

Hebrews 7:11-28

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.

The priests of the Old Testament had a vital role in the community of the faithful. They were preachers and teachers. They were especially responsible for offering sacrifices for sin and making intercession for sinners. Yet, while they had a vital role, they imperfect men placed into a holy office. They could only do so much, and even their best offerings were but hazy shadows of the perfect sacrifice to come. And when their days were done, they died. Another had to take their place.

What comforting words, however, the writer to the Hebrews writes of our Lord, Christ, then! *“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 to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”*

Our Jesus is risen, risen indeed, to intercede for sinners, for me and for you, all the days of our lives and every day until the Last Day's arrival. And He need not offer sacrifice after

sacrifice. His sacrifice abides and abounds and endures for all. He has been the perfect sacrifice and He is the perfect priest, and so He is able to save us who draw near to Him through faith in the utmost, in fact, He transforms us into sacrifices of gratitude, not in death, but in lives lived for Him who died to redeem us, and not on the altars of the temple, but in the vocations in which we have been placed.

Rejoice, therefore. *“For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 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. 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.”* Amen.