

*Valley Bible Church - Sermon Transcript*

Melchizedek's Priesthood Trumped Aaron's Priesthood  
Hebrews 7:26-28  
Part 5

I have a difficult time finding pants that fit me. I have large calves, large thighs and no rear end.

Will I find a pair of pants that fit me well? I doubt it. I have too many flaws. The only hope that I believe that I might have is if I go to a tailor and have a pair of pants made to fit me.

Know that the odds of that happening are zero. But even though I may never have a pair of pants fitted to my needs by a tailor, God has fitted me with a high priest perfectly suited to my many personal spiritual shortcomings and flaws.

Now hopefully what I have just shared with you will come alive for us this morning as we return back to our study of Hebrews, which was written to a group of struggling Hebrew believers living in Rome who in the midst of a great persecution were actually considering returning back to Judaism. And what did the author choose to do in order to strengthen their faith so that they would not do this?

The author of Hebrews in seeking to strengthen their faith chose to focus on the superiority of Christ.

He began with emphasizing Christ's superiority over the Old Testament prophets, then he focused on Christ's superiority over the angels, then he focused on Christ's superiority over Moses and now he is presently, in our ongoing examination of this book, focusing on the superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other priesthoods. This section began in **Hebrews 4:14** and will continue all the way down in **Hebrews 10:18**. So what have we seen so far?

In **Hebrews 4:14-16** the author introduced Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry, which he then pointed out in **Hebrews 5:1-10** was according to the order of Melchizedek. This was followed by a warning section which extended from **Hebrews 5:11-6:20**. And then after completing this warning section what did the author do next? The author returned back to the subject of Melchizedek highlighting his greatness in **Hebrews 7:1-10** and then following this section what did the author do?

The author in Hebrews 7:11-28 explained why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be

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**replaced** by Christ's priesthood which was according to the order of Melchizedek. So why was it necessary? This is the question that we have begun to answer and will CONTINUE to answer this morning.

First of all we saw: It was necessary because Aaron's priesthood could not bring about "perfection" (Hebrews 7:11-14).

Secondly we saw: It was necessary because Aaron's priesthood provided a "better hope" (Hebrews 7:15-19).

Thirdly we saw: It was necessary because God had sworn to Christ an oath that His priesthood would be forever (Hebrews 7:20-22).

Fourthly we saw: It was necessary because Aaron's priesthood unlike Christ's priesthood could never provide a permanent priest (Hebrews 7:23-25).

And this morning we will see the fifth and final reason for why it was necessary for Aaron's priesthood to be replaced by Christ's priesthood. So what was this fifth reason? This was the fifth reason:

### MESSAGE

It was necessary because Christ's priesthood was "**fitting**" for us and Aaron's priesthood was not (Hebrews 7:26-28).

Let me read for you **Hebrews 7:26-28** and see if this is not so, "**For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; (27) who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. (28) For the Law appointed men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.**"

So based on these verses was Christ's priesthood "fitting" and Aaron's priesthood was not "fitting"? Yes, this is exactly so.

So what does this word "fitting" mean? The word "fitting" (PREPO) means "**suitable.**" Or we could say it this way, "Christ's priesthood was suitable and Aaron's priesthood was not suitable."

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3347 West Avenue J  
Lancaster, California 93536  
[www.valleybible.net](http://www.valleybible.net)

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So what makes Christ's priesthood fitting or suitable and Aaron's priesthood not fitting or suitable? The **sinlessness** of Christ is what makes Christ's priesthood fitting or suitable for apart from Christ's sinlessness He would not have been able to solve our sin problem (Hebrews 7:26-28).

Though this may not be clear to us now hopefully this will become clear to us as the author proceeds to highlight for us not only the fact of Christ's sinfulness but also the significance of His sinlessness in **verses 26 & 27**.

So how was the sinlessness of Christ highlighted by this author in **verses 26&27**?

First of all: The sinlessness of Christ was highlighted by the author's **description** of Christ's character (Hebrews 7:26).

So let us begin to read **Hebrews 7:26** and see if this is not so. And how does this verse begin? It begins like this, "**For it was fitting (or suitable) for us to have a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled ...** " So considering just this part of the verse, could we say that the sinlessness of Christ was highlighted by the author's description of Christ's character? Yes, I believe we can.

So how did the author describe the sinlessness of Christ's character? The author used three different adjectives.

So what was the first adjective? The first adjective was "holy". The word "**holy**" (HOSIOS) signifies, 'devout, pious, pleasing to God'. In the New Testament the term is used of God in Revelation 15:4 and Revelation 16:5. It is used of Christ in Acts 2:27 and 13:35 and it is also used of an overseer in Titus 1:8.

So what was the second adjective? The second adjective was "innocent". The word "**innocent**" (AKAKOS) signifies freedom from 'guile, duplicity, deception'. It was used of Job in Job 2:3 and Job 8:20.

And what was the third and final adjective? The third adjective was "undefiled". The word "**undefiled**" (AMIANOTOS) signifies 'pure, unstained'.

Taken together these three adjectives forcibly describe the sinlessness of Christ our great heavenly high priest.

So after having highlighted the sinlessness of Christ by using these three different adjectives in **Hebrews 7:26** to describe His character, how else did this author highlight the sinlessness of

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Christ?

The sinlessness of Christ was also highlighted by the author's description of Christ's separated and exalted position in **glory** (Hebrews 7:26).

So let us go back and continue to read **Hebrews 7:26** and see if this is not so. And what does it say? It says this, "**For it is fitting (suitable) for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled** (there are the three adjectives that the author used to describe His character and then what did the author say about Christ? He said this ...) **separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.**"

So based on this verse did the author in addition to highlighting the sinlessness of Christ by his description of Christ's character also highlight the sinlessness of Christ by his description of His separated and exalted position in glory? Yes, I believe he did.

At the end of **verse 26** there are two participial phrases "**separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.**" So as we look at these two participial phrases, the first question that we must ask ourselves is this: Should the first participial phrase "separated from sinners" be connected to the previous three adjectives thus making it a qualitative separation from sinners or to the subsequent participial phrase "above the heavens" thus making it a spatial separation from sinners?

I believe on balance in light of where this text is going, which is an emphasis on the heavenly sanctuary, that it would be best to understand the phrase "**separated from sinners**" as a spatial or physical separation rather than as a qualitative separation from sinners.

Or we would say it this way: The best way to understand "separated from sinners" is as a spatial or physical separation brought about by Christ being "exalted above the heavens." This I believe is the best way to understand this phrase "**separated from sinners.**"

So how does this spatial or physical separation of Christ from sinners brought about by Christ being "exalted above the heavens" highlight the sinlessness of Christ?

This is how. The physical separation of Christ from sinners brought about by Him being exalted above the heavens, assumes His moral perfection, for apart from His moral perfection Christ could never have been exalted above the heavens to this place of highest possible exaltation at God's right hand as we have already seen in **Hebrews 1:3** and we will see again in **Hebrews 8:1**.

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So how else did this author highlight the sinlessness of Christ beyond simply his description of Christ's character as well as his description of Christ's separated and exalted position in glory?

The sinlessness of Christ was finally highlighted by the author's description of the effectiveness of Christ's **sacrifice** in contrast to the ineffectiveness of the former high priests sacrifices (Hebrews 7:27). Let me now read for you **Hebrews 7:27** and see if this is not so. And what does this verse say? It says this, "**who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.**" So based on this verse did the author highlight the sinlessness of Christ by his description of the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice in contrast to ineffectiveness of the former high priests sacrifices? I believe the answer again is, "Yes."

So how did the author go about establishing the contrast between the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice and the ineffectiveness of the former high priests sacrifices in his description? He used the backdrop of the Day of Atonement.

On the Day of Atonement, which would occur once a year, the high priest of the nation of Israel on behalf of Israel could approach God or in other words could approach the visible manifestation of the presence of God in the Holy of Holies, for the purpose of offering up sacrifices for sin. First on behalf of his sins and the sins of His family and then on behalf of the sins of the people. All of this is spelled out in **Leviticus 16** and is clearly alluded to by this author in the very middle part of **verse 27** when he spoke of the high priests of Israel first offering sacrifices for their own sins and then for the sins of the people.

So how did this author use this backdrop of the Day of Atonement to establish the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice over and against the ineffectiveness of the sacrifices of the former high priests in **verse 27**? This is how:

Though Christ has been exalted above the heavens, and is continuously functioning as our great heavenly high priest at the right hand of the throne of God, as was made clear in **verse 26**, He unlike the former high priests of the nation of Israel does not have to continue to offer up sacrifices on our behalf, even though He is continuously representing us before God as our great heavenly high priest.

So why is this? The reason why Christ does not have to continually offer up sacrifices though He is representing us on a daily basis is because His sacrifice of Himself was **effective** or in other words it was a "once for all" sacrifice.

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Isn't this exactly what the author told his readers at the end of **verse 27** when he explained to His readers why Christ in His exalted position, as our great heavenly high priest, does not need to offer daily sacrifices? Absolutely! This is exactly what he told his readers at the end of **verse 27**.

He does not have to offer up daily sacrifices in His exalted position at God's right hand as our great heavenly high priest, as the high priests of the nation of Israel had to do on the day of Atonement, **“because this (the offering of sacrifice to God for sin) He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”**

When Christ died on the cross of Calvary, He put an end to the sacrificial system that had been instituted under the Law. For His death on our behalf was effective or in other words it paid the debt that was owed to God because of sin **“once for all”** or in other words **“for all people for all time.”**

And why was Christ able to do this? He was able to offer up a once for all sacrifice because He, both as God's appointed high priest and sacrifice for sin, was **sinless**.

So is it **“fitting”** or **“suitable”** for us to have such a high priest as Christ? Absolutely! For if we did not have such a high priest as Christ or in other words a sinless high priest who offered Himself up as a sinless sacrifice, we would not presently have the access to God and His throne room of grace that we presently enjoy. For apart from His sinlessness and the sinlessness of His sacrifice, the sin problem would not have been solved.

Hopefully as each of us grow in our understanding of the importance of the sinlessness of Christ that provided us with a high priest who was perfectly fitted or suited to us, we will find ourselves caught up in the beauty of His sinlessness knowing that unless we came to have such a high priest as Him, who was perfect in all of His ways, even in the midst of great suffering, we would have been forever separated from God and the blessings of God. But because we do have such a high priest let us rejoice and continue to rejoice.

So after giving this last reason for why Christ's priesthood trumped the Aaronic priesthood in **verses 25-27** what did the author do next?

The author in Hebrews 7:28 concluded the section that he had begun in Hebrews 5:1 concerning Christ's **appointment** as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. And how did he conclude this section? Let me now read for you **Hebrews 7:28** and this is what it says, **“For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.”**

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So as the author brought this section on Christ's appointment as high priest according to Melchizedek to a conclusion, what did author then point out to his readers?

First of all he reminded them of how the Mosaic Law appoints men as high priests who are weak or in other words who are sinful. What did the author say at the very beginning of **verse 28**. He said this, "**For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak**" and then what did the author do? He then contrasted the appointment of these weak priests through the Mosaic Law to Christ's appointment by God, through an oath that was prophetically anticipated by David in Psalms 110:4 hundreds of years after the giving of the Law and that would not be spoken by God to Christ until a thousand years later at the time of His exaltation.

So let us now continue to read **verse 28** and see if this is not so and what does it say? It says this, "**For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.**"

What an appropriate way to bring this section on Christ's appointment as high priest according to the order of Melchizedek to a conclusion.

But now having said this I would like to draw your attention to what the author said about Christ, in light of His appointment by His Father at the time of His exaltation, at the very end of the verse. And what did the author say at the very end of the verse? He said this, "**made perfect forever.**"

So how had Christ, as God's appointed high priest, been made perfect forever? Christ was "made perfect forever" in the sense that what He suffered and had passed through in terms of His death, burial, and resurrection as well as His exaltation, without ever committing sin, perfectly **qualified** Him to be our forever heavenly high priest.

### CONCLUSION

May God give us the grace to grow in our understanding and appreciation of the importance of Christ's **sinlessness** so that the splendor of Christ's beauty might shine even that much brighter as we behold Him.