

## *Acts 2: Lesson Four, Hebrews, Part 1*

### *Hebrews 1-7*

**Subject:** Hebrews seeks to strengthen the faith of believers by pointing out the superiority of Jesus, the object of their faith.

**Main Idea:** Jesus is better than anyone to whom we might consider turning and has accomplished something better than anything to which we might consider turning.

**Principles:**

1. *Fixing our thoughts on Jesus will keep us from drifting spiritually.*
2. *Jesus offers rest from the slave masters of religion and self.*
3. *Jesus lives forever to intercede for us and He alone can completely save us.*

### **Introduction**

People of all nations, in all ages, have always sought security. Today, middle-aged Americans are wondering how they will survive their older years financially. Jobs have been fewer, companies who are hiring often prefer younger people, and the stock market has taken dives. With extended family often spread around the country and beyond, these folks are wondering what they will be able to count on. The youngest American adults are asking the same question. At least 40% of them are children of divorce. They were told that higher education would lead to better jobs. But they have not found security in following traditional wisdom about marriage or education. To make matters worse, many are encumbered by staggering amounts of debt. They wonder whether any of the institutions their parents counted on are really reliable. In some parts of the world, Christians face far more serious threats. They question whether they can endure prison or the martyrdom of loved ones without losing their faith. Would they and their families be more secure if they back off on their public profession of Christ?

In the second half of the first century, after Christ-followers started to be persecuted, a second generation of Christians, who hadn't seen Jesus face to face, wondered whether they could count on Him to endure persecution. Was their faith in Jesus strong enough to see them through? Since Judaism was a legally recognized religion under Roman rule, Jewish believers were particularly tempted to return to the "safety" of their religious roots. Perhaps they could secretly hold on to Jesus but publically identify with Judaism.

The writer of Hebrews was concerned that these believers were drifting from their confidence in Christ. He set out to strengthen their faith by reminding them of the superiority of Jesus, the object of their faith. He argued that Jesus Christ is far superior to anything religion can offer and encouraged them to persevere in their faith. There is no better investment than Jesus. He is better than anyone to whom they might turn and He has accomplished something better than anything to which they might turn. There was (and is) no religion, no system, no government, no process, and no person that offers the security Jesus offers. He is superior to all and we must hold fast to Him, knowing that He alone can see us through every difficulty of life.

# I. **An Ideal Savior** – Hebrews 1:1 – 3:1

## A. **Introduction to Hebrews**

### i. Author

1. *Paul*: No one knows who wrote the book of Hebrews. The letter to the Hebrews indicates that the original readership knew the writer (13:18-19). The church father, Clement, the bishop of Rome from AD 88-99, claimed that Paul wrote it, but if he did, he did not identify himself as was his custom. The King James Version (printed in 1611) entitled the book, “The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews,” but that is merely a publisher’s title, not an inspired part of the original letter.
2. *Other Suggestions*: Other suggestions have included Luke, Silas (Silvanus), Philip, and Priscilla. Timothy is excluded by the third-person reference to him in chapter 13. Tertullian (AD 155-240) thought that Barnabas might have written it. Martin Luther’s guess was Apollos. Perhaps the third-century theologian Origen’s answer to the question of authorship is best: “God only knows.”

### ii. Audience

1. The original readership is also in question. The writer said that Jesus had announced the gospel and that “those who heard Him” confirmed it “to us” (2:3). This suggests that neither the writer nor the audience had been alive during Jesus’ earthly life.
2. The abundance of Old Testament quotes and arguments concerning the Jewish ritual suggest that the targeted audience was Jewish Christians on the verge of lapsing back into Judaism. Although they were believers (3:1a), some were not maturing in their faith (5:11-12).
3. Third, we learn that the audience had been persecuted for their faith (10:32-34). Jews were often unpopular with Romans (Acts 18:2), but since Judaism was legally approved, perhaps the readers’ motivation to abandon Christianity was related to Nero’s persecution of Christians.
4. A final clue comes at the end of the letter, where “those from Italy” sent greetings (13:24). The letter may simply have been written from Rome but it also could have been written to people in Rome (the greetings sent by Roman expatriates who lived near the writer).

- iii. Date: Clement quoted from Hebrews, so the letter had to have been written sometime before the end of the first century. If it was written to a second generation of Christians, it's not likely to have been composed before AD 60. However, the fact that the Temple is mentioned (9:25) without any reference to its destruction (an extremely significant historical event for Jews and Christians alike) suggests that the book was written prior to AD 70.
- iv. Purpose: Hebrews was clearly written to persuade readers against defecting from the faith and to remind them of Christ's superiority and complete adequacy in their trials. To this end, the words "better" and "superior" occur fifteen times. The letter is heavily doctrinal, but the writer regularly draws conclusions from his arguments (the word "therefore" appears sixteen times) that have tremendous practical implications (as doctrine should).

### **B. God's Message through His Son – 1:1-3**

- i. God's Final and Ultimate Self-Revelation: The letter begins by stating that in the past (before the time of Christ), God's word had been revealed through human prophets, "but in these last days" God has spoken through His Son. The "Last Days" is the entire period of time from Jesus' first advent (His incarnation) to His second advent (His return). Although the Old Testament is the critical foundation of God's revelation in Jesus (as the letter later shows), the finality of Jesus' message is emphasized by Jesus' superiority as a messenger and revealer of God's truth.
- ii. Jesus' Identity: Verse 3 tells Jesus is the "radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word." He is God in all of His glory, as seen through the lens of human flesh. By looking at Him, we know what God is really like. He is also the sustainer of creation, the force scientists have long sought to identify that holds everything together. Furthermore, Jesus is the Savior who has provided purification for sins and sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven.

**C. Jesus' Superiority to Angels Attested by Old Testament – 1:4-14**: In chapters 1-2, the writer set out to prove that Jesus is infinitely superior to all created beings, earthly or heavenly. The Old Testament passages quoted in verses 5-13 affirm His superiority over angels, both in His person and position. While Jesus is God's eternal and unchangeable Son, Lord of all, and seated on His throne, angels are created beings that worship Jesus and minister to the recipients of His salvation.

**D. Warning Against Ignoring the Message** – 2:1-4: While in the past, God delivered His message to prophets through angels (2:2, Acts 7:53), the fact that the message He has given in these last days was delivered by His very own Son indicates that it is too great to ignore. The nature of the message is revealed in 2:3-5: it is the gospel of salvation, a message of significance for “the world to come” (2:5)! The letter’s readers had obviously heard the gospel, since they were being warned against “drifting away” from it (2:1). If those who ignored the Old Testament scriptures faced punishment, how much greater will the consequences be for ignoring the gospel!

**E. Jesus Made Lower than Angels to Bring Many Sons to Glory** – 2:5-18

- i. The Pioneer of Our Salvation: To support his premise that this all important message has significance for “the world to come,” the writer turned to a passage from Psalm 8 that highlights the noble role for which human beings were created: exercising dominion over God’s creation. Currently, we do not see everything subject to us (nor do we see everything that is subject to Christ<sup>1</sup>). When sin entered the world, we lost the ability to effectively exercise dominion without destroying the earth. However, the writer says, we do “see Jesus,” and in seeing Him now “crowned with glory and honor” we see a glimpse of “the world to come.” Jesus willingly became “lower” than the angels in order that He might pioneer the movement to restore *us* to the dignity for which we were created. He “earned this top position in the afterlife for us.”<sup>1</sup> God’s plan in Jesus was to “bring many sons and daughters to glory” (2:10). It is not angels who are destined to rule the world to come but us!
- ii. The Perfect Savior: In becoming like us (human), Jesus became the “perfect” (ideal) Savior. In chapter 5, the author stated that Jesus “learned obedience” from what He suffered and [was] made perfect (5:8-9). Jesus did not have to “learn obedience” because He had formerly been disobedient. He learned it in the sense that He experienced something He had never previously experienced: human temptation. Because He suffered when He was tempted, He is sympathetic to our suffering and because He rode out every temptation without ever succumbing, He is able to break Satan’s power over us (2:14) and atone for our sins (2:17).

**Summary Statement:** Since Jesus is God’s Son, the “perfect” Savior, and far superior to all created beings in His person and work, we are in serious trouble if we ignore or drift away from the message He delivered. In 3:1, the author says that the solution to drifting from our faith in so great a Savior is to fix our thoughts on Him.

**Principle:** *Fixing our thoughts on Jesus will keep us from drifting spiritually.*

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<sup>1</sup> Although God has now exalted Jesus above all, we presently still do not see the full result of His position, for death and

Chapter 12 returns to this theme, again urging us to “[fix] our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith... so that [we] will not grow weary and lose heart” (12:2-3).

Jesus is superior and has accomplished something better than anyone to whom we might turn or anything to which we might turn. He pioneered the way back to God and the dignity for which we were created. Through the routine disciplines of prayer and Bible reading, study, and meditation, the spiritually mature man or woman looks daily for a glimpse of Jesus’ glory. Our faith may seem weak, but we do not need more faith. We need a clearer vision and more frequent meditation on the object of our faith. We are what we think. Fixing our thoughts on Jesus crucified, risen, and glorified is the surest way to keep us spiritually on course.

**Application:** When you read your Bible, ask God to show you Jesus more clearly. When you read Hebrews 1 this week, did you see Jesus “anointed with joy” (Hebrews 1:9)? It was “for the joy set before Him [that] He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (12:2). The One who pioneered our faith to bring us with Him to glory is exceedingly happy! When you think of Jesus with your holy imagination, do you envision Him full of joy, crowned with glory and honor (2:9), with myriads upon myriads of angels adoring Him (1:6)? Do you see Him holding all things together (1:3), including the things that appear to us out of control?

Mature believers outgrow infantile desires for entertaining services, showy preaching, and flamboyant spiritual experiences and depend instead on a daily glimpse of the glory of Jesus.<sup>ii</sup>

**Transition:** The writer of Hebrews set out to strengthen our faith by reminding us of the superiority of the object of their faith. Jesus’ person and work is superior to that of angels, and His person and work is also superior to that of Moses and the Law.

## II. A Superior Offer – Hebrews 3:1-4:13

**A. The Superiority of Christ’s Role in God’s House – 3:1-6:** Moses was the Old Testament prophet par excellence. God used him to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt, to give them His Law, and to lead them to the Promised Land. In Judaism, Moses is the supreme authority under God, but the author of Hebrews says that Jesus is worthy of greater honor. Both Moses and Jesus were faithful, but Moses was merely a servant in “God’s house” while Jesus is the builder and Son over “God’s house.” We are God’s house, says the writer, “if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory” (3:6). The obvious concern was that readers might *not* hold onto their confidence, which resulted in another warning.

## B. Warning Against Failure to Enter God’s Rest

- i. Warning Illustrated: The warning in chapter 3 is against failing to enter God’s rest. Sadly, the Israelites illustrated this failure.
  1. According to the book of Exodus, the Israelites agreed to enter a covenant relationship with God and become His people (19:1-8). Not long after, they were faced with the fact that this covenant required faith in God and His promises. The most remarkable proof of this came when God told them to enter and claim Canaan as their own, but the Israelites refused to obey because the land was full of hostile people.
  2. Psalm 95 is quoted, where God’s explanation of the Israelites’ disobedience was that they hardened their hearts (Hebrews 3:7-11). They did not enter Canaan because of unbelief (3:19). Biblical unbelief is not only an intellectual failure to agree with God but also a failure to act on what we profess to believe. To fail to obey God is to not truly believe Him! Thus, the readers were warned against having sinful, unbelieving hearts and exhorted to “encourage one another” to hold on to their original convictions about Christ (3:12-14).
- ii. The Controversial “If” – 3:6, 14
  1. *Four Views*: In chapter 3, the word “if” appears twice: “We are [God’s] house *if* we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast” (3:6), and, “We have come to share in Christ *if* we hold our original conviction [about Christ] firmly to the very end” (3:14). These difficult verses raise questions: What is it exactly that the author fears we might lose if we do not hold on and persevere in the faith? Furthermore, who is at risk of not holding on? Bible students have proposed four different answers to these questions.
    - a. *Believer’s Loss of Salvation*: The first view was advocated by a man named Jacobus Arminius in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and is known today as Arminianism. According to this view, Christians are at risk of losing their salvation. The trouble with this view is that so much Biblical evidence contradicts it. Jesus said, “No one can snatch [His sheep (believers)] out of the Father’s hand” (John 10:29).
    - b. *Hypothetical Statements*: The second view agrees that the “if” statements refer to a believer’s loss of salvation but suggests that the writer was speaking hypothetically. In other words, *if* a genuine Christian *could* turn away from Christ, they would lose their salvation. But what purpose would it serve for the author to have warned against something that could not really happen? This view seems illogical.

- c. *The Apostate's Disqualification from Service and Reward:* The third view is like the first two in that those at risk are Christians and that they are at risk of defecting from the faith. However, according to this view, such a person does not lose their salvation but is disqualified from further service in God's kingdom and from reward.<sup>iii</sup>
- d. *The Futility of Empty Profession:* The fourth view is that the warning is for those who *profess* to be truly saved *but are not* because they have never really understood saving faith.<sup>iv</sup>

### iii. Entering God's Rest Today

1. *An Active Offer:* The writer has warned against failing (as the Israelites did) to "enter God's rest." In chapter 4, the writer points out that after God completed His work in creation, He rested. Although He has done His part, He has kept active His offer of rest to us. It is for "today" (3:15; 4:6-7). If God's offer of rest had been fulfilled in Joshua's day when the Israelites entered Canaan, God would not have promised later in David's time that the rest was still for "today" (4:7). No, the Israelites' entrance into Canaan merely illustrated a spiritual principle, a principle that will remain active until Christ returns. The offer of rest remains "today," but we do not know when Christ will return; we dare not ignore or delay to act on His offer of salvation. Any person who knows the way of salvation but has delayed in entering God's rest should consider what happened to the Israelites and respond in faith before their own heart hardens.
2. *The Nature of the Rest Offered:* What is the nature of this rest? 4:10 explains, "Anyone who enters God's rest also *rests from their works*, just as God did from His." Moses' Law was a law of works (complete obedience would result in salvation), but since no one but Jesus has kept or ever can keep the Law perfectly, God has made us a superior offer: salvation by faith in Jesus. True saving faith means setting aside our futile and exhausting attempts to earn our salvation and instead, resting (trusting) in Christ. For the Christian, each Sabbath day is a celebration and physical re-enactment of this wonderful, spiritual principle.
3. *The Role of God's Word:* 4:12-13 concludes this section on entering God's rest by explaining the role of the Bible. God's word is unlike any other book in that it is living and active. It exposes and judges our thoughts and attitudes, enabling us to recognize attempts to live the Christian life on our own strength and teaching us to rest in Christ's adequacy instead.

**Summary Statement:** The question the writer of Hebrews intended to raise in his readers' minds was, "Why would I return to the rituals and demands of Judaism (works-based living) when Jesus offers me such a superior salvation?"

**Principle:** *Jesus offers rest from the slave masters of religion and self.*

Colossians 2:6 says that just as we *received* Christ as Lord (by faith), we are to continue living in Him (by faith). Many believers who come to Christ by faith believe that it is up to them to live out the Christian life by their own effort. Then they wonder why their daily Christian life seems so burdensome.

The Christian life does require effort on our part (4:11). We must choose to take up spiritual disciplines and set aside unhealthy practices. *But* we trust God and stop fretting over the results; they are not ours to determine. To live with this freedom is to enter God's rest.

**Application:** Do you have a habit of overfilling your schedule, becoming angry when your goals aren't met, or beating yourself up for not trying harder? If you insist on living in your own strength, these chapters have a word for you: your failure to enter God's rest is exposing unbelief! Perhaps when you see Jesus, you see a "god" of many demands, a "god" who died for your sins but expects you to live the Christian life on your own. If so, God invites you to enter His rest. Only Christ can live the Christian life. Maturity comes by daily reliance on Him for our every need. Are you wandering in the wilderness of unbelief? With what problem or temptation do you doubt Jesus will come through for you? Will you enter His rest while it is still available to you?

**Transition:** In chapter 2, the writer stated that Jesus became our ideal Savior by becoming human and experiencing human suffering. He "became fully human in every way, *in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest* in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people" (2:17). Beginning in the middle of chapter 4 and continuing into chapter 8, the writer picks up the theme of Jesus' high priesthood.

### III. A Better Hope – Hebrews 4:14-7:28

#### A. Purpose of the Argument

- i. The Levitical Priesthood: In accordance with the Mosaic Law, the high priest's role was to mediate (negotiate) with God on the worshipper's behalf by presenting an offering, first for their own sin and then for the sin of the worshipper(s). Not just any Israelite could become a priest, but only those whom God appointed. The high priest had to be a descendant of Moses' brother Aaron and all of the other priests had to come from the tribe of Levi (the tribe to which Moses and Aaron also belonged).

- ii. The Question at Hand: Although the Law established the Levitical priesthood as a perpetual institution, the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 effectively halted it. Without an authorized altar, no sacrifices could be offered. Throughout this long section, the writer continually refers to the Levitical priesthood as if it was intact (the letter must have been written prior to the Temple's destruction). More importantly, the writer's argument strongly suggests that at least some of his readership was considering that the Levitical priests could effectively intercede with God on their behalf, should they decided to abandon the Christian faith. Thus, the writer set out to show the vast superiority of Jesus' intercession, beginning with the facts that, as God's Son, Jesus has a superior relationship to God, and since He has ascended into heaven, He has a superior position from which to mediate (4:14).

### **B. Jesus' Intercessory Role – 4:14-5:10**

- i. A Sinless Intercessor: Since Jesus experienced all of the temptations and sorrows we face, He (like many human priests) is empathetic. Unlike any human priest, Jesus faithfully endured every single temptation without ever yielding. Riding out the growing intensity of temptation was agonizing. Jesus "offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears" to God the Father (5:7). His victory made Him the perfect "source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him" (5:8 [Christ's obedience is the basis for our obedience]). His agony made Him our ideal high priest. Since we have such an empathetic and ideal high priest, the writer exhorts us to "hold firmly to the faith we profess" and confidently "approach the throne of grace" in our time of need (4:14, 16).
- ii. High Priest by God's Appointment: Like the Aaronic high priests, Jesus received His high priestly position by divine appointment, but unlike human priests (who eventually die), Jesus was appointed a "priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek" (5:6). The writer returns to explain the significance of this in chapter 7 but paused to give another warning.

### **C. Warning Against Prolonged Immaturity – 5:11-6:12**

- i. Nature of the Warning: This is the author's third warning and it concerns prolonged immaturity in the faith. The writer was concerned that at least some of his readers had not matured beyond spiritual infancy and were not ready for the deep teaching he was about to give. The warning is that failing to mature puts one in a very dangerous position spiritually (or is evidence that a person is already in this dangerous position).

- ii. Description of Immaturity: Immature believers are described as incapable of teaching others (5:12), not learning to discern good from evil by continual practice (5:14), only wanting to hear the same foundational teachings over and over again (6:1-2), lacking clear evidence of faith in their daily lives (6:8), and spiritually lazy, failing to follow the example of diligent believers (6:11-12). Every believer starts out this way but as the writer explains, remaining spiritually immature is extremely serious.
- iii. A Hard Teaching
1. 6:4-6 says that it is impossible to be brought back to repentance if we fall away once we've been enlightened. What exactly does this mean? The same four views concerning the "if" statements in chapter 3 can be applied.
    - a. The writer might have been saying that true converts who fail to mature are in danger of falling away from the faith and losing their salvation (something other Bible passages say cannot happen).
    - b. The case might have been hypothetical. Although no true Christian has ever lost their salvation, the writer put it this way to make his warning more impressive.
    - c. The writer might have been saying that true believers are at risk of turning away. If they do, they will not (indeed cannot) repent and will lose reward and opportunities for service (those who support this view point out that the passage does not say that it is impossible for them to be saved but only that it is impossible for them to repent).
    - d. The warning might apply to individuals who investigate the Christian life and even "taste" some of its benefits but then "fall away" – proof that they were never truly saved in the first place. As long as they remain in this position, it is impossible for them to be saved.<sup>vi</sup>
  2. I believe these last two views are worthy of consideration. The third challenges us to keep growing spiritually so we don't become dull, fall away from the faith, and lose opportunities for service and reward (something that is surely of greater eternal importance than we currently imagine). The fourth calls us to consider whether our salvation is truly genuine. If it is, it will be evidenced by spiritual growth and willingness to submit to Christ's lordship. Growth does not always occur in great strides. For the most part, spiritual growth is gradual, like the slow development of a well-rooted oak. But if there is *no* evidence of growth, one should reconsider the sincerity of his or her profession, in light of Christ's lordship.

3. The situation is illustrated in verses 7-8, where productive land is contrasted with land that produces only weeds. Although the burning of weeds may refer to the fires of hell, it may also refer to God's discipline in a believer's life. Those who continue to grow and persevere in their faith, regardless of how imperfectly, have no cause for alarm. It is the individuals whose lives are devoid of growth who need to be concerned. The writer was confident that his readers were in the first group (the growing group) and not the second. Nevertheless, they needed to take their growth much more seriously.

**D. God's Promise and Oath – 6:13-20:** Abraham is a perfect example of one who took his faith seriously. God made a promise to bless him and give him many descendants and confirmed His promises with an oath (Genesis 22:16-18). Abraham believed and acted upon these promises. Persevering was not easy. Abraham had to wait a long time to see the promises fulfilled, but Abraham persevered because He knew God's promises are unshakeable, an "anchor for the soul, firm and secure." The writer wants us to know that God also made us a promise and swore to it with an oath. He took this oath that we might be "greatly encouraged" and so secure in His promise that it would be "an anchor" for our souls (6:18-19). Specifically, the writer wants us to have confidence in God's promise that Jesus would be "a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek" (6:20). Chapter 7 explains why this promise is so tremendous.

**E. Jesus Like Melchizedek – 7:1-28**

- i. Melchizedek's Identity: Melchizedek is a mysterious figure of whom the Old Testament only speaks twice. Genesis 14 indicates that, long before Jerusalem was inhabited by the Israelites and long before Levi was born, Melchizedek was king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of God Most High. Melchizedek's priesthood thus predated the Levitical priesthood by several hundred years, yet according to the short Genesis account, Abraham, the father of Jewish race ("Abram" at the time), honored Melchizedek as superior to him.
- ii. The Likening of Jesus' Priesthood to Melchizedek's Priesthood: Having made this point, the writer of Hebrews next pointed out several ways in which Jesus' priesthood is "in the order of Melchizedek."
  1. First, Melchizedek means "king of righteousness." His title, "king of Salem," means "king of peace." Jesus is certainly the ultimate king of righteousness and peace.

2. Second, both Jesus and Melchizedek are “without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life... priests forever.” It is easy to see how these things could be said of the divine Son of God but less obvious how they could apply to the human priest Melchizedek. The explanation is the lack of information about Melchizedek in the Bible. The Bible does not record his birth, his death, or his ancestry. In fact, he seems to have appeared into the Biblical story from out of nowhere. Then after three short verses, he completely disappears again. In the sense that Melchizedek has no known predecessors or successors, he is “without genealogy” and foreshadows Jesus’ eternal priesthood.
  3. Third, neither Jesus nor Melchizedek was from the tribe of Levi. In fact, Levi was still “in the body of his ancestor” Abraham during Melchizedek’s lifetime (Abraham was Levi’s great-grandfather) and Jesus’ human lineage is traced from the tribe of Judah. Neither Jesus nor Melchizedek were qualified to be priests from the viewpoint of the law, yet God appointed both of them “on the basis of the power of an indestructible life” (7:16).
- iii. A Better Hope: The writer comes to his point at the end of chapter 7: God set aside the priesthood established by the Law in order to introduce in Jesus a “better hope.” The sacrifices of the Levitical priests were not effective in enabling people to “draw near to God” (7:19). Furthermore, the Levitical priests could only serve as long as they remained alive. However, God swore an oath that Jesus (like Melchizedek) would *always live* to intercede for us (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:21)! This oath should give us immense security! Because Jesus’ atonement was effective in completely satisfying God (2:17), because He has experienced human suffering and completely understands us, *and* because God swore on oath that Jesus would eternally remain our high priest, we can be confident that He is able to “save [us] completely” (7:25)

**Summary Statement:** The writer of Hebrews wanted his readers to hold fast to Jesus because He is the ideal Savior, has made us a superior offer, and is guaranteed to eternally remain our mediator with God.

**Principle:** *Jesus lives forever to intercede for us and He alone can completely save us.*

## Conclusion

Hebrews 7:25 says that Jesus saves “forever,” “completely,” “to the uttermost.” It particularly “signifies that Christ’s salvation is a complete deliverance, no matter what the need of the sinner... [He] will save in the most comprehensive sense; He saves from all that humanity needs saving from.”<sup>vii</sup>

Jesus never fails. He is not like the world’s best counselor, who may help us until his death or retirement. He is not like a human parent who sometimes misunderstands us. He is not like entertainment that only temporarily distracts us from our problems. He is not like the drugs that may unnerve us for a while but then ultimately destroy us. He never grows weary of our troubles and never gives up on us. He will be there for us in every situation and also for our children, our grandchildren, and our great-grandchildren. His appointment has no “term limits.” God has sworn it to us on oath. He doesn’t have another plan. This is His final word: Jesus *always* lives to intercede and He saves *completely*. Is there a greater security available than this? Is there a rival in your life for His supremacy? Jesus is better, offers something better, and has accomplished something better than anyone to whom or anything to which we might consider turning.

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<sup>i</sup> Girdwood, J., & Verkruyse, P. (1997). *Hebrews* (Hebrews 2:5). Joplin, MO: College Press.

<sup>ii</sup> Keller, Timothy (sermon, “Principles of Christian Growth: Part 1”) as quoted in Reinke, Tony (2015),

<sup>ii</sup> Keller, Timothy (sermon, “Principles of Christian Growth: Part 1”) as quoted in Reinke, Tony (2015), *Newton: On the Christian Life* (p. 150). Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

<sup>iii</sup> Hodges, Zane C. (1983). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Hebrews 6:4–6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>iv</sup> Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed.) (Heb 5:11–6:20). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>v</sup> Allen, D. L. (2010). *Hebrews* (p. 329). Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group.

<sup>vi</sup> Stedman, Ray C. *What More Can God Say?* Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1974.

<sup>vii</sup> Morris, Leon (1994). *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition: New Testament* (p. 972). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.