

## Saved To The Uttermost • Hebrews 7:25

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Amusement Park Rides

1. The first time I went to Disneyland was during Summer vacation when I was all of about 6 years old.
  - a. we lived in the Mid-west and took a road trip to CA to visit my dad's family.
  - b. of course, being in Southern CA meant my relatives had had to take us on the obligatory trip to Dizzyland
2. But being only 6, it turned out I was too short to get on some of the more fun rides.
3. I was confined to such thrills as *Mr. Toad's Wild Ride* and the *Mad Hatter*.
  - a. the *Merry-Go Round* was fairly merry
  - b. and the *Storybook Land* cruise was mildly interesting
  - c. but I wanted to go on *Autopia* and couldn't 'cause I was too runtish; my head didn't clear the height limit
4. Years later, now living in Southern CA and into my junior high years, we went to *Disneyland* again.
  - a. I was able to get on every ride; the *Matterhorn* was the best.
  - b. then, *Knott's Berry Farm* started adding rides – like the *Parachute Drop* and one that did two full 360 degree corkscrews!
  - c. *Montezuma's Revenge* shot out of the station house at high speed, did a full loop, ran up an incline, then shot *backwards* through the same loop.
  - d. I was in heaven!
5. Then, just north of LA – they built a Roller Coaster Heaven called *Magic Mountain*!
  - a. just recently I took my 9 year old daughter Karesse
  - b. we went on *Viper*, *Colossus*, *Batman*, *Riddler's Revenge*, *Freefall*, and *Goliath*!
  - c. we were a bit disappointed that the new rides *Déjà vu* and *Xtreme* weren't open yet.
  - d. they promise to take the roller coaster experience to the next level!

- e. as the day wound down and we were getting a bit tired, I saw an old ride I'd taken years before when Magic Mountain first opened and the most thrilling ride in the park was *Revolution*; it was a simple little kiddie ride that was some seats suspended by chains that rises in the air and then spins.
- f. I guess at the time it seemed pretty fun, pretty "out-there" and exciting
- g. Karesse and I decided to go for a ride and got on – we went round and round, and you now what? It was pretty boring!
- h. after riding *Viper* and *Goliath* – the rides that used to seem such fun just don't hold the same thrill.

## **B. Hebrews**

1. In some way, that's the perspective the writer of Hebrews is trying to communicate to his readers.
2. As Jews, the Judaism of their past had brought them as close to God as was possible at that time.
  - a. but God never intended it to be the final or full revelation of His plan or will for them.
  - b. Judaism set the stage for a *new* covenant, which would be brought in by the Messiah
  - c. until Messiah came, Judaism came short of the bar and was confined to rituals and laws which all pointed forward to the Word of the Messiah who would bring full growth and allow them to enter in to what Judaism could only point toward & prepare for.
3. As Christians, the original readers of this letter had now entered in to that new covenant through faith in Jesus Christ.
  - a. they'd been born again and were indwelt by the Spirit of God.
  - b. the things they had only looked forward to before, they now enjoyed.
4. So why, the writer asks, would they be interested in going *back* to the incomplete and unsatisfying Judaism of their past?

## **C. Set-Up**

1. In this section of Hebrews, which stretches from Ch. 5 all the way through the middle of chapter 10, the author shows in detail how Jesus has fulfilled all of the rituals of the Law Of Moses.

2. Here in ch. 7 he's showing how Jesus serves as a priest from an order of priests which is vastly superior to the priesthood of Israel.
3. We won't go into his argument this morning – that's the subject of our study this coming Wednesday evening –
4. But for now, let's begin by seeing what he says in v. 23 . . .

## II. TEXT

### A. Vs. 23-24

**23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.**

**24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.**

1. One of the reasons Jesus is a superior priest to the priests who had served Israel is because He has risen from the dead and so serves *continually*.
2. That is not something *they* were capable of doing.
3. I like the way John MacArthur says it, "The . . . **priests** had what might be called the *ultimate disqualification* for *permanent* ministry: **death!** None of them could serve indefinitely. Each died and had to be succeeded in order for the priesthood to continue."
4. In Numbers 20 we read an interesting story –
  - a. during the Exodus, while the people wandered around the wilderness, they came to Mount Hor.
  - b. Aaron, Moses' brother and the first high priest, was old and it was time for him to pass on
  - c. God told Moses to take Aaron and his son Eleazar and ascend the mount in the sight of all the people
  - d. Moses then took Aaron's priestly robes off him and placed them on his son.
  - e. Aaron then died, and Moses and Eleazar descended from the mountain.
  - f. the people grieved over the loss of Aaron and mourned him for 30 days, which was far longer than usual.
  - g. their attention was being focused on Aaron's death -
  - h. as if God were impressing upon them the fact that the

- priesthood Aaron represented was one that *passes away*.
5. The reason this was so grievous to them is only understandable as we realize just how crucial the role of the priest was in the ancient world.
    - a. keep in mind that in ancient religion, all ancient religion, people did not have *direct access* to their god
    - b. access was limited to priests, to those who were properly trained in the rituals for encountering god
    - c. priest-craft was secret – passed on from an older priest to his trainee who would carry on in his place when he was gone.
    - d. the common man or woman could *not* have a personal or intimate relationship with their god *on their own* – everything went through the priest.
    - e. this meant that the worship of the people was only as *effective* as the priest's working of the rituals
      - 1) when people saw a priest was earnest and sincere in his performance of religious rites, they rejoiced.
      - 2) but when the priest was cold and indifferent and performed his role in a perfunctory manner – they grew fearful and timid, thinking the god might be ill-disposed to grant them their needs and desires.
    - f. the unending succession of priests, one after another, because of their mortality, meant a constant state of concern on the part of people –
    - g. would the new priest do a good job? Would he be sincere or just an office holder?
  6. Since we put *little* emphasis on priests *today* it may be difficult for us to relate to this and how deeply it would bear on the quality of a person's spiritual life and sense of union with God.
  7. So let me use an example that may this home:
    - a. at a church in a mid size town in central CA, there's a pastor whose been faithfully serving his congregation for 40 years.
      - 1) he's a true shepherd whose been leading, feeding, and protecting the flock diligently.
      - 2) he's a humble man of God and everyone in the town loves him
      - 3) the people in the church are spiritually mature and strong
      - 4) they are so active in their faith, both the church and the city

are well-served.

- 5) in the 40 years he's served there, there's never been a hint of scandal,
- 6) and while not everyone in town agrees with everything the pastor says, he is still deeply respected as a man of integrity who believes what he preaches.
- b. one day, his wife drops by his office to bring him lunch, but as she enters the room, she finds him lying on the floor – he's had a heart attack and has entered into His reward.
- c. what's the church to do? They have to secure a new pastor!
- d. and the church is so deeply involved in the life of the community, they need to find someone quickly.
- e. is there going to be apprehension on the part of the people?  
You bet!
- f. who could fill the shoes left by this godly man?
- g. what young seminary graduate has the experience and wisdom of 40 years?
- h. whose got the personal integrity and balance in life to be able to carry on in the course the previous pastor has established?
8. Put in that perspective, it's not heard to understand how the spiritual fortunes of people were tied up in the quality of those who served them as priests.
9. What made it doubly difficult for the Jews is that under the *Old Covenant* – their approach to God was only through a *substitutionary sacrifice* that would be offered *by a priest* to God **ON THEIR BEHALF!**
  - a. what if the priest took their offering to God with a distracted mind or cold heart?
  - b. what if the ritual was botched through carelessness?
  - c. what if the priest was tired or ill or just out of sheer boredom used shortcuts in the procedure that would dishonor the holiness of God?
10. All of these were grave concerns the people had about their priests.
11. When the high priest was someone who showed great reverence for God and performed the rites of his office with skill and integrity, the people rejoiced.
12. But these priests always grew old and died and the priesthood

- was then passed on to another.
13. Not all the priests served with integrity – some were corrupt and defiled the office.
  14. So the priesthood *changed* from priest to priest, and as a result, the *quality of spiritual life* among the people changed as well!
  15. The writer is saying here that because Jesus has risen from the dead, never to die – his priesthood continues on, *unchanging!*
  16. What makes this especially comforting is that *His* priesthood, His service as our high priest – is perfect!
    - a. Jesus is the epitome of integrity!
    - b. His attention is 100% on The Father and on us!
    - c. and the sacrifice He brings before The Father on our behalf isn't merely the blood of some bull or goat –
    - d. it's His own precious blood – which doesn't merely cover over and hide our sin, like the blood of bulls and goats did
    - e. His blood *purges* and washes us as *white as snow*.
    - f. His blood removes our sin as far from us as the east is from the west!
  17. That word “unchangeable” in v. 24 is a special word.
    - a. it was a legal term that was affixed to the conclusion of a legal document to indicate that it was both *valid* and *unalterable!*
    - b. it wasn't subject to amendment but was surely meant to be put into force just as it was stated in the terms.
  18. As the writer uses it here, he means that Jesus' priesthood is valid and unalterable!
    - a. Jesus is serving even now as our great high priest
    - b. and we can have full assurance that the service He performs before The Father is totally acceptable to Him.
    - c. not only that – we never have to worry that God is going to suddenly turn things around and devise some new strategy, some new way to come to Him and worship.
    - d. we never need fear that a new plan of salvation will be thrust upon us.
  19. A 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher decided to instill a method of rewards and punishments for her students to help enforce order in her classroom.
    - a. using her computer and color printer, she made up a batch of classroom dollars

- b. if her students were good, she rewarded them and gave them the special money.
  - c. if a student was acting badly, they were penalized and had to pay.
  - d. at the end of each month, the students got to buy things from the class store or turn them in for extra recess time of an automatic A on a quiz.
  - e. but suddenly, the teacher noticed there were a lot more dollars floating around than she has passed out!
  - f. she over-heard some of the students talking – one of the little girls had gone home and told her parents about the class dollars and her dad had then made up a bunch of counterfeits and given them to his daughter; she was then giving them away to people who were nice to her.
  - g. so Monday morning, she informed the class that the class dollars would no longer be used;
  - h. instead, she was going to give out special aluminum coins that she was having custom made.
  - i. of course, all the children who had really earned their class dollars were upset; they were being penalized for someone else's wrong-doing.
20. We need never worry that we'll wake up one morning, turn on the news and find out that God has sent a message that too many people have become Christians and heaven is too crowded so God has implemented a new means of being saved.
21. Heaven is not some cheap or cheesy hotel with a flashing *No Vacancy* sign out front.
22. God isn't going to change the price tags on us!
23. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!
24. And the salvation He brings is good for eternity!
25. Let this be our answer to those who have come since Christ claiming that their insights and revelations *added* to His work.
- a. let this be our answer to the Judge Rutherford and the Jehovah's Witnesses =  
    - Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood!
  - b. let this be our answer to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and the 12 Apostles of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City
  - c. let this be our answer to Roman Catholicism which wants to

insert a new order of priests between God and His people

We need no priests because we have One already.

His name is Jesus and his priesthood is valid and unalterable!

- d. here is our answer to Islam which claims Muhammad, who came some 600 years *after* Jesus, is the final messenger of God and whose office surpasses that of Christ.
- e. and finally, let this be our answer to any man or woman today who claims to be a prophet who comes with some supposed message from God about the new thing God is doing.

God's New Thing is the New Covenant – inaugurated and officiated by Jesus Christ!

And His office as our Great High Priest is still in force today!

AMEN!

## **B. V. 25**

### **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.**

- 1. “Therefore” - because Jesus continues forever and abides in the office of our Great High Priest – *from* that office and position – He is able to save!
- 2. And how does He save – what's the extent His salvation goes?
  - a. to the uttermost!
  - b. all the way, completely, entirely, without distraction, with nothing left undone.
- 3. I don't care what you've done or who you are – Jesus is able to save you, completely.
- 4. He is able, more than able, to accomplish what concerns you today.
  - a. He is able, more than able, to handle anything that comes your way.
  - b. He is able, more than able, to make you what He wants you to be.
- 5. He who framed the universe with one word;
  - a. He who spoke and a billion, billion stars winked to life in a vast unfathomable sky;
  - b. He who gathered up a thimbleful of dust and breathed into it

- and it became a man
- c. He who's already written the whole story of history -
  - d. He is able to save you and I, my friend.
6. And He has the power to affect *all* that that word *salvation* means -
- a. to heal, to deliver from danger
  - b. to protect and preserve,
  - c. to make complete and whole
7. Is there any sin God cannot forgive and save from?
- a. only one!
  - b. but that one is not murder – from the cross he looked down on those who were murdering him and said, “Father, forgive them.”
  - c. that one sin God cannot forgive is not abuse – for there was no greater abuse than the abuse Jesus suffered at the hands of sinful men that day.
  - d. most of the sins human beings commit were present in one way or another in the way Jesus was treated that day.
  - e. and those that weren't we placed on Him when He hung upon the cross.
  - f. yet in His death, they were all atoned for – all but one!
8. What that one unforgiven sin is, we see in the next phrase . . .

**Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him,**

- a. there's only one sin God cannot forgive - the sin of rejecting Christ.
  - b. you see, Christ is the ground, the basis of *all* forgiveness
  - c. if you reject Christ, you *have* no forgiveness and must pay for your own sins, all of them, eternally!
  - d. Jesus said it this way in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. NO one comes to the Father except through me.”
  - e. you might not like that - but that's too bad!
  - f. heaven is *God's* home and He determines who enters.
  - g. Jesus is the only way!
9. But those who come to God through Christ are told that the salvation they are given goes all the way.
- a. the moment we turned from our sin and put our faith in Christ,

- we *were* saved from the *penalty* of our sin.
- b. now, as we abide in Christ, we *are being* saved from the *power* of sin.
  - c. and when Christ comes again, we *will be* saved from the very *presence* of sin!
10. Have you come to God through faith in Jesus Christ, or are you trying to come to God some other way?
- a. maybe the way of being a good person -
  - b. or maybe you think God's too good a guy not to allow you in, after all, you haven't *murdered* anyone!
  - c. is that it? Do you think that God draws the line at murder but anything *less* is acceptable?
  - d. the problem with thinking this way is that it doesn't see *sin*, even the *smallest* sin, for what it *really is*!
  - e. sin, all of it, is nothing less than *cosmic treason* and that means everyone who sins is a *traitor* who's sold out his or her fellow man and imperiled the entire creation.
    - 1) maybe you *haven't* murdered anyone -
    - 2) have you ever lied?
    - 3) and are you aware of how many seemingly insignificant lies have grown and engendered hatred that has led to someone's death?
    - 4) how many lives have been devastated; ruined by some gossipy little lie that's exploded with countless retelling!
    - 5) there are people this week who will commit murder or kill themselves because someone told a lie!
11. My point is this – sin, all sin, is a dark ugly blot that requires eternal judgment!
12. There is no salvation from sin but faith in Jesus Christ!

**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.**

13. Not only is Jesus the only hope, the only way of salvation – but now that He has risen from the dead, He lives on, making continual and constant intercession for us before the Father.
14. Oh, how this ought to thrill and comfort us!
15. It's said that people's number one fear is the fear of public

- speaking!
- a. in terms of stress, at the top is the loss of a loved one, then comes divorce
  - b. and third is giving a speech.
16. And of course – the larger the crowd, or the more famous the people listening to you, the greater the anxiety.
17. You might think this is easy for me – it ‘taint!
- a. I am a bit nervous every Saturday night as I think about Sunday morning!
  - b. Sunday morning, as I drive to church, the butterflies start to open their wings
  - c. when I sit in my office and go over my notes one last time, those butterflies lift off the branches and start dive-bombing my innards
  - d. I’m fine through worship, but then I walk up here and for the first minute or so, I can be a bit light-headed as my heart pounds away in my chest.
  - e. it’s gotten better over the years, the more I’ve done it, the easier it gets.
  - f. but every time I’m asked to speak in a *new* setting, to a larger group or if there are people there who are famous – I’m fairly a basket case!
  - g. just being honest!
18. How would you like to stand up here and speak for a half hour?
19. How would you like to stand at the Ventura County Fairgrounds and open the Harvest Crusade in prayer on Friday night for about 8,000 people, knowing there are mayors, pastors, and celebrities in the crowd? Would you be nervous?
20. What if you were given that invitation, that opportunity, but then you had the chance to meet with, oh, let’s say, Billy Graham and work over your prayer with him.
- a. you jotted down a few ideas on what to pray
  - b. then gave them to him and asked him what he thought
  - c. he takes them, looks them over, makes a few suggestions on how to pray before an evangelistic event, some better terminology, something a bit more eloquent than what you first had in mind.
  - d. then when you got it back, you realized what Billy had done

was take your ideas and put them into words that *perfectly* conveyed what was in your heart but you were unable to articulate.

- e. then as the time drew near for you to actually stand out there and give the prayer, you realized you'd lost your voice!
  - f. so you write out a request and hand it to Dr. Graham, asking him to take your place and pray the prayer for you.
  - g. together, the two of you step up to the podium and Billy grasps the sides of it as he leans slightly toward the mic and then says, "I am here tonight, praying on behalf of my friend." Then He says your name. He goes on, "This is the prayer my friend wants to pray." Then he prays the prayer the two of you wrote together.
21. This is only the dimmest picture of what the writer is saying in v. 25 when He says Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us.
22. For you see, it isn't a stadium of well-known people we come to here – that is far too *petty* an example; this is GOD we come before!
23. Jesus Christ, as our Great High Priest, has entered into the presence of the Father in Heaven.
- a. unlike the priests of old who entered the presence behind the veil, performed their service then left
  - b. Jesus has sat down at the right hand of God and from that position of favor He intercedes on our behalf.
  - c. Romans 8:34 "Christ died, and is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us."
24. A mother told her young son to go into the garden and pick some flowers to make a nice arrangement for his father when he got home from work.
- a. the boy collected everything that caught his eye and returned with a mass of both flowers and weeds.
  - b. but when the father come home, he was greeted by a beautiful bouquet
  - c. the mother's tender care had removed the weeds and arranged the flowers.
25. This is what Jesus does with our prayers
- a. how often we bring both flowers and weeds in our petitions
  - b. but Jesus knows our hearts and knows the Father's will

- c. so He arranges our requests and presents them to the Father in a manner the Father is both blessed by and moves to answer.
26. Friend, don't be concerned about the wording of your prayers!
- a. don't avoid prayer meetings or praying out loud in a group because you're afraid you'll sound clumsy
  - b. we're not praying to one another – but to God!
  - c. and Jesus intercedes for us – always!
  - d. He takes our prayers and presents them to the Father as a beautiful bouquet!

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. *Intercession*

1. There's another way the intercession of Jesus works on our behalf.
2. It has to do with even more than prayer – it has to do with us!
3. You see, Jesus not only makes intercession for us with His *words*; He also intercedes for us with His *wounds*!
4. If you watched the OJ trial, you know that when Marcia Clark or Johnnie Cochran made their case, they always *stood*.
  - a. they were trying to *persuade* the judge, the jury and the rest of the public.
  - b. neither felt their case was strong enough to sit while speaking.
  - c. but if we were to visit the home of Wayne Gretsky, he could sit on his couch and say, "I was a pretty good hockey player," there would be no discussion or debate. His trophies and championship rings sitting there on the shelf are the evidence that he was a *great* hockey player.
5. In the same way, Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father; His wounds the evidence He is a great Savior!
6. Jesus makes intercession for more than just our prayers, He intercedes for *us*!
  - a. when we fail, when we fall and sin,
  - b. He is right there at the Father's side to ensure we may obtain mercy and find grace.