

The Perfect High Priest

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[0 : 00] God has provided a redemption that is sufficient for all men, for all people.

! But I want to add that it's sufficient for all men. But I want to add that it's not efficient for all people, but it is sufficient for all people.

What do I mean by that? It is efficient for those whom God has or will save through His sovereign plan of redemption for them.

This is beautifully summarized by the Christian song, There's Room at the Cross for You. Verse 2. Because of man's lostness and spiritual deadness to the things of God, it is necessary for God to draw men to Himself.

His desire for unbelievers is that they come to Him, and He has provided ample evidence in the world in which lost men can live for them to...

[1 : 12] in which lost men live, this world, for them to conclude that God exists and also to conclude that they need Him. That should be abundantly clear, and especially in the day in which we live.

Of course, the power of sin and spiritual death is so strong that the Bible is clear that men and women do not seek Him.

That truth is expressed, I think, clearly in the book of Romans 3. This is what verse 11 says, None is righteous, no, not one.

No one understands. No one seeks for God. Now, for believers, we have already drawn near to God, and that happened through the powerful ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit can speak into the dead ears of dead men, and He quickens them so that they will understand and embrace the gospel of Christ.

[2 : 34] Now, just because we now believe does not end this drawing ministry of the Lord, He also desires that saved men and women draw nearer and nearer to Him through the sanctification process.

So this is lifelong. Lifelong. The very essence of Christianity is this drawing near to God.

We are to do it daily, moment by moment, and with the indwelling Spirit of God that is placed inside every believer, we are constantly in the presence of God.

Our highest purpose in this life is to draw nearer to God. This is summarized by another great hymn, Draw Me Nearer, Precious Lord. That was Fanny Crosby.

The Lord Himself summarized this. Jesus did in John chapter 6. He said, No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.

[3 : 53] I didn't put this in the notes, but that's an interesting quote of the Lord, because a few verses later it says, the people that are assembled, and by the way, that's the same ones that He had fed a few days earlier with creating food out of nothing.

When He said, You can't come to Me unless the Father draws you. They said, This is a hard saying. And many of them walked with Him no more. They walked away.

And people still walk away from that. They don't like that. I wonder how often though, we tend to forget that we live in the presence of God.

How often do we allow other things to come between God and ourselves? Do we ever allow sin? Or even mundane things, television, secular hobbies, or a myriad of other things interfere with our worship through the process of drawing near to Him.

[5 : 07] And many people who claim a relationship with Christ, they think that salvation is the end of all things. Little do they realize that genuine salvation is the beginning point.

It's where we start. That is when all things become new. That is when we are reborn as babes in Christ and our new spiritual life began.

Salvation is a beginning. What should really mark us out as believers is our desire to grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

God is a person. And as a person, we can know Him. And through a closer walk with Him, we can even get to know Him better through His Word.

Every true believer should desire what Paul stated was the essence of a true, mature, spiritually filled believer.

[6 : 24] believer. And he said this in the book of Ephesians 3, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

That's a tall order. As Christians, we are to seek the fullness of God. That's really the goal of the Gospel.

Judaism brought men and women into the presence of God, but there was always a veil between the Lord and His people.

Only by the blood of Christ shed at the crucifixion, when the veil was torn, can men and women have direct and unfettered access to a righteous and holy God.

So on what basis do we enter into the Holy of Holies today? This is what the high priest did back in Leviticus.

[7 : 56] On behalf of himself, his family, and the people, he entered into the Holy of Holies. How do we enter in today? One could say, well, we enter in by the blood of Christ, and they would be correct.

But there's something that is even more specific. We enter in to the presence of the Father through the intercessory work of our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's alive. He's living. He was dead. He's alive. And at this very moment, he is making intercession intercession for every true believer.

Do we need intercession? Every moment. Every moment. Is Jesus qualified to be our intercessor? And if so, how did he become qualified? As the sinless Son of God, he took all of our sins, he died a substitutionary death on the cross.

[9 : 12] What does that mean? He took our place. He's our substitute. And then he entered into the real Holy of Holies in heaven.

That was the place where the judgment seat of God existed. as our high priest, he approached that judgment seat and he sprinkled his blood on it.

He did that as our high priest. Just as the earthly high priest entered into the earthly Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement.

Christ entered into the heavenly Holy of Holies and there as our high priest, he sprinkled his blood which was shed on the cross onto the judgment seat.

And something marvelous happened. It transformed into the mercy seat in the presence of the Father.

[10 : 26] It went from the judgment seat to the mercy seat. The Father's wrath toward our sin, a very specific wrath for very specific sins, was quenched.

the Father's wrath and the Father was satisfied with the sacrifice that had been offered.

And bear in mind something, this sacrifice was offered once for all. By all, I mean all who would believe.

God's wrath is not going to be to be repeated over and over as was the case of the earthly high priest. We all know they had a whole assembly line of sacrificing various animals year round. and it went on constantly around the clock. But this one cannot be repeated over and over and nor does it need to be.

[11 : 41] The earthly sacrifice was offered continually because atonement that it wrought was only temporary. It lasted about as long as the next sin.

But Christ as our high priest offered a better sacrifice and it settled for all time our need for continual sacrifice.

This is beautifully expressed in Hebrews chapter 10 which we will eventually get to. And every high priest stands daily at his service offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins I love this. He sat down at the right hand of God waiting for that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. One offering and he sat down.

[13:09] the priest never sat down. There were no chairs. No chairs. Why? There was always another sin to atone for.

Always another animal to sacrifice. The sinners were lined up with quote unblemished animals. We do not need a continual sacrifice.

His was sufficient. But I'll tell you one thing we do need. We do need continual intercession because we continually pick up the stain of sin that is so prevalent in this life.

And I get so frustrated with myself. I'm sure no one else does. And I just think in the arena of lust, you can't watch an ad by Ace Hardware selling a hammer that doesn't have some girl in a string bikini.

Because Medicine Avenue, where all the advertisers list, exist in New York City, they know a male hot button. So they sell products based on that. But we are continually picking up what I call the dust of sin.

[14:32] This was aptly expressed in the Gospel of John. John chapter 13. We had this wonderful exchange between Jesus and Peter. You ever notice there's a lot of exchanges between Jesus and Peter?

But this is commonly called the foot washing. John 13 starting in verse 5. Then he, that's Jesus, poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter who said to him, Lord, do you wash my feet? Jesus answered him, what I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.

Peter said to him, you shall never wash my feet. And Jesus answered him, if I do not wash you, you have no share with me.

So Simon Peter, who was always willing to speak, said, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. And Jesus said to him, the one who has bathed does not need to wash except for his feet, but is completely clean, and you are clean.

[16:12] Now he's speaking to the twelve. You are clean, but not every one of you. would that not put a chill down your spine?

Remember when Jesus would do that at times and they would all say, is it me, Lord? For Jesus knew who was to betray him, and that is why he said, not all of you are clean.

They were clean with salvation, but even saved men pick up dust, and it has to be dealt with. And Jesus expressed that in the washing of their feet.

They picked up dust, but they were already clean and saved. So we have a high priest in heaven that is mindful of us every moment.

He is the one who brought us to God, and through his intercessory work, keeps us in the presence of God. Now the priests of Aaron could never bring a man fully to God.

[17:27] The veil could not be removed because sin could not be dealt with, and when they were busy, it couldn't be dealt with on a permanent basis.

They would only come through the sacrifice of Christ. sin was dealt with finality. The Levitical sacrifices had only been symbolic, but then one comes after the order of Melchizedek.

Remember that guy from last week, two weeks, last two weeks? And the way to God was open forever. There's only two priests that are not from the Levitical priesthood.

not counting the Catholics in the Old Testament. Melchizedek and Jesus. And Jesus was obviously the superior. So what is the Spirit of God telling the members of His Hebrew congregation somewhere probably near the nation of Greece?

Christians. It is the same recurring theme throughout the book of Hebrews. They are being urged to break with the old system and embrace Christ.

[18:52] The believers in this Hebrew church had done that, but those who are not yet committed had not done that as yet. I'm sure some would and some probably never did. That was a great difficulty for the Jews to hear.

This is a system they had been under for 1600 years. It had to have been difficult. Now they knew that one day the Messiah would come.

I mean even the woman at the well who was a Samaritan, a half-breed Jew, half-Gentile, half-Jew, even she said one day Messiah is coming. I love what Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he. But they had no concept that he would supersede and eliminate the Mosaic covenant. They didn't think that was possible.

And to this day, you go to Israel, and particularly among the Orthodox, you say, who's the greatest Jew that ever lived? And they'll say, Moses. He's the greatest Jew. They could not imagine that the Mosaic covenant was incapable of bringing them to God eternally.

[20 : 11] And the interesting thing is the Mosaic law wasn't even intended to save anybody. It was intended to drive people to the Messiah, to Christ, who could save them.

Now for generations, the Jews had been under the Levitical system, and they thought it would last forever. And now they're being told it's not perfect, it's not sufficient, it's not eternal.

That was hard. The writer of the book would have to show the imperfections of the old priesthood. God never intended for the Levitical priesthood to last forever.

In fact, God spoke in the Psalms, and we covered this a couple weeks ago, in the Psalms, of a better priesthood that was coming. In Psalm 110, 4, the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind.

You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek. Israel was told that a better priesthood was coming and that the Messiah would be the priest.

[21 : 35] And this truth went back, far back, even before the time of Israel. Abraham was the father of the Hebrew nation, but before that happened, Melchizedek, a priest of the Most High God, paid a visit to Abraham.

Remember that? And Abraham knew this would be the perfect priesthood and the Levitical priesthood that would come later was merely a type of the perfect priesthood of Melchizedek. And the greater Melchizedek, the Lord Jesus Christ, although Abraham didn't know his name. Now what do we mean when I use that word perfect for perfect priesthood?

Often in the Bible, perfect means complete or mature. In the book of Hebrews, it refers to a goal. The writer is telling the Hebrew congregation that their goal is access to the Father through the high priesthood of the Son, referring not so much to maturing in Christ, but to being saved.

[22 : 59] Many of these people need to be saved. They weren't even there yet. And we do know from previous studies that many in that congregation were uncommitted to Christ.

They were mere observers. Hebrews 7:11, Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood, for on the basis of it the people received the law, what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek and not be designated according to the order of Aaron. Now here the writer clearly tells us that perfection does not come through the Levitical priesthood. This priesthood was a type, but it was an incomplete type, picturing the one that was to come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

There would be perfection. It was imperfect because it could not give men access to God. Only through Christ do we have access to God.

There's no other way open to us. And I cringe when I hear somebody, well I believe in God, I just don't believe in Jesus. I got some sad news for them. They can't even approach the Father.

[24 : 31] unless they're cloaked in the Spirit of Christ. The Old Testament sacrifices could never achieve full access to God on behalf of the practitioners.

And that is why the sacrifices had to repeat it over and over. As I said, it was an assembly line. Henry Ford didn't invent that. The Levitical priests did.

If the Old Covenant could bring one to God, they would have ceased once that was accomplished. But they had to await the New Covenant.

They couldn't get there through the Old. Well, to gain access to God, one must be perfect. perfect. If you're not perfect, like a few of you are in here, I won't name names, I'm sure it would be embarrassing, but if you're not perfect, then access to God is either denied or gained through a substitute that is perfect.

perfect. And we know such a substitute, don't we? Perfection came not through Old Testament sacrifices or the keeping of the law.

[26 : 01] Perfection is found only in Christ Jesus. no other name. Hebrews 7, 12, for when the priesthood is changed of necessity, there takes place a change of law also.

That word change that is used here in the original language means to put one thing in place of another. Christianity came from Judaism, but it also replaced Judaism.

The priesthood after the order of Melchizedek replaced the Levitical priesthood. The priesthood that's carried on by the tribe of Levi has been totally abrogated. It no longer exists in the grand economy of God.

In fact, I told you last week, they don't even know who Levitical priests are in Israel. They try to pretend. But all the genealogical records were destroyed in 70 AD by the Romans under Titus Vespasian.

They were burned down, burned up. They don't know who was part of a Levitical priesthood anymore. And we have to remember that the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic Law were closely tied together.

[27 : 19] So when the priesthood changed, so did the law. Attached to the priesthood were many laws that dealt with ceremonies and rituals, dietary laws, they passed away with that earthly priesthood.

Now, let's make sure we understand though, the moral law embraced by the Ten Commandments has not passed away.

Why not? Because the moral law reflects perfectly the character of God. It reflects the character of God.

All of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament with the exception of keeping the Sabbath when we define that as the Jewish Sabbath, 6 a.m., 6 p.m.

Friday to 6 p.m. Saturday. Christ is our Sabbath and we're to worship Him each and every day of our life.

[28 : 33] Hebrews 7 and 13 and 14, for the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe. Boy, that's a shocker.

I mean, you can guarantee those guys were trying to look up Jesus, you know. what tribe is He from? Is He a Levitical? This one's from another tribe from which no one has officiated at the altar. I could just imagine they would have said, you can't come in, Jesus. Can you imagine? It's like if Paul shows up here some Sunday and says, no, you're not going to preach. Yeah, let him preach. He'll be all right. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

No priest had ever come from the tribe of Judah. Every priest from the tribe of Levi, that's where they came from. Jesus came from the tribe of Judah.

[29 : 44] To be the high priest, Jesus obviously came from a different order than Aaron or the other priests of Levi. Jesus did. He came from a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

I think we can pretty well assume Melchizedek wasn't from Levi either. Probably Judah. That's an eternal priesthood. This priesthood was perfect and eternal.

And verse 15 and following and this is clearer still. If another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement but according to the power of an indestructible life for it is attested of him you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek speaking of Jesus.

Now there are two Greek words for another. One means another of the same kind but the word here used means another of an entirely different sort.

In Christ we do not just have another and a long line of priests that unlike any of the thousands that came before him in the Old Testament there are many priests of the same kind in the New Testament there is one priest the Lord Jesus Christ and as the word means he is entirely different no comparison the Arianic priests arose because they had the correct pedigree Jesus had no ancestry by which he became a priest he arose to this priesthood because he was virgin born and had no such mother and father as the Levites did and because he alone arose from the grave and ascended into heaven there is no other priest like him that is why he is described as our high priest forever he is our high priest forever verse 18 and 19 for on the one hand there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness for the law made nothing perfect

[32 : 24] I mean Moses went up and got a copy of the law brought it down the mountain and what we are doing making a golden calf and carrying on with women riotously the law made nothing perfect and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope through which we draw near to God and we studied that in chapter 4 I think it's verse 16 I believe maybe 25 but we have access unfettered access to the father through Christ Jesus we read here of a setting aside Christ replaced

Aaron by setting him aside God set aside the old and imperfect for the new and perfect God set aside all the temple worship and sacrificial system and you know God verified that he permitted the temple complex to be totally destroyed by the

Roman army under Titus Vespasian wiped out and tradition says that of course the temple was full of gold and the fire was so intense the gold melted and went down into the crevices and the Roman soldiers picked up the very stones and threw them out into the valley right next to the temple mount to get to that gold and you can see stones out there to this day if you go over to Israel the old system could reveal sin and cover sin for a season but it could not remove sin permanently that's what we need that's really what we need God has done this by taking the sins of his children and placing them on the perfect substitute the Lord Jesus Christ I used to say God doesn't wink at sin our sins he takes them and puts them on his perfect son sinless son the Lord

Jesus he has covered our sins Jesus has with his blood when God looks at us he sees the blood of his dear son if you are one with him and God is completely satisfied by that sin covering and then there's Satan the great deceiver he's an interceder too he intercedes against us but we have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous one he intercedes for us and Satan at times reveals to the father how horrible our sins really are maybe I should personalize that how horrible my sins really are and they are and Jesus can say to the father their sins have been atoned for and God can say and declare they're not guilty on the basis of a debt that has already been paid and I struggled there and I changed those words back and forth

I didn't know whether to say I originally said God declares us to be innocent but I said not guilty innocent implies we really didn't do that not guilty means there's been a judicial declaration another has paid our debt God does not require double payment for a sin debt if Jesus died for every one of your sins and mine God does not then require another payment from us that by the way is woven by our founding fathers into our law if we try a guy for murder downtown he's acquitted the prosecutors say I want to indict him one more time and get another shot at this I could do a better job can't do that you got one shot at that it's a Latin term res judicata double jeopardy can't do that once it is paid for that is the end of the matter we all owe a debt it's called a sin debt that's certain we owe a debt and actually there's two ways that a person can pay for their sin debt that they owe to God that person can spend eternity in hell and it'll never be totally paid for they'll be there for eternity or Christ atones specifically for us providing the forgiveness of sins and that is forever so on the cross Jesus became our substitute he took our place and died for us and that is why Christ is the better way the better covenant and the perfect high priest