



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: WHO IS JESUS?
TITLE: THE INTERCEDING ONE
SCRIPTURE: HEBREWS 7:23-25
DATE: APRIL 19, 2026

INTRODUCTION

The overall message of Hebrews is that Jesus is better. He is better as God's revelation (1:1-4), He is better than angels (1:4-2:9), He is better than Moses (3:1-19), He is better than Joshua (4:8-10), He provides a better rest (4:1-13), He is a better High Priest (4:14-10:18), He is a better sacrifice for sin (10:1-18), and He offers a better way to live by faith (11:1-40). Admittedly, Hebrews can feel like a complex book, yet its overall message can still be summarized rather simply: Jesus is better.

Our attempt in this lesson is to summarize how Jesus is a better High Priest. To address this topic, the author of Hebrews makes a complex case, drawing from several comparisons and contrasts with the Old Testament order of the priesthood, tabernacle, and sacrifices. The main point is clear: Jesus is better as a High Priest than the Old Testament high priests.

Text

Hebrews 7:24-25

²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost^[b] those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Explanation

Context

The primary role of priests in the Old Testament is to intercede for the people before God. This means that they carry out the duties of the temple so that worship, offerings, and sacrifices can take place. The role of the earthly high priest is summarized in Hebrews 5:1: “For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.”

Hebrews reminds readers that the high priests in the Old Testament come from the tribal line of the Levites. Here are some observations that Hebrews makes about the high priests:

- God appoints Aaron and his descendants to serve as High Priest. They are not self-appointed but clearly chosen by God.
- Each high priest is born into the role. There is no “transfer portal” to the Levites from another tribe, nor can a person from a different Levitical clan serve as high priest.
- They offer sacrifices daily for the people.
- They also offer sacrifices for themselves, since they too are sinners.
- All the high priests die, and after one’s death, another assumes his place of service.
- Their service takes place in the tabernacle/temple.

Jesus, however, is a better High Priest. How is this so? The rest of our lesson seeks to answer that question in seven ways.

Jesus is Better as High Priest

1. Jesus Experienced Life in Every Way that We Do.

Jesus is a better priest because He experiences life like us in all the ways we experience it. Hebrews 2:17–18 reads, “Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Hebrews points out that Jesus becomes a man and dwells among us. Hebrews 2:14 notes that Jesus “shares in flesh and blood” with us. Since Jesus, as High Priest, acts on our behalf before God, it is necessary that He becomes one of us.

2. Jesus Is Without Sin

Jesus is a better High Priest because, while experiencing life as we do—including temptations and trials—He is without sin. Hebrews 4:15 says, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Hebrews observes that the high priests in the Old Testament can also sympathize with us. The difference, of course, is that the earthly high priest also sins. Hebrews 5:2 notes that high priests “can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since [they themselves are] beset with weakness.” In light of their own sin, the high priest must offer sacrifices for his own sin just as he does for the people (Heb. 5:3).

Yet Jesus, as High Priest, does not need a sacrifice for His own sins. He lives a perfect life free from sin. Furthermore, He demonstrates His perfection not only by avoiding sin but also by actively obeying the Father through suffering (Heb. 5:8–9).

3. Jesus Is Appointed by God to be a High Priest in a Better Priestly Order

As a heads up, this third point has extensive explanation in Hebrews and can get fairly complex. Yet still, these truths can give us assurance of our faith and reason to remain steadfast in belief.

Hebrews tells us that in the Old Testament, the high priest office is not self-appointed, but rather chosen by God. Hebrews 5:4 notes, “And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was.” Some of you may remember a few stories in the Old Testament that show this to be true. In Exodus 28–29, God gives instructions to Moses that Aaron and his sons will serve as priests. Included in these chapters are instructions on how they are to be ordained and consecrated for their service. Later, after the tabernacle is completed, Exodus 40:13–15 tells us that Moses obeys God by consecrating them as priests and admitting them into a “perpetual priesthood throughout their generations.”

It is interesting to note that Aaron’s role as high priest is later challenged by a man named Korah, who begins a rebellion against him. Yet, because of his rebellion, God punishes Korah, his family, and his goods by swallowing them up into the earth (Num. 16:31–35). The issue of God choosing Aaron is finally settled when Aaron’s staff buds, revealing before the Israelites whom He is choosing (Num. 17:1–13).

Referring back to Hebrews, God also appoints Jesus as Son to serve as a high priest after the order of an Old Testament figure named Melchizedek. Hebrews 5:5 says, “Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him...”

The quotation concerning Jesus being a priest comes from Psalm 110. We will touch on this Psalm in a moment, but first it is helpful to explain: who is Melchizedek?

Melchizedek appears briefly in Genesis 14:17–24 in an encounter with Abraham. He is identified as the king of Salem and also a priest of God Most High (Gen. 14:18). He blesses Abraham, and in return, Abraham gives him a tenth of everything—essentially a tithe. Melchizedek seemingly appears and disappears rather quickly. Oddly enough, no reference is made to where he comes from or what happens to him afterward. No genealogy is given, and no record of his death is provided.

He is hardly referred to again in the Old Testament except for one other location in Psalm 110 (which is a significant Messianic psalm that prophesies about Jesus).

Quite famously, Psalm 110 begins, “The LORD says to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” This verse is well known and is one of the most quoted verses in the New Testament. One reason it is significant is that David recognizes in the Psalm that the LORD is speaking, not

to David, but to David's Lord—hence, “The LORD says to my Lord.” The reason this is important is that David, as king, has lordship over everyone else, yet in this psalm, he describes how God is speaking to someone whom David recognizes to be greater than himself. The best explanation for whom David is referring to is Jesus.

As the Psalm continues, we see an oath from the LORD: “The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek’” (Psalm 110:4). With this verse, God is saying that the same person who is described as David's Lord is also a priest in a manner similar to Melchizedek. Furthermore, this statement is emphasized by the fact that God vows not to change His mind.

Thus, here is the point that Hebrews makes to show that Jesus is a better high priest—He comes from a better priestly order, that of Melchizedek. Note the observations that Hebrews makes about Melchizedek:

- Melchizedek's name means “king of righteousness.” (7:2)
- Melchizedek is the king of Salem, which means peace. (7:2)
- He is described in Genesis as not having a genealogy, which presumably hints that he has no beginning. (7:3)
- He has no death recorded, which presumably hints that he never dies. (7:3)
- He embodies the rare combination of being both a priest and a king. (7:1)
- Abraham gives a tithe to him, indicating that he is greater than Abraham. (7:4-10).
- He blesses Abraham, also indicating that he is greater than Abraham. (7:7)
- He is a priest before the Levites become priests. (7:9-10)

Thus, in the Old Testament, we have an example of a different kind of priesthood, which is in many ways better than the Levitical priesthood. Melchizedek is better because he is both a king and a priest. Abraham recognizes Melchizedek as greater than himself. And we see a priest who has neither a beginning nor an end recorded. Jesus, then, is also both a King and a Priest. He is greater than Abraham, of course, and He has neither a beginning nor an end. Jesus' resurrection proves that He lives forever.

Thus, in Jesus, we have a better High Priest who will never die, but who serves for us before God for all time.

The reason that all these comparisons between Melchizedek and Jesus matter is to show that Jesus' priesthood is not a disruption in God's plan, but has been

part of the plan from the beginning. Jesus' priesthood is the fulfillment of Scripture, not an abolishment of Scripture. It fulfills Scripture that Jesus is both a King from the line of Judah and one who can serve as a priest, since He is not from the tribe of Levi.

4. God Appoints Jesus as Priest with an Oath.

Admittedly, this point is closely tied to the previous one, but it is worth acknowledging directly. Hebrews explains the importance of an oath. Hebrews 6:17 reads, "For people swear by something greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desires to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guarantees it with an oath." Hebrews goes on to say in verse 18, "...it is impossible for God to lie."

Along this topic, Hebrews makes the observation that the Levitical priesthood is not established by God with an oath. God certainly ordains and chooses the Levitical priesthood, but He never declares that it will last forever. In God's design, the Levitical priesthood is temporary and anticipatory. It is intended to be fulfilled in Jesus. Thus, God never establishes it with an oath declaring that He would never change His mind.

Yet, after the law is given, with the Spirit of God inspiring David, God promises with an oath that one will come to serve as a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 7:20–21 notes, "And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, but this one was made a priest with an oath."

5. Jesus is a Priest Forever

Since Jesus rises from the dead and since God appoints Him with an oath, He serves as our High Priest forever. All former priests die and are then replaced by another. Hebrews 7:23–25 presents another contrast with Jesus and the Levitical priests:

"The former priest 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.”

6. As a Better High Priest Jesus Intercedes for us in Heaven.

This point may seem obvious, but it is worth stressing. The Levitical priesthood serves the Israelites in a tabernacle/temple on earth, but Jesus serves us in heaven. Hebrews 8:1–2 reads, “Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.”

Hebrews goes on to explain that the earthly tabernacle’s structure does not come by random design. When God gives instructions to Moses, His instructions follow a pattern of heavenly realities. Thus, the earthly tabernacle is intended to be a copy, in some ways, of heaven. Hebrews 8:5 mentions, “They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, ‘See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain.’”

Yet, Hebrews explains that while the tabernacle as a whole is designed to provide a way for God to dwell with people, its structure is only able to provide limited access to God. The structure of the tabernacle has two sections. The first section is accessible to priests, and it is called the Holy Place. Included in the first section are the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence. The second section, as Hebrews explains, is called the Most Holy Place. In it, the ark of the covenant rests, which represents the very presence of God.

With these two sections, priests enter the first section, performing their ritual duties. But only the high priest enters the Most Holy Place. Even then, he enters only once a year to offer a sacrifice for his own sins and the sins of the people.

Mentioning two sections, Hebrews draws a conclusion. Hebrews 9:8–9 reads, “By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper.” In other words, the tabernacle’s structure, with the two sections, indicates that people do not have direct access to God. The use of sacrifices in the first section does not grant them access into the Most Holy Place—a barrier still needs to be lifted.

That barrier cannot be fully removed on earth, but only in heaven. Hebrews 9:11–12 says, “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.” So also, Hebrews 9:24 puts it well: “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.”

7. Jesus as High Priest Offers a Better Sacrifice

In addition to all the previous ways Jesus is a better high priest, He also offers a better sacrifice. The Levitical high priest could offer the blood of animals, but Jesus offers himself. Hebrews 10:13–14 stresses the significance of Jesus’ sacrifice for us: “For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” So also, Hebrews 10:11 –12 reads, “And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”

Discussion Questions

- What stands out to you about Jesus’ priesthood the most?
- How does Hebrews help us understand the purpose of the Old Testament tabernacle and priesthood?
- Why is it important that Jesus experienced life “in every respect” like us?
- Why is Jesus’ sinlessness essential for His role as High Priest?
- How might it encourage you that Jesus’ priesthood is permanent and unchanging?
- How can some of the truths about Jesus’ priesthood relate to one searching for assurance of salvation?
- How can some of the truths of Jesus’ priesthood relate to how one prays?
- How can some of these truths of Jesus’ priesthood affect how we approach God in worship?

Conclusions or Applications

JESUS THE INTERCEDING ONE

In conclusion, we want to offer a few applicable thoughts.

1. Jesus intercedes for us on the basis of His own righteous life and blood.

As Jesus intercedes for us before God, He does so on the basis of His own righteous works and His sacrificial blood. When Jesus intercedes for us, He doesn't speak to God weighing your good days and your bad days. He doesn't try to explain to God how your sin is not as bad as others' or that you will promise to do better next time. As Jesus intercedes for us, He presents Himself as acting righteous on your behalf. He declares your sin justly forgiven by His atoning sacrifice. It all depends on Jesus.

2. Jesus intercedes for us concerning all our sin

Jesus saves to the uttermost. Any and all sin can be forgiven by God. Remember that Jesus experienced life in all the ways that you have experienced it—temptations and trials included. And in experiencing life as you have—he was without sin. He achieved a righteousness by not only avoiding sin, but also actively obeying God. He indeed achieved a perfect righteousness so that any and all sins can be forgiven.

3. Jesus intercedes for us for all time

There will never be a time when God steps away from His High Priestly duties. He lives forever to make intercession for the saints. It is comforting to know that at any time of the day and in any circumstance, you can call upon Jesus. He is there to hear your prayers and to extend forgiveness.

4. Jesus intercedes for us with all authority

Jesus' intercession for us comes with the highest of authority. Jesus will never fail in His efforts to intercede for you. He is always successful. Romans 8:33-39 summarizes for us this truth:

³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed

is interceding for us.^[1] ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.