The Supremacy of The Son of God

Studies in Hebrews

29) Superior High Priest (part 4) Heb. 7:25

**Hebrews 7:23-25 Also** there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore, He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

**Outlines:**

A. Christ is **Superior to the Prophets** (1:1-3)

B. Christ is **Superior to the Angels** (1:4–2:18)

C. Christ is **Superior to Moses** (3:1–4:16)

            D. Christ is **Superior to Aaron** (5:1-10:18)

1. **Superior High Priest** (5:1-7-28)

a. The Priesthood of Aaron vs Christ (5:1-10)

Third Warning: Don’t Degenerate (5:11–6:20)

b. Christ is a superior high priest in comparison to Aaron’s (7:1-28)

1) Because Christ’s priesthood is of a greater order 1-10

- Melchizedek is a type of Christ 1-3

- Melchizedek greater than Aaron 4-10

2) Christ’s priesthood of a different order 11-19669

- The insufficiency of the levitical priesthood v11-12

-  A better High priest is announced v13-17

\*  negatively: Not like Aaron 13-14

\*  Positively:  Like Melchizedek 15-17

- The sufficiency of the new priesthood 18-19

3) Superior because of the divine oath 20-22

4) Superior because of its permanence 23-25

5) Superior because of who Jesus is 26-28

2. **Superior Priesthood** (8:1-10:18)

In vv 23–24 the main emphasis appears to rest on the contrast between the “many” and the “one”: οἱ μὲν πλείονες … ὁ δέ, “on the one hand these many … but on the other hand that one.” The fact that there were many priests under the Levitical arrangement is important to the writer’s argument. In Hebrews multiplicity signifies incompleteness, imperfection, and inconclusiveness (e.g., 1:1 many messengers vs one messenger; 9:24-28 many entrances to the holy of holies vs one entrance; 10:1–4 many sacrifices vs one sacrifice).670

In this section, the author of Hebrews is elaborating on the word “forever” from Psalm 110:4 “the Lord has sworn and shall not relent, you are a high priest forever on the order of Melchizedek”

We will pursue this passage differently. We will start with this passage but we will move on to the broader scripture’s teaching in the intercessory ministry of Christ:

Introduction:

The most eloquent symbols of the intercessory function of the high priest are found in the prescriptions for the sacerdotal garments that Aaron was to wear. In the shoulder-pieces of the ephod two onyx stones were set on which the names of the sons of Israel were engraved. These stones are designated “stones of remembrance,” because Aaron bore “their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for remembrance.” And attached in front to the two shoulder-pieces of the ephod was the breastpiece in which were set twelve precious stones, in four rows of three, also engraved with the names of the twelve sons of Israel; so that Aaron bore “the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment upon his heart” when he went into the sanctuary, “to bring them to continual remembrance before the LORD (Exod 28:6–12; 39:1–14). Thus the people of God were carried by name into the divine presence, supported, as it were, in their weakness on the strong shoulders of their high priest, and bound closely to his loving and compassionate heart. Their high priest was their remembrancer.

This is a beautiful picture of the intercessory ministry of Christ:

1- He who is the Good Shepherd knows His own sheep by name (John 10:3, 13). It is by name that as High Priest He intercedes for them in the heavenly sanctuary, supporting them with His victorious strength and ceaselessly surrounding them with His love.

2- The OT high priest has the name close to his loving and compassionate heart. Similarly “ that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God” Hebrews 2:17 and “we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are,”  Hebrews 4:15

3- The OT high priest carried the names on his strong shoulder (cf. Isaiah 9:5 the government will be upon His shoulder.) Similarly “For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.” Hebrews 2:16; and because he is our great high priest, we “ may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16671

Jesus started his intercessory ministry when he was here on earth as we see in John 17; The author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus entered into heaven “for us” Hebrews 6:20

We will look into 7 ways Jesus intercedes for us:

**1- Jesus intercedes for us eternally:**

The is the point of Hebrews 7:25. Because Jesus lives forever, there will be no time that we won’t be covered by his intercession.

The choice of the infinitive μένειν, “to continue,” appears to be theologically significant. In the LXX μένειν signifies God’s continuing life in contrast to limited human existence (e.g., θεὸς μένων καὶ ζῶν εἰς γενεὰς γενεῶν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος, “God continuing and living from generation to generation forever,” Dan 6:27 LXX). In v 24*a* μένειν, together with εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, “forever,” recalls the striking declaration concerning Melchizedek in 7:3*d* (“he continues as priest without interruption”). What is true of Melchizedek in a literary and symbolic way attains its definitive realization in the priest of the new covenant. The predication “he continues forever” implies Christ’s participation in the life of God672.

“he has an unchangeable priesthood” In v 16 the writer had declared that Christ was a priest “by virtue of the power of an indestructible life.” He now provides a further explanation of that statement. Because he continues forever, he has a priesthood that is ἀπαράβατον, “permanent”. In contrast to the Levitical priests, whose ministries were continually disrupted by death, there is no temporal limitation to the ministry of a priest who lives forever.673

**2- Jesus intercedes for us salvifically:**

Jesus able “to save to the utmost” because of his eternal intercession.  It is generally acknowledged that sinners could not be saved without the death of Christ; but that believers could not be saved without the life of Christ following it, is not so much considered.”674 Paul told us in Rom 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

The present tense of to save σῴζειν reflects the current experience of the community and suggests that Jesus’ support is available at each critical moment. He has a sustained interest in the welfare of his people. The perfection and eternity of the salvation he mediates is guaranteed by the unassailable character of his priesthood.675

In v 25 he specifies the further benefit of Christ’s eternal priesthood that he is able to save εἰς τὸ παντελές, “absolutely”. Faith and hope are solidified through an awareness of the finality and duration of Christ’s priestly ministry on behalf of his people676.

“**Who will be the accuser of God’s chosen ones?”** asks St. Paul. “**Will it be God himself? No, He it is who pronounces acquittal. Who will be the judge to condemn? Will it be Christ—he who died, and, more than that, was raised from the dead—who is at God’s right hand? No, he it is who pleads our cause”** (Rom 8:33–34, NEB margin; cf. Phillips: “Who would dare to accuse us, whom God has chosen? The judge himself has declared us free from sin. Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us,” i.e. “intercedes for us,” RSV). When the Christian falls into sin, Jesus Christ is still his righteousness, for it is still in Him, and not to the smallest degree in ourselves, that we are justified before God.677

**3- Jesus intercedes for us exclusively:**

Jesus intercedes for those who come to God “through him.” Jesus isn’t interceding for the world. Jesus intercedes exclusively for those who come to God through him because there is no other way to God except through him. 1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”

**4- Jesus intercedes for us compassionately:**

As we have seen, the OT high priest had the names of the tribes close to his heart. Jesus as our high priest have been like us in every way to be a “merciful high priest”

**5- Jesus intercedes for us powerfully:**

As we have seen, the OT high priest carried the names on his shoulder. Jesus doesn’t just sympathize, but he is able to “give aid” and we approach him we will “obtain mercy and  find grace to help in the time of need”

**6- Jesus intercedes for us defensively:**

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Greek word for advocate is παράκλητος paraklētos lit., "called to one's side," i.e., to one's aid is primarily a verbal adjective, and suggests the capability or adaptability for giving aid. It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1Jo 2:1, of the Lord Jesus. In the widest sense, it signifies a "succorer, comforter." Christ was this to His disciples, by the implication of His word "another (allos, "another of the same sort," not heteros, "different") Comforter," when speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jhn 14:16. In Jhn 14:26; 15:26; 16:7 He calls Him "the Comforter." "Comforter" or "Consoler" corresponds to the name "Menahem," given by the Hebrews to the Messiah.678

**7- Jesus intercedes for us proactively:**

Jesus didn’t wait for the time of temptation for Peter. He assures Simon Peter as the time of his testing approaches: “I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again [as the Master’s intercession ensures that He will], strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:31–32).679