

March 10, 2019 -

Hebrews 7:20-8:2 -

“The Perfect High Priest Forever.”

### Introduction:

Last week “Jeopardy” quiz show host Alex Trebek stated that he had been diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, which carries a very low survival rate. Mr. Trebek vowed to beat the cancer. The 78 year old who has hosted the game show since 1984, asks for your prayers and he declares He will beat this diagnosis. It was a blessing to hear him covet prayers. No matter how grim things may be there is always hope that prayer can change thing.

Research at San Francisco General Hospital looked at the effect of prayer on 393 cardiac patients. Half were prayed for by strangers who had only the patients’ names. Those patients had fewer complications, fewer cases of pneumonia, and needed less drug treatment. Studies like this one have been done for years by such intuitions like the NT Times, Harvard University to mention only a few. Their results are very similar. Marilyn Schlitz, Ph.D., and lecturer at Harvard, says, “That in a study on intercessory prayer, “the prayer groups had statistically significant improvements in outcome, suggesting that the intervention has clinical relevance.” Prayer makes a different, knowing the one who intercedes for us makes it better.

Duke University’s Harold G. Koenig, M.D., tells Newsmax Health. “Studies have shown prayer can prevent people from getting sick — and when they do get sick, prayer can help them get better faster,”. An exhaustive analysis of more than 1,500 reputable medical studies “indicates people who are more religious and pray more have better mental and physical health,”.

Elements of prayer are universally valid – across various religions, traditions, and practices. The act of prayer itself has beneficial physiological effects. Prayer, much like meditation or concentration on breathing techniques in Yoga, causes the mind and body to focus on singular focal points that align the mind, soul, and physical aspects of a person to lower cortisol levels, improve oxygen utilization, and confer numerous other psychological benefits.

However, I believe the Bible teaches us amazing results happen when we pray by faith to the one who makes intercession for us. When we feel that no one understands or can help us, we are reminded that Jesus gave us Himself, and He knows exactly who we are and what we are facing today. Jesus was made like us, “fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God”

Chapter seven explains that Jesus is a High Priest superior to any earthly high priest because He is after the order of Melchisedec. The point of the letter is to tell those Jews in that community that they can put everything on Jesus Christ. They can put all of their confidence in Him, all of their hope in Him and all of their trust in Him. Christ is superior and He is sufficient. That is the message of this book, that they do not need a combination of both the old and the new.

As Christians, we believe that God hears us when we pray not because we deserve it but because Christ has opened the way for us to talk directly to the Father.

**The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer. —Psalm 6:9**

As believers, perhaps the greatest privilege we have, aside from going to heaven when we die, is being able to pray powerfully while we are here on earth. To take advantage of the power of prayer, it is imperative when we pray remember three things about Jesus...

### **I Jesus Saves Completely (7:20-25).**

1. This new system that has been established is not without an oath, while those priests were made without an oath (7:20-21). It is not necessary for God to give an oath because He cannot lie, but He does so to add emphasis to this special promise. In verse 21b, the writer of Hebrews states that Jesus was made a priest with an oath. Then, he quotes a reference to the Messiah in Psalm 110:4, **The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever. This means Jesus is our eternal High Priest.** Because of this oath, Jesus is the surety-the One who guarantees the better testament with God (7:22).

2. Each Levitical priest had an unavoidable term limit-death (7:23). But because Jesus lives forever, he has an unchangeable priesthood (7:24). He is a superior High Priest because He will never need a successor. This truth should bring peace to your heart. Now we come to one of the greatest verses in the Bible, which tells us Jesus is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him (7:25a-b). This means Jesus saves completely and eternally. Then, Hebrews 7:25 declares--- Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. ). Because Jesus is not after the order of the Levitical priesthood, but is after the order of Melchisedec and appointed by God, you can relax. You can be at peace because Jesus saves completely once for all and continually makes intercession for you...

### **II Jesus does our Intercession (7:26-28).**

1. The verb translated intercession is present tense, which means Jesus is continually interceding for us and asking God the Father to act graciously on our behalf. Every time I confess a sin, Jesus says to the Father, "I'm Tony's High Priest and I have already made the sacrifice for that sin; so you can be gracious to him and forgive the poor guy."

2. Jesus, our high priest, is holy, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. <sup>27</sup> **Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's- for this he did once, when he offered up himself (7:26-27)**

"If the priesthood is to be defunct, then there must be a changing of all of the ceremonial laws." Certainly, there's not doing away with God's moral law. It's not all of a sudden right for us to say, "Well, we're under the new covenant. We may now commit adultery, steal, lie, covet, etc., etc., take the Lord...Lord's name in vain." No, God does not set aside His moral law. Paul says in Romans 7, "The law is holy, just, and good." But the ceremonial law, the Mosaic system of sacrifices has been set aside. That's what He's saying.

3. You don't have to worry about offering a sacrifice-Jesus did that once and-for-all. (Eph. 2:8). The believer has been liberated from the Law's penalty because Christ met its demands of death on the cross. Paul expresses this truth by saying, Know ye not brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? (7:1).

### **III Remember His position (8:1-2).**

1. What is Jesus' position? He is seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (8:1). The writer is saying the point of the previous seven chapters of Hebrews is to explain Jesus' position right now. The Greek word means the chief point. This is the apex. The most important feature about our priest is that He's sitting down. Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.

Imagine what it must have been like in heaven when Jesus returned to be installed as the eternal High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Imagine His glory right now as He sits at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty. Words do not have the power to describe the throne of the Majesty. However, Revelation 4:3 does give us some insight...

2. As our High Priest, Jesus is now a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man (8:2). The tabernacle in the wilderness was a replica of the original in heaven. Since He is a superior priest who has ascended to heaven, He ministers in a superior sanctuary. He doesn't minister in a skin tent like the Tabernacle. Nor does He minister in a physical building on earth. Those temples have all crumbled long ago. His temple is in heaven. He ministers in the real Holy of Holies.

3. In the wilderness tabernacle, and later the temple, only the high priest could go once a year on the Day of Atonement into the Holy of Holies where God was. However, because Jesus is our High Priest, through prayer we have free, unlimited access to the throne room in heaven anytime we want. The writer wants his readers to understand this priesthood is better in so many ways... Ephesians 3:12 express this truth: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

### **Conclusion:**

When we pray, we are not praying through a crucified Jesus but through the risen, glorified Jesus. He is a better priest, he is superior: His seat, His sanctuary and His superior covenant.