

Permanent, Perfect & Powerful - the High Priest We Really Need

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Date: 17 November 2019

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] Well, we're going to turn to our Bibles and read together now, and we're going to read in two places. You'll see we're back into Hebrews chapter 7, so look that up.

That's page 1004, and we're going to read very briefly, first of all, in the book of Genesis, and I think that's page 10 if you have one of the church Bibles, and hopefully it'll be obvious why.

So, first of all, reading Genesis chapter 14 at verse 17, and then we'll read together the whole of Hebrews chapter 7.

Here we are way back in the days, the early days of Abraham, and his first foray into the land, and Genesis 14 verse 17, after Abraham's return from the battles that the rest of the chapter telling about from the defeat of Chedorlamer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the valley of Shaveh, that is, the king's valley.

And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abraham by God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.

[1 : 29] And Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. Well, let's turn forward now to Hebrews chapter 7, and I'll read in just from the last verse of chapter 6, where we're told that Jesus has gone ahead of us into the heavens as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever like Melchizedek.

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. And to him, Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything.

He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, Melchizedek, king of righteousness. And then he's also king of Salem.

That is, king of peace, Salem, shalom. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.

But, literally, he was made to resemble the Son of God and continues as a priest forever. See how great this man was.

[2 : 50] To whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the spoils. Those descendants of Levi, that's the priests who received the priestly office, they have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers.

Though these also are descended from Abraham. But this man, who does not have his descent from them, received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.

It's beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case, tithes are received by mortal men. But in the other case, by one of whom it's testified that he lives.

One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham. But he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

Now, if perfection, fulfillment, had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, concerning these things, our translation is a little clunky here.

[4 : 04] Let me read it slightly differently. If perfection or fulfillment had been attained through the Levitical priesthood, concerning which the people received regulations in the law, what further need would there have been for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, or just better like Melchizedek, rather than the one named like Aaron?

For when there's a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. For the one of whom these things are spoken belong to another tribe, from which no one has ever

served at the altar.

For it's evident that our Lord was descended from Judah. And in connection with that tribe, Moses said nothing about priests. This became even more evident when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who's become a priest not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.

For it's witnessed of him. You are a priest forever, like Melchizedek. So on the one hand, a former commandment is now set aside because of its weakness and uselessness.

The law made nothing perfect. But on the other hand, a better hope is introduced through which we now draw near to God.

[5 : 39] And it was not without an oath. Those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath. 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. And this makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. The former priests, you see, 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.

For it was indeed fitting. Better, it was precisely appropriate that we should have such a high priest that is 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.

[7 : 06] For the law, that is the law of Moses, the old covenant, the Mosaic covenant, appointed 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. And may God help us to understand and take in this great message of his holy word. Do turn with me then, if you would, to Hebrews chapter 7.

We're going to look at it together. Someone asked me the other week, when we were looking at Hebrews 6, just who is this Melchizedek character that keeps being referred to?

At the end of chapter 6, verse 20, Jesus is said to be like Melchizedek. And he first pops up in chapter 5, verse 6, in that quote from Psalm 110, verse 4.

And of course, here in chapter 7, he's all the way through. He seems to be quite important. Why? Well, the answer is that a consideration of this rather strange character, who appears only in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110 in the Old Testament, actually, it will teach us a very great deal about how to read the whole Bible as it's meant to be read and understood.

[8 : 37] And that is, of course, as one great story of salvation that finds its ultimate perfect fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ. So you can read the Bible.

You can even know vast tracts about the Bible, even about obscure people like Melchizedek. And yet you can miss completely what it's all really about. That's what Jesus said, wasn't it, of many of his Jewish contemporaries in his day.

John chapter 5, he said to them, you search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. But it's these that bear witness to me. And yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

They misunderstood their own Bible in a completely fundamental way, simply because they didn't seem to grasp the basic truth that the story of a promise must look for and at last find its resolution in fulfillment.

Pretty basic, isn't it? A promise looks beyond itself. And it must be fulfilled beyond itself. Well, from the very beginning of the Hebrew Scriptures, they are a story of the promise.

[9 : 43] God's promise to undo the wrecking of this world brought about by man's rebellion against God and to restore the righteousness, the perfect harmony of God's relationship with man once again.

Right back in the beginning in Genesis chapter 3, after the curse, God promises salvation through the seed of the woman. And as the story goes on, well, that seed is promised to Abraham as being his progeny.

It would ultimately bring blessing, not just to his family, but to all the nations of the earth. And as that story of Abraham's family, the people of Israel, unfolds, God continues to paint in more and more

clearly the picture of how at last that promise is going to be fulfilled for the world.

And the whole story is a living prophecy pointing forward to the fulfillment which will at last come as God is true to his covenanted promises to his people to be their savior.

And so the whole story of the Old Testament, in that sense, is prophetic. Not just in prophesied words, but in a whole rich tapestry of foreshadowings and of intimations about the future.

[11:01] In people, in events, in the institutions, in the ceremonies that God prescribes for the people of Israel to show them and through them to show the world the nature of the salvation that he has planned and that he will bring at last to fruition in the world.

And all of these, according to the Lord Jesus, all of these find their fulfillment in him, in his person, and in his work as our ultimate savior.

That's why he says in Matthew's gospel, chapter 11, that all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, John the Baptist, the greatest of all the prophets.

He's the Elijah who was to come, said Jesus. But now, now that I've come, the kingdom of God that was promised is now advancing in fulfillment of all of these things.

That's what the apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 10, verse 3, that Christ is the end. He's the goal, ultimately, of the whole law of Moses to bring that promised righteousness of God, to bring that great restoration for all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

[12:17] In Jesus, it's fulfilled that promise to Abraham that through his seed, all the families of the earth would at last be blessed. through faith in that ultimate seed, our Lord Jesus Christ.

So as Jesus says, everything that Moses wrote of and spoke about was ultimately about him. He wrote of me, he said. And so if you really believe Moses, you'll believe in me.

And that's what the book of Hebrews, of course, is telling us again and again, all through. The law of Moses, including all of its regulations about priests and sacrifices and the tabernacle and so on, it foreshadows, it prophesies about things still to come, things that would at last find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

And in chapter 8, verse 5, we'll see next time, he says that the priesthood was a copy and a shadow of true heavenly things. That is, it foreshadowed the fulfillment to come because they were genuine copies of heavenly realities.

They were earthly manifestations of great heavenly truths. Earthly representations, if you like, of eternal realities. Which taught God's people and taught us through what we read in the Old Testament scriptures about the eternal way of salvation.

[13:49] But of course, and this is the crucial thing, being only copies, they never had any power in and of themselves to affect eternal salvation. You can look at detailed photographs of a car in a brochure, can't you?

Read the description of all of its features and that can educate you about the kind of car that you might need or you might want. But that picture of a car can't actually drive you anywhere. All it can do is make you long for that car and it can direct you to the car dealership where at last that real car is going to be found that you can drive in.

Well, one of the central realities you see that God taught his people in these former days under Moses, the days of promise in the Old Covenant, was about the need for forgiveness of sins. That was what's needed to restore true fellowship with God. And that could only be through sacrifice for sins. And for that, you needed priests to offer these sacrifices on behalf of the people. That's what you find in all the legislation about priests and sacrifices and tabernacle and so on in the book of Exodus and Leviticus. But clearly, for sinful people to be restored to permanent fellowship with God, then a perfect and permanent sacrifice for sins would have to be made.

[15:09] And that would obviously only have been achieved when, well, when the curse of death, which is the wages of sin, was seen to be no more.

When there's a perfect restoration of fellowship with God. Because that's restoration to life before the curse. Life without human death. Of course, the relentless cycles of sacrifices in the tabernacle and the temple clearly showed that that had not yet been achieved.

Because all the people still died. And more and more sacrifices were needed. And it was just the brochure, you see. It was showing what was needed, but never able to affect that reality on a permanent basis.

And so the whole Old Testament covenant law was always still looking forward. It was needing more. It was longing for more. It was looking in hope, well, for a forever priest that lasts who would

be able to effect a forever sacrifice to bring that eternal forgiveness, to restore eternal fellowship with God forever, eternal life.

That is not through a priesthood and sacrifices like that of the Levites under Moses, but only through a totally different kind of priesthood.

[16:30] A unique one, an ultimate priesthood. One that would be permanent and perfect and therefore powerful to actually achieve the supreme and sufficient salvation to really save forever frail human beings from their sins.

Now that's what God was promising in the Scriptures through Moses way, way back in these ancient days from the beginning. And that is exactly what he has fulfilled in these last days for us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what this chapter in Hebrews 7 is telling us so very clearly. So let's look first at verses 1 to 10 where we see why Melchizedek comes into this picture.

Because you see in former days long ago what God was actually bearing witness to constantly through Moses' writings about the history of God's people what he was bearing witness to was the unique permanent supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ of a promised priestly king over the whole world who was still to come.

The truth is you see that the Bible tells us doesn't it before the foundation of this world God always purposed to bring salvation to this world through his son through his son becoming a unique permanent heavenly priest for his people.

[17:56] And what verses 1 to 10 tell us here is that even before God's sworn covenant with Abraham this chap Melchizedek prefigured the coming son of God in the Bible's account and bore witness as one who appeared extraordinarily as a priest who is totally in a class of his own who is unique who is supreme who is permanent who precedes Abraham and indeed is preeminent over Abraham and all his seed including every single priest that came through his lineage through Levi.

Melchizedek verse 3 was made to resemble the son of God the one who alone is permanent in his priesthood forever.

In other words the whole reason for the existence of Melchizedek the whole reason for his appearance in the Bible story is simply to be a pointer to the coming one who would at last be the priest the king over this whole world forever.

And verses 1-3 are telling us that plainly that is why Moses wrote this account in Genesis 14 that we read. It tells about this man that Abraham met who was the priest of God Most High but he was a priest like no other in the whole Old Testament radically different from all the priests under the Mosaic law.

First verse 2 notice he was a priest king that's utterly unique in the Bible none of Israel's priests were kings his name king of righteousness Melchizedek an extraordinary name and then also king of peace because he was king of Salem probably Jerusalem but he's not some kind of mystical figure he's not some sort of angelic figure or divine figure verse 4 is plain so is verse 6 it just clearly calls him this man sometimes people have extrapolated all kinds of fanciful ideas about Melchizedek from the words in verse 3 where it says that he had no father or mother no end of life the words don't literally mean that they just mean that he had no recorded genealogy no recorded origins no recorded successes as a priest the point that's being made you see is that he stands in total contrast to all the Levitical priests because they were priests only by virtue of their genealogy being proper they were totally unlike he was totally unlike all these other priests he was totally unlike every other figure you read of who's got any significance in Genesis you just need to read they're all genealogies aren't they everybody appears with their origin and their successes but he doesn't appear in any of these things so as far as the scriptures are concerned verse 3 he just appears uniquely no recorded origin no recorded end he's just there and so as far as the Bible text is concerned he just remains a priest we're never told that he retires or he passes on to one of his sons like all the Levites did so in that way in the unique way that he figures in the Genesis account he is made to resemble the Son of God he prefigures by deliberate design the unique eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ that's why God made him exist that's why he appears in the Bible at all that shouldn't surprise us because if the Son of God is the center and the purpose of all creation of the whole story of this world and the story of its redemption then as Gary Williams helpfully puts it in one of his books the things used in the Bible to describe God were created in order to do just that but Gary Williams has a further interesting comment on that he says everything in the whole creation that God made was principally to reveal himself to us that's why lions were made next time

you go to the zoo or to the safari park ask yourself why are there such things as lions and he says the real answer although lions are there to kill antelope and you know feature in David Attenborough movies and so on the real reasons that God made lions was so he could use them to help people understand his greatness and in a sense as with lions so with Melchizedek everything in creation and everything in the Bible story is there to reveal God to man it gets clearer in verses 4 to 10 because it shows us just how much greater

[22 : 38] Melchizedek must have been to all the Levitical priests all the priests of the tabernacle he points us doesn't he to Melchizedek's preeminence but also to his permanence first his preeminence verse 4 see how great this man was why was he so great well Abraham the great Abraham spontaneously gave him a tenth a tithe of everything by contrast you see verse 5 the Levites well they got their tithes from their fellow people through a commandment in the law that Moses gave but this man verse 6 who's not a priestly Levite by descent he receives a tithe from the father of all Israel Abraham and notice verse 6 he blesses Abraham he blesses the man who had the promises from God himself so clearly look at verse 7 there can't be any dispute can there he was greater than Abraham the greater one blesses the lesser so he is preeminent and verse 8 he's permanent the Levites were mortal men but as we said

Melchizedek doesn't appear as a link in a genealogical train or chain he just appears just living and that's why you see Psalm 110 picks up this figure Melchizedek figuratively and calls him a priest forever he's been made to resemble the one who truly is forever the son of God and Abraham tithes to Melchizedek because he represents on earth as his priest the most high God the one who is superior to Abraham and the one who truly does rule Abraham forever but it's not merely a figurative thing look at verses 9 and 10 it's historical too because Levi who was the father of all Israel's dynasty of priests he was literally still in the loins of his ancestor Abraham and so in a sense he through Abraham also paid homage to Melchizedek long before the priesthood was even begun long before the tabernacle had even been invented do you see what he's saying way back then even then

Melchizedek was brought into the story by God to awaken among his people the idea of a great priest king of a kind of priest who was unique who was supreme who was eternal who was in a class of his own totally unlike all these others to show that the most high God has a priest far greater than Abraham and a concept of priesthood that vastly supersedes even the priesthood of the Mosaic Covenant long before that even came into being a priesthood that had a far greater scope than just for the nation of Israel indeed a priest who was a copy of the heavenly things themselves a priest who was a copy of the Son of God who was to come the priest king of righteousness and of peace so what he's saying you see is that the Old Testament itself as far back as Moses writing through whom all the laws about priests and sacrifices came it recognizes that there is a kind of priesthood of a far greater order altogether not yet seen among any of the priests of Israel that's why you see the heart of the Old Testament faith was exactly that it was faith it was faith in the promise of God's salvation that looked forward to the fulfillment of that promise and Abraham and all the patriarchs we know from Hebrews 11 they died not having received the promise they died acknowledging that they were strangers and exiles on this earth because they were looking for a heavenly city their hope was never fixated just on an earthly home and earthly religion but on an eternal home eternal righteousness and relationship with God and so as Israel's history unfolds and limps on from disaster to disaster as God's people kept rebelling and eventually they were exiled right out of the land in order to humble them yet all through that there were people of true faith who were encouraged by the prophet Habakkuk and others to live by faith in the promise knowing that one day the whole world will at last be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea and all the prophets spoke of that coming day of the Lord to come the day of great restoration through God's Messiah King and those of true faith trusted and longed for that day all through the centuries right up until you read in the beginning of Luke's gospel about people like Simeon Anna and Elizabeth and Zechariah people who we are told are walking humbly in the law of Moses and longing for the consolation of Israel for God's promised salvation these were the true Jews the true Israelites who understood their scriptures and so we're longing for the great king for the Messiah and for the one whose rule would be bound up with saving his people from their sins forever that brings us to see to verses 11 to 19 because in these former days of waiting what God was bearing witness to constantly in all the

Mosaic legislation about the sacrifices and the priesthood and so on what he was testifying about was to the ultimate perfect sufficiency of our Lord Jesus the coming one the priest king who would be at last the real ultimate savior of this world God had always purposed to bring salvation to this broken world through his son becoming the perfect human priest to make perfect permanent atonement for sin and what verses 11 to 19 show us you see is that even after God's covenant with Moses the inherent imperfection of the Levitical priesthood showed clearly that this could only ever be a provisional arrangement only ever be something that's pointing forward and looking for ultimate fulfillment because it was so obvious that this priesthood was just passing and not permanent that the sacrifices were perpetual never ending they couldn't be perfect so the whole system was of itself ultimately powerless not powerful to actually deal with people's sin and guilt forever in its very nature it pointed forward to the need for fulfillment and to look for fulfillment in the perfect permanent sacrifice which would at last be powerful to bring lasting forgiveness of sins and therefore lasting and complete fellowship with God and that's the point in verses 11 to 14 this was perfectly plain if perfection if complete fulfillment was attainable through the

[30 : 10] Levitical priesthood well why on earth did God have to promise in the Psalms in his own scriptures that another type of priest altogether would have to come a priest not like the Levitical priest not like Aaron but like Melchizedek every Jew knew that Psalm 110 was speaking about the Messiah God's promised king God's son who would come and rule over all the nations but that song tells us that that son was also going to be a priest forever like Melchizedek not like the Levitical priests not the kind of priesthood that verse 11 says the people received the law laws and regulations about through Moses no this priest was going to be totally different and hence verse 12 when that happened and he came well the whole system of laws was obviously going to have to change because he wasn't going to be fitting into the old system he wasn't coming from the tribe of Levi like all the old priests he was coming from the tribe of Judah no priest ever came from the tribe of

Judah verse 13 there's plenty of course about kings coming from the tribe of Judah going way back to Moses time right through the prophets and the Psalms just like here see what he's saying is it's obviously understood in the Old Testament scriptures themselves that when God's promise of his ultimate priest king the promise made in Psalm 110 when it came to fulfillment everything would change because as verse 12 says when there's a change in the priesthood then necessarily there must be a change in all the laws a change in the whole way that God's covenant with his people is administered and operates so the law of Moses he's saying itself prophesied that a new kind of priesthood altogether was going to come and therefore that that would necessarily mean a whole new kind of covenant would have to come and that's what was promised and that is what happened when Jesus came and so verse 15 says it made everything even more evident because a priest like Melchizedek came who wasn't a priest through legal requirements about genealogies but verse 16 was declared a priest through the power of an indestructible life and he really was as verse 17 says really was one who was a priest forever not by earthly regulations but by eternal resurrection in his resurrection we've already seen in chapter 4 verse 14 Jesus has passed through the heavens into the real presence of God or as it was put in chapter 6 verse 19 beyond the curtain not of the earthly tabernacle or temple but into the heavenly throne room of God himself because he has made at last the ultimate perfect sufficient atonement for sin to bring his people permanent forgiveness and therefore permanent fellowship with God and so you see verse 18 that's why at last what was just an imperfect and prophetic covenant the former commandment has been set aside it was in itself weak and useless it could only point forward and promise ultimate forgiveness on its own it could never actually bestow it but now verse 19 it's given way to a better hope which is as verse 22 calls it a better covenant the fulfillment the perfection the reality of everything that the mosaic covenant pointed to and now we in these last days can actually draw near to God forever you see perfect fulfillment was never attainable under the levitical priesthood verse 11 is very plain verse 19 nothing was made perfect by that but now in Jesus Christ there is perfect fulfillment and Moses spoke about that day the whole testament looked for it and longed for it but now in these last days it's come look at verse 19 sinful people can draw near to

God again can be in right relationship with God the reality that was lost ever since Eden at last it is restored through Jesus Christ and his ultimate perfectly sufficient priestly ministry for us under Moses of course yes there was drawing near to God in faith but ordinary people were still at a distance weren't they and it was imperfect it needed perpetual sacrifices offerings regulations

galore priests galore but now look at verse 19 we all all of us ordinary people we draw near to god through the better hope that we have in our lord jesus christ he is a priest forever for us of course we don't yet have it all we're still saved in hope aren't we we haven't yet entered god's eternal rest we've seen that we haven't yet seen his face we haven't yet inherited the heavenly city we haven't yet physically possessed the world to come that awaits the coming of the lord jesus but already the great privilege of living in these last days of this world after christ's death and resurrection is that already we have a better hope we can draw near to god in full assurance of faith through the lord jesus christ that's what's underlined in verses 20 to 28 at the end here because you see it's the coming of jesus in these last days that bears wonderful witness to the utter most powerful salvation that we have now through jesus christ god has brought his his promised salvation to the whole world through his son the utterly powerful heavenly priest and human priest the one that we really need the perfect sacrifice of his earthly passion has brought permanent forgiveness for us with god forever and the perfect sufficiency of his heavenly presence brings us permanent fellowship with god forever all the saints of of all they had a great hope in god's promise for that ultimate fulfillment but but the wonderful privilege we have in these last days is that our hope he says is even better because already we are tasting the wonders of the world to come when there will be no separation ever again even physically between us and our great god and savior already as we await that day we can draw near to him now with certainty continually and completely verses 20 to 22 tell us we have certainty about forgiveness from god now and fellowship with god it's god's oath remember what he read in chapter 6 verse 18 we have the certainty of two unchangeable things not just god's covenant promises to abraham and moses in the former days but we have the oath that david speaks of in this psalm god's own oath to his son a totally different order of things from these merely earthly regulations about priests here in jesus is god's sworn oath forever a new covenant sealed indeed in the blood of his son guaranteed on his own life and by his risen life so jesus he says is the guarantor the absolute guarantor of a better covenant altogether a guarantor is somebody who stands behind with a promise to pay you might guarantee a mortgage for your children if they don't have the money to back it up well standing behind this guarantee is the indestructible life of the risen lord jesus christ who will never ever fail us his priesthood is forever it's utterly certain and therefore as

verses 23 and 24 tell us you see we have certainty of continuous forgiveness and fellowship with god human priests you see died you had to have lots of them and a priest if he died in office well there could be a gap in the sacrifices being made there'd be a breach of the fellowship with god but that can never happen when jesus is our priestly savior i will never leave you and forsake you he says so we can say confidently the lord is our helper what can anyone do to us to accuse us of our sin to erode our confidence in our salvation there's nothing that we can even do ourselves to separate us from his love we have continuous forgiveness from him forever and so you see verse 25 we have in him complete forgiveness and fellowship with god he saves to the uttermost when we draw near to god through him that means there can't be anything can there that awaits you or me on the great day of judgment that god is not able and willing to save us from on that day nothing or indeed every day between now and then he lives in the presence of god as our advocate forever to save to the uttermost to give to us the uttermost grace and mercy from god the wonderful picture of that if you go back later and read in exodus chapter 20 28 i think it is about the clothing of the high priest when he went into the holy place of god and he had on his garment on his shoulder two stones bearing all the names of the people of israel and a breastplate over his heart likewise with the names of god's people and he stood in the presence of god before him with the names of god's people on his heart and our great high priest the lord jesus christ does that for us for you and for me your name and mine continually completely with certainty he always lives to make intercession for us our great high priest whose name is love whoever lives and pleads for you and me and so that means we can be certain that we have complete forgiveness with god continually and forever and so we can draw near to god our father continually forever so you see verses 26 to 28 just sum it up so indeed it's fitting it's precisely appropriate that we have such a high priest one translation puts it very graphically here at last is the high priest we really need truly powerful to save us forever because he's not like us he's not like any human priest verse 26 or like any sinful man but rather he is exalted above the heavens the perfect supreme son of god perfectly obedient in his life and and therefore able to make for us the perfect sacrifice for sins you see verse 27 offering up himself once for all for our sins so that we might be brought back to that nearness with god forever we have at last permanent forgiveness from god through his earthly passion for us he died to make the perfect

sacrifice for us and so we have at last permanent fellowship with god through his heavenly presence for us because he ever lives to make intercession for us see in jesus christ all the covenant promises of god have come at last to covenant perfection all the the laws foreshadowings have been eclipsed by the light of the lord jesus christ himself that's what verse 28 at the end is saying summing it all up the

[42 : 47] law of mooses the old covenant era it was a wonderful covenant of promise looking forward for fulfillment but it had to make do for its actors with priests and prophets weak mortal men whose inadequacies whose deficiencies insisted that we look for more and better still to come but in the gospel of jesus you see in the new covenant fulfilling at last the oath of the priest king to come now we have at last eternal reality we have the son of god made perfect forever as our glorious savior that is as as we saw back in chapter 5 verse 9 having been perfected having fulfilled all that god promised through what he suffered for us he's become the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him because he's been designated as a priest forever like murchisadek his living presence in heaven for us is because of his dying passion on earth for us because at last he perfected god's promised forgiveness through his earthly cross he's now made possible for us perfect fellowship with god in his heavenly court forever and ever and that means friends that all the the previous need for the rituals of earthly religion have been set aside forever because in jesus we have the reality now we don't need the copies anymore we have everlasting righteousness we don't need the rituals of religion that's why we have today we who who believe and trust in the lord jesus christ we have says chapter 8 verse 1 such a high priest one who ministers in the true tent in heaven the one that god has set up god's eternal dwelling not just man's earthly copy so why he is saying would you ever think of going back to that the copy that was passing why would you go from from the fulfillment that god has given you to the mere foreshadowings from the reality of near relationship with god to go back to the rituals of mere religion that's why he's going to such length here to explain all about how god's promises have all been fulfilled in jesus christ because you see many of these jewish christians he's writing to were being tempted back to something familiar to something visible something much more acceptable to society that would would not have them scorned and and berated for giving up their jewish faith to go back to the priests to the temple to the sacrifices look more impressive you can you can see a temple can't you you can see the sacrifices on the altar you can't see the heavenly temple for the lord jesus at the right hand of god and it made for a more peaceful way for them they didn't have to have the the stigma the shame the suffering of giving up on their their cultural identity as jews and what our writer is saying no no no to go back is to lose everything to go back to the world of shadows of preliminaries when you should be rejoicing in the great reality of drawing near to god with intimacy with with an immediacy you've never had before that is the way of disaster why would you ever want to do that but friends here's the reality the lure of earthly religiosity is a very powerful thing and it can draw people back from the liberation of heavenly realities right into that sort of religious bondage in the ensuing centuries after this letter was written to church is very probably around room well the church of jesus christ centered upon rome started to build churches that look like temples with altars at the front of them and screens that separated priests from ordinary people and brought back all the distance that jesus came to get rid of everything that he came to abolish the christian church over its history has so often brought right back in the church of rome today is full of all of these things that jesus christ came to get rid of and yet many people are drawn to these visible tangible earthly rituals but if perfection could have come by such things the son of god would never have had to come to earth would he but he did come as the great high priest that we so desperately need he died and he has risen forever to be a permanent perfect powerful priest for everyone who looks to him as savior which means that no other priest is ever needed for our access to god for drawing near to him we don't need priests to do that for us we don't need saints to pray for as intermediaries we don't need praise priests the kind of people who think that at the front of a church service today they've got to sing their songs interminably endlessly in order to lead us so that we can draw near to god we've already drawn near to god through jesus christ we have a savior a holy savior who is able to atone for our sins forever and has done and a human savior who's able to have compassion for us and intercedes on our behalf who loves us forever and who lives forever right now continuously with our names upon his heart in the presence of god our judge and whenever we call out to god the father in his name we're drawing near to the one who has loved us with an everlasting love in jesus and we can be assured friends that we have always in jesus the great high priest that we really need who's the

same yesterday today and forever who saves us certainly and continuously and completely forever and ever that's the privilege that you and i have of living in these last days let's never give it up let's pray he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to god through him since he ever lives to make intercession for them we thank you lord that we live in these last days when you've spoken your final word to this world in the person of our lord jesus christ and completed your finished work forever for us that we should know you as nearly and as closely and as intimately as your own son has enabled us to do so guard us lord and keep us we pray from ever being driven back to that which is so much less keep us we pray drawing near to you forever through our great savior we ask it in jesus name amen