

Jesus – Our High Priest – Hebrews 7:23-28

Our text for this morning is the Epistle reading from **Hebrews 7 concerning Jesus as our High Priest.**

When Hebrews was written, it was during the **persecution of the Christians in Rome after the burning of Rome** which was blamed on Christians, and many scholars agree that this was a **letter of encouragement** to the **Jewish-Christians** being persecuted who were **considering returning to Judaism** which was a state approved religion.

For many years, it was assumed that the epistle was written by Paul, but later scholarship deems it **famously anonymous.**

The salutation in **Hebrews 13:24 – those from Italy greet you** indicates that it is being written to Christians in Italy, and **Rome would be the place where Jewish Christians would be found, and it is profoundly directed to Jewish Christians.**

Hebrews is not a **catholic/general epistle** but rather explains the transformation from the **Old Covenant of the Law**

to the **New Covenant of grace through the Blood of Jesus Christ.**

During Paul's time in Rome between **61 and 63 AD**, the **seven Jewish** synagogues became divided. Three of them became **Jewish Christian congregations and it is to these Churches that Hebrews is directed.**

Nevertheless, it must have been written **prior to 70 AD** because the destruction of the Temple is never mentioned. It did however **prepare the Jews for its destruction.**

I The **overriding emphasis of Hebrews is that Jesus Christ is superior to all that Judaism held dear:**

- **Prophets**
- **Angels** – who had given the Law to Moses
- **Moses**
- **Tabernacle** – a pattern for the Temple
- **Law**
- **Levitical Priesthood of Aaron (Moses' brother)**

II Now we arrive at the **center of the argument for the Jewish Christians to remain Christians and not return to Judaism: Jesus Christ is the true, immutable, eternal High Priest.**

A The discussion of Jesus as **High Priest began in Chapter 4** and in **Chapter 5** accents the fact that **He is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**

B The priesthood established through **Aaron was a Levitical Priesthood**; i.e., only members of the tribe of Levi were to be priests. **Jesus**, however, was of the tribe of **Judah!**

C Nevertheless, at least **600 years before Moses** and Aaron, as **Abraham** was returning from a war, he passed **Salem** which would later become Jerusalem, and the **King of Salem** who was also a **Priest named Melchizedek** met him, gave him and his men bread and wine, blessed him, and Abraham gave him **one-tenth of all the wealth he had acquired from the defeat of the kings from what would today be Syria, Iraq and Iran.**

III Melchizedek is a mysterious figure described in Hebrews 7 as **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.**

A What I am about to say is **not Anglican doctrine** and it certainly is **not Lutheran** doctrine because they reject this interpretation, but I believe that Melchizedek was the **pre-incarnate Christ.**

B **Genesis 14** describes him as **King of Righteousness and King of Peace.**

C These names also **refer to our Lord Christ.**

IV In **Psalm 110**, **David prophesied** that **the Messiah** would be a **Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek** which was **1000 years** later than **Genesis 14**, and then Hebrews is **another 1000 years** later indicating the **Holy Spirit** correlated what appears to be incidental episodes **with an overarching unanimity** through three Biblical writers.

V Lastly, I come to the text for today which speaks of Jesus:

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 those who approach God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them.

VI Paul concurred in **Romans 8:34**:

It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

VII The real **clincher** comes in our text from **Hebrews 7, vs. 27**:

Unlike the other High Priests, Jesus has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this He did once for all when he offered Himself.

VIII The animal sacrifices of the priests of the First Testament were **types pointing to the ultimate Sacrifice for the sins of the world**: Jesus, the Christ and only Son of God.

- IX Since we are near **Halloween**, I propose an analogy.
- X We come – as it were – to the **gate of Heaven like beggars with our bags** – not unlike children on Halloween night.
- XI We stand before the gate **clothed with the righteousness of Christ** – not unlike a child at Halloween clothed in a sheet.
- XII **We hope that the One before whom we stand does not know that we have no clothing of our own**, for we are naked underneath Christ's covering – nor unlike Adam and Eve.
- XIII We have nothing to offer the One who stands inside the gate.
- XIV **All we bear in our hands is our empty bag.**
- XV And amazingly we find that the **gate stands open.**
- XVI **Nothing bars our entrance.**

XVII We hear a familiar voice from the throne within the gate: **Come My child; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you by My Father.**

XVIII **And into our bag is placed a crown – the crown of life eternal** given by Him who is the **eternal High Priest** – the One who has **interceded for us all our lives.**