



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 7:20–28

“The Exalted Status of Our High Priest”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we turn again to Thee with thanksgiving, for the word of God. We thank Thee for the way in which it has ministered to us. We reflect, Lord, upon the fact that it is first and foremost a revelation from heaven and, therefore, should have the greatest of significance for us and the greatest of attention on our part to it. We thank Thee for the way in which Thou hast so marvelously set out the divine redemption of the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And, of course, Lord, the thing that we are particularly grateful to Thee for is the fact that Thou didst include us in this great program; bringing us to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the knowledge of the Scriptures. We know that and we surely confess that we have a very limited understanding of the greatness of the word of God and the significance of it for us. But, Lord, we ask that as we apply ourselves to the reading of the text of Scripture and the pondering of its truths that Thou wilt bring us into the knowledge of the divine truth. We need that knowledge; the society of which we are a part needs that knowledge. Our world needs that knowledge desperately. We thank Thee for this great epistle, part of the divine revelation, and again, Lord, we ask that Thou wilt give us an understanding of Thy truth and a responsiveness on our part to what we find in Holy Scripture. May our lives be different as a result of the word of God and if it please Thee, Lord, use us in the magnification of the Son of God, whose we are, whom we serve, and whom we wish to continue to

serve fruitfully. We commit our study this evening to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon each one present.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Well, we're looking at Hebrews chapter 7 in verse 20 through 28, tonight and so if you have your New Testaments with you, turn to Hebrews chapter 7, verse 20, and I'm going to read you verse 20 through 28, and I am reading from the Authorized Version, the King James Version. And the author writes verse 20, remember, he is expounding Psalm 110, and treating the great truth of the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ, in the light of the statement of Psalm 110, "Thou," clearly a reference to the Son from verse 1, "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

Now, he has also said, "The Lord has sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." And so we'll see as we read these verses that he regards that introduction, "The Lord has sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek," as being extremely important. And, in fact, this section is built upon that introduction. Verse 20.

"And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest. For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

Now, incidentally, you can see from this that he regards Psalm 110, as a word spoken by God the Father to God the Son. Notice how he puts it.

"For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, that is, by the one who spoke to the Son, the Father, "Thou art a priest forever, according to the

order of Melchizedek.’ By so much Jesus was made surety of a better testament. And they. [Now, when he says “they” he’s talking about the Old Testament Levitical priests.] And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death. [Incidentally, that’s why there are many members in my family; because my ancestors were not suffered to continue by reason of death. And so that seems that has always provoked a smile with me, because that seems so obvious, but he puts it in the word, nevertheless.] They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. [In other words, he’s not a descendant of a priest. There are no priests that follow him. He is the whole order the Lord Jesus Christ.] This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy. [That’s a word, incidentally, that refers to holiness in the sense of faithfulness to the covenantal obligations, and so he’s speaking of the Son as coming to fulfill a covenant, and he is holy, in that he is faithful to all of the obligations of that covenant, so.] For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity.”

Well, that’s why they were unable to continue by reason of death infirmity. Take a look, infirmity. Well, if you had seen me twenty-five years ago, there’d be quite a difference.

I read something this week, I thought was rather interesting, made by a sports—one man who was prominent in the sports world who said something like this, he was an old man, “Growing up is an option.” What was the other thing? [Laughter] “Old age is mandatory,” or “getting old is mandatory.” “Growing up is optional,” of course, he was playing upon the fact that there are a lot of people that grow up and they don’t really grow up. You know, there are people twenty-five, thirty-

five years of age; they are still children. So that’s what he was talking about. But, anyway, the mandatory part has come and so I, one of these days, I am not going to be suffered to continue by reason of death, if the Lord does not come. So holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, made higher than the heavens and so on. And then, verse 28.

“For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law. [See, again, ‘the word of the oath’ “The Lord has sworn and will not repent.” That’s the word of the oath!] The word of the oath maketh the Son. [Incidentally, there is no article in the original text. So we will say, “maketh a Son,” that is the well-known Son, but such a person as the Son of God, a Son who is perfected. My text has “consecrated,” but the term means perfected.] Perfected for evermore.”

Now, our author has just used one of the great expressions of the Bible that we referred to last week in verse 19. He said, “For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw near to God.” To draw near to God, or to draw nigh to God, as my text has it, this refers to the deepest need of the human soul. And, I asked last week, “Is that your desire? Is that your aim in life? Is that your purpose?” To draw near to God? Because, it’s obvious from reading the Bible that the word of God is not concerned wholly with a person coming into the possession of eternal life. What the Bible talks about is far more than that. The Bible talks about getting converted, of course. It talks about being saved. But it talks about that as the first step on the way to maturity. That’s what the Bible is concerned with. That you, as a believing individual, if you have believed that you not only be saved, but you be saved and grow in the knowledge of our Lord to reach maturity.

I don’t know why it is necessary to make that point, but I really think it is necessary to make it. And, probably, the reason that it is necessary is so much glamour seems to be attached in Christianity to evangelism, preaching the gospel, and getting people saved. But let me tell you

something that the apostle states in Colossians, he says, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, “Whom we preach warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect or mature in Christ Jesus, where unto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” I imagine since you are in an audience like this, coming to study the word of God, you understand that, but the evangelical church often forgets that. And so great stress is made on the preaching of the Gospel and no stress to speak of on growing in the knowledge of the word of God in a significant way.

Now, our author talks about “drawing nigh to God.” Now, following hard upon that is the equally significant, the divine side of it that we might be saved to the utter most. That’s what he says in verse 25, “Wherefore he is able also to saved them to the utter most that come unto God by him.” That is the “draw nigh to God,” seeing “He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

“Saved to the utter most.” What is involved in being saved, according to Scripture? Well, you probably know, as I look out over this audience, most of you have studied the Bible for a long time, and so you understand what is involved in the term “saved.” Salvation is a doctrine, first of all, that you know is peculiar to divine revelation. You do not find salvation taught anywhere else, in the sense in which the Scripture uses that term, in other things. If you want to find out what salvation is, you have to turn to the word of God. You find a whole lot in nature. Marvelous things in the heavens. The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament showeth his handiwork.

You can learn a great deal about God, if you come to Scripture believing in God, just believing in God, and believing in him as the creator, and learn a great deal about the nature of God even from that. You can learn from the lightning, from the storms, from the natural disturbances that, evidently, God is not simply a God who is in all of his activities “good” in the sense that men think of good. But, there is also an aspect of his character that is strong and that may even suggest the idea of judgment, if one listens carefully to what one sees about us. The storms are just as much a part of nature. The lightening, the disasters, the natural disasters which come, ultimately, from the Lord God, are part of the divine revelation of the Lord himself.

In fact, I would like to argue, I'm not going to do it now, but I would like to argue that one could come to the knowledge of the judgment of God by what happens in his creation. If we really study creation, we will understand that there is an aspect of the Lord God in Heaven that is perfectly represented by the doctrine of divine judgment. There are many other wonderful things about God that we can learn from his creation; the beauty of the creation, the usefulness of the creation, and all of the other things that we think about when we think of the magnificent wonder of divine creation. But we should not, of course, forget about those things that are revelations in another way, often overlooked. Fundamentally, when the Bible talks about salvation, it talks about deliverance. That's the fundamental meaning of the word deliverance.

One of the earliest expressions of the idea is found in the book of Exodus, in God's dealing with the children of Israel. And, you'll remember, when Moses was by God given the leadership of the children of Israel, and he brought them out to the Red Sea. And then when Pharaoh and his hosts determined that they were going to follow after them. You remember, how the children of Israel were talking. They were telling Moses, “Weren't there graves enough in Egypt. Did we have to come out here to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?” And, if, “Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptian,’ for it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness?”

Isn't that interesting? That these people are going to experience the great deliverance and I would say their attitude is not the best. Would you? [Laughter] Would you say the same thing? It's not the greatest. And Moses says unto them, “Fear ye not! Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which He will show you today. For the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you shall see them again no more, forever.” Tell Pharaoh goodbye because you'll never see him again. And at the conclusion of their marvelous deliverance, we read in verse 30, “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day, out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.”

Now, deliverance, then, is the idea, right from the beginning, when we speak about a person being saved, we mean he's been delivered, in some way. Now, the Bible goes on to tell us different ways in which salvation takes place. There is deliverance from guilt. This is an accomplished fact for Christians, for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ deliverance from guilt. That's something we have when we say, “I have been saved,” most of the time, that's what we mean by that. We mean we have been delivered from ultimate judgment because Jesus Christ has taken our judgment. It's a term, when we use it in that sense, that's connected with the cross of Christ, and Christians look back to the deliverance that took place when our Lord died upon Calvary's cross, and then, in our own lives we look back to the time when we believed the message concerning that which Christ had done and we have been delivered from our guilt. But, also the term salvation speaks of emancipation from the dominion of sin not simply the guilt of sin but the control, the ruling power that sin exercises in our lives.

Now, that is a continuing process. The first sense of deliverance from guilt is an accomplished fact, when we have believed in Christ. We don't have to go over that again and again. There are, of course, bodies within the professing Christian church that do take that viewpoint. Those that believe that one can lose the salvation, but the Bible, in my opinion, does not teach that. And, I'm sure, in the opinion of most of you in this audience, it does not teach that. And so we think of deliverance from guilt as an accomplished fact, when we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the accomplished ultimate fact is when he died on Calvary's cross.

Deliverance from the dominion of sin is also promised to us and Christians are not under the rule of sin. Paul makes that very plain in chapter 6 of the Epistle to the Romans. It's not something that we possess in the sense, we have it and we never have any disturbances over it or questions about it. But it is, it's something that we experience. It's connected with the living Savior, at the right hand of the throne of God, who engages in that work of delivering us from the dominion sin, constantly, in our lives. If we say we look back to the Cross for deliverance from guilt, we look up to our Lord for deliverance from the power of sin in our lives.

And there is one final sense, of course, and that is the sense of translation from the presence of you and other believers into the presence of the Lord; that’s the future hope that we have that we will be fully delivered. It’s something we anticipate, when we will have the fullness of salvation and enter the presence of the Lord. For those of us who are still living, we hope that that is to be connected with the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for us. Ultimately, it will be connected with that generation that is alive when our Lord does come. They will receive their translation, their deliverance from the presence of sin when our Lord comes. We look on to that.

These three tenses of salvation have been expounded by almost all Bible teachers: the past, the present and the future sense. We find it a number of times in the word of God, itself. One passage that states it, I’ll just read these verses because it seems to state it very succinctly in Titus chapter 2 in verse 11, the Apostle writes, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men.” Verse 12 of Titus 2, “Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Looking,” verse 13, “for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

So the salvation has come but, nevertheless, the experience of deliverance from the power of sin is our experience now, and we look on to the final coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s been illustrated by saying, it’s something like drowning in which an individual is thrashing about in the water and has gone down a couple of times; and someone reaches in and grasps him and effectively saves him, but it’s necessary to bring him to the shore, and so he brings him to the shore and full salvation is reached when he finds himself on the shore. So when we talk about being saved to the uttermost, what is involved in this salvation is deliverance from the guilt of our sin from the dominion of sin and, ultimately, from the presence of sin, itself.

Now, our author is still in meditation on Psalm 110 in verse 4. And here, in these final verses, he develops further the saving ministry of our great Melchizedek High Priest. And I want to emphasize just three aspects of it. In verse 20 through verse 22, he says of the great High Priest that, “He is the surety of a better covenant.” Notice verse 22, “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a

better testament.” Now, he has stated, of course, this is something that is part of God’s oath. “The Lord has sworn and will not repent.”

Now, we’ve been underlining the fact that the Law of Moses speaks of the requirement of obedience; the oath on the part of God represents a purpose to save, through the Lord Jesus Christ. “The Lord has sworn and will not repent, “Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” A priest has to have people to save. That’s his work, is to save. So lying back of our Lord’s statement in Psalm 110 is a purpose of God to save through our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, he is called a surety. As our representative, he satisfies God by his perfect work as the Son of God in heaven and our great High Priest, he is the guarantee that we who have believed in him shall receive that which has been promised to us.

I was in the insurance business for eight years; six years when I was, before I came to theological seminary. I’ve often wondered, why did the Lord put me in the business world for six years, before I ever came to seminary? And then, when I came here and saw the young men who had just graduated from college and had never been in business, that there were a lot of things that could be learned by a person who had to get to work every morning at eight-thirty and get home at five o’clock and work on Saturday morning, too, which we did in those days. And so I’m thankful to God that I did have six years there, then I worked for two more years in the insurance business in Dallas, Texas, while I was going through theological seminary.

Well, I was in the insurance business, and while we did not handle surety bonds, I knew enough about the talk of other people in the business that surety bonds are very important part of our insurance world. A surety bond is something that you buy, which guarantees the fulfillment of certain obligations and usually, the kind of people who are bonded are people who handle the money of the congregation.

For years, Dallas Seminary didn’t have anybody bonded. And when I was serving on the faculty, they were examined by an accrediting agency, and one of the things they said was, “You need

to bond your president and your treasurer.” And all those years, they had served and they never had any trouble. And I often felt like maybe I should have raised my hand when the president was talking about that and say, “Which one did they say, particularly, needed to be bonded? The treasurer or you?” [Laughter] I didn’t get an opportunity to do that. But, anyway, the surety bond is that which guarantees the fulfillment of obligations, if they are not carried out then the insurance company guarantees and pays the debts that may be involved.

Now, when we read here that Jesus was made “a surety” of a better testament, what it means is that he’s the guarantee for the promises that are found in the word of God. Now, it’s very interesting that he is also called a mediator in this book as well. And we have come across that idea and we will see again that idea, as I remember, in the book. And it’s important to recognize that the surety is actually a stronger term than the term mediator. Now, a mediator, of course, is a person who is able to bring two people into fellowship; and in the case of our divine mediator, there is something special about that. He, of course, must be a divine person, in order to represent God; he must be a human person to represent us, and so the mediator in this instance is something that is of great significance. But, normally, the surety is much more important than the mediator.

We have mediators in labor negotiations; but the surety is the one who guarantees the fulfillment of the obligations and so it’s encouraging to read that our Lord Jesus is the surety of a better testament. That is, God has made it certain that all those promises that are found in the New Covenant are going to become the possession of all who have believed, all for whom he stands as surety. That word, incidentally, is the word *egguos* in the Greek text, and it’s a word which is related to the word “to draw near” which is used here in verse 19. So he’s the one who’s near, who guarantees the promises of God for us; He’s the surety of a better testament. That’s the first thing.

Now, he goes on to talk, secondly, about the fact that he’s a savior to the uttermost. It’s a golden chain with three beautiful links when we think of the endless life of the Son of God, his priesthood, and his salvation; because, he’s just stated in verse 16, “Who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” So he is a person who possesses

eternal life, endless life, and now we are told that he is a priest; so he is a priest with endless life.

And, finally, we are told, in verse 25, he is “able to save them to the uttermost,” that come unto God by him.

Now, contrast the priests of Israel; Israel’s priests in the past. Think of Eli, one great illustration of a priest who was unable to carry out the responsibilities that he should have carried out. He didn’t take care of his children as he should have, and as a result, judgment was pronounced by the Lord God upon him as well as upon his family.

In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, he is one who is the perfect priest. Also think of the contrast that might be drawn between this priest and Rome’s priests; because Rome makes great claims to have a priesthood, by which individuals may enter into relationship with God. Who is Rome’s great priest? Well, Rome’s great priest is the Virgin Mary and our Lord Jesus Christ. But the Lord Jesus Christ is not sole in the office of priesthood, but others, as well.

How would you like to have your eternal destiny rest upon someone who is not an eternal person? I wouldn’t like that at all. And so I have no confidence, whatsoever, in the intercession of Mary for the souls of men because she confesses, herself, in Luke chapter 1 that she, too, needed a savior. So she, herself, is not one who lived endlessly, possessed of the eternal life that the Son of God is possessed of and could not effectively serve as priest.

In the case of the Israeliteish priests, they derived their office from their ancestors, ultimately, from the word of God, who started the Levitical priesthood. It is also a priesthood that is not transmitted to their, I shouldn’t say that their priesthood that, is transmitted to their descendents and then, of course, as far as they are concerned, it is interrupted by death. But, in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ, his priesthood is not derived from someone else, it’s not transmitted to someone after him, it’s not interrupted by death, because as our author says in verse 16 again, “He has an endless life.” So we’ll ask the question then, what is the extent of his salvation? The author says, “He’s able to save them to the uttermost.” He’s a savior; how far does he take us?

There are physicians that we all go to and, of course, we love to have a physician who'd be able to take us on through life and care for all of our needs, but we know that that is impossible, for finally those physicians are swept away by death, also. We come, we ask them to help us and then the time comes when we may live long enough to see them swept away, who have been our physicians. How wonderful it is to have a great physician, who's not swept away by death, but we can appeal to at all times and we can expect that he will fully heal us.

We have physicians, too, in the sense that we have a dentist, we have a heart specialist, a cardiologist, we have whatever our particular difficulties may be. Some of us have three or four doctors. Some love to go to doctors. They have six or eight doctors. They just love to go. But, none of them can compare to this one, this great physician that we have, because none of them can fully heal us of the things that are wrong with us. Only our Lord Jesus Christ can do that. He can save us from the uttermost of guilt; he saves us from the edge of the pit. He can save us from the uttermost of rejection.

It's very interesting that people can sit in a church and they can hear a thousand sermons, they can hear a thousand prayers by the preacher and others, they can attend a thousand Sunday schools, and yet be lost. But then, at a particular point in time, when God acts in his sovereignty and through the Holy Spirit calls them to him, they come.

He saves from the uttermost of despair. We do not need, if we are following the teaching of the word of God, we do not need to call some agency to help us when we are plunged into despair. Despair is the experiences of life, but we have a great High Priest in heaven, to whom we may appeal and expect to find relief from him. He saves us from the uttermost of temptation and temptation comes to all of us and it is all the temptations are of all kinds. They are financial, they are sexual, they are medical, they are personal. There are all kinds of temptations. You know about them as well as I know about them. But the Lord Jesus is able to save to the uttermost, those that come unto God by him. And when the temptations come, the first step that we would like to say that we will make is that we will turn immediately to our Lord Jesus Christ. He saves us from the uttermost of

the infirmities of life and many of us do have those infirmities. And some of us have them from the time that we are born. It's very helpful to remember that the things that happen to us are things that come to us within the sovereign will of God.

There's a little story that I have in my notes of a visitor at a school for the deaf and dumb was writing questions on the blackboard for the children. He was there to help them. “By and by he wrote this sentence, ‘Why has God made me to hear and speak, and made you deaf and dumb?’” And the author who tells the story, I don't have his name said, “The awful sentence fell upon the little ones like a fierce blow in the face. They sat palsied before that dreadful, why?” And then a little girl arose. Her lip was trembling. Her eyes were swimming with tears. Straight to the board she walked and picking up the crayon, she wrote with firm hand these wonderful words, ‘Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.’” What a magnificent thing. “This particular reply, “reaches up, lays hold of an eternal truth,” the author says, “upon which the maturest believer as well as the youngest child of God may alike securely rest, the truth that God is your Father.” Not only the truth that God is our Father, but he is our Father and sovereignly controls all of the experiences of our lives. Isn't that marvelous? Isn't it marvelous in the experiences of life to know that this has come to me through my loving Father's hands? He saves to the uttermost, then, from infirmities. And, ultimately, of course, he saves from the uttermost of death. Salvation, past, present, future, the uttermost of human guilt, hopelessness evermore of the human experience, the meeting of our needs.

Now, the author, in verse 25, speaking about this, talks about the object of his salvation. Notice, he says, “He saves them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” No limitation of rank. No limitation of state. No limitation of sect. Baptists may come. Presbyterians may come. Jehovah's Witnesses may come. And whoever may come, “He saves to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him.” Come! Clarence Edward MaCartney called that “God's favorite word.” Come! The word that was spoken to Noah and to his family, as they went into the ark, in the physical sense. The word that was spoken to Bartimeus. The word that was spoken by John as he

concluded his great Book of revelation. God’s favorite word. Come unto him through the Lord Jesus Christ. He’s talking about coming in the sense of really coming. He’s not talking about agreeing with a doctrinal statement of a church, like the general confession of the Anglican Church. He’s not saying the person who just says, “Yes, that’s my confession.” But this is a person coming to the Lord. “He saves to the uttermost those that come unto the God through Him.” Now, notice, it’s “through Him.” It’s not through our good works. It’s through Him that we come to God. The Lord Jesus is the only Savior. We’ve said that so many times and you know it, you’ve heard it so many times, you’ve read it so many times in the Bible, but it’s true. “I am the door,” Jesus said. There are not a lot of doors, there is one door. There are not many different ways to the Lord God, as so frequently is said.

I just read in a national publication, just today, of someone who is expatiating on something that they didn’t really know anything about, in which they said that simple fact, that the door there are many ways into the knowledge of the Lord God. It’s not true. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Now, there is an interesting thing that he says at the end of this verse, since “He ever lives to make intercession for them.” “Since,” this is why he saves to the uttermost; because he is a total priest and still observes his priestly ministry.

The priestly ministry involves four things. I’ll just mention the two; it involves first, a satisfaction for sins. It involved the sacrifice that was made on Calvary’s cross. Then it involves constant intercession in heaven. So as we would put it, it’s the satisfaction of his death on Calvary’s cross, the constant intercession of his prayer in heaven, as our great High Priest. In fact, that’s the way he puts it. “Seeing that he ever goes on living to be making intercession for us.” It’s a continual work. Remember, too, that the priest, who offered the sacrifice, offered the sacrifice for Israel. He did not offer the sacrifice for everybody. He offered the sacrifice for everybody in Israel. When he carried out his work, he had the names of the children of Israel upon his breastplate. So he served them, by the sacrifice of the great Day of Atonement, by the intercession pictured by entrance into

the second veil and the sprinkling of the blood on the Mercy Seat. So the Lord Jesus carries out the work of intercession, which is the completion of his work of satisfaction. Completion not in the sense that the work of satisfaction was not finished; but in the value of that, he continues his intercessory work in heaven.

I know, if you would just think for a moment, we don't have time to talk about this in detail but if you just think for a moment, you might ask a question of your Bible teacher, who is talking about the fact that Jesus Christ, when he died on Calvary's cross in his saving work, covered our past, our present, and our future sins. Have we not heard Bible teachers say that? Have not we Bible teachers said that many times that Christ's death pays for our past, present and future sins.

What then is the need for a high priest in heaven to make intercession for us then? Why? What's the necessity? Well, let me try to help you. I think you need help because I needed help. I remember the first time that came to my mind. Why? Why does our Lord continue to make intercession? If the sacrifice covered every sin, past, present, and future, what's the point of constant intercession? Well, let me put it very simply. Maybe, later on, we can deal with it in more detail. The things that the Lord Jesus Christ does are done by virtue of the arrangement that he and the Father and the Spirit entered into eternally. The Father to do certain aspects of the saving work; the Son to do certain aspects of the saving work; the Holy Spirit to do certain aspects of the saving work. In other words, the saving work of our Lord is a covenantal arrangement. Now, let me show you just if you'll just think for a moment, you'll see that not everything becomes ours the moment that we believe.

How many of you in this audience are believers? We'll just quickly raise your hands? You don't look like believers to me. The Bible says that believers are going to have a new body. Their body is like the Lord Jesus Christ's body. Those who believe in him. You don't appear to have that body. Some of you, I've seen go down over the years. You don't look as well as you looked five years ago. [Laughter] Martha and I were talking about it just a little before we came here. We know we don't. And as far as twenty-five years ago, and some of you know me from twenty-five years ago,

you know, as I've said often, I was pretty thin but I am not now. Because, you see, all of the things that are won by Christ on Calvary's cross are given to us, according to the arrangements between the persons of the Trinity. And in the arrangements of the persons of the Trinity, the various benefits we have are not all given at once. They are given according to his specific will. And so why do we need a great High Priest? Because it's part of the arrangement between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that the Son should pray when we have sinned and request of the Father, according to the covenant, the forgiveness that he, himself, has won by what he obtained on Calvary's cross in his sacrifice. So he carries on that constant ministry of praying for us and doling out, what some of the old Reformed men used to call about daily forgivenesses, daily. Well, I've forgotten the exact term on the spur of the moment what they used. But, these daily deposits of salvation that's why we have a great High Priest who continues in his work in heaven. So he's able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him, “since he ever lives to make intercession for them.”

Isn't that marvelous to think about it! That my daily life is a personal, a personal concern of the Lord Jesus in heaven, at this very moment. That's what we have when we have such a High Priest.

Now, finally, because of time, we read in verse 26 through verse 28, that he is not only a surety, not only a savior, but he is a perfected son, and that has significance for us, also. “For such an high priest. Notice the “for.” This explains why the preceding is so significant. It gives us an explanation of it. “For such an high priest became us, who is holy,” true to the covenantal obligations *hosios* “harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;” that is, he has proceeded into the heavens at the right hand of the throne of God. He does not need daily, “as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once.” Once and for all! That adverb signifies later on, we have it, once for all, “when he offered up himself.”

Now, to conclude, in a sense, this is a conclusion of the chapter, “For the law.” What does he mean by the law? The Mosaic Law! The Mosaic Law “maketh men high priests which have

infirmity.” From Aaron down through all of the high priests, there were eighty-three of them, I think, that are known to the Israelites eighty-three of the high priests, all of them have infirmity. And they don’t even, of course, there’s no one today who is a Kohen. There are lots of Cohens, Jewish people by the name of priest. That’s what that term means, incidentally. If you see a person who is named Abraham Cohen, that means Abraham the Priest. But the priest is unknown today because our Lord Jesus is the priest, he’s the priest today. And so those high priests had infirmity. They’ve all passed off the scene from Aaron on through to the eighty-third. They are all gone. So “The law maketh men high priests which have infirmity.” That’s why they can never save us. You cannot be saved by someone who, himself, is afflicted with infirmity. I couldn’t save you. There are people who talk of preachers in that way. “He saved me.” I’ve had them even speak to me that way. “He saved me.” Of course, what they really mean is, “He preached the Gospel by which I was saved.” The Apostle Paul talked about the fact that he, by some means, might that he by all means might save some, but what he, of course, means is that he might preach the Gospel and they might be saved through his preaching. But, these high priests cannot save.

Second, “But the word of the oath.” You see how the Mosaic Law is set over against Psalm 110. “The word of the oath.” The word of the oath, “The Lord has sworn and will not repent, ‘Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek,’” which was since the Law. What does that tell us? Remember? The fact that a priest is announced after the giving of the Mosaic Law, who is possessed of endless life, means that the old priesthood, Levitical priesthood, would one day be done away with.

If you are ever speaking to a Jewish person, this is one of the great chapters that one might use because Psalm 110, itself, tells us that the Levitical priesthood is one day to pass off the scene. “But the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh a Son, who is consecrated for evermore.” So over against the Law is the word of the oath; over against the infirmity of the priests of the Old Testament is a Son! A Son! Capitalized in my text. A Son! That is, a person who has divine nature. A Son! The one of whom the author speaks in the beginning of his great epistle.

“God has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who being the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This Son! This is that which the word of the oath constitutes a priest. And then, it is stated, “who is consecrated for evermore.” So the Law is over against the oath, men as over against the Son; infirmity as over against consecrated forever, absolutely and efficacious, and eternally suited to the work of priesthood, and he serves us forever. This exalted priest, faithful to the covenant obligations, we have in heaven.

There are, as you know, reading through the Epistle to the Hebrews, other “ables” in this book. We have one in verse twenty-five, here, “Wherefore, he is able to save them to the uttermost.” Back in chapter 2 in verse 18, the author used the expression, “For in that He Himself suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” And then in chapter 4 in verse 15, he had said, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points like as we are, yet without sin.” And, again, that’s the sense of that particular text. So this is one of the greatest of them, because it says that “He is able to save to the uttermost.” The complete work, God brings through all hindrances to the experience of the Glory of God, the person who has believed in Christ.

Back in chapter 2 in verse 10, he wrote, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” That’s the work of the great Priest. He it is, to bring you ultimately to glory.

I think, I mentioned to you, some of you were not here, but I mentioned to you that years ago, when I was in the insurance business in Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer came to Birmingham for a weekend of meetings. He spoke on a Friday night, a Saturday morning, a Saturday night, a Sunday morning and a Sunday night, and I went to hear him. I had been told by my Presbyterian friend that I should go to a Presbyterian seminary. And he knew Dr. Chafer pretty well. And he said the reason that you shouldn’t go to Dallas Seminary is because Dr. Chafer is an old man.

And he can't give you anything, because he's already an old man. He was seventy-two years of age. I didn't debate that point because Dr. Chafer, of course, was an old man. But, unfortunately, for him and fortunately for me, I had heard Dr. Chafer in the series of meetings. And I had heard him, one, two, three, four, five times. And I knew from listening to him that he had a lot to say that I would profit from and so I came out to Dallas Seminary. But, I remember that one of his sermons was on Hebrews 2:10, which he entitled, “Populating Heaven.” And, listen to the text again, “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory.” That's populating heaven. “To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Well, what do we say to this magnificent revelation? Our response, it seems to me, is very plain, very clear, know Him as a perfected priest. Believe he is at the right hand of the throne of God for us! Yield to Him! Turn over to him and to his working all of the problems of our lives all of the experiences of our lives and expect him to produce in us the supernatural life that these texts seem so obviously to set forth. Christians are to live a supernatural life and that is done through the gift of faith.

Adolph Saffer, the Jewish believer, said, “Faith is the echo of the word of God in the soul of man. And if, by God's grace, we keep the promises of the word of God before us; and as the experiences of life unfold and all of us have different experiences if, as they unfold, we take that as an opportunity to believe what Scripture says about the presence of the Lord in our lives and his power in our lives, we'll discover in a personal way what it is to have a great High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek.

May God help us all to have that experience!

Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy word and we thank Thee for these marvelous promises; how great they are, how wonderful it is to have such a priest. And we thank Thee, too, for the covenant, which sets forth so plainly the blessings that we may expect; and as we turn to the

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study of the New Covenant, give us understanding and enable us, Lord, to respond in the way of genuine believing faith.

For Christ's sake. Amen.