

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 07: 23-28

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We will continue to read Hebrews Chapter 7, and today we will read verses 23 to 28.

Aaron's priestly system taught the Jews the Law, offered sacrifices and offerings to God on behalf of the Jews, and once a year, the high priest was able to bring the Jews into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle, coming before the mercy seat to meet with God. In the Old Testament, this was the only way for man to come before God; therefore, Aaron's priestly system was cherished by the Jews and was also their source of pride.

However, in the New Testament, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, personally came to the earth. He became the Passover Lamb and was crucified on the cross for the sins of the world, accomplishing redemption. It was then that people realized that Aaron's priestly service was merely a foreshadowing, that all the various sacrifices and offerings were symbols, and that the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering were also foreshadowing. Jesus Christ is the reality; the true sacrifice had come and replaced the foreshadowing.

Jesus Christ not only accomplished redemption but, after rising from the dead, also ascended to the heights of heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father's throne, beginning His heavenly ministry. He is a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, supplying the saints with bread and wine. The author of Hebrews saw that some of the Hebrew saints, unable to withstand persecution and temptation, were turning back to Judaism, so he encouraged them to recognize Jesus Christ as the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, which is far more precious and surpasses the high priesthood according to the order of Aaron.

The author first presents the necessity of a priest according to the order of Melchizedek and then lists five characteristics of Christ as the High Priest. First, He

is from the tribe of Judah and possesses a kingly identity. Second, He is according to the power of an endless life. Third, He is appointed by God's oath. Fourth, He lives forever. Fifth, He is holy and without sin. We have already read the first three characteristics, and today we will read the remaining two.

Verse 23: “Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.”

Those who became priests refer to the priests serving under the Aaronic system, that is, the male descendants of Aaron's family. They were numerous, and although only one person from each generation could serve as the high priest, and the high priest held the office for life, he was still a man and would eventually die. After his death, another had to be chosen to take his place, for death was a barrier, and no high priest could remain permanently. From the time Aaron served as the first high priest until the author wrote the book of Hebrews, many had held the position of high priest, yet none could retain it forever.

Verse 24: “But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.”

"This One" refers to Jesus Christ. As the High Priest, He remains forever. Before His incarnation, Christ was already the only begotten Son of God, the second person of the Divine Trinity, the Creator of the universe and all things, and the One who upholds all things. Naturally, He is eternal. Even after He took on flesh, assuming the form of a man, becoming fully human, and living a perfect human life, He was ultimately crucified on the cross for the sins of all mankind. However, God raised Him from the dead; He triumphed over the power of Hades and could not be held by death.

His humanity was also uplifted in the process of resurrection. Not only did He rise from the dead, but He also ascended to the heights of heaven and sat at the right

hand of the Father's throne. He remains forever. Unlike the priests of Aaron's order, who were hindered by death, Jesus Christ, having triumphed over death, lives forever, and His priestly office will never be changed. A priest is a mediator between man and God, and an unchanging mediator is the assurance of our salvation, the confidence for us to press on to perfection, and the glorious hope we hold.

Verse 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."

"All who come to God through Him" can also be translated as "because of Him," "through Him," or "by way of Him" to come before God. For Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; He is the only means by which man can come before God. And because Jesus Christ is the eternal High Priest, He not only helps us come before God, but He is also able to save us to the uttermost. What a sweet assurance this is! Each one of us is unreliable, changeable, and unstable, but thank the Lord—we do not rely on ourselves to walk the path of sanctification. Instead, it is our eternal High Priest who will save us to the uttermost.

When we face temptation, He comes to preserve us; when we are weak, He comes to strengthen us; when we do not know how to move forward, He comes to guide us; when we are discouraged and disappointed, He comes to encourage us; when we are under attack, He comes to protect us; when we are in need, He comes to supply us; and when one day we reach the end of our journey, He will welcome us with a glorious smile. He truly is able to save us to the uttermost. Even when we are on the verge of giving up on ourselves, He lives forever to intercede for us. He fulfills His role as the High Priest in heaven—He neither slumbers nor rests but continually watches over our every step. Especially when we go astray, lose our way, or wander into error, He begins to intercede for us.

Dear brothers and sisters, have you ever experienced a moment of sudden enlightenment on your life's journey? When your path seemed to grow darker and darker, did something happen, did someone appear, or did even just a single thought awaken you and help you change direction? This is, in fact, the effect of our

eternal High Priest interceding for you. When you turn back, His precious blood has already been prepared for you, ready to cleanse your sins and receive you again as a blameless child before the Father.

In the Gospels, Peter's threefold denial of the Lord was likely the greatest failure of his life, yet even before Peter's failure, Jesus had already interceded for him. In Luke 22:31-32, it says, "And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.'" In Jesus' intercession, He did not ask the Father to remove the situation, but rather to preserve Peter so that he would not lose his faith. Indeed, after Peter turned back, he strengthened his brethren. We see that Jesus' intercession is truly powerful—He is able to keep us from falling into the hands of Satan.

Next, in verses 26-28, we come to the fifth characteristic of Christ as the High Priest—He is holy and without sin. Unlike the high priests according to the order of Aaron, who had to first offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer sacrifices for the people.

Verse 26: “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;”

Here, the author of Hebrews presents another new characteristic—that Jesus Christ, as the High Priest, is more fitting for us, more appropriate, more correct, and more suitable for our needs. The author proves that Jesus Christ is more fitting from three aspects: His character, His position, and His accomplishments.

Speaking of the character of Jesus Christ, the author describes it from four aspects, all of which are incomparable to the Aaronic priests. First, He is holy. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of Mary. Although He appeared in human form, He was, in essence, the second person of the Divine Trinity. He is holy, completely aligned with God, and entirely belonging to God.

Second, He is without evil. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, it says, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us." The phrase "knew no sin" in the original text means that Jesus had absolutely no knowledge of sin. During His life on earth, His heart never entertained an evil thought—He was completely upright, full of light and goodness, and had no connection with evil whatsoever.

Third, He is undefiled. Though Jesus lived on earth and was surrounded by the filth, corruption, and sin of the world, He remained completely unstained. He maintained absolute purity and was without blemish. Only in this way was He qualified to accomplish redemption for humanity's sins.

Fourth, He is separated from sinners. This does not mean that Jesus avoided associating with sinners during His earthly life—quite the opposite. Matthew 9:10-13 records Jesus dining with tax collectors and sinners, for which the Pharisees condemned Him. In response, Jesus said in Matthew 9:12-13, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Jesus came to earth to save sinners. His separation from sinners means that He bore the sins of sinners so that they could be transformed into righteous ones in God's sight. His separation was not one of avoidance but rather a means of helping sinners repent and, through His accomplished redemption, be made righteous.

Some interpreters emphasize that Jesus' holiness is proactive and use this passage to encourage believers to influence sinners through their own active holiness. However, this approach is ineffective. The more one displays personal holiness before others, the more sinners will distance themselves. Sin is sin, and unless someone pays the price for sin, it cannot be forgiven. Only when sin is forgiven does holiness have any true influence. Therefore, the starting point for holiness is helping sinners repent, confess, and receive the salvation of Jesus Christ. We must acknowledge that our ability to help others is extremely limited; only by bringing people to the salvation of Jesus Christ can they receive real help. In Christ's nature, He is separated from sinners—not in a way that pushes them away, but in a way that, through His accomplished redemption, transforms sinners into righteous ones.

Furthermore, the second aspect of how Jesus Christ is fitting for us is His position—He is the High Priest who is exalted above the heavens. Here, "heavens" is in the plural form. The Jewish understanding is that the first heaven is the visible sky, where Satan holds sway; the second heaven is outer space, where the sun, moon, and stars reside; and the third heaven is the dwelling place of God. After completing His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ resurrected, ascended, and returned to the dwelling place of God—the third heaven. He is transcendent, heavenly, and able to deliver us from all earthly bondage.

Verse 27: “who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.”

In the Old Testament, the high priests of the order of Aaron had to first offer sacrifices for their own sins before they could offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. For example, in Leviticus 9, when the priestly system was first established, the first sacrifices for the people were offered. Leviticus 9:8 states, "Aaron therefore went to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself." Aaron himself was a sinner and had no inherent qualification to offer sacrifices; he first had to present a sin offering for his own atonement. Then, in Leviticus 9:12, "And he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron’s sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar." After offering a sin offering for himself, Aaron also had to offer a burnt offering to be accepted by God. Only then was he able to begin his priestly duty of offering sacrifices on behalf of the people.

Then, in Leviticus 9:15-16, it states, "Then he brought the people’s offering, and took the goat, which was the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one. And he brought the burnt offering and offered it according to the prescribed manner." We see that Aaron first had to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for himself before he was qualified to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for the people. The priests of the Old Testament offered sacrifices of bulls and goats, but these sacrificial animals could not truly represent humans. Therefore,

the sin offerings of the Old Testament were merely a foreshadowing of Christ. Before Christ came, these sacrifices only temporarily covered sins, but the blood of bulls and goats could not truly remove sin.

When Jesus Christ came, He offered Himself once and for all, thus accomplishing the complete removal of sin. This "once" refers both to a single moment in time and to the singularity of the sacrifice. Because Jesus Christ was fully human, having lived a perfect and sinless life on earth, He was able to represent humanity as the only true sacrifice. Moreover, since He was also fully God, His one offering carried eternal efficacy, bringing about the permanent removal of sin.

Verse 28: “For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.”

The high priests of Aaron’s order were appointed according to the law and based on lineage—only male descendants of Aaron could serve as high priests. However, they were weak and imperfect, subject to sin, death, and the limitations of time and space. Their priesthood could only temporarily cover the people's sins until the fulfillment of God's promised salvation. When Jesus Christ came, He was appointed as the eternal High Priest not by the law, but by God's oath after the law. As God's Son, He perfectly fulfilled God's eternal purpose.

Dear brothers and sisters, as New Testament saints, how blessed we are. Jesus Christ has once and for all accomplished eternal salvation, and His precious blood remains effective forever. As long as we are willing to confess our sins, God, who is holy and righteous, will surely forgive us our sins. Even when we are stubborn and our minds cannot turn back, He, as our great High Priest in heaven, intercedes for us, for He is able to save to the uttermost every one who belongs to Him.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for placing the book of Hebrews in our hands. We see that You are our High Priest today according to the order of Melchizedek, and what a glorious gospel this is for us. Not only have You accomplished the work

of redemption, but You also intercede for us daily in heaven. Lord, guard our hearts and minds, that we may spend more time before You each day. Grant us a tender heart and a willing spirit of obedience, that we may receive the ministry of our High Priest and walk on the path of sanctification. Bless my daily life. In the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen!