

**Hebrews 7: 26-28; “Jesus – Our Strong High Priest”, Sermon # 28 in the series –
“Holding Fast our Confession”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on February 13th, 2022, in the Morning Worship Service.**

This whole section of the book of Hebrews, starting in Chapter 7, and running to the end of Chapter 10 shows us many different truths about Christ’s High Priestly Ministry. Every aspect of the Perfections of Christ’s Person, and all of His work as our great High Priest, both at the cross and during the whole of our Christian life, needs to be deeply thought upon by us, His people. The reason is, so that we will be thankful for all that He has done for us at the cross, and all that He is doing for us now in His intercession. It will be good for us, spiritually speaking, to think about these truths, so that we will interact with our Lord over our becoming more holy and righteous people in God’s sight. Indeed, that we might become more like Him by His grace.

Today we want to consider the greatness of the strength of Jesus our great High Priest. 1st of all – We want to consider the greatness of the strength of His Personal Character. (verse 26) And 2nd – The greatness of the strength of His Sacrificial Offering of Himself. (verses 27 & 28) May the Lord help us at this time to see that our whole salvation our whole transformation in holiness and righteousness rests upon Christ’s strength to save us, to the uttermost.

1st of all – Let us consider the greatness of the strength of Jesus’ Personal Character.

Verse 26 says – “For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens...” In the King James and the American Standard Version it says – “For such a High Priest became us...” The word in the Original is *πρεπω* (*prepo*) and it means that He is suitable for us. His character qualifications suit our great need as sinners in the sight of God. That He would undertake to save us required that He should have impeccable character qualities. It was indeed fitting that we should have such a High Priest as He was, it says in the ESV. It is fitting because of what Christ is like.

His character is described for us here in four very important ways. Our great High Priest is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. And as a result of that He has become higher than the heavens. Let’s think about each of these character qualifications for a few minutes. He is holy. You may not understand that Christ came to fulfill the law in regard to all of the types set forth in it, and I so want to speak specifically of this in relation to Aaron, the first high priest under the Old Covenant.

Turn with me to Exodus chapter 28, verses 1-4. “Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron’s garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.”

You will notice that these garments that would be made for Aaron were called “holy” garments. They were for glory and for beauty; that is, they would make Aaron look glorious and beautiful in an outward physical way. They were given to him and to the other priests so that they would be seen as set apart to the priestly ministry, and that they themselves, as they looked at these clothes, they would remember the important office that they were called to. As the people looked at them, they would think that Aaron was set apart to holiness by God Himself. And because of the beauty of His priestly uniform, they would respect his office and the work that he was called to do. They would stand in awe of God’s high priest for He was doing God’s work of offering sacrifice.

But these garments were intended by God to be typical of the glory and beauty of Christ's human nature. Christ put on holiness as a Man in His Incarnation, when He took human flesh to Himself. He clothed Himself with a body and a true human nature. When He laid down His life at the cross, He put off this garment of His flesh for a time. And then in His resurrection, He put it on again; He took it up again. In these actions He was ministering on our behalf as our great High Priest. There is an infinite beauty and glory in Christ's human nature because He is both God and a Perfect Righteous Man. He was holy unto God in all His words and all His deeds. He was holy in His devotion to God in His prayers and in His faith in His Father's purpose and plan of what He would do and accomplish by His life and His death.

Let's think further about Aaron's clothing and Christ's ministry as High Priest. Here in Exodus 28, it goes on to set forth all the details of all the various pieces of clothing that Aaron wore as high priest. The ephod, which was the outermost garment of all, and put over the robe, was a shorter garment than the robe; kind of like a glorified suit jacket for size, buttoned down with onyx stones upon the top of the shoulders, and it was belted at the waist. It had no sleeves. Its colors were blue and purple and scarlet interwoven with threads of those colors and gold threads as well. It was woven together in a very beautiful way, by craftsmen who were gifted artisans; men who were filled with wisdom from God, to put it together in such a way, that holiness would be thought of, when Aaron was looked upon by the people.

The Ephod together with the robe, was a very fit emblem of the excellency and purity and holiness of Christ's human nature; how He was given the Spirit without measure. Aaron's wearing this garment was showing forth typically, to the worshipers at that day, what Christ would come to be and to do, as our Great High Priest. He would be holiness unto the Lord personified. And in His human nature He would offer Himself to God as a sacrifice for our sins. In verse 8, it says – "And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen."

This band at the waist, over the Ephod jacket, it typically represented Christ's strength to do His work as a priest, and His readiness to perform it. He was set apart to His ministry by God, as the Holy One of Israel. His faithfulness and integrity in doing and keeping the Law; His righteousness being the girdle around His waist, and His faithfulness the belt around His loins, as it says in Isaiah 11: 5. In verse 15 the breastplate of judgment is mentioned. "You shall make a breastplate of judgment. It was artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod. It was made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. Settings of stones were put into it. And these stones would have the names of the son of Israel on them.

In verse 29 it says – "So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the Lord continually." This was typical of Christ's having all of the Israel of God upon His heart continually. When He went to the cross, His bearing our judgment there was the thing that rested heavy upon His heart until it was accomplished. And when He had borne our sins in His own body on the tree, after He had accomplished our redemption and died, He was then able to enter the Most Holy Place of heaven once for all; not with the blood of bulls and goats but with His own blood He obtained our redemption. (Hebrews 9: 12)

Now, we should understand, that right now, from His exalted position at the right hand of the Father He is interceding on our behalf. All of His dear people are continually on His holy mind. In verse 36 of Exodus 28 it says – "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: "Holiness to the Lord." "And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban." "So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." This writing of Holiness to the Lord, which was on the plate of gold on the turban of

Aaron, speaks to us today of Christ having accomplished our redemption. He now is applying all the benefits of our salvation to us so that we might be holy even as He is holy.

Even as it was on Aaron's forehead, we are continually on Christ's mind, because He ever lives to make intercession for us. In all that we offer to the Lord in our service to Him, we find that we need His intercession on our behalf, so that our gifts will be accepted before the Lord. Christ bears the iniquity of our holy things. That is, His righteousness is imputed to all of our works to make them acceptable to God, even holy. The offering of ourselves, our time, our substance, and our labors, Christ sanctifies all of these things. We are holy because of imputed righteousness and imparted grace. God sees us as holy for Christ's sake in relation to our justification. And we are becoming more holy in our sanctification because of Christ's intercession, and His grace to help us keep His word and live to His glory. When we are tempted, tried, and oft times failing, He our strength, our victory is.

We see here in our text that Christ was also harmless in His earthly ministry. Christ never harmed any person during the time of His earthly ministry. He never did wrong. He always went about doing good. 1st Peter 2: 21-24 says – “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.’” Since Christ was righteous continually in this good way, He calls us to be the same. We should follow in His steps, by being harmless. People should not be afraid of us. They should not be afraid to talk to us. They should not feel that we are continually judging them and evaluating them. Instead we should attempt to be their friend, even as Jesus would be to them, without compromising righteousness in any respect.

It says here in our text that Jesus was undefiled. That is He was pure in His heart and actions. He was undefiled by original sin. He was the only man to be born into the world with a sinless nature; undefiled by Adam's sin which all of us are. He also was undefiled by the sins of people around him. He would not be led into anyone else's sinful mistakes or thoughts or reasonings. He would not participate in other men's sins and thus be defiled. In this He was our perfect representative, to bring us to God! In 1st Timothy 5: 24 it says – “Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.” “Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.”

In Jesus' case, He had no sin in His heart, His words, or His actions. And all of His good works were clearly evident. This was the greatness of His character. And in this perfectly righteous character, He now intercedes for us. During His earthly ministry He was separate from sinners in His perfect righteousness. And He came to call sinners to repentance based upon what He would do for them. He would be the Perfect Man. He would have a perfect obedience to fulfill the law. And thus by faith in Him God imputes His righteousness to you. He would humble Himself to the point of death, even the death of the cross as a sinless sacrifice. All this shows the greatness of His strength of character. Come to Him today, and you will find grace that is greater than all your sins.

2nd – I would have you consider the greatness of the strength of His Sacrificial Offering of Himself. (verses 27 & 28)

“The Lord Jesus 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.” “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.” We see the weakness of Aaron having to offer up sacrifices in this way, back in Leviticus chapter 9. Let me read you a couple of sections from this chapter. Verses 1-6 – “It came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. And he said to Aaron, “Take for yourself a

young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD.”

“And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying – Take a kid of the goats as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering, also a bull and a ram as peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the LORD will appear to you.” “So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of meeting. And all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. Then Moses said – This is the thing which the LORD commanded you to do, and the glory of the LORD will appear to you.” Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded.”

So Aaron was to take for himself a young bull as a sin offering, and a ram as a burnt offering. The offering of these creatures which were both strong and innocent, once again representing the character and ability of Christ to be a suitable sacrifice for sinners to take away their sins. Also a kid of the goats was offered as a burnt offering. This creature fitly represented Christ who knew no sin, being made sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2nd Corinthians 5: 21) Also, a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, were offered by him. These creatures properly represent Christ in His strength and innocence. “In the first year” should make us think of the youthfulness of Christ at the time of His death on the cross; His spotless purity, and His painful sufferings. (Gill)

Also, a bull and a ram offered as peace offerings would have intimated to them the peace and joy which would come to those for whom the sacrifice was made. For knowing that atonement had been made, was intended to bring joy and peace in believing in God’s atonement through the priest’s offering. Further, when these things were offered, the glory of the Lord would appear to Aaron that day, it says. So, it says, they brought what Moses commanded, before the tabernacle of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. And then Moses told them that this was thing which the Lord commanded them to do, and the glory of the Lord would appear to them.

What was this glory? It was either Christ, who is the brightness of His Father’s glory, appearing in a human form, as He sometimes did in that Dispensation. Or it was the glory of light breaking forth out of the Holy of Holies itself, where God had now taken up His dwelling between the cherubim. Or perhaps it was the fire coming and consuming the sacrifice. But all of these things were typical of Christ’s sufferings, and the glory that would follow. After the offerings were made, it says in verse 23 – “And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar.

When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.” The reason that I have shown you these things is so that you might understand the greatness of Christ’s High Priestly ministry which was typified by Aaron’s. It was that in the sacrifice and offerings which Aaron offered, they only brought blessing to Aaron and the people in relation to their representation of Christ’s future ministry as High Priest! Aaron had to offer sacrifices for himself! And he had to offer sacrifices for the people. Ceremonially, this was done to make atonement for the people.

But it was not the blood of bulls and goats that availed to really atone for sins. It was rather, the people’s seeing that the blood of bulls and goats and rams and lambs was typical of the Christ who would come and be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. The strength of ministry was not in Aaron, it was only really found in Christ! Aaron’s high priestly ministry, accompanied by his sons, had no efficacy at all to take away sins, but it did serve to point to Christ, and what He would come to do. Christ would come to willingly suffer

and die as a sacrifice for the sins of His people; all who believe in Him to become their Savior and High Priest.

But Jesus did not have to offer up any sacrifices for Himself as those high priests did. He was the spotless Lamb of God. He being the Perfect Son of God in one of His natures, this brought infinite and eternal value to His sufferings. And this is imputed and imparted to us when we are saved. As a Man, He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. And so, after He had offered Himself up on the cross, He knew that that was the only time that He would have to do it. It would be a once, for all time, sacrifice. And so the law appointed men as high priests who had weakness, but the word of the oath which came after the law, that is by the mouth of the David in the 110th Psalm, appointed the Son, our Lord Jesus, to be our High Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

Aaron blessed the people after he finished offering his sacrifices. Christ, after He had offered Himself a sacrifice for sins, when He was risen from the dead and about to ascend to heaven, He lifted up His hands and blessed His disciples. (Luke 24: 50) And now from heaven, all of the saints are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Him. It says in verse 24 of Leviticus 9, that fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering. And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces. Well they might do these things, for when this happened they knew that the sacrifice had been accepted by God, and that their sins had been forgiven. After Christ ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and He descended upon the apostles in tongues of fire. In doing so, He ratified their commission and their ministry, even as the priests were blessed that day when their ministry began, their commission to their office was ratified.

But let me ask you as I close this message: Do you shout for joy in your spirit, perhaps even shout out loud, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners; even a sinner like yourself? Do you see how much greater He is, as a High Priest, than the high priest Aaron was in his day? It is only what Christ has accomplished as a High Priest which will avail to save your soul, and bring you on to maturity. Eventually, He will bring all of His saints to complete perfection, someday when you die, and when He returns. He has been perfected forever, it says here in verse 28. The Old Covenant and the Law were completely fulfilled when Christ said – “It is finished” at the cross. When He rose from the dead, the New Testament age began. The Old Covenant, Old Testament times were now over. They had come to an end! Now Christ is seated at God’s right hand and He ever lives to make intercession for you. If you believe in Him, it will be entirely effectual.