

“Insights on Intercession”

Hebrews 7:25

June 16, 2024

Hebrews 7:20-25 ... For those who formerly became priests were made such without an oath, ²¹ but this one was made a priest with an oath by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
‘You are a priest forever.’”

²² This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.

²³ The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, ²⁴ but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵ Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since **HE ALWAYS LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.**

...a Lot of SUBCATEGORIES here!!

- **Intercession is an “Always & Forever Thing”**

“Now the second great implication of verse 25 is that our future salvation depends on the active work of Christ forever and ever, not just on the past work of Christ or on our past decisions and commitments. It says that Christ is able to save forever . . . since he always lives to make intercession for us. In other words, he would not be able to save us forever if he did not go on interceding for us forever.

This means our salvation is as secure as Christ's priesthood is indestructible. This is why we needed a priest so much greater than any human. Christ's deity secures his indestructible priesthood for us.

This means we should not talk about our salvation in static terms the way we often do—as if I did something once in an act of decision, and Christ did something once when he died and rose again, and that's all there is to it. That's not all there is to it. This very day I am being saved by the eternal intercession of Jesus in heaven. Jesus is praying for us and that is our salvation.” **John Piper**, “From Melchizedek to Eternal Savior”

- **Intercession is Strangely Necessary/Required**

Ezekiel 22:30-31 And I sought for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the breach before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none. ³¹ Therefore I have poured out my indignation upon them. I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. I have returned their way upon their heads, declares the Lord GOD.”

Is. 59:16 He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede; then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.

- **Intercession is Securing Something**

...Heb 7:25 ...Is. 59:16

- **Intercession is a Continuing Exchange Shared Amongst the Trinity**

Rom 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Rom 8:31-39 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

...These Verses are Imbedded in a setting of “the sufferings of this present time” (v. 18) ... “futility”, “corruption”, “groaning”, “pain” (v. 20-23) ...people/forces against us & accusations & condemnation (v. 31-34)

v. 34 ...the language intentionally Enlarges the Heb. 7:25 Reality!! ...**We Are SAVED to the UTMOST—By the Ongoing, Attentive, Ever-present, Ever-up-to-date, Always Ministry of Our Great High Priest in the Heavenly Temple!**

SUPER-INSIGHT!! —These Intercessions are set in our moments of...

Rom 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought...

... “Weakness” = v. 18-23’s descriptives!

... “we do not know...” ...Be Released from any attempt at “Prayerful Omniscience”!!

- **Intercession is Mysterious, Multi-Partied and Multifaceted!**

- The Intercession in the Heavenly Temple Does Not Dismiss the Intercession of the Spirit!

- The Son is Interceding at the Right Hand of God (Heavenly Temple)
- The Spirit is Interceding THROUGH Us—v. 26 *the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.* ²⁷ *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit...*

“the children of God have two divine intercessors”, writes John Murray. ‘Christ is their intercessor in the court of heaven ...,’ while ‘the Holy Spirit is their intercessor in the theatre of their own hearts.’ **John Stott, Romans, BST**

- The Intercession of the Son does not Dismiss the Prayerful Intercession of Man

1 Cor 14:1-19 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵ Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. ...

¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ...¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Jude 1:20-21 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.

...These passages depict a “mysterious” building up that does NOT engage my mental processing—ie, I’m not built up by some cognitive content or convincing reasoning! ...and that is also true when the Spirit intercedes with groans and Jesus intercedes in the heavenly temple.

2 Cor 1:8-11 *For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹ You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*

- **Intercession Informs & Enables Endurance**

...Remember the Reason for Heb 7:25 ...to Help the Hebrews to *“Run w/ Endurance the Race Set Before Us—LOOKING TO JESUS!”* → Jesus, who is Interceding for Your Right NOW!!

...This passage wants us to be mindful that Jesus is ACTIVELY Interceding for us—NOW!!

—What Might That Intercession Contain?

“... the text of v. 25 does not spell out the content of his petitions. Are there any hints that may be gleaned from elsewhere in Hebrews? (a) The author has already encouraged his listeners by affirming that Christ is able to help those who are tempted (2:18), and to provide mercy and grace to help them in their time of need (4:16). The nature of this help is not specified but presumably includes any gracious and merciful support that the members of his family need when they are tempted. We may assume that our Lord's petitions to the Father synchronise with these fundamental needs, since these intercessions are intended to lead to his people's complete, eternal salvation.” **Peter O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC**

Heb 2:14-18 *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things... ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

...in my moment of “Endurance”—**My High Priest and the Holy Spirit have Effectively Taken an INVENTORY of my WEAKNESSES!!**

Lk 22:31-32 *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

? - Are you tempted to say—“Lord, where were you, when I was being tempted and my faith felt like it was going to fail at any moment??” ... “I was interceding for you!”

“The safest conception . . . that we can have of the intercession of Christ . . . is his continual appearance for us in the presence of God by virtue of his office as the “high priest over the house of God, ...intercession is prayer . . . Wherefore there is in it, . . . a requesting and offering unto God, of his desires and will for the church, attended with care, love, and compassion.” **(John Owen, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, Vol. 5, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991, p. 541)**

“... our future salvation depends on the active work of Christ forever and ever, not just on the past work of Christ or on our past decisions and commitments. It says that Christ is able to save forever . . . since he always lives to make intercession for us. ...We are saved eternally by the eternal prayers (Romans 8:34) and advocacy (1 John 2:1) of Jesus in heaven as our high priest. He prays for us and his prayers are answered because he prays perfectly on the basis of his perfect sacrifice. **John Piper**, “From Melchizedek to Eternal Savior”

LITURGY MOMENT: “Engaged Awareness” (“the Spirit bears witness with our Spirit” – Rom 8:16)

“...Whenever I begin to talk to you about the intercession of Christ, I feel inclined to sit down and let you think, and look up, and listen till you hear that Voice, matchless in its music, pleading, pleading, pleading, with the Father! It were much better for you to realize it than for me to describe it. ...Oh, but listen! It is Jesus who is praying! He shows His wounds and pleads the merit of His great Sacrifice and, wonder of wonders, He pleads for me, and for you! Happy man, happy woman, to have our faith preserved by such a mighty preservative as this — the intercession of Christ!

... ‘Satan has asked for you by asking that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you by asking,’ (so I will venture to paraphrase it) “that your faith fail not.” There stands Satan. You cannot see him and you need not want to, but that grim monster who has made kings and princes tremble, and has plucked angels from their spheres of light, and hurled bright spirits down from Heaven to Hell, stands there to assail you! And you may well be afraid, ...Ah, but there also stands the Ever-Blessed One, before whom an angel, fallen or unfallen, is but a tiny spark compared with the sun! There He stands, girt about the chest with the golden girdle of His faithfulness, robed in the fair white linen of His matchless righteousness. Upon His head is a crown of glory that far outshines all constellations of stars and suns! And He opposes His Divine pleading to the demoniacal asking of the fallen one. Are you still afraid? It seems to me unspeakably blessed to see it written here, “Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat,” and then to see over the top of it these words, “but I have prayed for you.” Oh, blessed, “but”! — “But I have prayed for you.” Tempt on, then, O Satan! Tempt at your worst, for there is no fear when this glorious shield of gold, the intercession of the Savior, covers the entire person of the poor attacked one! “I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not.”

Charles Spurgeon, Christ’s Prayer for Peter