

The True King of Righteousness

Hebrews 7:1-28

Introduction

Who or what are you hoping in this morning for salvation?

Hebrews 7:1-28

1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. 3 He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

4 See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! 5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. 8 In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. 9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, 10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

11 Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, rather than one named after the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 13 For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

15 This becomes even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is witnessed of him,

“You are a priest forever,
after the order of Melchizedek.”

18 For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); but on the other hand, a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.

20 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, 21 but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest forever.””

22 This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

23 The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. 28 For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

Exposition

I. Prelude to the Point (Vss. 1-24)

Without going into exhaustive detail about these verse, let me state the author's point and attempt to show you have these truths are significant for your life. If you recall earlier in this study, we saw that the audience of Hebrews was being tempted to return to Judaism, to return to the law, because of the persecution that they were facing for following Jesus. They were starting to drift but the author was intent on warning them to press on in Christ. In these 24 verses, we find the author addressing the temptation of returning to the Levitical priesthood. Instead of trusting in the priestly work of Jesus, the readers of Hebrews were attempting to turn back to Aaron, and essentially the law. The author's point here is that Jesus' priesthood is better! It is the Melchizidekian priesthood, which is demonstrably greater than the Levitical priesthood. The author shows this by pointing out how Abraham paid alms (or a tithe) to the Priest-King of Salem, the King of Righteousness and Peace, Melchizedek. His point is that the inferior pays gives alms to the superior, and if the Levites are descendants of Abraham, then for Abraham to give alms to Melchizedek, then it proves the he is superior to Levite. The reality, this morning, is that none of you are tempted return to the Levitical priesthood. So how do these verses bear any significance for you today? Well, just like these Jews in the book of Hebrews, you are tempted to place your hope for salvation in things that are inferior to Jesus. You are tempted to place your hope in finances, friendships, family, healthcare, governments, inheritance, wealth, and a laundry list of other things. You fret over these things. You worry over these things. You dedicate the majority of your time to thinking about and working for these things. And, if these things were taken away from you, you would most likely feel like you have "lost it all." We are all tempted to feel this way. We are all tempted to return to the fleeting things of life and attempt to find lasting hope in them.

T.S. - Just like these Jews who were tempted to return to lesser things, we face the same temptations. So, what must we do?

II. The Point (Vss. 25-28)

Here is the most significant point in the whole passage for us this morning – "Jesus is always able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since he always lives to make intercession for them." Let's look at this phrase one piece at a time. We begin with "Jesus is always able to save." There is not a circumstance out of which Jesus cannot save. Nor is there a time on this side of eternity when Jesus is not capable of saving an individual. Jesus is always able to save, and the next phrase tells us the extent of His saving abilities – "to the uttermost." Jesus is always able to save to the uttermost! He not only begins the rescue effort. He completes the rescue effort. He redeems us totally. His salvation is not partial. It is complete. He does not simply rescue you from the quicksand, then set you on your journey in your own strength again. He rescues you and then carries you onto to completion. So, now the question is: Who does Jesus do this for? Who does He save to the uttermost?

The next phrase tells us: “those who draw near to God through Him.” He does not save everyone. He will not save you if you do not “draw near to God through Him.” You must come to God through Jesus! You must come and leave your sin, your self-righteousness, your self-reliance, your good deeds, and your bad deeds. You must leave it all and “draw near to God through Jesus.” If you do not do this, you will not be saved to the uttermost. You do not get to hold on to your sin and receive salvation. Where there is no repentance, there is no rescue. Where there is no death to self, there is not salvation. You come to God through Jesus, or you do not come at all. So how is Jesus able to do this? Why is He able to complete the work of salvation that He began in those who draw near to God through Him? The last phrase tells us: “since He always lives to make intercession for them,” that is, “for those who draw near to God through Him.” The reason why Jesus is able to complete the work that He began in us is because His work on our behalf never ceases. He serves, as verse 16, “by the power of His indestructible life.” The work of Jesus’ priesthood never expires because He never dies! He is a priest forever, which is the point of this whole chapter.

Jesus’ priesthood is superior to the priesthood of all the former Levitical priest because His service was based on better promises under a better covenant that He established by His blood, which He offers up on behalf of all who draw near to God through Him. Jesus intercedes forever for the those who draw near to God through Him.

Conclusion

If the most significant point of this passage for us today is the fact that “Jesus is always able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him, because He always lives to make intercession for them,” then I have to ask the question, “Have you drawn near to God through Jesus? Have you left your sin behind? Have you come to God through Jesus with love, prayer, and faith in Him? If you have not, then He does not intercede for you! But if you have, He will never cease to intercede on your behalf, and He will save you to the uttermost!

Brothers and sisters, do not put your hope in the lesser, the inferior things of this life! More stuff will not make you happy. More security and ease will not bring peace to your troubled and fear-filled soul. What you need more than anything is to draw near to God through Jesus, the true king of righteousness and peace, who always lives to make intercession for His people.