

## Offered Once for All

*By Linda Rex*

**October 27, 2024, Proper 25**—As we have been touching down here and there in the book of Hebrews, we have been learning about Jesus Christ serving as our high priest now that that he has risen from the grave and ascended into heaven. We've looked at Jesus and his intercessory role in our lives, and how he ever offers our worship and praise to our Father, and offers the Father's gifts, his Word, and his love and grace to us in the Spirit.

Perhaps you've heard that old phrase, "There's nothing so certain as death and taxes." In our New Testament passage for this Sunday, Hebrews 7:23–28, this book's author notes that in the original tabernacle which we read about in the book of Exodus and Leviticus, the high priest was appointed according to the law. This high priest would eventually die, and another would be appointed in his place. This meant that as time went by, the role of high priest was continually being filled by different people. Death limited the ministry of those who offered this service of high priesthood to God and the people of ancient Israel.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, while in his human flesh did die, but then he, being the Son of God, rose from the grave. Because he remains both God and human, Jesus lives forever and will never die. Jesus has been appointed our high priest according to the Father's promise, which will never be broken. We can take comfort that nothing, not even death, can separate us from Jesus and his love for us (Rom. 8:38–39). There is continuity in Jesus' ministry to us in the Spirit, and we can rest assured that he will always be there for us, offering us grace in our time of need, as we draw near to him.

As our high priest, Jesus offered up the perfect sacrifice—himself. He does not need to continually offer up new animal sacrifices like the ancient high priests were required to. No, he simply offered himself, in our place on our behalf, just once, and offers himself continually on our behalf, in every moment, on into eternity. Jesus has no sin in himself that needs to be dealt with through sacrifice as the ancient high priests constantly had to concern themselves with. Rather, Jesus is without sin, holy in character, and flawless and undefiled. So what he offers—himself—is the perfect sacrifice. Not only did his self-offering only have to be done once, it also was an offering that includes all people, and all that God has made in and through Jesus, and it lasts forever.

Because of who Jesus is as the Creator and Redeemer of all things, his sacrifice has tremendous power to redeem, restore, and renew. We celebrate the wonderful gift of new life that Jesus gives us, and we rest in his faithful intercession in our place on our behalf before his Father in the Spirit. Jesus is constantly at work making all things new—this is his word to us through the apostle John (Rev. 21:5; 2 Cor. 5:17). And we look forward to when Jesus will return in glory and renew all things as he ushers in the new heaven and earth. What a glorious hope we have in Jesus!

Now, if you thought that is good news, just consider how wonderful it is that we do not have to try and work things out with a distant, uninvolved, uncaring God. This Jesus Christ who we trust in is the Son of our heavenly Father, with whom he lives in close relationship in the heavenly Spirit. There is an eternal relationship of love and grace that Jesus brought humanity right up into. And within that relationship of love and grace, we get to share by the Spirit in Jesus' own sonship, in face-to-face oneness with his Father. We are not left trying to figure out some way to make ourselves right with God, or trying to make ourselves good enough or acceptable enough to be worthy of God's love, attention, or grace. Instead, we are simply able to rest in and revel in the joy of participating in Jesus' own oneness with his Father in the Spirit, as we trust in Jesus'

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finished work. This motivates us to live a life of gratitude and obedient service to the Lord who both created us and redeems us. Praise God!

*Dear Jesus, thank you for the amazing gift you have given, in giving yourself so generously and freely in our place on our behalf. Thank you for ever interceding for us and for bringing us home to our Father to be with him forever in the Spirit. We praise you for your glorious work! Amen.*

*“The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.”* Hebrews 7:23–28 NASB

*“The fact that there were so many priests shows how frequently they died and had to be replaced. But there will be no successor to the Priesthood of Jesus because he remains forever. Through him mankind’s approach to God is forever secured; he continues to communicate the full accomplishment of their salvation. As our High Priest he towers far above every other priestly system in conspicuous prominence and in holy character. His guileless, flawless life on earth was never compromised by sin, and he himself was exalted above the heavens where he occupies the highest rank of authority in the eternal realm. Unlike the previous high priests whose system of daily sacrifices was a constant reminder of their own failures, he had no need to sacrifice on his own behalf. The sacrifice he offered was himself for all; a sacrifice never to be repeated. Under the law, men were appointed as high priests regardless of their weaknesses. The word of the oath, which succeeded the law, appointed the son in perpetual perfection.”* Hebrews 7:23–28 Mirror Bible