldn’t cure it.

Jesus introduces a better hope. Not hope in ourselves. Not hope in our morality. Not hope in our performance. Hope in Jesus.

Because of Christ, we don’t stand at a distance wondering whether God will accept us. We draw near with confidence. We approach God, not because we deserve access, but because Jesus has secured access. This better hope changes everything. Prayer becomes possible. Worship becomes personal. Forgiveness becomes real. Relationship becomes available. We can draw near because Jesus has opened the way to a better covenant.

5. A Better Covenant

Verse 22 says: “*Accordingly Jesus has also become the guarantee of **a better covenant**.*”

A guarantee is someone who stands behind a promise. Jesus is the guarantee of God’s covenant. The old covenant depended upon imperfect people. The people repeatedly failed. The priests repeatedly failed. The system repeatedly revealed human weakness.

The new covenant rests upon Jesus. And Jesus never fails. His righteousness is perfect. His obedience is complete. His sacrifice is sufficient. His promises are secure. The strength of our relationship with God doesn’t ultimately rest upon our ability to hold onto Him. It rests upon His ability to hold onto us. That is good news! Because if our salvation depended entirely upon our consistency, our performance, or our strength, none of us would have much confidence. But our salvation rests upon the faithfulness of Christ. He guarantees what He promises. And what He promises, He fulfills. Which opens the way to a better future.

6. A Better Future: Able to Save Completely

Now, we come to the heart of the passage. Verse 25: ***“Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”***

This may be one of the most encouraging verses in the entire New Testament. Notice what it says. **Jesus is able to save completely.** Some translations say, **“save forever.”** Others say, **“save to the uttermost.”** **The idea is comprehensive and complete salvation.** Jesus doesn’t merely forgive past sins. He saves fully. He saves entirely. He saves permanently. He saves from beginning to end. He saves us from the penalty of sin. He saves us from the power of sin. And one day, He will save us from the presence of sin. Our salvation isn’t partial. It’s complete. And why is Jesus able to save completely?

Because He always lives. And because He always lives, He always intercedes. Think about that. Right now, at this very moment, Jesus is interceding for His people. The risen Christ is praying for you. He’s advocating for you. He’s representing you before the Father. Many Christ followers have an understanding of what Jesus did in the past. We understand the cross. We understand the resurrection. But Hebrews wants us to understand what Jesus is doing **now**. He’s interceding. He’s continuing His priestly ministry. When we’re weak, He intercedes. When we’re tempted, He intercedes. When we fail, He intercedes. When we’re discouraged, He intercedes. When we don’t know what to pray, He intercedes.

What a comfort this truth provides. We’re not alone. We’re not forgotten. We’re continually prayed for. There may be seasons when it feels as though no one understands what we’re carrying. Perhaps, others don’t know our burdens, and maybe we don’t tell them. Perhaps, friends overlook our struggles or have struggles of their own. Perhaps, family members fail to understand. But Jesus knows. And Jesus intercedes. There’s never a moment when His attention wanders. There’s never a moment when He forgets. There’s never a moment when He grows tired of His people. He always lives to make intercession for them. For us. For you. Which makes Jesus the perfect high priest.

7. The Perfect High Priest

Finally, verses 26-28 describe Jesus as: ***“Holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.”***

Every earthly priest had weaknesses. Every priest was a sinner. Every priest needed to offer sacrifice for himself before offering sacrifice for others. Not Jesus. Jesus is holy. Everything about Him is pure. Jesus is blameless. No accusation can stand against Him. Jesus is undefiled. Sin never stained His character. Jesus is exalted. He reigns above all things.

Unlike every other priest, Jesus offered Himself. And He did so once for all. The sacrifices of the old covenant had to be repeated endlessly. Jesus' sacrifice never needs repeating. His work is finished. His offering is sufficient. His victory is complete. That is why verse 28 concludes by describing Him as the Son who has been made perfect forever. Forever. Not temporarily. Not provisionally. Forever.

The message of *Hebrews 7* is not merely that Jesus is a priest. It's that Jesus is **the better, perfect high priest**. The old priesthood had limitations. Jesus has none. The old priests died; Jesus lives forever. The old system pointed toward God; Jesus brings us into God's presence. The old covenant revealed human weakness; the new covenant reveals divine faithfulness. The old sacrifices were repeated; Jesus' sacrifice was once for all. And because He always lives, He always intercedes.

When worship is over, I encourage you to remember *Hebrews 7:25*, ***“Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”***

When you feel weak, remember that Jesus intercedes.

When you feel guilty, remember that Jesus intercedes.

When you feel forgotten, remember that Jesus intercedes.

When you face temptation, remember that Jesus intercedes.

When you wonder whether you can make it through another day, remember that Jesus intercedes.

The risen Christ is not merely a figure from history. He's your living High Priest. He's your advocate. He's your representative. He's your Savior. And He always lives to make intercession for His people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. **What does it mean that Jesus is able to save us “for all time,” or “completely”?** How is Jesus’ salvation different from merely receiving forgiveness for past sins? In what ways does *Hebrews 7:25* give assurance about our present and future relationship with God?
2. **Why is Jesus’ ongoing intercession important?** What comes to mind when you hear that Jesus is actively interceding for you right now? How might your prayer life or confidence before God change if you truly believed this every day?
3. **How does Jesus’ priesthood differ from the Old Testament priesthood described in *Hebrews 7*?** According to verses 11-19 and 23-24, what were the limitations of the Levitical priests? Why is it significant that Jesus holds His priesthood permanently?
4. **What encouragement do you find in verses 26-28 about the character of Jesus?** How do descriptions such as “holy,” “blameless,” and “exalted above the heavens” strengthen your trust in Jesus?
5. **What obstacles tend to keep people from “drawing near to God” (verse 25)?** What practical barriers do you experience personally? How does knowing that Jesus intercedes for you help overcome those barriers?
6. **If Jesus is continually praying and advocating for His people, how should that affect the way we live?** How should it influence our response to temptation, failure, or discouragement? What is one specific area of life where you need to rely more on Christ’s ongoing ministry, rather than your own efforts?