

# Hebrews 7:20-22 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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## The Epistle to the Hebrews

INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
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BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST

DOCTRINE	DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD	

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)  
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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## Hebrews 7:20 And [inasmuch](#) \* as it was not [without](#) an [oath](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Kai kath' hoson ou choris orkomosias, oi men gar choris orkomosias eisin](#) (3PPAI) [hiereis gegonotes](#),  
([RAPMPN](#))

**Amplified:** And it was not without the taking of an oath [that Christ was made Priest], ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

**NLT:** God took an oath that Christ would always be a priest, but he never did this for any other priest. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** And not without an oath (He was made priest);

**Young's Literal:** And inasmuch as it is not apart from oath, (for those indeed apart from oath are become priests,

**AND INASMUCH AS IT WAS NOT WITHOUT AN OATH:** kai kath hoson ou choris horkomosias hoi men gar choris horkomosias eisin hiereis gegonotes (RAPMPN) :

- [Hebrews 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**ESV** Hebrews 7:20 And it was not without an oath. For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath,

**NIV** Hebrews 7:20 And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath,

**NAB** Hebrews 7:20 And to the degree that this happened not without the taking of an oath-- for others became priests without an oath,

Note that some translations include "**for they indeed became priests without an oath**" (gar choris horkomosias eisin hiereis gegonotes (RAPMPN)) with this verse. The NAS and KJV include it at the beginning of the Hebrews 7:21.

When God made His covenantal promise to Abraham, He did so with an **oath** (Ge 22:16-18; cf. Heb 6:13). This promise was unconditional and eternal. God wanted Abraham, and eventually all Israel and all the world, to know that this promise was permanent. Jesus' priesthood is also based on an **oath** of God, and is thereby shown to be eternal, unchangeable. Because of that fact, Jesus is made a guarantee, a surety, of a better covenant (Heb 7:22)

When the Levitical priests were inducted into office, God took no **oath**. God did not swear to Aaron that his priesthood would be forever. In fact God never suggested, to Aaron or to anyone else, that that priesthood would be anything but temporary. However, many Israelites no doubt thought that it would be permanent, but their belief had no basis in Scripture. Neither when the old priesthood was first established nor when any priest or group of priests were consecrated had God made an oath-or any sort of promise, conditional or unconditional-that this priesthood would be eternal. But with Christ He swore an eternal priesthood, as David had written in Ps 110:4, to which the writer here refers for the fourth time in the letter (Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:17). To make the point more emphatic, David added, and will not change His mind.

**Spurgeon** - The Levitical priesthood dealt only with the shadows of good things to come, and not with the very substance of the things. So to speak, the sacrificial bull was not actually a sacrifice, but the representation of the sacrifice that was to come. The

morning and evening lambs did not take away sin, but only mirrored the great blood-shedding of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. In very deed and truth, the men of the house of Aaron who attended at the visible altar were not actual priests before the real altar of the Lord, but only shadows of the true. The real altar is the person of Christ, the real sacrifice is the death of Christ, and the real priest is Christ Himself.

**Without** (5565)(**choris** from **chora** = land from **choros** = field or place usually where cattle range and feed or chasma = thru idea of empty expanse) as an adverb means apart, separately, by itself (Jn 20:7). **Choris** as a preposition means (1) separately from, without, which is the main sense in the NT.

Hebrews 7:21 (for they **indeed became priests without** an **oath**, but He with an **oath through** the One who **said** to Him, "THE LORD HAS **SWORN** AND WILL NOT **CHANGE** HIS **MIND**, 'YOU ARE A **PRIEST FOREVER**' ") (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [o de meta horkomosias dia tou legontos](#) (PAPMSG) [pros auton. Omosen](#) (3SAAI) [kurios. kai ou metamelethesetai.](#) (3SFPI) [Su hiereus eis ton aiona.](#)

**Amplified:** For those who formerly became priests received their office without its being confirmed by the taking of an oath by God, but this One was designated and addressed and saluted with an oath, The Lord has sworn and will not regret it or change His mind, You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

**NLT:** Only to Jesus did he say, "The Lord has taken an oath and will not break his vow: 'You are a priest forever.' " ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** for indeed without an oath they have become priests, but this One with an oath through the agency of the One who says to Him, The Lord took an oath and will not change His mind. As for thee, a priest forever thou art.

**Young's Literal:** and he with an oath through Him who is saying unto him, 'The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest--to the age, according to the order of Melchisedek;')

**Septuagint (LXX) Ps 110:4:** omosen (3SAAI) kurios kai ou metamelethesetai (3FPInd) su ei hiereus eis ton aiona

FOR THEY INDEED BECAME PRIESTS WITHOUT AN OATH BUT HE WITH AN OATH THROUGH THE ONE WHO SAID TO HIM THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER: ho de meta horkomosias dia tou legontos (PAPMSG) pros auton omosen (3SAAI) kurios kai ou metamelethesetai (3SFPI) su hiereus eis ton aiona:

- Heb 7:17; Ps 110:4
- Heb 6:16-18
- [Hebrews 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Without an oath** (**horkomosia** = taking an oath) - Scripture says nothing of an oath of God when He appointed Aaron and his posterity to the priesthood.

**Wuest** - when Messiah was made a high priest, God took an **oath** guaranteeing the unending character of His priesthood. This shows the inferiority of the Aaronic priesthood to that of Melchisedec. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

**Has sworn** (3660) (**omnuo**) means to affirm the truth of a statement by calling on a divine being to execute sanctions against a person if the statement in question is not true (in the case of a deity taking an oath, his divine being is regarded as validating the statement). In this case God's Own Divine being is regarded as validating the statement.

It is distinct from **horkizō** (3589), which means to adjure or implore someone divine to accomplish a task (Mark 5:7; Acts 19:13).

**Omnuo** is repeated in this middle section of Hebrews...

**Hebrews 3:11** (note) As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

**Hebrews 3:18** (note) And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

**Hebrews 4:3** (note) For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest," although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

**Hebrews 6:13** (note) For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

**Hebrews 6:16** (note) For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute.

**Hebrews 7:21** (note) (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn And will not change His mind, 'Thou art a priest forever' ")

This verb **omnuo** is used in the Septuagint (LXX) of God swearing to keep His covenant to bring Israel into the land (Dt 1:8, 35, 2:14, 4:21, 31, 6:10, 18, 23, 7:8, 12, 13, 8:1, 18, etc > 30x in Deut.)

The writer quotes from **Psalms 110**...

The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." (Ps 110:4) (**Comment:** Like Melchizedek, Christ combines the offices of priest and king. Note that **Ps 110:4** is quoted three times -- see notes Hebrews 6:20; Hebrews 7:17, Hebrews 7:21 -- and expounded upon in **Hebrews 7** which demonstrates the eternal priesthood of Christ)

God taking an **oath** is somewhat startling. The only reason for taking an oath is because a man's word w/o an oath may be disbelieved, so that an oath is given to guarantee as it were that man's word is true & can be relied upon. However God's word is always true so the fact that He confirms this PRIESTHOOD by an OATH makes the truth He swears of extraordinary importance! The old order of priests can pass away; but the priesthood of Christ can never pass away; because God has sworn an oath that it will last for ever.

**Spurgeon** on God taking an **oath** - I tremble while I speak of the oath of God; for God's lifting His hand to heaven and swearing by Himself, because He can swear by no greater, is something so solemn that one scarcely dares to think of it. The Lord will not hold him guiltless that takes His name in vain. The devout soul is full of awe at the bare thought of God in His most fatherly and ordinary acts, but how shall we think of the Lord girt with solemnity, resolute in purpose, stern in truth, as lifting His hand and taking an oath? Surely this is the innermost sanctuary of mystery, the holy of holies. This oath was for the honor of His dear Son as He assumed the sacred priesthood on behalf of the sons of men. The glory of His character, the dignity of His work, the certainty of its accomplishment, and the supreme excellence of His motive in entering upon it, all lift up the priesthood of Christ out of the category of all human priesthoods. Therefore the eternal Father signalizes it by a special mark of distinction, and Himself makes oath that His only begotten Son is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. **An oath for confirmation among men is the end of all strife.** When an honest man has sworn to it, the testimony stands in evidence and may not be questioned. When God not only gives His promise and His word, but swears to His declaration, who shall dare to doubt?

**Change his mind** (3338) (metamelomai from **metá** = denoting change of place or condition + **melomai**, = be concerned) means feel remorse or regret (Mt 27:3) or to think differently afterward (the sense in Heb 7:21).

**Zodhiates** - To regret (Matt. 21:29, 32; 27:3; 2 Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21 quoted from Ps. 110:4). The aor. pass. metemelethēn has the meaning of changing one's mind or purpose after having done something regrettable. Contrasted with **metanoëo** (3340), to repent, it expresses the mere desire that what is done may be undone, accompanied with regrets or even remorse, but with no effective change of heart. Metaméleia (which does not occur in the NT) is an ineffective repentance for which the forgiveness of sins is not promised (as it is for **metanoia** [3341], repentance, see Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38). **Metamélomai**, on the part of man, means little or nothing more than a selfish dread of the consequence of what one has done, whereas **metanoëo** means regret and forsaking the evil by a change of heart brought about by God's Spirit. On the part of God in Heb. 7:21, metamélomai means His plan of salvation for man can have no improvement; He made no mistake (**Zodhiates**)

**Complete Biblical Library** Metamelomai is composed of the two Greek terms meta, "after," and melō, "I care, I am concerned for." The basic meaning is "to feel regret, to repent, to feel sorrow." In classical Greek it can mean "to change one's mind," and it cannot always be clearly distinguished from metanoëō, "I repent" (cf. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, p.256).

**Septuagint Usage** The translators of the Septuagint used metamelomai to translate three Hebrew words, but one is most common (seven times out of nine)—the niphal of nācham ("to repent, be sorry"). Metamelomai

suggests a “change of mind” (Exodus 13:17). It does not necessarily imply a sense of error, but it emphasizes the feeling of sorrow (e.g., 1 Samuel 15:35 [LXX 1 Kings 15:35], the Lord “repented” [regretted] He had made Saul king; cf. 1 Chronicles 21:15). In fact, God’s great love and mercy may effect a change in His mind (Psalm 106:45 [LXX 105:45]), but His oath is unchangeable (Psalm 110:4 [LXX 109:4]).

**New Testament Usage** Metamelomai does not join with metanoō in the New Testament to describe conversion or repentance in the Biblical sense. In fact, some distinction may be preserved, as the example of Judas, who regretted (metamelomai) betraying Christ, suggests. He in no way is regarded as “repentant” in a spiritual sense (Matthew 27:3). Trench, quoting the English theologian Chillingworth, goes so far as to say that metamelomai in no way suggests any forgiveness of sins. Only metanoia (3211), he contends, signifies a “thorough change of the heart and soul, of the life and actions” (Trench, *ibid.*). However, Matthew hints at a relationship between metamelomai and repentance or at least the movement toward repentance (Matthew 21:32 of “repenting” [metamelomai] at the preaching of John the Baptist).

Paul’s usage in 2 Corinthians 7:8 maintains a distinction between regret and repentance. Paul regretted his indicting letter to the Corinthians, but he does not attempt to alter its effect. In fact, if it led them to repentance he was delighted.

The Hebrews 7:21 citation of Psalm 110:4 emphasizes God’s firm commitment, His absence of regret, in making Christ high priest. This reaffirms God’s covenant and ensures His steadfast faithfulness and purpose

**TDNT - Abridged** - 1. Unlike metanoēin, which means “change of heart,” metamélesthai means the “experiencing of remorse.” The two may, of course, converge. Aristotle criticizes the latter as a sign of inconstancy, and the Stoics reject both on similar grounds. The preaching of the Cynics and Pythagoreans, however, gives them positive force as it arouses guilt and summons to conversion.

2. The LXX hazards the phrase that God repents, using both words in this connection (1 Sam. 15:35; Amos 7:3). Yet God’s repentance does not overthrow his judgment (Num. 23:19 etc.). He may reject in spite of his grace (1 Sam. 15:35) no less than renew his grace in spite of his judgment (1 Chron. 21:15). This tension continues in Judaism, in which God is the God both of judgment and of mercy. In humans the LXX distinguishes between remorse, which may not be pleasing to God (Ex. 13:17), and repentance, although with some assimilation (cf. Jer. 4:28 and 20:16). Remorse sees the bitter end of sin, repentance breaks free from it. The result of sin brings remorse, a divinely commissioned call brings repentance.

3. In general, Judaism distinguishes the narrower metánoia from the more general metaméleia. Philo can call the latter the presupposition and proof of forgiveness, but Josephus senses that metánoia goes further with its implication of a change of will.

4. metanoēin and metánoia take precedence in the NT. The only instances of metamélomai are in Matt. 21:29, 32; 27:3; 2 Cor. 7:8; Heb. 7:21 (quoting Ps. 110:4). In Matt. 21:28ff. the son who refuses to work changes his mind and goes, but the opponents of Jesus refuse to do so when they hear the call of the Baptist. In Matt. 27:3 Judas suffers remorse when he sees the result of his betrayal. His suicide shows that this is no true repentance. In 2 Cor. 7:8ff. Paul does not “regret” sending a severe letter (although he had regretted it), because it has led to “repentance” (metánoian) in the readers — a “repentance” which brings “no regret” (metánoia ametamélētos). In this passage “being sorry” is plainly distinguished from repenting. Paul uses ametamélētos again in Rom. 11:29, where he says that God’s gifts and calling are irrevocable. The same thought of God’s faithfulness occurs in Heb. 7:21: God has pledged with an oath that the institution of the eternal high priest is unchangeable, and he will not change his mind. The NT, then, has a clear sense of the distinction between the terms; it reserves metánoia for the divinely effected change of heart which leads to salvation. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#))

**Are you confused by this question - [Does God change His mind? Click for discussion](#)**

**Metamelomai** - 5v - **NAS Usage:** change his mind(1), feel remorse(1), felt remorse(1), regret(2), regretted(1).

Matthew 21:29 "And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he **regretted** it and went.

Matthew 21:32 "For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel **remorse** afterward so as to believe him.

Matthew 27:3 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt **remorse** and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

**MacArthur** - metamelomai, merely connotes regret or sorrow. Judas did not experience spiritual penitence

but only emotional **remorse**. Although he would not repent of his sin, he could not escape the reality of his guilt. Genuine sorrow for sin (metamelomai) can be prompted by God in order to produce repentance (metanoēō), as Paul declares in 2 Corinthians 7:10. But Judas's **remorse** was not prompted by God to lead to repentance but only to guilt and despair. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew)

2 Corinthians 7:8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not **regret** it; though I did regret it-- for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while--

Hebrews 7:21 (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT **CHANGE HIS MIND**, 'YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER'")

**Metamelomai** - 9v in the **Septuagint (Lxx)** - 1Sa 15:35; 1Chr 21:15 ("was sorry" - **nacham**; **Lxx** - metamelomai); Ps 106:45; 110:4; Pr 5:11; 25:8; Jer 20:16; Ezek 14:22; Zech 11:5

Ps 106:45-[Spurgeon's note](#) (Context - Ps 106:44) And He remembered His covenant for their sake, And **relented** (Hebrew = **nacham** = to be sorry, to relent; **Lxx** = **metamelomai**) according to the greatness of His lovingkindness.

Psalms 110:4-[Spurgeon's note](#) The LORD has sworn and will not **change** His **mind** (Hebrew = **nacham** = to be sorry, to relent; **Lxx** = **metamelomai**), "Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 7:22 **so much** the **more also** Jesus has **become** the **guarantee** of a **better covenant**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [kata](#) [tosouto](#) [[kai](#)] [kreittonos](#) [diathekes](#) [gegonen](#) (3SRAI) [egguos](#) [lesous](#).

**Amplified:** In keeping with [the oath's greater strength and force], Jesus has become the Guarantee of a better (stronger) agreement [a more excellent and more advantageous covenant]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

**NLT:** Because of God's oath, it is Jesus who guarantees the effectiveness of this better covenant. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Wuest:** By so much was Jesus made a pledge of a better testament.

**Young's Literal:** by so much of a better covenant hath Jesus become surety,

**SO MUCH THE MORE ALSO JESUS HAS BECOME THE GUARANTEE OF A BETTER COVENANT:** [kata](#) [tosouto](#) [kai](#) [kreittonos](#) [diathekes](#) [gegonen](#) (3SRAI) [egguos](#) [lesous](#):

- Genesis 43:9; 44:32; Proverbs 6:1; 20:16
- Heb 8:6-12; 9:15-23; 12:24; 13:20; Daniel 9:27; Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25
- [Hebrews 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BETTER THAN A MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!**

**Wuest** - In this verse, the writer states the proposition which he wishes to prove, namely, that the New Testament in Jesus' blood is better than and takes the place of the First Testament in animal blood. His argument here is that Jesus is the surety of a better covenant because God took an oath that His priesthood would be an everlasting one. Jesus is the guarantee or pledge of a better covenant or testament. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

**Jesus** = our Guarantor, our Security that there will be no annulment of the **Better covenant**. (A description occurring only here).

**Has become** ([ginomai](#)) is in the **perfect tense** which speaks of the permanence of His guarantee! Our Lord Jesus does more than mediate the New Covenant. He also guarantees it. He has become surety for it. All of God's promises in the New Covenant are guaranteed to us by Jesus Himself. He guarantees to pay all the debts that our sins have incurred, or ever will incur, against us. Hallelujah. Amen.

**Spurgeon on guarantee** - We are absolutely certain that the covenant of grace will stand because the Redeemer has come into the



world and has died for us. The gift of Christ is a pledge that the covenant, of which He is the substance, cannot be dissolved. Christ has been born into the world, God Himself has become incarnate. That is done and can never be undone; how can the Lord draw back after going so far? More, Christ has died: He bears in His flesh today the scars of His crucifixion. That also is done, and can never be undone. The priests of the house of Aaron were poor sureties of the former covenant, for they could not keep it themselves. But Christ has kept the covenant of grace; He has fulfilled all that was conditional in it, and carried out all that was demanded on man's part. It was conditional that Christ should present a perfect righteousness and a perfect atonement; He has effected this to the full, and now there is no "if" in it. The covenant now reads as a legacy, or a will—the will of God, the New Testament of the Most High. Christ has made it so, and the very fact that there is such a person as Jesus Christ the Son of Man living, bleeding, dying, risen, reigning, is the proof that this covenant stands secure.

**Guarantee** ([1450](#)) (**egguos** from **eggúe** = pledge, bail, security) describes one who gives security, who guarantees the reality of something. It was used of one who guarantees someone else's overdraft at a bank, thus becoming surety that the money will be paid. Someone who goes bail for a prisoner; he guarantees the prisoner will appear at trial. It also refers to a bond, bail, collateral or some kind of guarantee that a promise will be fulfilled. In Greek secular writings **egguos** referred to in legal and promissory documents as "a guarantor" or "one who stands security." The idea of surety of one person for another was not new. Judah promised surety for Benjamin (Ge 43:9, 44:33); Paul promised to be surety for Onesimus (Philemon 1:18,19)

**Better** ([2909](#))(**kreitton/kreisson**) is a comparative of **kratus** (strong) and the comparative degree of **agathos** which means "good". This reminds one of our English comparative "good, better, best." That which is of high status, is more prominent or higher in rank (Of a person -Heb 7:7; of things Heb 7:19). **Kreitton** relates to that which has "a relative advantage in value" (BDAG) (Heb 6:9).

**Better** - Stronger, more useful, more profitable covenant

**Better** than what? Old Covenant, Mosaic. Why is it **"better"**? The covenant that God made through Jesus is better than the old one because the old one was temporary and the new one is eternal. A better Priest guarantees a better covenant. God did not make the new because the old was bad, but because it was imperfect and temporary. The New Covenant is better simply because the Old was incomplete. The Old was good; the New is better.

**Spurgeon** on a **better covenant** - The first covenant was typical and shadowy. It was but a school lesson for children. Just as we give to our boys models of churches or models of ships, so was the ceremonial law a model of good things to come, but it did not contain the things themselves. Christ is no surety of a mere model or pattern of things in the heavens, but of a covenant that deals with the heavenly things themselves, with real blessings, with true boons from God. It is implied in the use of the word **"better"** that the ordinances of the ceremonial law were good in their place, but **Jesus is better** than the best of all visible things. The eternal Christ is better than the best of all the temporal arrangements that God has made for the good of man.

**Covenant** ([1242](#)) (**diatheke** from **dia** = two + **tithemi** = to place pictures that which is placed between two Thus, a covenant is something placed between two, an arrangement between two parties.) was a commonly used in the Greco-Roman world to define a legal transaction in settling an inheritance. **Diatheke** denotes an irrevocable decision, which cannot be cancelled by anyone. A prerequisite of its effectiveness before the law is the death of the disposer and thus **diatheke** was like a "final will and testament". In reference to the divine covenants, such as the Abrahamic covenant, **diatheke** is not a covenant in the sense that God came to agreement or compromise with fallen man as if signing a contract. Rather, it involves declaration of God's unconditional promise to make Abraham and his seed the recipients of certain blessings.

The thought of covenant is introduced for 1st time, and foreshadows Heb 8:6-13. It adds to the thought of the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood that of the inferiority of the Old Covenant which it represented.

**Spurgeon** on **covenant** - Learned men have fought each other very earnestly over this word. Some say that it means "testament"; others answer that in the Septuagint Greek it is used as the interpretation of the Hebrew word that signifies "covenant." I feel quite sure that the combatants are both right. I am always glad when I can conscientiously take both sides in a battle. I do so in this instance, because it matters nothing which of the two conquers, though it would be a loss for either side to be defeated. The word means both testament and covenant. God's covenant of grace has had the conditional side of it so completely fulfilled that it has virtually become a "testament," or a deed of free gift, in which the one party is a donor and the other has become simply a receiver. Though the economy of grace is a covenant under one aspect, under another it is no covenant, now requiring something from each of two parties, but it has become a testament or will as to its practical result. The first covenant was temporary: it was meant to be so. It was meant in part to teach the coming covenant, and in part to show the weakness of man and the necessity of divine grace, but it was never meant to stand. This covenant of which Christ is the surety stands forever and ever. The everlasting hills may bow, and the heavens themselves be rolled up like a worn-out vesture, but God's covenant shall stand forever and forever while Christ its surety lives.

## THE NEW COVENANT IS

## GUARANTEED BY JESUS HIMSELF!

Steven Cole rightly reminds us that **"Money-back guarantees** are a great thing! You buy a product, but it fails within the time of the guarantee. You take it back to the store and they either give you your money back, or replace the product with one that works. Such a deal! Sometimes the guarantee is worthless. Perhaps you were guaranteed a seat on a flight, but you got to the airport at the last minute and discovered that the airline had overbooked the flight and your seat was gone. The more important the situation, the more important it is that you have a sure guarantee. **The most important matter where you need a certain guarantee is your eternal destiny.** This life is brief and uncertain, but eternity is forever! You don't want to show up at the pearly gates and hear, "We don't have a reservation under your name. When did you book it?" If there is anything that you want to be certain about, it should be your salvation. The author of Hebrews wants us to know that because Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, He is the guarantee of a better covenant that ensures our salvation. The author is continuing his argument that as a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, Jesus is far superior to the Levitical priests. In our text, he shows that Jesus is superior as our priest because of: (1) God's oath (Heb 7:20-22); (2) Jesus' permanence and perpetual petition on our behalf (Heb 7:23-25); (3) Jesus' perfect purity and His sacrifice of Himself (Heb 7:26-28). His message is that... **The superiority of Jesus our high priest guarantees salvation for all who draw near to God through Him.** The heart of the text is Hebrews 7:25, "Therefore He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, ..." To understand that sentence, we need to be clear on the meaning of "save." As I have said often, salvation is a radical term. You don't need to save someone who is doing pretty well, but could just use something extra to round out an otherwise happy life. You don't need to save someone who is fairly competent and together. To save someone is not to offer advice or tips about a better way to live. Someone who needs salvation is lost, incapacitated, and in immediate danger of perishing. He cannot save himself. Without outside help, he will not survive. Last week, they tried to rescue a fallen climber off of Mount Rainier, but they failed. He died before the helicopter could get him off the mountain. His injury prevented him from hiking down the mountain by himself. He was helpless and desperate. He needed to be saved, but the attempt to save him failed. **Spiritually, every person needs to be saved.** What do we need to be saved from? The biblical answer is, "We need to be saved from God's wrath and eternal judgment." John 3:36 puts it, "He who **believes** in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not **obey** the Son will not see life, but **the wrath of God** abides on him." Or, as Paul wrote (1Th 1:10), it is Jesus "Who rescues us from **the wrath** to come." In Romans 5:9 he wrote, "having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from **the wrath** of God through Him." Or, again (1Th. 5:9), "For God has not destined us for **wrath**, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." Either we are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, or we will face God's wrath because of our sins. God never compromises His perfect righteousness and justice in order to save sinners. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), which means eternal separation from God. To satisfy His justice, God demands that the penalty of our sin must be paid. In His love, God sent His own Son to be the perfect high priest, offering the sacrifice that we need to escape His wrath. But amazingly, rather than offering an animal sacrifice, He offered Himself! John Piper ([Sermon](#)) puts it, "*All this is the love of God rescuing us from the wrath of God, in such a way that the justice of God is vindicated and the glory of God is exalted.*" The author wants us to see the superiority of Jesus as our high priest. He didn't want his readers to return to Judaism under the threat of persecution, so he is showing how Jesus is superior to the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system. Although we may not be tempted to give up Christianity for Judaism, we are easily tempted to turn away from Christ when trials or disappointments hit. We face problems for which knowing Christ more deeply is the answer, but we turn to worldly psychology that offers techniques for coping, or insights into our pasts. Or, we salve our pain by pursuing material comforts or worldly pleasures. But what we really need is to see the supremacy of Jesus Christ as our high priest, who is able to save to the uttermost all who draw near to God through Him.

**Jesus is superior as our high priest because of God's oath** (Heb 7:20-22). - The author is contrasting the Levitical priests with the priesthood of Jesus according to the order of Melchizedek. With the Levitical priests, God did not make an oath that the priest would serve forever. But when it came to the priesthood of His Son, "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever'" (Heb 7:21, citing Ps. 110:4). We saw a similar thing in 6:13-18 regarding God's promise to Abraham, that He swore by Himself to make the promise that much more secure. God's bare word is enough to make His promise certain. But when He adds His oath, it is like underlining the promise, highlighting it, and putting it in brackets with multiple exclamation points after it! And then He adds, "and will not change His mind"! You get the impression that God wants us to take note—Jesus is a priest forever! As such, he adds (Heb 7:22), "so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant." In Greek, the name Jesus is placed last in the sentence for emphasis. Jesus is the human name of our Savior, which means, "Yahweh saves." As the angel told Joseph, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). This is the only time that the word "guarantee" is used in the New Testament. Jesus, who offered Himself on the cross for our sins, is our surety or guarantee of this better covenant, the New Covenant, which the author only mentions here, but will expand on in Heb 8:7-13. **Philip Hughes** (A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews [Eerdmans], p. 267) observes, "*It is a matter of exceptional significance that the covenant with Abraham and the declaration concerning the priestly order of Melchizedek were both confirmed by God with an oath, for under these two heads all the gracious promises and prophecies which precede the coming of Christ are gathered, and with the coming of Christ both the evangelical covenant and the evangelical priesthood burst into fulfillment.*" In other words, God's oaths stand behind the two crucial prophecies and promises about Christ. It's like a double warranty from the God of truth Himself backing



our salvation! **John MacArthur** puts it, *"All of God's promises in the New Covenant are guaranteed to us by Jesus Himself. He guarantees to pay all the debts that our sins have incurred, or ever will incur, against us"* (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Hebrews [Moody Press], p. 198). ([Lesson 22- Salvation Guaranteed! Hebrews 7:20-28](#))

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## As The Surety of the Covenant

**Andrew Murray** has the following comments regarding **Hebrews 7:22**...

OF THE old Covenant, Scripture speaks as not being faultless, and God complains that Israel had not continued in it; and so He regarded them not (Hebrews 8:7-9). It had not secured its apparent object, in uniting Israel and God: Israel had forsaken Him, and He had not regarded Israel. Therefore God promises to make a New Covenant, free from the faults of the first, and effectual to realize its purpose. If it were to accomplish its end, it would need to secure God's faithfulness to His people, and His people's faithfulness to God. And the terms of the New Covenant expressly declare that these two objects shall be attained. "I will put my laws into their mind": thus God proposes to secure their unchanging faithfulness to Him. "Their sins I will remember no more" (see Hebrews 8:10-12): thus He assures His unchanging faithfulness to them. A pardoning God and an obedient people: these are the two parties who are to meet and to be eternally united in the New Covenant.

The most beautiful provision of this New Covenant is that of the surety in whom its fulfilment on both parts is guaranteed. Jesus was made the surety of the better covenant. To man He became surety that God would faithfully fulfil His part, so that man could confidently depend upon God to pardon, and accept, and never more forsake. And to God He likewise became surety that man would faithfully fulfil his part, so that God could bestow on him the blessing of the covenant. And the way in which He fulfils His suretyship is this: As one with God, and having the fulness of God dwelling in His human nature, He is personally security to men that God will do what He has engaged. All that God has is secured to us in Him as man. And then, as one with us, and having taken us up as members into His own body, He is security to God that His interests shall be cared for. All that man must be and do is secured in Him. It is the glory of the New Covenant that it has in the Person of the God-man its living surety, its everlasting security. And it can easily be understood how, in proportion as we abide in Him as the surety of the covenant, its objects and its blessings will be realized in us.

We shall understand this best if we consider it in the light of one of the promises of the New Covenant. Take that in Jer 32:40

I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

With what wonderful condescension the infinite God here bows Himself to our weakness! He is the Faithful and Unchanging One, whose word is truth; and yet more abundantly to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, He binds Himself in the covenant that He will never change: "I will make an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from them." Blessed the man who has thoroughly appropriated this, and finds his rest in the everlasting covenant of the Faithful One!

But in a covenant there are two parties. And what if man becomes unfaithful and breaks the covenant? Provision must be made, if the covenant is to be well ordered in all things and sure, that this cannot be, and that man too remain faithful. Man never can undertake to give such an assurance. And see, here God comes to provide for this too. He not only undertakes in the covenant that He will never turn from His people, but also to put His fear in their heart, that they do not depart from Him. In addition to His own obligations as one of the covenanting parties, He undertakes for the other party too:

I WILL CAUSE you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them (Ezekiel 36:27)

Blessed the man who understands this half of the covenant too! He sees that his security is not in the covenant which he makes with His God, and which he would but continually break again. He finds that a covenant has been made, in which God stands good, not only for Himself, but for man too. He grasps the blessed truth that his part in the covenant is to accept what God has promised to do, and to expect the sure fulfilment of the divine engagement to secure the faithfulness of His people to their God:

I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

It is just here that the blessed work comes in of the surety of the covenant, appointed of the Father to see to its maintenance and perfect fulfilment. To Him the Father hath said, "I have given thee for a covenant of the people." And the Holy Spirit testifies, "All the promises of God IN Him are yea, and in Him are Amen, to the glory of God by us." The believer who abides in Him hath a divine assurance for the fulfilment of every promise the covenant ever gave.

Christ was made surety of a better testament. It is as our Melchizedek that Christ is surety (see Hebrews 7). Aaron and his sons passed away; of Christ it is witnessed that He liveth. He is priest in the power of an endless life. Because He continueth ever, He hath an unchangeable priesthood. And because He ever liveth to make intercession, He can save to the uttermost, He can save

completely. It is because Christ is the Ever-living One that His suretyship of the covenant is so effectual. He liveth ever to make intercession, and can therefore save completely. Every moment there rise up from His holy presence to the Father, the unceasing pleadings which secure to His people the powers and the blessings of the heavenly life. And every moment there go out from Him downward to His people, the mighty influences of His unceasing intercession, conveying to them uninterruptedly the power of the heavenly life. As surety with us for the Father's favour, He never ceases to pray and present us before Him; as surety with the Father for us, He never ceases to work, and reveal the Father within us.

The mystery of the Melchizedek priesthood, which the Hebrews were not able to receive (Heb 5:10-14), is the mystery of the resurrection life. It is in this that the glory of Christ as surety of the covenant consists: He ever liveth. He performs His work in heaven in the power of a divine, an omnipotent life. He ever liveth to pray; not a moment that as surety His prayers do not rise Godward to secure the Father's fulfilment to us of the covenant. He performs His work on earth in the power of that same life; not a moment that His answered prayers--the powers of the heavenly world--do not flow downward to secure for His Father our fulfilment of the covenant. In the eternal life there are no breaks--never a moment's interruption; each moment has the power of eternity in it. He ever, every moment, liveth to pray. He ever, every moment, liveth to bless. He can save to the uttermost, completely and perfectly, because He ever liveth to pray.

Believer! come and see here how the possibility of abiding in Jesus every moment is secured by the very nature of this ever-living priesthood of your surety. Moment by moment, as His intercession rises up, its efficacy descends. And because Jesus stands good for the fulfilment of the covenant--"I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me"--He cannot afford to leave you one single moment to yourself. He dare not do so, or He fails of His undertaking. Your unbelief may fail of realizing the blessing; He cannot be unfaithful. If you will but consider Him, and the power of that endless life after which He was made and is a High Priest, your faith will rise to believe that an endless, ever-continuing, unchangeable life of abiding in Jesus, is nothing less than what is waiting you.

It is as we see (Who) Jesus is, and is to us, that the abiding in Him will become the natural and spontaneous result of our knowledge of Him. (From Andrew Murray's book *Abide in Christ*)