

## Hebrews 7:23-28 – Priests sacrificed for sins; Jesus can save completely

**Jewish Christians brought up under priesthood are taught about Jesus' unique position as the only intermediary we ever need**

23-25 Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them.

*“Permanent priesthood” – the language is that of something which cannot be changed. Now people will (1) never be without a priest to represent them to God, and (2) one who lives forever and therefore saves forever, (3) in a way which is now fully effective, unlike the old order of priests, expanded in Heb. 10:1-4;10-14.*

26 Such a high priest truly meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.

*“Holy, blameless, pure, set apart” – contrasting the high priesthood of Jesus, who had no sin nature, with the morality of the Levitical priesthood which by*

**IN PRACTICE** The letter to Jewish-background believers talks about priests and high priests in several places – all in the present tense. The system of temple worship and sacrifices continued up until 70 AD, although superseded – but it was what they knew. Now they were receiving the teaching of the apostles, 1 Peter 2:9, Rev 1:6, that every believer has a direct relationship with Jesus, and is part of a priesthood with royal privileges, as sons and daughters of the king! The only priestly intermediary any of us need, is Jesus Christ. He has identified totally with our world and our sin, before paying the price for it and ascending to take up a role of the highest authority, for which He has uniquely qualified – taking our intercession and praying it with us before the Father. Knowing this, and knowing Him, enables us to pray bold prayers that push back darkness and bring in His kingdom order.

**QUESTION** *As part of this new priesthood, how does that help you pray for others?*

**PRAYER** Father God, so many things that we think we see clearly have a greater purpose or different timescale or way of working out than we are aware of at first. Help us to be of "earthly use by being heavenly minded" as we grow in faith from Your word in these passages where the story starts one way and ends – Your way!

*comparison was weak, earthly and with the flaws of unredeemed human nature.*

27 Unlike the other high priests, He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered himself.

*“He does not need to offer sacrifices” – From a different starting point, Jesus represents a completely different order of priesthood “unlike the other high priests” who sacrificed only animals, an imperfect substitute. Our high priest offered Himself, a perfect and once-for-all-time sacrifice.*

28 For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

*“The oath... after the law” – a verse which echoes Heb. 5:1-3 and sums up the whole discussion of Heb. 5:1-10; 7:1-28 of Christ’s appointment from perfect (complete) qualification, to a far superior high priesthood that the Levitical priesthood could never achieve. The oath refers to Psalm 110:4, a declaration of God’s promise of an eternal priest, over and above the earlier giving of the law and establishment of temporal priests and high priests.*

# The Living Word

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The Bible readings for Sunday, October 28, 2018, with commentary

Revised Common Lectionary readings for **Sunday, October 28** in Bible order

*Prepare for Sunday by reading the Bible passages beforehand – read again to reflect on Sunday’s teaching*

Theme: **God and His purposes are good, all the time**

Job 42:1-6, 10-17 – Job’s encounter with God opens his eyes

Jeremiah 31:7-9 – Exiled Israel’s promise: a new relationship with God

Mark 10:46-52 – Blind Bartimaeus implores Jesus to heal him

Hebrews 7:23-28 – Priests sacrificed for sins; only Jesus can save completely

Also: Psalm 34:1-8, 19-22

## Job 42:1-6, 10-17 – Job’s encounter with God opens his eyes

**He repents of his earlier poor understanding of God and His ways**

1-2 Then Job replied to the Lord: “I know that You can do all things; no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

*“I know...” Job has realised two things from what the Lord has said to all of them, in His summing-up speech: (1) how unlike God he is, and (2) the message that God is both loving and all-powerful.*

**For further study:** Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26. *Nothing halts God’s plan, Job 23:13; Isa. 14:27; 46:10.*

3 You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures My plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

4 “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.’

*“You asked...You said” – Job quotes, with humility, what God had said at the beginning of His first speech. He is seeing God in a new way.*

*“Things I did not understand” – Job has spoken about God with accuracy and integrity, even if his understanding of God was limited. His friends’ spokesman Eliphaz, Job 4:12-16, 42:7, claimed that his advice came from prophetic insight. God affirmed Job – not Eliphaz and his friends in their superficial*

*doctrine about God who they clearly did not know.*

5 My ears had heard of You but now my eyes have seen You.

*“My eyes have seen you” – a deep experience with God. Until now, Job had not seen God, Job 23:8, but now, like Isaiah, he encountered God’s close presence and holiness, a leap in his relationship.*

6 Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

*“I despise myself...I repent...” – Job recognises the ignorance behind his words earlier and he repents of having such a weak understanding of God; not as his friends had urged, of moral issues.*

10-11 After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the Lord had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.

*“The Lord restored... him” – The last words we heard from Job are repentance (v.6). Now we hear of Job’s restoration and the extent to which God blessed him. The two are linked.*

12 The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys.

13-15 And he also had seven sons and three daughters. The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their

father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

*"He had..." – the tally is twice the head of animals, but not children – Job already had seven sons and three daughters waiting for him in heaven.*

16-17 After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

*"Full of years" – old age, like Abraham and Isaac, Gen. 25:8; 35:29, being a sign of God's blessing.*

### Jeremiah 31:7-9 – Exiled Israel's promise: a new relationship with God

#### **The remnant, exiled people in a foreign land without rights will return rejoicing**

God promises Israel that "I will be ... God ... , and they shall be my people," Jer. 31:1-14 and in a number of other places in Jeremiah, with the additional promises that He will have mercy on weary Israel, Jer. 31:15-26, and will make Israel secure, Jer. 31:27-30.

7 This is what the Lord says: "Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, 'Lord, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'

*"The foremost" – because they are God's elect. "Lord, save..." – this word is the basis of the 'Hosanna' of the triumphal entry (Palm Sunday), Matt. 21:9. "The remnant" – those who have survived exile.*

8 See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth. Among them will be the blind

and the lame, expectant mothers and women in labour; a great throng will return.

*"North... and from the ends of the earth" – Assyria and Babylon and the remoter known world. About 50,000 returned between 538-536 BC.*

9 They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's father, and Ephraim is My firstborn son.

*"Weeping" – with joy and praise, verse 7 above*

**For further study**, see Ps. 125:5-6, Isaiah 55:12, Psalm 23:1-3, Isaiah 49:10, Isaiah 40:3-4.

*"Ephraim is My firstborn" – Ephraim standing for Israel, firstborn meaning first in rank and priority, Exod. 4:22. David, eighth son of Jesse, is referred to in this way, Psalm 89:27 and Jesus is called the firstborn over all creation, Col. 1:15; Rev. 1:5.*

**IN PRACTICE** Job suffered, and spoke about how he felt to God and to his counsellors. He was honest - but he misjudged God's intentions from a position of knowing more about God, than knowing of God. However, unlike his pious counsellors who claimed to speak for God when they didn't, Job was honest and admitted his shallow and inadequate perceptions - for which God commended him. The Jews in exile who heard Jeremiah's word had also made mistakes - serious enough to lose their city and be deported. But, like Job, they had learned lessons and come to know God in a deeper way, and this remnant of true worshippers were about to be led back with joy. God wants for us that we learn from life's setbacks and see His greater purposes, learn to love him more personally and deeply - and grow spiritually.

**QUESTION** To what extent have you given God your heart, not just your beliefs?

### Mark 10:46-52 – Blind Bartimaeus implores Jesus to heal him

#### **A man without physical sight has the insight to see Jesus and His kingdom purpose more clearly than the disciples**

46-47 Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and His disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

*"Jericho" – the new city built by Herod the Great, to the south of the site of the ancient and abandoned one.*

*"By the roadside begging" – on the pilgrim route to Jerusalem, where Jesus and those with Him were going.*

*"Bartimaeus" – Son of Impurity, a derisory name reflecting Jewish tradition that blindness resulted from sin, John 9:1-3.*

*"Jesus, Son of David" – prepares the hearer or reader for the "Hosanna" shouts of the crowd at Jerusalem, Jer. 31:7 and note, above.*

*"Mercy" – undeserved kindness, which Scripture repeatedly ascribes to God. Bartimaeus, blind in one sense, is seeing something clearly – Jesus is the Messiah but also personifies God's merciful character in bringing the kingdom to poor, maimed and blind people like him. This was Jesus' own understanding, Luke 4:18-19.*

48 Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

**IN PRACTICE** The disciples were spiritually struggling to see who Jesus was, and what His kingdom was about. However, blind beggar Bartimaeus quickly sees something they are missing, recognising the One bringing God's unconditional mercy in a kingdom order that, unlike the Jews of that time, is fair to the poor and disadvantaged. We, too, start from a self-centred and short-sighted, limited perspective. God challenges us in this with His higher purpose, inviting us look again, raise our faith and see what He is doing - and join Him in it.

**QUESTION** Can you believe that Jesus wants us to participate in this kind of miraculous healing today?

*"Many rebuked him" – regarding him of no status and no account, as they had earlier with children, and doing what He had taught was wrong then, Mark 10:13-14.*

49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you."

50 Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

51 "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."

*"What do you want..." – Jesus' 'unnecessary' question drew out the blind man's faith as he then spoke out his expectation. Jesus gives the blind man what he asks for in faith. There is a parallel with the spiritual blindness and slow learning of James and John earlier, to whom he put the same question – probably Mark's intention.*

52 "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

*"Your faith has healed you" – this time without touch unlike the previous occasion when a blind man was healed, Mark 8:22-26.*

*For further study on faith and healing (sozo, literally 'saved') see Mark 5:23, 28, 34; Mark 6:56; Matt. 9:22, Luke 8:48.*