

CHRIST:
THE PERFECT
REPRESENTATIVE

HENSWORTH JONAS

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Hebrews 7:25-27

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CHRIST: THE PERFECT REPRESENTATIVE

“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. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 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.”—Hebrews 7:25-27

BROTHERS and sisters, ladies and gentlemen! Most of the time, when we think about Christ’s saving work, we think of the past, or we think of the future. We know that in the past, Christ lived the perfect life and died on the cross for all sinners who prove to be true believers, and that He rose from the dead. We know that, according to Scripture, in the future, Christ is returning, and that He will put everything right that has gone wrong.

While the work of Christ on behalf of true believers, both in the past and in the future, is vital, there is an argument to be made that what He is doing right now is of equal importance.

Hebrews 7 gives us the framework of the Old Testament tabernacle or temple. It helps us understand our Lord Jesus’ work for us right now in the

present tense in terms of that temple. The tabernacle came first; it was a tent. The temple came later; it was a solid building. There was an altar out front where animals were slain in both cases. The people prayed in the outer court, and there was a tiny cubicle. It was completely surrounded. It was a perfect square and cube surrounded by heavy curtains, and inside that was the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was where the *shekinah* glory of God, His radiance, dwelled. He dwelled over the Ark of the Covenant, and only one person could go there, the high priest, and only once a year.

The high priest, once a year, would come and sacrifice an animal, go back into the Holy of Holies, and represent the people before God. He would go there as the mediator, as the people's representative. He would pray for them and offer a sacrifice for their sins and seek to procure God's favor for the people for the coming year.

The concept of the temple is not a familiar one to our generation. Temple activity involved blood, gore, incense, smoke, curtains, and priests. However, all of this was designed by God to teach the doctrine that Jesus Christ is the *real* High Priest Who makes the offering, literally goes into the presence of God, and there procures God's love, grace, and favor for sinners like us.

Before we go any further, I must advise you that there is a question that we all have, and we desperately need to have it answered. The question is: How do I look before an infinitely holy God? Am I beautiful in the eyes of God, or am I ugly? This sacred text

will assist us in answering the question. Now, if you allow other people to answer the question for you, you will risk increasing the frustration already built into the question. Everybody in this place has at least one person in the world who does not like them at all. There may even be quite a few haters in your life. These haters are all ready to give a bad report about you.

Many of you have had broken relationships, and there may be somebody walking around who thinks you are awful. Are you as bad as some of these people say? You have been in work situations where you did the right thing, as far as you know. Other people think that you stabbed them in the back. Many people may feel that you are a terrible person.

So, are you ready to answer? How do you look before an infinitely holy God? Are you beautiful in the eyes of God, or are you ugly? For the true believer in Christ, the biblical answer is right here in this text. However, we must make abundantly clear a couple of things before we look at the text. First of all, God's eye is the only objective eye. God's eye is the only eye that counts. His view of you is the only one that matters. Secondly, if you enter into an intimate relationship with God in Christ, you are beautiful in God's sight. You are a surpassing beauty. You are gorgeous. If you get ahold of that fact, you can face anything that life will throw at you.

The whole point of this text is that what Christ had done for truly penitent sinners when He lived the perfect life and died on the Cross of Calvary, as well as what He is doing right now as their

representative before the throne of God, has effectively made them beautiful in the eyes of God. Let's work it out. We will look at the *character* of the present ministry of Christ, the *credentials* for the present ministry of Christ, and the *consequences* of the present ministry of Christ.

1. The Character of the Current Ministry of Christ (v. 25)

“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.”

The question here is this: What is the nature of the representation that Christ provides for sinners saved by the grace of God? It says in verse 25 that “he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” What does *intercede* mean? It means “to stand in.” In 1 John 2:1, it says, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” In other words, He says, “Little children, I don’t want you to sin; but if you sin, I have for you an interceder with the Father. I have Someone to stand in for you, Someone to speak up for you.”

While we have admitted that our generation might have some difficulty relating to the concept of intercession within the framework of the ancient Hebrew temple, it might also be true that today we do not have that much of a problem understanding intercession within the framework of a court of law.

When the Bible says Jesus is our High Priest, the Lord Jesus is literally our defense attorney in God's court.

I try to avoid litigation if I can, but I will hire a lawyer if I must go to court, even though a good one is so hard to find. I have not studied, mastered, or applied the rules of evidence in the context of a court of law, so I am not confident enough to represent myself. That is why I will hire a lawyer. Through a legal transaction, that attorney becomes my legal representative in court. What do I look like to the court? I look like my attorney. If my attorney is eloquent, if my attorney is polished, if my attorney is skilled, then I am articulate, polished, and professional in the court's eyes. If my attorney messes up, I suffer the consequences. If my attorney does well, I will celebrate the benefits. There are certain times or occasions when the court may not require my presence if my representative is present. My choice of representation matters.

That is precisely the nature of the Lord Jesus' relationship to anyone who is a biblical Christian. It is a legal thing; it is forensic. It is a status thing. There is a legal transaction! Suddenly, there is no difference between you and your attorney before the court. When your attorney speaks before the judge, you are legally speaking before the bar. We are all standing judged before the judgment seat, the court of heaven, and at that court. Listen! If you are a genuine Christian, the Lord Jesus stands today, right now, as your Advocate.

This is excellent news! However, it is only good news because there is also bad news. There is a judgment seat, a heavenly judgment seat, a heavenly court, and an eternal Law of God before which we all stand condemned. This Law is written in the Holy Scriptures, but it is also written on our hearts by our Creator, according to Romans 1. We all know it, for we all feel the crushing guilt of our sin. We are not just referring to guilt feelings, but also our legal status before God as being in a state of condemnation. Our whole life is about dealing with this guilt.

Guilt is not just indelible; it is immediate. Why is it that you may be walking along and, suddenly, a slideshow begins to run in your mind about all the things you have done wrong? Why is it that sometimes your conscience drives you crazy? We all have to deal with the guilt—even preachers while preaching. Here lies the reason behind our getting so defensive when people criticize us because, down deep inside of us, there is that fundamental insecurity that comes from knowing that we must answer to the Judge of all the earth, the One Who is our Maker. We know that we have not loved God and our neighbor according to God's holy standard. There is an indelibility about guilt.

It should be evident that we have a kind of guilt that we cannot seem to get rid of, and this is exacerbated¹ by the fact that our guilt somehow continually gets reinvigorated. There is an immediacy about it. We know that we are guilty. We know that we

¹ **exacerbated** – made worse.

stand judged. We know that we have failed. We know it, and, therefore, we desperately need an advocate.

Here comes our Lord Jesus in one of His mediatorial offices. I am a grateful man today, for Jesus took my case! I am not prepared to guess what you may say, but I know the facts about my case, and I also know a little about the law. My case was hopeless. No one has to convince me about my sin and guilt. But somehow, this Advocate, this lawyer called Jesus Christ of Nazareth, took my case, for I heard that He specializes in hopeless cases. And if He took it, He must know just what He would do with it, for I heard that He has never lost a case! Hallelujah to the Lamb!

2. The Credentials for the Current Ministry of Christ (vv. 26-27)

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 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.”

Brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen! The Bible tells us right here that our Lord Jesus Christ does stand as our Advocate and that He has two credentials to do the job.

The first is in verses 26-27. *Jesus Christ is perfect!* The reason our Lord can be an Advocate for us is His perfection. If you hire a lawyer with whom the law has a severe quarrel, one who has to answer

serious charges of his own, how can he credibly stand in court as your representative? Of course, we know that, except for our Lord Jesus Christ, there is not another human being who could stand as our advocate before the throne of God. Christ stands flawless, representing true believers. No one can find any fault in Him. The court loves Him! But that is not His only credential.

The second credential is that *Christ has an infallible case to present*. This fact is also evident in verse 27. Look at it closely. Our Lord is not representing us with a shaky case. He is not grabbing at straws. It will completely change your life when it sinks in that Christ as your Advocate is not only flawless but has a flawless case that He pleads for you. This truth gives true believers confidence.

Some of you may know by experience that it is possible for lawyers, when they realize that they have no credible case to present, will find all sorts of other ways to get their client off. They sometimes do histrionics,² you know, the emotional song and dance. They sometimes do hysterics, you know, the sudden fits of panic. They sometimes do blackmail, you know, holding something threatening over the head of someone they want to cooperate with the lie. They sometimes try to buy the jury with impressive language. They use flowery words and do rhetorical gymnastics. You can do all sorts of things to cajole a jury and get sympathy when you do not have a case.

² **histrionics** – exaggerated dramatic behavior designed to attract attention.

Beloved, when I consider my problems before the throne of God, I sometimes imagine that that is the kind of lawyer that I need, for I have no case. I have sinned before my God. I know that I am guilty as charged. It appears that only some novel legal maneuvers could get me off. But the good news of the gospel is that our Lord Jesus does not need such manipulative devices to plead the case of true believers. You see, what He does, first of all, is to enter a guilty plea on our behalf. But then He quickly reminds the court that the penalty has already been paid and that double jeopardy³ would be an act of injustice. He then presents evidence of full payment to the court. He would say, in effect, to the Father, “Look at My blood, that crimson tide that washes white as snow. Look at My hands, the nail-scarred hands that suffered torture for this man’s sin. Look at My side, for I was pieced for his redemption. Look at My head, where the thorny crown pressed upon My brow. Father, look at the evidence.”

Listen, folks! That is the case! Verse 27 says, “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.”

Please note that Christ is not asking for mercy from the Father for true believers. Now, we have asked for mercy, and so should we, for we need it. But Christ does not currently ask for mercy as our

³ **double jeopardy** – the prosecution of a person twice for the same offense.

representative. It is not legitimate to ask for mercy at this point. Mercy is something you consider after the verdict. To make a case means you show what the law is. You show it. What does Christ say? He says in effect, "I do not ask for mercy for my brothers and sisters. I ask for justice, for *I* have satisfied the law. *I* have paid the price. Look at the evidence of *my* perfect life as well as *my* suffering on Calvary!"

Hebrews 12:24 makes it clear that the blood of our Lord Jesus speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel. Do you remember what happened when Cain killed Abel? God came to Cain and said, "Where is Abel thy brother? And he said...Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9). God said, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen 4:10). Cries out for what? Justice! Yet the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the blood of Christ has also been spilled. It was lying out there on the ground. Men could see the horror of it, but it was saying something else. It was crying out for something else. It was still crying out for justice, but it was justice of another kind. This is the whole point of the gospel. Because of His gracious blood in the past on Calvary, our Lord Jesus is pleading right now on behalf of the true believer. "I do not ask for mercy for My clients, for their sin debt is paid in full. I ask for justice. Your perfect justice demands the acquittal of My brothers and sisters, for full payment has already been made on their behalf." That is an infallible case.

Based on Christ's gracious substitutionary death and His perfect life, His substitutionary

intercession, the Law of God, and the justice of God are entirely now demanding our acquittal, ordering it. The scales of divine justice have been tipped in favor of the true believer so that "He is able...to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb 7:25). It has nothing to do with what you have done. It has nothing to do with your record. It does not matter whether or not you have done things that you will never be able to tell anybody. It does not matter what you have accomplished. It does not matter how alienated you are. "He is able...to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Because of the work of Christ, God is able to accept you, love you, forgive you, and acquit you. That means that when the Father looks at you, you are absorbed in your Advocate. As a result, a Christian never has to worry about today or tomorrow. True believers never have to worry about whether or not they will slip in or out of this life. If you are a biblical Christian, the Father looks at you, and what does He see? He sees your High Priest, your Advocate. What does He see? He sees your name engraved in absolute beauty and glory over the heart of Christ. He sees your record in Christ as being completely clean. He sees your inheritance in Christ as being steadfast and sure. He sees your heart as being wholly surrendered to Him. He sees something exquisite! Why? It is not because of anything you have done or your moral efforts. It happened the minute you made an application to your divine Advocate. It happened when you said to Christ, "Be my Advocate. I cannot appear before the court in myself. If I try to do that,

I will be slaughtered! But with You standing in for me, I have reason to rejoice!" Hallelujah!

3. The Consequences of the Current Ministry of Christ (v. 25)

"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."

Brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen! Our Lord Jesus is a perfect Lawyer. In this case, He does not merely get you acquitted. He brings you all of the rights and privileges you had lost as a sinner. You are now absorbed in Him. You are liable for everything for which He is exposed. You are to get everything He deserves.

That is precisely what the doctrine of the intercession of Christ means. For example, why can you have the Holy Spirit? God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him (Act 5:32). The Holy Spirit is the lifeblood of God. The Holy Spirit shows us God's power, the joy of God, the nature of God, and the strength of God. However, we have not obeyed Him. How then can we get the Holy Spirit? It is straightforward. In John 14:16, our Lord Jesus says, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." You have the Holy Spirit entirely and totally through the intercession of Christ.

Here is another benefit: prayer itself. Your ability to pray to God is based on the high priestly intercession of Jesus Christ. It says, for example, in Psalm

66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." What? Then why should we even bother to pray? This is depressing. Why should God hear anybody? We are all cherishing iniquity in our hearts, so it seems like that is the end of that. But hold on! Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Christ understands us, so let us draw near. Prayer is entirely a function of the high priestly intercession of Christ.

There are so many benefits, but I will tell you one more. Your assurance and your certainty that Christ will never let you go, and that you will never lose Him, and that He will never lose you, are all based on the intercession of Christ. In Luke 22:31-32, before Peter was about to deny and betray his Master, our Lord Jesus came to him and said something significant. The text reads, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Now, did you hear that? Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus too. Why is it that six weeks later, the body of Judas was rotting in the potter's field, and Peter was leading a movement that was about to change the history of the world? Do you know why? Was it because Peter was more intelligent? Was it because Peter was better? Was it because Peter was more resilient? No! It was because our Lord Jesus said, "I have prayed for thee." It was Christ's

intercession that saved Peter's life! The transaction between Peter and Jesus, making Jesus his Advocate, had never happened between Judas Iscariot and Jesus.

Have you noticed that our Lord Jesus does not say, "I have prayed for you, so *if* you return"—does he? What does our Lord say? He said, "I have prayed for thee...and *when* thou art converted" (v. 32). Why? Jesus has never, ever, ever, ever had one of His prayers turned down. This is because He has an infallible case, and He ever lives to intercede for true believers in Christ! This is what He lives to do. When you live to do something, that means you get joy in it. You can never stop doing it. You can never get enough of it. He lives to intercede. That is an incredible thing. It does not merely say that He intercedes. It does not simply say that He lives *and* intercedes. It says that He lives *to* intercede for you and me, who are true believers. Think of that. He is saying in effect, "That's what I'm built to do. That's what I'm here to do. That's My meaning in life." What a Savior! Hallelujah!

4. Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen! If this is all true, do you not see what a difference it makes? Do you have some guilt in your life? Do you have some things that make you feel unworthy? Well, this holy text offers you the way to have an end to your disappointment. If you understand that Jesus Christ is your righteousness and that He is your worthiness, you will see that you may stand before

God looking beautiful despite all you have done that brings you shame and guilt. He enables you to stand before the Father.

With Christ as your Advocate, your Representative, there is no more disappointment. Do you know why? Most of the things that disappoint us are things we hope would give us meaning in life. We hope they will provide us with our identity, significance, and security. Whatever it was in your life that you had put your hopes in for meaning did not come through for you. Why? Only God can give you the identity, significance, and security you need. Only God can indeed be your God. Anything else is idolatry! You have wasted your time when you put your hopes in anything or anyone other than Christ. Everything in this world, except Christ Jesus, is overrated. All that you have trusted in has made a fool out of you. But what were these things that we have lost? What were these things that have so shattered us? These were things that we foolishly made our righteousness. We were banking on them. All of our eggs were in the wrong basket!

I will put it another way. Most of our desires for success are our efforts to be for ourselves what only the Lord Jesus can be for us. They are our efforts to be our advocates and our defense before the bar of God's justice. We say, "If only I could get this. If only I could get that. If only! If only!" And when it does not happen, we are shattered; we are disappointed.

Listen! No longer does a biblical Christian have to be up and down emotionally over things like that, no longer, because none of these things can stand

before God on your behalf and be your advocate. None of these things prove that you are worthy. But Jesus is your worthiness. If you willingly embrace this truth, there will be an end to the guilt. There will be an end to constantly being disappointed. There will be an end to self-consciousness.

If you, as a true believer, are lacking confidence and boldness in living your life, it is because you think about your sin without thinking of the intercession of Christ. On the other hand, if you are self-righteous and lacking in compassion for other sinners, it means that you believe that you are pretty good. You forget the fact that you are a wicked sinner, just like everyone else, and that the only reason you can stand before the Father is that you are hidden in your Advocate.

Brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen! I am not confused. I know that I am a wicked sinner. Even after I had experienced the saving grace of God, I have been occasionally crushed and embarrassed by my weakness and wickedness. Sometimes, I am tempted to despair because of my repeated failures. But, right now, I have no time for self-pity. I am in a rejoicing mood right now! You see, I have an Advocate with the Father pleading my case. Yes, He lived the perfect life for me and paid the ultimate price for me in the past, and He promised to come for me in the future. But, my mind is on what He is doing for me right now. Because of the current intercessory ministry of Christ, I have a hope that is steadfast and sure. You see, right now, I have a lawyer in Jesus Who is perfect in His holy person. My

lawyer has never lost a case, and He is very intimate with the court. My lawyer has powerfully presented Himself as the evidence. My lawyer also has bottomless pockets, and His currency is His infinite blood. My lawyer never throws in the towel, and He is never unprepared. I have a lawyer in Jesus Who has already won the victory!

I have no time for self-pity, no time for self-righteousness, no time for self-glory or self-congratulation.

*No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.*

Please don't judge me by anything but the work that Christ has wrought in me, for apart from Christ I am nothing. Apart from Christ, I merely wander from one foolish project to another and just argue one empty and absurd argument after another. Without Christ, I just pretend to be happy from day to day. Without Christ, I end up embracing perversion and try to convince myself that it is the epitome of purity. However, with Christ as my representative, my lenses have cleared up, my faith has moved the mountains of my sin, hope has been snatched from the jaws of despair, and love has embraced me that will never let me go. With Christ as my representative, there is joy unspeakable and full of glory. I'm looking pretty good before the heavenly court with His representation, and I can stand justified

before the holy bench. Thank God for Jesus! Hallelujah! Amen.

