



New Testament Survey Series

Hebrews

By

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Dear Saints in Christ Jesus,

These notes were taken from our Old and New Testament Bible surveys at Koinonia on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. The intention was to give an overview of the entire Bible and see how the two testaments “connect.” Within the notes, practical truths were brought out because we know that the study of Scripture without application is like a vehicle without gas...going nowhere.

If the Holy Spirit can use these simply truths to draw you closer to Jesus Christ and develop a more mature love of God the Father, then this booklet will have accomplished its task.

May the blessing of God be shed upon you as you receive, with meekness, His engrafted Word.

Selah,

Pastor Ray

* Portions of these notes were downloaded from Quick Verse and Online Bible Study notes.

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HEBREWS

The Book of Hebrews was addressed to Jewish believers who were being pulled back into Judaism. They were being drawn back into their old rituals and the Levitical system. Basically, what God was saying to them was that if they went back to their old religion and ritual as the basis of their salvation, that would nullify the work of Christ for them on the cross. That would be going back to the shadow instead of being rooted in the Substance, Jesus Christ. The message is timely for you and me too. Don't complicate your faith. Keep it simple. Keep it focused. Keep it centered on Christ.

As the book unfolds, it shows that those addressed were persecuted and were in danger of being tempted to fall away, but they had not yet shed their blood for Christ (12:4). In order to strengthen them, the superiority of Christianity to Judaism is demonstrated by showing the superlative excellence of Christ. He is: 1) superior to the **“prophets”** (1:1-3); 2) superior to the **“angels”** (1:4-2:18); 3) superior to **“Moses”** (3:1-6). Furthermore, 4) Christ's priesthood is superior to that of **“Aaron”**, since He is forever a priest **“after the order of Melchizedek”** (5:1-10). Then, 5) the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old is shown, being a better covenant, based upon better promises (8:6-13).

The human authorship of this book has been debated for years, but we know for sure that all Scripture has been given by inspiration of God (2 Tim 3:16).

Chapter 1

1:1 **“At various times”** is better translated (as in the Revised Version), **“in diverse portions”**. The Old Testament was given in portions, not all at once, and at wide intervals. Holy Scripture is a record of God's speaking to His people through many centuries.

Note that it was God who **“spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets”**. Though prophets were chosen as the instruments, the message was from God; and, although God spoke through them, the prophets were only men.

This is what is known as the progressive revelation of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

The book opens with the name of its Author, the Holy Spirit of God Himself! Theologians have debated who wrote this book as far as human authorship. But while we can only speculate about that, this we know for sure:

2 Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,

:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

1:2 Please take note that with the first coming of Jesus mankind officially entered the era of human history known as the **“last days”**.

Gen 49:1 And Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days”.

In the last days, Israel will be in the news.

Acts 2:17 “‘And it shall come to pass in the last days,’ says God, ‘that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh’”. (quote from **Joel 2:28**)

In the last days, the Spirit of God is going to be poured out upon the servants of the Lord to do the work of the Lord.

2 Tim 3:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times will come.

The last days will be like the days of Noah, Lot, Sodom and Gomorah with immorality abounding, loss of natural affection, the calling of evil good and good evil, spiritual deception, the mocking of creation and the Second Coming (**2 Peter 2:1-10, 3:3-4**).

Note too that Jesus is the **“Heir of all things”** as well as the Creator (**John 1:3; Col 1:16,17**). This proves the preexistence of Jesus as God before His Incarnation (**John 1:1,14**). In fact, as the progressive revelation of Scripture unfolds, we find that **“God”** - “Elohim” of **Genesis 1:1** (which is a compound unity in the Hebrew language) - attributes the creative office to all three members of the Trinity.

1:3 Jesus is **“the brightness of His glory...”** and God’s glory is the revelation of who He is and what He is like.

“...and the express image of His person...” In Christ we have a tangible, visible representation of the substance of God. We see God in Jesus: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (**John 14:9**).

The fullness of the Godhead dwells, not in a type or in a figure, but truly in Jesus (**Col 1:19**).

“...and upholding all things by the word of His power”. The Son has all power, and His power was always manifested by His word.

He spoke and it was done, whether it was to still the winds (**Matt 8:23-27**) or to raise the dead (**John 11:43,44**). So it was in creation; the word was spoken and it was done (**Heb 11:3**). Jesus is here revealed as the Creator.

“...when He had by Himself purged our sins...” Jesus Himself alone has made an atonement for us (**2 Cor 5:19,21; Eph 1:7**). That Jesus should by Himself cleanse us from our sins is a mystery of love that deserves our utmost love, admiration, gratitude, and praise!

“...sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”. Jesus sat down at God’s right hand. The right hand was always the place of honor. Sitting down reveals the finished work of Christ. The Old Testament priests could never sit down, for the work of atonement was never really complete (**Heb 9:24-26**).

- 1:4-8** Many Jews had a superstitious or idolatrous respect for “**angels**” because they had received the law and other tidings of the Divine will by their ministry. They looked upon them as mediators between God and men, and some went so far as to pay them a kind of religious homage or worship. Thus it was necessary that the writer should insist, not only on Christ’s being the Creator of all things and therefore of angels themselves, but as being the risen and exalted Messiah in human form to whom angels, authorities, and powers are subject.
- 1:5** Beginning here we see the superiority of Jesus to the angels. “**For to which of the angels did He ever say...**”? To none of them did God ever use such language as follows in **verses 5-13**. The style in which the Father addresses Christ shows His superiority to the angels. “**You are My Son**”. This is a quote of **Psalm 2:7**. The second psalm was regarded by the Jews as a prophecy of the Messiah. Note how the writer based his arguments on the O. T. Scriptures, the Word of God: **verse 5 - Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14; verse 6 - Deut 32:43, Psalm 97:7; verse 7 - Psalm 104:4; verses 8,9 - Psalm 45:6,7; verses 10-12 - Psalm 102:25-27; verse 13 - Psalm 110:1.**
- 1:10-12** In **Psalm 102:25-27**, these words are applied to God, but in this passage the writer refers to the divine Son. Both this passage and the psalm emphasize the Creator’s supremacy over His creation. He initiated creation; He will end it and renew it.
“Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed.”
 The heavens will be rolled away; they will be “rolled up” to be put away like a worn out garment or a scroll (**Isaiah 34:4; Rev 6:14**).
“But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” The Son is eternal, “the same yesterday, today and forever.” (**Heb 13:8**)

Chapter 2

As we begin this chapter, we find the first of six perils or danger signals in the epistle, the peril of drifting. The others we will look at are: the peril of doubting (**3:7-4:2**); the peril of dull hearing (**5:11-13**); the peril of departing (**6:4-8**); the peril of despising (**10:26-31**); and the peril of denying (**12:15-17,25**).

- 2:1** “... lest we drift away” literally means, “**let them (that is, “the things we have heard”) slip past.**” The reason for the drifting is due to neglect. To hear the Word of God and either ignore it or neglect it will be perilous to you and those around you.
- 2:2** An Old Testament example of “**the word spoken through angels**” was when the two angels preached that Sodom and Gomorrah would be destroyed, and indeed it was. There is a mountain range near that area today where you can taste the salt in it, which was caused by the

judgment of fire and brimstone on the careless, idle, immoral society there (**Ezek 16:49,50; Gen 19:1-28**).

2:3 How can people escape the eternal judgment of God if they “neglect” His offer of “salvation” to them by grace through faith in Jesus Christ? The fact is, they can’t. They think that there are other ways, but there aren’t (**Prov 16:25**). They think there is another gospel, but there isn’t (**Gal 1:6-10**). “It is appointed unto man to die once” - so don’t count on reincarnation to give you a second chance to live less a de-praved life than you are now - “and then comes the judgment” (**Heb 9:27**). Satan wants to hold onto men until they die, because once they are dead the opportunity for salvation is gone forever; there’s no es-cape after death. But God is not willing that any perish (**2 Peter 3:9**).

- Has Satan blinded your eyes from the one true gospel (**2 Cor 4:4**)?

2:4 Note that the “signs and wonders” followed them that “heard Him” (v 3), and they still follow those who hear and obey the Word of God. In **Mark 16:17-18** we read Jesus’ words that certain signs would follow those who believe. The miracles found in the Bible are still following the true proclamation of the Word of God. The book of **Acts** has no “Amen” at the end of it because the Church age is still intact. However, not all signs and miracles are of the Lord (**Matt 24:24; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 13:11-15**). Be wise, be discerning!

Note also here that the Spirit gives the “gifts of the Holy Spirit” to each believer. God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in His dispensing of His gifts (**1 Cor 12:7-11**). There are no second-class citizens in the Kingdom of God. Too much emphasis is placed on the gift of tongues, but Scripture asks, “Do all speak in tongues?” (**1 Cor 12:30**), implying they do not. Read the gift lists found in **Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; Ephesians 4:11**. Every time believers get together it’s like Christmas since there’s a beautiful exchange of gifts.

- Be a wise steward of the gift that God has given you.

2:5 Again we see the superiority of Jesus to angels in His humanity. Both the Deity and humanity of Jesus (**John 1:1-3,14; Phil 2:5-8**) are very important truths to be studied.

“...the world to come” is a reference to the millennial reign of Jesus Christ when, as the Seed of David, He will carry the government on His shoulders (**Isaiah 9:6,7**).

2:6-8 These verses quote from **Psalm 8:4-6**. “What is man”? If you broke down the elements of man’s body and put them up for sale, at one time they were estimated at a value of just 98 cents. So physically, in the material resale sense, man is not very valuable. However, when

we add the Creator God to the mix, man becomes a wonder of all wonders (**Psalm 139:1-18**)! Every person has been “fearfully and wonderfully made” to know God and have meaningful fellowship with Him, but apart from his Maker, man is, at his best, “vanity and vexation of spirit” (or, “grasping for the wind” - **Ecc 1:14**).

- When you look at the unsaved, do you see a sheep that has lost its way and needs a Shepherd (**Mark 6:34**), a sinner who needs a Savior (**Isaiah 53:6**)?

2:7,8

Adam was created to have dominion over all the earth and the creatures of the earth (**Gen 1:26**). What happened? He sinned, and now the devil is called “the god of this world” (**2 Cor 4:4**) and “the prince of this world” (**John 14:30**). This is the reason why we have such horrible things as rape, war, etc. God did not design man to live like this, but “the wages of sin is death” (**Rom 6:23a**). Satan is the inspiration behind all of the ills on the earth, not Jesus Christ. As proof, study the works of Jesus in the gospels.

Some say that the church is now reigning triumphant because of Jesus Christ. Oh really? Go stand in the cage of lions at Seneca Park Zoo after they have fasted for two days and command them to not have you for lunch! Do you have weeds in your garden? Does your hair lose color, or simply disappear? We shall reign as kings and priests in the Millennium (**Rev 5:10, 20:6**), but we are not reigning now in the complete sense of the word. The greatest of the faith preachers die, even though in the atonement of Christ the enemy of physical death has been defeated. When in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, death will not occur for the saints reigning with Him (**1 Cor 15:54**). As **verse 8** says, “**But now we do not yet see all things put under him**”, that is man. In the Kingdom age the reign of man, forfeited by Adam, will finally be realized in the reign of the Man Christ Jesus.

2:9

We do not see man in the present condition ruling the creation as intended by God in the beginning, but “**we (do) see Jesus,**” who **...taste(d) death**” for us, meaning that He became our Cupbearer. When kings were offered drinks, the cupbearer would take the first sip to insure there was no poison in it to kill the king. Jesus prayed that the cup would pass from Him in the Garden (**Matt 26:39**), but of course, He was destined before the foundation of the world to drink that cup. Jesus tasted the cup of sin and death so that we, through faith in Him, could have the gift of eternal life (**John 3:14-15**). “**By the grace of God**” Jesus died for our sins, and by the grace of God we receive forgiveness for our sins. Since by a man sin entered into the world, thus by a Man atonement had to come into the world. Why was Jesus “**made a little lower than the angels**” (for His thirty-three years on earth)?

1 John 3:8 ...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

- 2:10** Please note here that all things (including you and me) are created both for the Father and by the Father. If a person who has received Christ begins to search for purpose or meaning in life outside of God, he or she becomes frustrated and discouraged because the reason for our existence is to bring glory to God. Presently, the work of the Spirit of God is to convict a person of their sin and bring them **“to glory”** by faith in Jesus Christ. The word for **“captain”** here means, “author, originator or founder.” Jesus is the Alpha (and Omega) of our salvation (**Rev 1:8**). The word **“perfect”** here means complete, or to carry out the goal. Through His suffering on the cross, Jesus completed God’s plan of salvation (**John 19:30**). A perfect salvation is available for you by grace through faith (**Eph 2:8**) in the finished work of Jesus Christ. **2 Cor 5:21** He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- 2:11** The popular concept of the universal fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is false. The true family of God is spiritually comprised of those who have repented of their sins and trusted Jesus Christ as the total payment for them. We are **“sanctified”** in Christ and by Christ. In the new birth we are perfectly holy; before God, those who are in His Son are holy. We may not always act holy, but we are holy - just as a child who often does not act like his father or please his father is still his father’s child. We are holy in the sense that before God the righteousness of Christ has been applied and imputed in our behalf. We were made holy through His sacrifice. **Heb 10:10** ...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
- 2:14,15** As glorious and majestic as the birth and life of Jesus Christ was, it was His **“death”** that saved us. His death brought to us salvation and deliverance from spiritual and eternal death. Note that in His death, Jesus defeated him **“who had the power of death, ...the devil”**. There is only one real Savior, only one perfect Savior. He is Jesus Christ. **Acts 4:12** And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.
- 2:17** We see here again that it is impossible for Jesus to be identified as an angel. There is always the danger of underestimating the humanity of Jesus Christ. Jesus, fully God, became a real man, yet without sin (**Heb 4:15**). He is still **“a merciful and faithful High Priest”**. Jesus

Christ was made a mercy seat for you and me. Man needs mercy, not religion. Jesus made the final “**propitiation**” for the sins of man.

2:18 How could Jesus suffer “**being tempted**”? If you put a hot fudge sundae in front of me, it would draw and entice me to no end. That would be a real temptation, and I would suffer with that. However, if you took me to a sewage plant and told me to stand there all day and look at it, I would also suffer. Not because I would be tempted to plunge into the sewage, but because I would be grossed out by what was in front of me. The stench of sin caused Jesus to suffer, not the sweetness or deceitfulness of it.

- May the Spirit of God cause us to view sin as sewage instead of hot fudge sundaes!

Chapter 3

3:1 “**Holy brethren**” does not refer to our virtue but to the righteousness God imputes to us because of our faith in Jesus Christ. We are made holy by being purged of our sins and from our sins. As “**partakers of the heavenly calling**” we do not look to our earthly situation for fulfillment, but to our final home with Christ.

1 Cor 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

“**Consider**” in the Greek means to “study carefully”. It is the same word Jesus used in **Matthew 6:28** when He said, “Consider the lilies of the field...”

“**Apostle**” means “one who has been sent, an ambassador”. Moses, in this sense, was an apostle. The Twelve were sent out by Christ as ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom (**Matt 10:5-7**). This verse is the only place where Jesus is called an Apostle, but He was sent from heaven by the Father (**Luke 4:43; John 3:17**). An ambassador represents all the power and authority of his country (**Matt 28:18**), and speaks for his nation. Jesus spoke God’s thoughts (**John 8:26,28**). Jesus is the “**High Priest of our confession**”. Job asked for a “daysman” (“mediator”) to bridge the gap between God and man (**Job 9:33**), and the word means “bridge builder”. God has built the bridge to man (**2 Cor 5:18-19**). Jesus Christ therefore is not only an Apostle, but a High Priest, superior to Moses and Aaron combined. He is the Mediator of the New and better Covenant (**Heb 8:6**).

3:2 How important it is for us to remember that Jesus as Son of Man was “**faithful**” to what His Father called upon Him to do, and He remains faithful today (**Heb 2:17,18; 1 Cor 1:9; Deut 7:9**).

Moses was a faithful servant in the house of God (**Num 12:7**).

- May we be faithful to do what our Lord Jesus has called upon us to do.

3:3,4 Note here another clear reference to the Deity of Jesus Christ, for He is the One **“who built all things”**.

The word **“someone”** or **“man”** in some translations of **verse 4** does not occur in the Greek. However, the clear meaning is that every house has a human builder, but the Builder of all things is God.

3:5,6 The house of God in the days of Moses was the nation Israel. The house of God that Christ built is the Church, for He dwells in us when we invite Him in.

1 Cor 3:9 ...you are God’s building.

Matt 16:18 ...I will build My church...

The whole ministry of Moses was a **“testimony”** to what would follow after, a shadow of what was to come (**Deut 18:18,19**). The life and ministry of Moses served in some respects as a foreshadow of the coming Messiah/Deliverer Jesus Christ.

Note the reference to **“the hope”** which we have in Jesus Christ now.

Jude 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

2 Tim 1:12 ...I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

:4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

:5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

3:7 The **“Holy Spirit”** is the Author of the Bible (**2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21**).

Verses 7-11 quote **Psalm 95:7-11**.

God wishes us to hear Him **“today,”** not tomorrow. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (**Rev 2:7,11, 17,29, 3:6,13,22**) As it says in **Proverbs (8:1-5)**, His wisdom is crying out to mankind!

- Anyone who has not been born again (**John 3:5-7**) by trusting the finished work of Jesus Christ for your sins, hear Him calling you right now to “Come to Me...and I will give you rest.” (**Matt 11:28**)

3:8-11 One of the ways that the children of Israel **“tested”** (or **“tempted”**) and **“tried”** God was by their constant murmuring and complaining. Another way was by insisting that He answer their selfish prayer requests. “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.” (**Psalm 106:13-15**) A third way that they tempted God was by

their desire to be just like all the other nations.

The result of the tempting and striving of the children of Israel was that God was **“grieved”** (**“angry”**) with the people. The Greek word for grieved here, “*prosochthizo*”, more nearly means “disgusted”. Scripture commands us not to grieve or quench the Holy Spirit of God (**Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19**). Anything we do, say, or participate in that is not holy grieves God and hardens our hearts.

God said that they **“always”** erred in their hearts and were ignorant of His ways. They did not simply make some mistakes, but their hearts were not willing to be fashioned to the word or will of God. If a person wins in striving against the work of Jesus Christ in their lives, in the end they are the losers forever. To **“harden”** one’s **“heart”** is to reach such a state that God’s voice makes no impression.

They saw God’s works **“forty years”** when He made them wander in the wilderness. They saw the miracles, and they saw their needs being met in a miraculous way. And yet, instead of worshipping the Lord for His goodness and mercy towards them, instead of entering into the rest He had prepared in the Promised Land, they were overthrown because of their hard hearts and rebellion.

- 3:12** Here we find the second warning of the letter, and that is the warning against the peril of **“unbelief”**. Scripture talks about people who embrace the outward forms of Christianity but deny the power of the new life in Christ (**2 Tim 3:5**). It also talks about how it is possible to embrace as doctrine “the commandments of men” instead of the Word of God (**Matt 15:7-9**). To question the Word of God is evil.
- 3:13** To prevent our hearts from becoming hardened with unbelief, we need to **“exhort one another daily”** in the things of God.
- Keep yourself accountable to others within the body of Christ. Another way that we prevent our hearts from being hardened is by avoiding **“the deceitfulness of sin.”** Sin deceives us by making false promises of happiness and safety. The ultimate deceitfulness of sin for the unsaved is concluding that life is okay without Jesus. That is the lie of Satan that ends up in eternal damnation. However, the deceitfulness of sin for the child of God is thinking that my life is mine to do with as I please. We have been bought with a price (**1 Cor 6:20**). For us to live a new life, we must die to our old self. For us to live a resurrected life, we must first be crucified (**Romans 6:4-6**).
- 3:14** The Israelites started well, but didn’t finish well. Remember Demas (**2 Tim 4:10**), Solomon (**1 Kings 11:1-10**), Saul (**1 Sam 10-23**)? The grace of God also enables the child of God to persevere **“to the end”**.
- 3:15-19** The reminder of Israel’s wilderness wanderings is given here to show that **“unbelief”** can rob us of all the rich blessings God wants to

bestow on us. The Israelites took their eyes off God and saw only the obstacles before them, refusing to believe in God's provision. Their unbelief kept them from entering into the "rest" God had prepared for them. There were two exceptions, Joshua and Caleb, but Scripture is clear that the reason why they made it into the promised land was because they "wholly followed the LORD" (**Num 32:8-12**). They saw the same giants as the others did, but they believed what God said and walked by faith, not by sight. They walked by faith, not by fear.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Matt 13:58 And He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

- Jesus wants to do a mighty work in your life!

May we follow in the footsteps of the father of our faith, Abraham.

Rom 4:19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sara's womb.

:20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God,

:21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

Look at some of the keys of Abraham's faith in this passage. The first key was ignoring the physical limitations of the situation (**v 19**). Sarah could have called on the doctor and said, 'My husband and I want a son of our own. However, I went through menopause about thirty years ago.' The doctor would have said, 'Sarah, you're dreaming!' Abraham comes in for his check-up and says, 'We want a son. Can you give me some vitamins?' 'No chance,' the doctor says. 'You're almost 100 years old and your wife is past 90. A son now? Abraham, forget it. That's humanly impossible!' God's promise to Abraham was humanly impossible to fulfill, but Abraham simply ignored the natural considerations.

The second key to Abraham's faith was not wavering (or staggering) in unbelief at the promises of God (**v 20**). How many times we stagger at God's promises through unbelief! God's promises often seem too good to be true. I can accept what God did for Elijah and Paul, but I can't believe that He would do it for me. However, the Bible says He has "given to us exceedingly great and precious promises" (**2 Peter 1:4**).

The final key to Abraham's faith was being fully convinced (or persuaded) that God was able to do what He had promised (**4:21**). How big is your God? Is your God able? Many times our God is too small for our problems because He is the product of our own imaginations. The God of the Scriptures is eternal and almighty! He

measures the heavens with the span of His hand, and to Him “the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales” (**Isaiah 40:12,15**). Oh, the greatness of the God we serve! He is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (**Eph 3:20**).

Chapter 4

Jesus is the believer’s “**rest**”. He is our Sabbath. The Sabbath day was only a shadow of the rest that God would provide through faith in His Son Jesus. By faith we must enter into the words of Jesus, “It is Finished!” (**John 19:30**) When we enter into the rest God has for us, we are able to relax and stop worrying. We then have more time to set our minds on Him and to rejoice and praise Him.

4:1,2 Israel did not believe that God would lead them into the Promised Land. They limited the Holy One because of their fear of the giants. There were obstacles and challenges put before them, but the good news was that if they trusted what God had promised, they would enter into His glorious victory and rest. (See **Numbers 13:32-14:9**.) There is no rest in unbelief. A double-minded person is “unstable in all his ways.” (**James 1:6-8**) For the perfect peace and rest offered by the Lord, there must be absolute faith in Christ and an absolute surrender to His Word and work in our lives.

The phrase, “**being mixed with faith**” means that our faith is an active verb, active in what God has said.

- May we fear missing that glorious rest that is ours by abiding in Christ!

1 Thess 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectually works in you who believe.

4:3 Believers in Christ have the hope of the promised rest. To have this rest is conditioned upon a trusting faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. **Isaiah 53** begins with the question, “Who has believed our report?” By believing the report of Scripture regarding the finished work of Jesus Christ, we enter into His rest.

“Eternal life does not begin with death; it begins with faith.”

SAMUEL M. SHOEMAKER (1893–1963)

4:4-5 The “**rest**” of the Sabbath (“**seventh day**”) is not then the promised rest, nor is the earthly Canaan, from which nearly all Israel was once excluded, because David, in **Psalms 95:11** (partially quoted in **verse 5**), exhorted the people, though in Canaan, to enter into the rest. The rest that God has promised is received by grace through faith.

- 4:6** Those to whom God’s rest was first offered failed to enter because of their **“unbelief”**. (Note: the Greek word here can also be translated as **“disobedience”**. They disobeyed because they didn’t believe.) Unbelief is at the root of all unfruitfulness, whereas faith in the faithfulness of God gives us the life of His word.
- May we follow in the footsteps of Joshua and Caleb!
- Num 32:11** “Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; because they have not wholly followed Me,
- :12** except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed the LORD.”
- The word for “wholly” speaks of the consecrated lives of Joshua and Caleb before the Lord.
- 4:7** The thought here is that there is a specific day of opportunity. If that day is passed by, the opportunity is gone. The word of the Lord is: **“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”** (Quoted from **Psalm 95:7-8**.)
- 4:8** **“Joshua”** led Israel over the Jordan into Canaan, but that did not give them complete rest. This rest, by the way, is not pointing to heaven, for there will be no giants or battles there!
- “Jesus” is the Greek form of the Hebrew word “Joshua”. His rest is the rest for those who have received Him and walk in the Spirit. Again we see that even the types the Holy Scriptures use to point to Christ have their limits. The true rest of God does not come by putting faith in religion or men of God, but in the Living God Himself.
- 4:9,10** After God created the world, He **“rested”** (**“ceased”**) from His acts of creation, but His work in the world was not finished. When man fell short of God’s ideal, it was necessary that God do a work of redemption to bring unrighteous man back into fellowship with a righteous God. Jesus came to finish the work of redemption on the cross.
- John 4:34** Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”
- John 19:30** So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.
- Isaiah 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
- Isaiah 53:10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
- 2 Cor 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that

we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

The righteousness of Christ is now imputed to us (not earned, not deserved) because of our belief in what He has done.

Phil 3:9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ (*or, "the faith of Christ"*), the righteousness which is from God by faith; We do not need to struggle and labor to increase our righteousness because God is satisfied with the righteousness of Christ that He has given to us. When we learn to rest and trust in what Jesus has done for us on the cross, we glory in Him alone, leaving no chance to boast about our own 'righteousness'.

It sounds contradictory, but we have to work at maintaining this place of rest in Christ because Satan will attack and try to destroy our rest. The devil's greatest objective in our lives is to keep us distracted from the rest God has provided for us. He may try to distract us with religious activity or with our failures and shortcomings, or he may distract us with the things of the world or with the flesh.

The true rest of God occurs when we realize it's not because of anything that we do, but all because of Jesus and what He has done for us. What must we do that we might "work the works of God?"

Believe in Him whom the Father has sent (**John 6:28,29**).

4:11 The children of Israel were the "**example of unbelief**" (or "**disobedience**") that we should learn from for they were not allowed into God's rest because of their unbelief (disobedience).

The expression "**be diligent**" means "to be zealous, eager, make every effort". It implies active exertion on the part of the believer.

However, our labor is simply to trust in the love, grace, mercy, goodness and compassion of Jesus Christ towards us.

John 6:27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.

4:12 "**The Word of God**" and prayer are our only offensive weapons in the spiritual realm (**Eph 6:17b-18**). The word is "**living**" ("**quick**", "**alive**"). Jesus said that His words "are spirit, and they are life." (**John 6:63**) The Word is like fire; it burns away the things of the flesh. It is like a hammer; it shatters the works motivated by the flesh (**Jer 23:29**). It is the light that we need to travel through this world of darkness and deception (**Psalms 119:105**). The Word convicts of sin, regenerates, gives direction, provides sound doctrine, and comforts! **Psalms 119** is a meditation on the excellence of God's Word.

4:13 Every "**creature**" is manifest before him, and all our deeds and thoughts are "**open to (His) eyes**". He sees all of our inadequacies and struggles. This should motivate us to obedience, realizing that

nothing can be concealed from Him. This should motivate us to live honestly before Him, for He knows what is going on inside. This should motivate us to worship Him, because even though He knows everything about us, He still died for us on the cross.

In one sense we must forget that people are watching us, because that can create all kinds of unbiblical, hypocritical behavior and motivation. Cultivate the awareness that Jesus is always watching you, and purpose to do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

There is a practical consideration about God's Word, because when the Word of God is only in our head, we tend to be legalistic and puffed up with the knowledge of Scripture. God's Word needs to be hidden in our heart, because that is what bears fruit and edifies others.

- 4:14** Our "**confession**" here is that which we profess or declare. "**Passed through the heavens**" refers to the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension into heaven.
This verse begins a major division in this epistle. Christ's position as "**High Priest**", which **3:1** alludes to, is now taken up and discussed in detail in **4:14-5:11** and **7:1-28**.
- 4:15** Since Jesus lived as a man, He knows what we're like and the temptations that we face, causing Him to have mercy on us. He was tempted by Satan beyond anything man has ever experienced (**Matt 4:1-11**). To be "**tempted**" is not sinful, but to yield to temptation is sinful. A high priest must "**sympathize**" with those to whom he ministers. Jesus Christ is a merciful, compassionate and faithful High Priest. We are not yet sinlessly perfect, but we do have resources of help and forgiveness in our sinless Savior. God through Christ has offered to help us in our temptations.
1 Cor 10:13 ...God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.
- 4:16** The Jewish high priest interceded before the mercy seat. We may now, through Jesus Christ, come boldly and directly to the heavenly mercy seat. According to **Leviticus 21:17-23**, if a priest had a defect he could not offer up the showbread or enter beyond the veil into the Holy Place. How clean have we been made through the holy blood of Jesus Christ? We can come "**boldly**" into His presence! There is no need for Mary, saints, a rabbi, priest, or pastor. We are to come with reverence and godly fear.
When Paul lifted up his thorn in the flesh to God, the thorn was not removed, but Paul was so filled with the grace of God that the thorn became a reminder of God's grace which would enable him to glorify Jesus Christ (**2 Cor 12:7-9**).
May these verses pierce our hearts with freshness and newness of life!

Matt 11:28 “Come (*Come now!*) to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden (*weary, tired, exhausted with toil, burdens, or grief*), and I will give you rest.

:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am gentle (*meek*) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

:30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

Chapter 5

5:1 Usually the “**gifts**” were meal offerings given as peace offerings to bring the people into fellowship with God, while the “**sacrifices**” were blood offerings for sin. Jesus Christ has provided the complete sacrifice of both, which enables us to have assurance of salvation and intimate fellowship with Him every day. The Old Testament sacrifices were but shadows of which Jesus Christ is now the substance (**Col 2:17**). We are complete in Christ (**Col 2:10**).

5:2 Since the high priest was also a man “**subject to weakness**”, he understood the temptations and trials of his fellow men. What a beautiful revelation that Jesus Christ is our merciful and compassionate High Priest forever!

Heb 2:18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Matthew 9:36 records that Jesus was “moved with compassion” as He looked at the multitudes and saw they were as sheep without a shepherd. How Jesus longs to be our Shepherd!

God allows people in ministry to go through trials and testing to keep them in touch with their own humanity, as well as to allow them to identify with those who are hurting around them.

As a side note, we are called “a royal priesthood” (**1 Peter 2:9**), that is, “kings and priests” (**Rev 1:6**). We are to be those priests who have compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way.

Has Jesus been compassionate towards us? Did we deserve His compassion? The Church is called to be a compassionate reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially in light of the fact that each and every one of us is weak and needy ourselves.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.

5:3 The high priest would offer a sacrifice first “**for himself**” and then “**for the people**”. This was demonstrated in the very garments he wore when he offered the national atonement once a year. On the shoulders of the ephod were two onyx stones, on which were

engraved the names of the twelve sons of Jacob, the representatives of all the tribes of Israel, including the priestly tribe of Levi. As he stood before the mercy seat interceding, he bore all these names before the Lord (**Ex 28:9-12**).

- 5:4** The ministry is a calling of God, not a career that one chooses. Being a Christian is responding to the call of Christ. He chooses us to abide in Him and to bear fruit (**John 15:16**). To be a Christian is the highest calling of God that any human being can receive.
- 5:5,6** Jesus Christ did not call Himself to the office of “**High Priest**”; the Father called Him to the honor. Both **Psalm 2:7** and **110:4** are cited to prove this fact. **Psalm 2:7** is also quoted in **1:5** to prove Christ’s superiority to the angels, and now the writer uses the quote to prove Jesus’ special relationship with God the Father. The quote from **Psalm 110:4** highlights the eternal nature of Jesus’ priesthood. He will be Mediator between God and us forever.
Gen 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High.
Jesus is the only High Priest for the Church; not the Mormon priesthood of Melchizedek, nor any other religious figure qualifies. Jesus alone “ever lives to make intercession” for the saints (**Heb 7:25**). The whole priesthood of Jesus has but one object, and that is to lead us boldly and joyfully into fellowship with the Father (**Jude 24**). Please note that Jesus did not glorify Himself. Self-exaltation is devilish. It is the spirit of Lucifer and has no place in the life of any Christian.
- 5:7** There is a lesson here about faith and “**prayer**” that we must grasp. The reference is when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and we know that His prayer was not that His will be done but that the Father’s will be done. The ultimate purpose of prayer is that we be in harmony with the will of God. Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (**Matt 6:10**) Also note that Jesus “**was heard**” because He feared. This means that He revered the Father in humble submission. The fear of God is an awe of who He is and what He has done for us.
- 5:8** What does it mean that Jesus “**learned obedience**”? As Son of Man, Jesus lived a normal human life just as you and I do. Though sinless, He still had to learn to submit to the will of the Father. Remember what Jesus told John the Baptist when John was reluctant to water baptize Him?
Matt 3:15 But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.

Remember the prophecy about the Messiah that was to come to atone for the sins of the world?

Isaiah 50:5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away.

:6 I gave my back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

Jesus, as Son of Man, is our example of submission to the will of God, even if it means a cross.

John 4:34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

John 6:38 “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

Heb 10:9 Then He said, “Lo, I have come to do Your will, O God.”

5:9,10 The phrase “**having been perfected**” does not suggest that Jesus had not been perfect before. It means that He successfully carried out the plan of God. He perfectly endured suffering and temptation so that He could truly function as our “**High Priest**”, understanding our weaknesses and interceding before God for us.

“**Author**” means “cause” or “source.” Jesus’ obedience to the Father led to Calvary, His own death on the Cross. The sacrifice of this sinless One in our place makes Him the source of our salvation.

Please note that the only salvation that God offers is “**eternal salvation**”. There is eternal security in Christ. Jesus is the Author and Finisher of eternal salvation for those who obey Him. Grace gives eternal life to those who obey God.

Rom 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” *(Isaiah 53:1)*

- Faith in the gospel of Christ is the first step of obedience to the Word of God.

Rom 6:17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered .

- Faith in the gospel of Christ leads us to a life of obedience.

2 Cor 10:5 casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

- Faith in the gospel exhorts us to bring every thought into the obedience of Christ. We are to have the mind of Christ.

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

- Faith in the gospel leads us to purify our souls by obedience to God, causing us to love one another with a pure love.

5:11 “Dull” means “sluggish”. When these people heard the word of God they were not quick to accept it. The sluggishness was not because they did not hear the truth; it was due to ignoring the truth that they had already heard. This is the third danger addressed in this letter.

- When there is sluggishness in your walk, or if the word of God is not really registering with you, it could be because the Lord has spoken to you about an issue that you have ignored.

Proverbs 1:23 tells us to turn at His reproof and then God will make known His words to us. The purpose of Bible study is to know the will of God in order that we might do it (**James 1:22-25**). Because of the sluggishness of these Hebrews in applying what they were taught, their spiritual development was arrested at the infant stage.

5:12 God expects us to grow up spiritually. His design is for us to mature in Christ in order that we might disciple those who are babes or young in the Lord. Every Christian is called to live a life that is a living “epistle” of the Spirit of God (**2 Cor 3:3**). It is really sad to meet saints that are in spiritual diapers year after year. The Christians at Corinth were not lacking in the gifts of the Spirit (**1 Cor 1:5-7**), but as far as maturity was concerned, they were “carnal, ...babes in Christ” (**1 Cor 3:1-3**). You see, to have the gifts of the Spirit does not require maturity; what develops maturity is obedience to the things of God. “**First principles**” are basic truths (**6:1-2**). The phrase refers to the letters of the alphabet in writing, or to addition and subtraction tables in arithmetic. The first principles are the elements out of which everything else develops. The foundational truths of Scripture are vitally important, for “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (**Psalms 11:3**) According to Jesus, the foundation is obedience to His Word in the storms and trials of life (**Matt 7:24-27**).

5:13 Just like a newborn baby lives off the milk of their mother, a newborn Christian is to live off the “**milk**” of God’s Word. However, if you were to see a child five years old or older breast-feeding, you would know that something was not right. The readers of this letter did not necessarily lack information concerning righteousness; they were lacking because they were not practicing the information they had. Maturity comes from practice of the truth. Biblical head knowledge can only puff a person up; love edifies (**1 Cor 8:1b**). The way to learn more about the Scriptures is by applying the truth of the Scriptures. To be “**unskilled in the word of righteousness**” is to be ignorant of the only acceptable righteousness that God provides through faith in His Son Jesus Christ.

5:14 “**Solid food**” (“**strong meat**”) follows the milk of the Word. “**Full age**” describes the spiritually mature.

“By reason of use” means “practice” or “habit”. Those who make a habit of obeying the message of righteousness mature in the faith and are able to distinguish good and evil.

1 Thess 5:21 Test (*Prove*) all things; hold fast what is good.

One reason why the visible church is so gullible to winds of doctrine is because there is no solid foundation on the Word of God. There is discernment in God’s Word (**Heb 4:12**).

Spiritual maturity will not produce pride, arrogance, self-confidence, confusion in the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, or alienation from the body of saints, but it will cause a person to be more and more like Jesus: meek, gentle, compassionate, submissive to the Father, prayerful, loving, and with all things being done decently and in order.

Chapter 6

6:1 The author of **Hebrews** is encouraging these new Christians beyond their first steps into a closer walk with Christ. Here again, the word **“perfection”** means “maturity”.

Phil 3:13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

:14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

:15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect (*full grown, adult, mature*), have this in mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

Col 1:28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Matt 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

These “first principles” (**5:12**) are the foundation of the Christian life. However, we are to build upon these foundations if we expect to reach a place of spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ.

All men are commanded to repent from **“dead works”**. Some try to save themselves by trusting in their works, but they are as useless to save as though they were dead.

“Repentance” is the work of God’s Spirit upon the human heart, which is essentially a change of the will. It is the realization that I cannot save myself by my own efforts.

“Faith toward God” is also an essential part of the Christian foundation. The sinner must believe upon the Lord, and repent. (See **Acts 16:31** and **2:38**.) Thus, what is needed for salvation is not lifeless works which cannot save, but faith directed toward God.

6:2 There are several **“baptisms”** foundational to the Christian life:

1. baptism into the body of Christ (**1 Cor 12:13**);
2. baptism into water as a public declaration of death to the old life and newness of life in Jesus Christ;
3. baptism of the Holy Spirit, as in **Acts 2:1-4** and **10:44,45**;
4. baptism of fire, which speaks of cleansing and holiness.

In the Book of **Acts**, the **“laying on of hands”** was used to impart the Holy Spirit (**8:17,18; 19:6**), and for ordination for ministry (**6:2-6; 13:2,3**). It is also employed in prayer for the sick along with anointing with oil, as directed in **James 5:14**.

The doctrines of the **“resurrection of the dead”** and **“eternal judgment”** are also basic principles of Christianity. The Scriptures indicate that there are two judgments coming. One is for believers in which Jesus determines every believer’s reward (**1 Cor 3:12-15**); this is known as **“the judgment seat of Christ”** (**2 Cor 5:10**). The other is a judgment of condemnation on unbelievers, which is the **“great white throne”** judgment (**Rev 20:11-15**).

Many people are frightened by **verses 4-6**, but if we keep in mind who the addressees of this epistle are, the verses are quite clear. These Hebrews were Jewish people who had been introduced to Jesus Christ as their Messiah, **“tasted”** of the things of the Spirit of God, but without ever coming to the place of making a real heart surrender to Jesus Christ. In fact, in spite of all that they had experienced, they failed to come to the conviction that Jesus was their Messiah. However, because of their season of association with the Christian community, His holy name was being brought to **“open shame.”** There is a theological debate, that will not end here, about what these verses teach concerning eternal security or losing one’s salvation. Whatever position one takes, it is evident that the author of **Hebrews** has given us a clear warning not to renounce Christ or spurn His offer of salvation. This danger of departing from the faith is the book’s fourth identified peril.

6:4 Here the word **“once”** comes from a Greek word meaning **“once and for all”**, indicating finality. Those who were **“enlightened”** were brought to a knowledge of the sacrifice of Jesus for their sins. The **“heavenly gift”** is the gift of salvation (**Rom 6:23; Eph 2:8**). **“Partakers”** means **“partners”**.

6:5 There seems to be a state where one has only **“tasted”** the things of God and not fully drunk. We see this in the Parable of the Sower. The seeds that fell among the stones and thorns did not mature and produce fruit (**Mark 4:3,5-7,16-19**). When we produce fruit, it is the evidence that we have faith.

6:6 **“Falling away”** here refers to deliberate apostasy, a defection from

the faith. By rejecting Christ they place themselves with those who rejected him and crucified him, because He affirmed that He was “**the Son of God**”. The people meant here are not those “overtaken in a fault” (**Gal 6:1**), but those who once were professors of faith in Christ or seekers of truth, who not only turn away from the faith, but oppose Christ, either entirely, or as being the only way for salvation. The word “**impossible**” (v 4) is used three other times in the Book of **Hebrews**. It is impossible for the blood of animals to take away sin (**10:4**), for God to lie (**6:18**), and for anyone to please God without faith (**11:6**). Here it is impossible “**to renew**” those who have fallen away from the faith.

6:7-8 We find here a hint at the grace of God. Note that the ground that produced thorns is not cursed; instead it is “**near to being cursed**”. (A human application brings to mind **1 Corinthians 11:29-32**.) Its ultimate end is burning, perhaps indicating the earthly, temporal judgment of God. There was an ancient practice of burning a piece of ground to destroy weeds and make a field useful again. If such an allusion is intended here, then this passage could be teaching that while all human attempts to restore apostates are futile (v 6), there is still hope that God will restore such a person.

6:9 Note the contrast here with the introductory words, “**But, beloved**”. In other words, what had just been written was a warning to those who were not really Christians. When we accept “**salvation**” through Christ, there are certain responses we should make. These Hebrews had shown the fruits of the love of Christ in ministering to the saints. As we read in **Hebrews 12:2**, Jesus is “the Author and Finisher of our faith”. We are complete in Jesus Christ. **Phil 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. **1 Thess 1:3** remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of our God and Father, **:4** knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God.

What are the things that accompany salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?

Gal 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

:23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to

all men,

:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present age,

:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

:14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special (*or "peculiar"*) people, zealous for good works.

6:10 We are not saved by our **“work”**, but when our salvation is genuine there will be the evidence of not only fruit, but works.

James 2:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

1 John 3:17 But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

6:11 We should strive, agonize, and work until it is painful to do the things pertaining to godliness. Saving faith is not passive; in fact, it is actually quite active (**Heb 11:4,7-9,17,20-40**)! Noah didn’t pray the ark together. David didn’t pray Goliath away. Yes, we should pray fervently, but prayer and action are not contradictions; they are precious compliments to one another.

Rom 12:11 not lagging in diligence (*or, “not slothful in business”*), fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

1 Cor 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

6:12 Concerning **“faith and patience”**, our faith is often tested in the times of waiting. Our faith is demonstrated when we have confidence while we wait for God to do something.

6:14 God made this promise to Abraham after the testing in the sacrifice of Isaac (**Gen 22:17**).

6:18 I underlined in my Bible the phrase, **“impossible for God to lie”**.

Num 23:19 God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

6:19 As an **“anchor”** holds the ship when the storms are raging, so our **“hope”** in Jesus Christ holds our souls steadfast.

- 6:20** As the High Priest entered within the veil into the Holy of Holies, so our High Priest **“has entered for us,”** and before us, into the heavens. The word **“forerunner”** describes one who has gone on ahead of others. You might use the idea of a scout in the old wild West who went ahead of others to ensure that there were no dangers.
- John 14:2** In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- :3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Chapter 7

The Old Testament picture for the doctrine of Jesus’ eternal priesthood comes from Melchizedek (**Gen 14:18-20**), and the connection in the Messianic **Psalm 110:4**: “The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ ”

Jesus’ priesthood is like that of Melchizedek in that it is a direct appointment of God and is eternal. In the **Genesis** account, this priest served Abram (Abraham) bread and wine, which are, of course, symbols of the New Testament sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Passover Lamb.

- 7:1** “Salem” was later renamed Jerusalem.
“**This Melchizedek**”...“**blessed**” Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel and of all Christians (**Rom 4:9-11**).
- 7:2** “**Melchizedek**” means “**king of righteousness**”; “**king of Salem**” means “**king of peace**”. Jesus Christ is the believers’ righteousness, and He is also our peace. There is no righteousness in God’s eyes apart from Christ, and there is no true peace in our lives without Him.
- 7:3** The author was not saying that Melchizedek was born without a father and mother, only that there is no record of his birth in the genealogies of **Genesis**. The scholars are divided as to whether or not Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, or simply a person who typified Him. There may be an answer to this debate found in the words “**made like**”. The Greek word here literally means “to make a facsimile,” or “to produce a model or copy.” Thus the author of Hebrews was highlighting the similarities between the Son of God and the way Scripture presents Melchizedek. In other words, the ancient priest-king of Salem was a copy of Jesus.
- 7:4** Interestingly, we find Abraham tithing prior to the law of Moses.
- 7:5** “**The sons of Levi**” were the Aaronic priesthood, who were the ones to whom the “**tithes from the people**” were given (**Num 18:24-28**).

7:6-10 Melchizedek “**received tithes from Abraham**”, and also from Levi in the sense that Levi descended from “**the loins**” of Abraham. The author is seeking to establish the superiority of Melchizedek over the Levitical priesthood.

7:11 “**Perfection**” means “completeness”, and in this context indicates making men acceptable to God.

“**Another priest**” was necessary because the Levitical priesthood, with its laws and sacrifices, could not make men acceptable to God. If the Levitical priesthood had been able to bring people to perfection, then a superior priest from the order of Melchizedek would not have been needed. If the priests under the Law of Moses could offer permanent reconciliation between God and His people, there would have been no need for a coming Messiah.

Heb 10:1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.

:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

:3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.

:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Gal 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.

7:12-14 According to the Law, the tribe of Judah had nothing to do with the priesthood. The argument for “**change**” hinges on **Psalm 110:4**. If the Old Testament said another priest was coming from “**another tribe**,” then clearly the Law was going to be superseded. By what was it superseded? By the gospel of the grace of God. While Law gives the knowledge of sin, grace grants forgiveness of sin (**Eph 2:8**). Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, and Moses did not include that tribe when he spoke of the “**priesthood**”, so Jesus could not be a priest under the Law. Instead, He is our High Priest in the covenant of Grace.

7:18-19 “**The Law**” was given to the Jews, not to the Gentiles. When the Gentiles became Christians, some of the Jewish Christians thought the Gentiles should keep the Law, but the Church elders decided not to yoke them with a burden the Jews themselves found impossible to bear (**Acts 15:5-11**).

The purpose of law is to show us our sin and to demonstrate that we cannot hope to approach God on the basis of our own righteousness. Law, or any system of rituals or works, can never make a person

perfect in the eyes of God. Through grace and faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, we find perfection and acceptance. Jesus is our hope, and it is through Him that **“we draw near”** to the Father and the throne of grace.

7:20-21 God made Jesus a priest forever by **“an oath”**, but the Levites were made priests by birth.

7:22 Jesus is the **“surety”** of the new covenant, called here **“a better covenant.”** The Church can have complete confidence in this new covenant because Jesus uses His precious blood as its guarantee. **Luke 22:20** Likewise, He also took the cup after supper, saying, **“This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”** The new covenant depends on what Jesus has done, not on what we have done. It is based on His love and faithfulness, not on our works.

The remaining verses in this chapter continue to contrast between the priests, who were of the tribe of Levi, and Jesus Christ, who was of the tribe of Judah. There were many Levites, but there is only one Christ. They offered animal sacrifices, Jesus offered up Himself. They died, but Jesus lives forever.

7:23,24 Because Christ lives forever, His priesthood is **“unchangeable”** and unalterable. The priesthood of Jesus is constant and does not pass from one man to another. In the Levitical system, though, when one high priest died, another assumed the office. Josephus, an historian, estimated that there were eighty-three different high priests between Aaron and the fall of the temple in A.D. 70.

Another thing about the earthly priesthood was that there were no chairs for them in the temple area because their work and sacrifices were never completed. Jesus though, our Great High Priest, is seated at the right hand of the Father (**Col 3:1**) because His work of redemption has been completed, and we can rest in His work and grace.

It is necessary to mention here that the Mormon claims regarding the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek are completely unbiblical and false. All believers in the covenant of grace are collectively called **“a holy”** and **“a royal priesthood”** (**1 Peter 2:5,9**). There is no reference to ‘priest’ in the singular outside of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7:25 Since this verse speaks of Jesus’ present intercession for us, the word **“save”** in this verse speaks of our sanctification, which is the continuing process by which we are freed from the power of sin. This ongoing process of salvation will eventually be completed in our glorification, when we are saved from the presence of sin. The Greek verb for **“come”** is in the present tense, thus indicating that Jesus continues to save those who keep coming to Him.

All who come to Jesus, He will “by no means cast out” (**John 6:37**). The Great Commission is, “Go”. The great invitation after the gospel is preached is, “Come.”

The word translated “**uttermost**” has been understood by some to mean completely (no physical limit), as with the woman whose body could not be completely straightened (**Luke 13:11**). It has also been thought that the word may agree with the words of Jesus in **Acts 1:8**, indicating no geographical limits. Extrabiblical Greek gives an alternate meaning of the word uttermost as “forever” (no time limit).

7:27

The high priest did not make daily “**sacrifices for (his) sins**”, but when he did sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (**Lev 16**), it was necessary to offer first for himself. The clear meaning is that Christ intercedes for His people but never offers sacrifice for Himself. Jesus Christ’s atonement for sins was unlike other high priests or any other sacrifices in that:

1. He was “without sin” (**Heb 4:15**);
2. He “**offered up Himself**” as the sacrifice;
3. His sacrifice was “**once for all**”, never again to be repeated. (This is in stark contrast to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass, which alleges a perpetual sacrifice.)

Jesus’ sacrifice meets every requirement to provide salvation for you. All of the Old Testament sacrifices were but shadows that were ordained to point to Jesus Christ Our Lord!

Col 2:10 And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

:11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

:12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

:13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

:14 having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

:17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

It is indeed all about Jesus, isn’t it!

CHAPTER 8

The key to the Old Covenant was the priesthood and the sacrifices, because they were the agencies by which man and God were brought together for fellowship. The writer to the Hebrews, though, has clearly revealed that in Jesus Christ mankind has been provided with a better or superior Priest and with a better and superior sacrifice. The Priesthood of Jesus and the extent of His sacrifice are both eternal.

- 8:1** The “**main point**” here about Jesus, our High Priest, is the fact that He is now “**seated**”. The Old Testament priests were never seated because their work was never finished. (See **Hebrews 10: 11,12.**) However, when Jesus, our great High Priest and the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**) gave up His spirit, He cried out, “It is finished!” (**John 19:30**), which in the Greek means, “Paid in full!” We might say, ‘Mission accomplished!’ Because of His work that has satisfied the demands of God, Jesus is now “**seated at the right hand**” of the “**Majesty in the heavens**”. The right hand is the place of honor. **Col 3:1** If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. An interesting side note about Jesus’ seated position is found in the death of Stephen, when Jesus is seen standing (**Acts 7:55-60**). He stands to welcome His faithful servants home.
- 8:2** Jesus now functions as a Priest in “**the true tabernacle**”, the dwelling place of God. The earthly tent and temple were only shadows of this true tabernacle. Please note that Jesus is still serving! He is the “**Minister of the sanctuary**”.
- 8:3** The “**gifts**” here refer to the bloodless meal offerings, which were really thanksgiving and praise offerings, while the “**sacrifices**” refer to the blood sacrifices for sin. What then was it that Jesus offered up? **Heb 10:9** Then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. **:10** By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. **Eph 5:2** ... as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.
- 8:5** A “**shadow**” has no real substance because it is only an image of the real object. Moses actually saw up on the holy mount the true mercy seat, the true showbread, etc. (**Exodus 25:40** quoted.) We see even in the law itself what God was ordaining would be symbolic in nature.
- 8:6** Jesus and Jesus alone is the “**Mediator of a better covenant**” (not Mary, not departed saints, not the clergy).

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

:6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Heb 9:15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Heb 12:24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant...

- 8:7,8** Note that the problem with the “**first covenant**” was neither the law nor the Lord; it was His people. This covenant was based upon their being faithful. Right after Moses presented the Law to the people, God gave to Moses the instructions for an altar (**Ex 20**). Why? Because the law makes nothing perfect. The law can only condemn us a sinners; it cannot make us righteous. The law can only point us to Jesus Christ. The instructions for the altar were given because the way to approach God would be upon the basis of a sacrifice, and the sacrifice by which we draw near to God is Jesus Christ. The word for “**new**” here means something that has not previously existed. For example, if you were to say that you bought a new shirt, it may be new as far as you are concerned, but it is not new in the sense that a shirt has ever existed in any form before your purchase. Although the quote here is from the prophet **Jeremiah (31:31-34)** and is referring to the “**new covenant**” between God and the houses of Israel and Judah, we find in Paul’s writings that we Gentiles also become beneficiaries of this new covenant and are grafted into Christ by faith (**Rom 11:11-25; Gal 3:8-29**).
- 8:10** Although this verse is part of the quote from **Jeremiah 31**, God also made this declaration and gave these promises twice to the prophet **Ezekiel (11:19-20; 36:26,27)**.
- 8:12** This verse does not say that God forgets our sins, but that in the new covenant, because of the work of Jesus Christ, He chooses not to remember them. God says that He would be “**merciful**” to our unrighteousness. That word means propitious or gracious. That is one reason why the writer will tell us in **chapter 13 verse 9** that it is a good thing “that the heart be established” in the grace of God. Three things are recorded in **verses 10-12** that are additional reasons that the new covenant is superior to, or better than, the old covenant.
1. There would be in the new birth the inclination to agree with God and to walk in His ways (**v 10; 2 Cor 3:3-18**).
 2. There would be a personal relationship with God (**v 11**); we call Him, “Abba, Father” (**Gal 4:6**).
 3. Our sins are no longer held against us (**v 12**), but were taken out of the way, being nailed to Christ’s cross (**Col 2:13-14**), and were

removed “as far as the east is from the west” (**Psalm 103:12**).

8:13 The Greek word for “**decayed**” means “to make (passively become) worn out, or declare **obsolete**”. To “**vanish away**” means to disappear. When Titus and the Roman army conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the temple in 70 A.D., it left Judaism without a sacrifice for sin. The old covenant was obsolete from the moment the veil in the temple was torn (**Mark 15:37,38**) after Jesus’ cry, “It is Finished!” The visible manifestation of that was the physical destruction of the temple, which Jesus had foretold (**Matt 24:1,2**).

Jesus has done all of the work necessary for our salvation, and by faith in Him, we enter into His rest. This is the work (singular) of God, that we “believe in Him whom (*the Father*) sent.” (**John 6:29**) But some of the Hebrews addressed in this epistle were trying to pour new wine into an old wineskin (**Matt 9:17**), and we, as well as they, would do well to ask, “Having begun in the Spirit, are you now (*trying to be*) made perfect by the flesh?” (**Gal 3:3**)

Chapter 9

Man was created to have fellowship with God. But in order for that to happen, there was the need for help outside of our own human resources because sin separates a man from God (**Isaiah 59:1,2**). Immediately after the giving of the ten commandments the Lord instructed Moses to construct an altar. God set up the various animal sacrifices for sin in the first covenant (**Heb 9:22**), but the blood of bulls and goats only covered sin; it did not do away with it. This chapter again reminds us that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice (**1 Peter 1:19**) of the second covenant. His death finally put an end to sin, thus providing for mankind the opportunity to return to fellowship with God.

9:2 The “**tabernacle**” had an enclosed courtyard 150 feet long and 75 feet wide (**Ex 27:18**). Interestingly, when you looked at the tabernacle proper (meeting place), there was only one door by which to enter into the presence and fellowship of God. Jesus Christ is both “the door” and “the way” (**John 10:9, 14:6**), the only door and the only way to God.

Next you would see the brazen altar (**Ex 27:1,2**). Brass (bronze) in Scripture always represents sin. The brazen altar pictured Christ, who was Himself the sacrifice for our sins (**v 26**).

Then you would move on to the laver, which was the place where the priest would wash his hands and feet before offering up the sacrifices (**Ex 30:18-20**). Christ is the believer’s laver. His blood washes us from the debt of sin, and from the defilement of sin (**Rev 1:5b**).

Within the tabernacle proper there was another structure called the “**sanctuary**” or tabernacle. The sanctuary was covered with badgers’ skins and was 45 feet long, 15 feet high, and 15 feet wide. It was

divided by a veil into two parts, the outer, or Holy Place and the inner or Most Holy Place (**Ex 26:1,14,33**).

To the right upon entering the Holy Place was the “**table**” with the “**showbread**,” which was twelve loaves of bread (**Ex 25:30; Lev 24:5-8**). To the left was the “**lampstand**” (candlestick), which was the seven-stemmed Menorah (**Ex 25:31-37**), not the nine-stemmed Menorah used on Hanukkah or on the festival of Lights in December. Straight ahead was the altar of incense, where incense was offered to God (**Ex 30:1,6**). Jesus is both the “light of the world” (**John 8:12**) and the “bread of life” (**John 6:48**). Incense, a symbol of prayer (**Rev 5:8**), points to how Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us (**7:5**).

9:3-4 Behind the altar of incense was the “**veil**,” which rested in silver sockets (**Ex 26:31,32**). Silver speaks of redemption. One extra comment about the veil in the tabernacle in the days of Christ: The historian Josephus tells us the veil, which was torn in two when Jesus gave up the ghost, was 80 feet tall and woven 10-12 inches thick! Beyond the veil of the Holy Place, was the “**Most Holy Place**” where the “**Ark of the Covenant**” was located, which was a box of wood that had a lid of gold (**Ex 25:10,17,21**). The wood speaks of the humanity of Jesus Christ, whereas the gold speaks of His Deity (**John 1:1,14; Phil 2:5-8**). Inside the ark was “**Aaron’s rod that budded**” and the Ten Commandments.

9:5 The “**mercy seat**” is an amazing study. In **Exodus 25:22**, the Lord declares that it is there that He will meet with and commune with us. The Greek word for mercy seat is the same word used for another redemption term, propitiation. It describes the means whereby atonement or reconciliation for sin is made. Calvary is man’s mercy seat. Our great High Priest Jesus Christ was wrapped in white linen when He emerged from the earthly Holy of Holies on Resurrection Sunday. The place where Jesus had lain was blood-stained, and when the apostles went in to check it out, they saw an angel on either side of where He lay, providing a beautiful picture of the mercy seat. When Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, it was a declaration of forgiveness, not just for another year, but for all eternity.

Rom 3:25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

:26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

- 9:6** Every morning and evening the priest would go into the Holy Place, **“the first part of the tabernacle”**, where he would trim the wicks, refill the oil in the lamps, and replace the incense on the altar of incense. Once a week, he would replace the twelve loaves upon the table of showbread. (See **Leviticus 24:1-8**.)
- 9:7** Only once a year, however, could the **“high priest”** enter beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place. This is what he was to do on the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur. The high priest was the only person who could enter into the absolute presence of God. How radical is the New Covenant! Through Jesus Christ, our High Priest, every saint can come boldly into His presence. We have direct access to our Father in heaven all the time.
The Orthodox Jews today have a real theological problem, that being that since the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., they have been left without a blood sacrifice for their sins. They will tell you that they now approach God by faith, but at the same time they are eager to have their temple once again.
- 9:8,9** The Holy Spirit says here that the way into the holiest place was not possible as long as the **“first tabernacle”** (covenant) was standing. As we shall see in **chapter 10**, Jesus has provided for us **“a new and living way”** (v 20) for us to enter into that holiest place of all. The Old Covenant sacrifices could not make those who came to God by them perfect because the sacrifices themselves were not intended to do that.
- 9:10** All of the Old Covenant pictures were temporal in nature until **“the time of reformation.”** This was the time when Jesus Christ fulfilled all the shadows and types, and cried out, **“It is Finished!”** (**John 19:30**)
- 9:11** Jesus was human, but He wasn’t born in a natural way as Mormons say He was. Jesus was conceived in Mary by the power of God the Holy Spirit (**Matt 1:20**)! The virgin birth of Jesus was a miracle. **“Creation”** here also means **“building”**. Jesus did not go into the earthly model (the temple), but into the actual heavenly scene the temple represented (v 23). He did not go into the Holy of Holies on earth, but directly into the presence of God.
Please note that Jesus is the **“High Priest of the good things to come”** (**Rom 8:28**).
- 9:12** Jesus was both the Offeror and the Offering. Note that the reference to **“redemption”** is in the past tense, signifying that the work is completed. Jesus did all the work of redemption. There is no co-payment on behalf of mankind. The redemption Jesus provides is **“eternal”**.

Note that Christ entered “**once for all**”. He did not have to go into the Most Holy Place once each year, but only once to last forever. In other words, His sacrifice for sins is infinite in nature; it does not need to be repeated, although in communion His sacrifice for us is to be remembered (**1 Cor 11:23-26**). However, if you study the Catholic Catechism, it clearly teaches that every mass is an actual repetition of the sacrifice of Jesus for sins. That position contradicts this Scripture.

- 9:14** Note that every Person in the trinity is mentioned in this verse. The Greek word translated here as “**spot**” or “**blemish**” means a flaw, either inherent or acquired. Jesus Christ, the perfect Offering, has neither; sinful man has both. Jesus offered Himself to God as the complete payment for our sins. “The grace of God that brings salvation” (**Titus 2:11**) eliminates man from coming to God upon the basis of the “**dead works**” of ritual or religion (**Phil 3:3-9; Rom 10:1-4**). The one work required for salvation was completed by Jesus Christ. Remember that in the Old Covenant when a person went to worship the Lord they would bring a lamb to be offered on the altar. The priest never inspected the person, only the lamb. Satan will tell you that you are blemished and flawed, you are not perfect, and you can’t worship the Lord. Wrong! It is not you who makes worship or serving Jesus possible; it is the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**) in whom the Father is well pleased (**Matt 3:16,17**). We have been purged from an evil “**conscience**”. Condemnation is from the devil and makes us feel guilty and seeks to drive us from the presence of God. Conviction is the work of the Holy Spirit that pricks our hearts when we do sin, but it drives us to the throne of grace, not to explain away or justify what we have done, but to be cleansed from all unrighteousness (**1 John 1:9**).
- 9:15** Note again that Jesus alone is “**the Mediator of the New Covenant**”. Also note that “**the eternal inheritance**” is a “**promise**”. All of the promises of God are “Yes” and “Amen” in Jesus Christ (**2 Cor 1:20**). We are promised eternal redemption and an eternal inheritance if we believe in the work God has done for us through Jesus Christ.
- 9:16,17** A man’s last will and “**testament**” is not in force until the man dies. In other words, the beneficiaries of a will only benefit from it after the “**death of the testator.**” As followers of Jesus Christ, we are the beneficiaries of what Jesus has left for us, including eternal life, but we are only beneficiaries by grace, though faith (**Eph 2:8-9**).
- 9:18** For the next few verses, we will read about the necessity of the “**blood**” for forgiveness. All the blood shed under the Old Covenant was temporal in nature; that is, it could not remove sins, only cover them. From **Genesis 3** on, God began to reveal the New Covenant

that was ordained before the foundation of the world (**Rev 13:8**). Saints, how important it is for us to place the value upon the blood that God does! Remember what God said:

Ex 12:13 "...And when I see the blood, I will pass over you".

We need to understand the value of Jesus' blood in the eyes of the Father, and in the face of the accusations of the devil, as well as in the time of need of cleansing from sin.

- 9:21** In New Covenant theology, every believer is both a **"tabernacle"** ("temple" - **1 Cor 6:19**) and a **"vessel of ministry"** (**2 Tim 2:21**) due to the power within the blood of Jesus Christ.
- 9:22** **"Shedding of blood"** is necessary for forgiveness. Trusting in candle lighting doesn't gain forgiveness. Trusting in my observation of special days doesn't gain forgiveness. Trying harder to be a better person doesn't gain forgiveness of sin. It's only the blood of Jesus. **2 Cor 5:21** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. **Isaiah 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
- 9:24** Jesus is appearing **"in the presence of God for us"**, not against us! Read **Romans 8:31-39** and be encouraged and blessed!!
- 9:26** What **"puts away sin"**? The sacrifice of Jesus Himself.
- 9:27** There is no reincarnation. It was Moses who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (**Matt 17:2**), not Rajneesh who used to be Moses. God doesn't recycle souls! **"To die once"** is the rule, but there are some exceptions: the widow's son (**Luke 7:12-15**), Jairus' daughter (**Luke 8:41-42,49-55**), Lazarus (**John 12:1**), and Dorcas (**Acts 9:36-41**), for example.
- 9:28** Jesus was **"offered once to bear (our) sins"**, just as **Isaiah 53** states. **"He will appear a second time,"** not to take away sin as before (as the Lamb of God), but **"for salvation"**, that is, to give believers their eternal inheritance. However, for unbelievers Christ's second coming will be in judgment as the Lion of the tribe of Judah (**Rev 5:5**).

Chapter 10

In this chapter the author emphasizes the finality of Christ's sacrifice by contrasting it with the lack of finality of the Old Testament system of law and sacrifices. Christ's redemption needs no repetition and no supplementation. Therefore, a rejection of His sacrifice is final and unforgivable.

10:1 The law was not an **“image”** of heavenly things but a **“shadow”**. The Old Covenant couldn’t bring perfection because it wasn’t intended to do so. All of the blessings and benefits that have come to us through Jesus Christ were shadowed in the Old Covenant sacrifices. The word **“perfect”** here in Greek indicates a “coming to a complete end.”

Col 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

:17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Heb 8:4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law;

:5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things...

10:2 If the law could make people perfect, they wouldn’t need to keep offering sacrifices. Nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can remove the guilt associated with our sins.

The phrase, **“once purified”** (or **“purged”**) refers to the effect of the work of Jesus Christ upon the soul which trusts in Him for salvation.

10:3,4 The Old Covenant sacrifices reminded the people of their sin every time they offered them. Their guilty consciences were not cleansed by the sacrifice because it was not possible for **“the blood of bulls and goats”** to take away sins. The repeated sacrifices only reminded the people of their sins. The Old Covenant sacrifices were temporary and pictorial, not permanent and eternal. Moreover, they did nothing to change the heart of those who brought the sacrifice.

Being free from the consciousness of sin does not mean that New Covenant believers are insensitive to sin, because a regenerate soul will certainly be sensitive to things that grieve the Holy Spirit of God. C. H. Spurgeon said, *“Dead men don’t wrestle.”* But there is a difference between being sensitive to sin as opposed to being guilt-ridden because of sin. Calvary reminds me that in Christ there is no more condemnation (**Rom 8:1**) because of my sin.

When we observe the Lord’s table together it is in remembrance of what Jesus did (**1 Cor 11:23-26**) to remove our sins from us. His blood has been shed; the price has been paid; the work is done (**John 19:30**). Christian communion is a celebration of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Communion also reminds us that the barrier of our sin debt has been removed by Jesus (**Col 2:14**), and now we can have personal fellowship with the Lord every day (**1 John 1:3b**).

10:5,6 If the Father **“had no pleasure”** in the Old Covenant sacrifices, why were they instituted? Because they were to serve as pictures or types of the Lamb of God (**John 1:29**). However, there was also another

reason why those sacrifices were ineffective, and that was because the people bringing them did not have a heart for God or any true intention to serve the Lord (**Mark 15:7-9**). The sacrifices were only meaningless rituals. But God is looking for people who will love and obey Him, not for sacrifices.

1 Sam 15:22 Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.

10:7-9 Now that Jesus has come, the Old Testament sacrifices are no longer of any value (**Col 2:16-17**). The Father is only pleased with one Sacrifice: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (**Matt 3:17**) When we embrace that truth with all of our hearts and minds, it sets us free to worship, serve, and rest in the Lord. The quotation is from **Psalms 40:6-8** which speaks of “open(ing)” the ear, referring to the piercing of a bondservant’s ear when he wanted to stay with his master.

- May we have ears that are opened to our Master’s voice! We also find in this quote that the New Testament was concealed in the Old Covenant. (Likewise, the Old is revealed in the New.) The “**volume of the book**” refers to the Old Testament. Remember Jesus’ Old Testament teaching to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (**Luke 24:13-15,27**)?

John 5:39 “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.”

Note that **verse 9** does not say, ‘We come...’, but rather “**I come to do Your will**”. The specific will spoken of here is the will of God pertaining to redemption from our sins. There is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ (**Acts 4:12**). There is no other way for man to be saved. (Remember Christ’s Gethsemane prayer? – **Mark 14:35**)

10:10 “**Sanctified**” means “set apart for God”. We are sanctified through Jesus, who did the will of the Father when He laid His life down at Calvary. Because the nature of God is holy, He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. Thus, if a person is to have a relationship with God, the sin issue must be removed. The Greek verb tense used in this verse reveals a permanent state. Through Jesus Christ our sin has been permanently removed, and we are forever set apart for God in Christ.

- God’s practical will for your life on earth is that you be sanctified.

1 Thess 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

:4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor;

10:11,12 Note the contrasts between Jesus Christ (**v 12**) and the priests of the Old Covenant (**v 11**):

“every priest” with “**this Man**”;
“stands...daily” with “**sat down**”;
“same (ineffective) sacrifices” with “**one (complete) sacrifice**”;
“never take away sins” with “**sins (removed) forever**”.

One word can be used to describe the Old Covenant sacrifices for sin – ‘Incomplete!’ In contrast, the word to describe the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is ‘Complete’ (**John 17:4**). Jesus is now in heaven at the Father’s right hand, resting in the finished work of the cross, and waiting for the day when God will give Him the ultimate victory over His enemies (**Psalms 110:1**). Jesus isn’t running, pacing, or worrying; He is seated and resting because He has finished the work that the Father gave Him to do.

10:13 Christ’s ultimate victory will result in the final defeat of every one of His enemies and adversaries. This earth will become the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and He will reign forever (**Rev 11:15**). Satan and death will one day be totally defeated (**Rev 20:10,14**).

10:14 This verse points out that the Father sees all who have trusted in Jesus Christ as being “**perfected**”. In other words, in God’s eyes we are already seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (**Eph 1:3**), not in the imperfect state we are in now in this world.

- Saints, never confuse your eternal position in Christ with your present condition in this life on earth.

“**He has perfected forever**” simply put means eternally secure in Jesus Christ.

10:15-17 A couple of things to note here:

“**The Holy Spirit**” is said to be speaking to and through the prophet Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 31:33,34** quoted). Every cult denies or denigrates the Personhood, Deity, and work of God the Holy Spirit. These floundering Hebrews were once again being confronted with New Covenant prophecies through an Old Testament prophet whom they had come to revere as a spokesman of Jehovah.

The word “**sins**” means “to miss the mark”, or “not a witness”, while “**lawless deeds**” (“**iniquities**”) are a combination of transgression and sin. Transgression is willful disobedience, like stepping over the ‘Keep Off the Grass’ sign. Sin can be a failure to be or do something, whereas transgression is deliberately not being or doing something.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and iniquity (**1 John 1:7,9**).

- 10:18** Since the blood of Jesus has done away with all our sins, there is no other **“offering”** that is acceptable to God for the payment of sins.
- 10:19-20** We have **“boldness to enter”** into the presence of God because of the work of Christ for us. Remember that access was forbidden to **“the Holiest”** (the “Holy of Holies” or “Most Holy” – **Ex 26:33**) except for the High Priest once a year (**Heb 9:3,7**) on the Day of Atonement. Because of the power of **“the blood of Jesus”**, every believer can abide in the Holiest place of fellowship with Christ (**John 15:4a**), and we can now call God, “Abba, Father!” (**Gal 4:6**) Jesus is the **“new and living way”** both for every saint to come into the presence of God, as well as for every repentant sinner to come into the family of God.
- 10:21** Jesus is the New Covenant **“High Priest”** and “Mediator of a better covenant” (**Heb 8:6**).
- 10:22** This verse begins a series of admonitions that start with, **“let us”**. First, we are exhorted to **“draw near”** to God **“with a true heart in full assurance of faith”**. A **“true heart”** is an honest heart, one without ulterior motives. To come to the Lord with a true heart implies coming to Him with all of our heart. We must guard against a divided heart, or a heart with its own agenda. **“Full assurance of faith”** implies the utmost confidence in coming to the Father because of our faith in Jesus Christ. Remember, “without faith it is impossible to please (*God*)” (**Heb 11:6**). The references to being **“sprinkled”** and **“washed”** were literal and external in the Old Covenant (**Ex 29:21, 30:20,21**), but are spiritual and internal in the New Covenant.
- 10:23** This encouragement to **“hold (onto) ... our hope”** (or **“faith”**) calls forth the practical evidence of our abiding in Christ. Our profession of faith in Christ will be demonstrated by the fruit, which indicates our true possession of faith in Christ. Remember, “faith without works is dead” (**James 2:26**).
- 10:24-25** How important it is for us to **“consider”** and **“stir up”** one another in the Lord! It is also necessary to make it a priority to be in regular fellowship with other saints.
- 10:26-27** The reference here is not to an occasional act of sin (which can be confessed and forgiven – **1 John 1:9**), but to a conscious rejection of God. **“If we sin willfully”** is a reference to a deliberate decision to turn away from the truth concerning the gospel of Jesus Christ. To sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth is apostasy. Keep in mind the context here. These were Hebrews who were now beginning to wonder whether or not Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

They had begun to consider going back to the temple and the Old Covenant rituals and sacrifices. If they were to do that, a “**certain fearful expectation of judgment**” awaited them.

This is the case for every person who has heard the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and has deliberately chosen to reject the fact that Jesus is the only Way to God (**John 14:6**), and only through Him can one find forgiveness of sin.

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

:6 who gave Himself a ransom for all ...

Praise God, Jesus promises that He will receive all who come to Him, and will cast none out (**John 6:37b**)!

The exhortations against apostasy and the call to perseverance have now been set forth. Here is this epistle’s fifth danger signal, a warning against despising. The sin pointed out in **verse 26** is a total and final falling away: when men, with a full and fixed will and resolution, despise and reject Jesus Christ, the only Savior; despise and resist the Holy Spirit, the only Sanctifier; despise and renounce the gospel (**1 Cor 15:1-4**), the only way of salvation and the words of eternal life.

The question is often asked, if a person, who ‘used to be a Christian’ and who has now become an atheist, or joined a cult, or follows another religion, lost his or her salvation? I do not believe that the person was ever truly converted or saved, because when a person is “born again” (**John 3:5-7**), He who began the good work will be faithful to complete it (**Phil 1:6**).

10:28,29 The specific sin in the Old Testament that required “**two or three witnesses**” was idolatry (**Deut 17:2-7**). The judgment for idolatry was death by stoning. If this infidelity toward God was punished with physical death, how much worse punishment should someone receive who treats the Word and work of God with disrespect or disdain? So, in the contextual sense, “**insult(ing) the Spirit of grace**” refers to the Hebrews who had gone back to the old sacrificial system of offering bulls and goats for their sins, and in doing so, treated the precious blood of Jesus as insufficient or unholy (“**common**”). However, this would also be true of any person who has turned away from Jesus Christ and rejected His gospel.

10:30 The quotes are from **Deuteronomy 32:35** and **36**. Be assured, saints, that there is punishment reserved for those who despise the Son of God and His holy blood, shed on Calvary for our sins.

10:31 Given the sovereignty and holiness of God, and the fact that all mankind will stand before Him in judgment (**Heb 9:27**), “**It is a fearful**

thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Paul wrote that to be absent from the body meant that he would be “present with the Lord”, and he obviously looked forward to being with Jesus (**2 Cor 5:8**). However, he also said that knowing “the terror of the Lord,” he felt compelled to persuade men (**2 Cor 5:11a**) to repent in light of the coming judgment of both saved and unsaved (**2 Cor 5:10**).

10:32-34 Evidently many of these floundering Hebrews had been imprisoned for their faith, whereas others had experienced the seizure of their possessions. They were enlightened, which means they were “**illuminated**” with the truth (**Psalms 119:130,105**). However, as in the parable of the sower, now it seemed that their hearts were like the shallow soil or stony ground (**Matt 13:5,6,20-21**), and the Spirit of God exhorts them to continue on in Messiah Jesus and not to misunderstand the reason for their adversities.

10:35-37 What is the basis of a Christian’s “**confidence**”? Jesus Christ (**Heb 4:15,16, 10:19**). Perseverance in the faith will be rewarded. **Rev 22:12** “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me...”

10:38 This verse completes the quote begun in **verse 37** from **Habakkuk 2:3,4**. The phrase, “**the just shall live by faith**” expresses the essence of how one relates rightly to God. So crucial is this verse to the Christian life that it is also quoted in **Romans (1:17)**, which explains who are “**the just**” (**Rom 8:1**), and in **Galatians (3:11)**, which emphasizes what it means to “**live**” (**Gal 5:1,18**). The nature of this life “**by faith**” is given living expression in **chapter 11**.

10:39 To “**draw back**”, or turn away from Jesus Christ in one’s heart, is evidence that the person was never truly born again. The pig returns to wallow in the mire, and the dog returns to its vomit (**Prov 26:11**), but not sheep!
John 10:4 “And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”

Chapter 11

As we move into what has been called ‘The Hall of Faith’ chapter, we discover that the faith of the child of God is a living faith, not a dead ritual or creed. Remember in **Mark 2** how Jesus saw the faith of the friends of the paralyzed man? “Faith without works (*corresponding actions*) is dead” (**James 2:14-26**).

11:1 This verse defines “**faith**”.
“**Substance**” here means “the confident expectation”. Faith rejoices without seeing or understanding what God is doing.

2Cor 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Four times in His Word God tells us that “the just shall live by faith” (**Heb 10:38; Gal 3:11; Rom 1:17; Habakkuk 2:4**).

2 Cor 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Saving faith simply believes the gospel of Jesus Christ from the heart, at which time God counts us as righteous. Justification is the result of the believer’s faith in the grace of God and in His provision for salvation. Whereas righteousness in God’s eyes is the result of our faith apart from our works, this righteousness by faith produces works that are consistent with genuine faith.

11:2 A “good testimony” is a faith report. The ten spies who did not believe the word of the Lord brought forth an evil report (**Num 13:32**) because unbelief is an evil thing. Joshua and Caleb believed the Lord and they brought forth a good report (**Num 14:6-9**).

Prov 15:30 A good report makes the bones healthy.

Philippians 4:8 instructs us to fill our minds with good reports, or reports that build faith in Jesus Christ into our lives. This chapter is a description of what true faith does.

11:3 The only eyewitness to Creation was God Himself. (There are no evolutionists after death!) There was a beginning point when out of nothing “**the worlds were framed by the word of God**”. He created an ordered universe from materials that are invisible to the naked eye. Faith understands that the invisible God created the vast universe.

- When we give our lives to Jesus Christ, He then begins to make something out of nothing in us.

11:4 The ‘Hall of Faith’ begins here. These were common people who trusted the Lord to do exactly what He told them He would do. Abel’s “**sacrifice**” was offered in faith; Cain’s was not. Abel’s sacrifice of faith was more acceptable to God than Cain’s due to both the nature of the sacrifice (**Gen 4:3-5a**) and the attitude in which it was offered. “**Abel**” brought a sacrifice of atonement from the firstlings of the flock, acknowledging himself a sinner who deserved to die, and only hoping for mercy through the great Sacrifice.

11:5 Just as “**Enoch**” was spared from the judgment of God upon the earth during the Flood, so the Church will be spared from the Tribulation. In pleasing God Enoch fulfilled the purpose for which man was created (**Rev 4:11**). The testimony is that he “walked with God” and “God took him” (**Gen 5:24**) because He was “**pleased**” with him. It should be the supreme desire of every child of God to please their

Lord in every area of their lives. In **1st Thessalonians 4:1,7** we read that when we walk in sanctification, we please our Lord Jesus. And **1st John 3:22** tells us that when we walk in ways that are pleasing to Jesus, we can have confidence in the effectiveness of our prayers.

- 11:6** **Rom 8:8** ...those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Faith pleases God, not flesh. Faith pleases God, not unbelief. Do you recall that “evil heart of unbelief” we already looked at (**Heb 3:12**)? Where does faith come from?
Rom 10:17 ..faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What develops faith? Fiery trials, diverse temptations, unlovable people, persecution on the ‘negative’ side. Prayer, fellowship, witnessing our faith, and intimacy with Jesus on the ‘positive’ side. The Lord rewards those who **“diligently seek Him”**, and that means with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- 11:7** When God warned **“Noah”** about the rains to come, he was moved with **“fear”**. This, of course, is the fear of the Lord. Noah did not question God’s command to build the ark, though it had never rained before. His building of the ark condemned the people around him for their unbelief, and made him an **“heir of righteousness”**. Faith and works go hand-in-hand. Noah preached righteousness for 120 years, right up until the time he and his family joined the animals in the ark. This shows how those who take refuge in Christ, heirs of the righteousness of faith, being warned of God to flee from the wrath to come, are moved with holy fear to be ready to meet their Lord at any moment. The last days will be like the days of Noah (**Matt 24:37-39**).
- 11:8** **“Abraham”** is called “the father of all those who believe” (**Rom 4:3, 11**). His first step of faith was to leave the land of his father to travel to the Promised Land. The Christian life is an Abrahamic journey of obedient faith. Like Abraham, you and I do not need to know where we are going; we only need to follow the Lord’s commands.
- 11:10** Abraham’s heart was in the **“city”** of God, not in earthly treasures or buildings. Jesus said that where a person’s heart is, that is where his/her treasure is (**Matt 6:21**).
- May we all strive to make our heart Christ’s home.
- 11:11** The birth of Isaac was based on God’s faithfulness in performing that which He had promised, not on **“Sarah”**’s or Abraham’s faith, for they laughed when God told them He would give them a son (**Gen 17:17, 18:12**). “Isaac” means “laughter”; he brought such joy to them.
- 11:12** Sarah was past childbearing age (over 90) and Abraham was 100 years old, **“as good as dead,”** and yet God gave them a child and

descendants beyond numbering.

Abraham “did not consider his own body, already dead, ... and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.” But he was fully persuaded that what the Lord had promised, “He was also able to perform.” (**Rom 4:19,21**)

- 11:13** Jesus said that those who belonged to Him were in this world but not of this world (**John 17:11,16**). Every child of God, as far as this present world system is concerned, is a “**pilgrim**” and a “**stranger**”. **Psalm 119:19** I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your commandments from me.
1 Peter 2:11 Beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.
- 11:15** The patriarchs and Sarah did not return to Ur, even though they could have if they had wanted to. Similarly, present-day believers should refuse to return to the attractions of this world (**2 Tim 2:3,4, 4:10**).
- 11:16** Jesus said that He went to prepare a place for us (**John 14:1-3**). Our citizenship is in heaven. Jesus is “**not ashamed to be called (our) God,**” and we should not be ashamed to proclaim Him as God.
- 11:17** Though Abraham had another son, the son of his fleshly attempt to fulfill God’s promise (**Gen 16:1-3,15**), God did not recognize him. The term “**only begotten**” is also used to describe Jesus (**John 1:14, 18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9**). This terminology does not recognize Ishmael, who had been born previously, nor the additional sons borne to Abraham by Keturah (**Gen 25:1,2**).
- 11:18,19** There are parallels between Abraham offering up Isaac (**Gen 22:1-14**) and God sacrificing His beloved Son. Abraham thought of Isaac as dead for the three day journey to Mount Moriah. Jesus was dead for three days. Isaac carried the wood for sacrifice on his back. Jesus carried the cross on His back. Both sons were submitted to the will of their fathers. Both sacrifices took place on Mount Moriah. Abraham had called the place, “The-LORD-Will-Provide” and said, “In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” (**Gen 22:14**) Calvary is where the Father has provided the way of salvation for sinful man, through faith in the sacrifice of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ.
- 11:21** In his blessing “**Jacob**” foresaw that both Ephraim and Manasseh would be tribes of Israel, and that Joseph’s younger son would be the ancestor of the greater tribe (**Gen 48:17-20**).
- 11:22** When “**Joseph**” was dying, he asked that his bones be returned to the Promised Land when the children of Israel finally returned, for he

believed they would someday leave Egypt and live as a nation in the land God had given to them (**Gen 50:24-26**). This charge was faithfully fulfilled (**Joshua 24:32**).

As you study the Book of Genesis, you conclude that Joseph died in faith because he lived by faith. It never ceases to amaze me how at some funeral services (and I pray that if this is something that you have experienced personally that you will not be offended by what I have to say), certain people are mentioned as being ‘in a better place’ and with the Lord, when on earth they wanted nothing to do with Jesus and didn’t even believe in heaven.

- 11:23** The “**parents**” of Moses hid him by faith and defied the Pharaoh’s decree (**Ex 1:22-2:3**). As Christians we are to obey the laws of the land unless they conflict with God’s laws, and then we must “obey God rather than men.” (**Acts 5:29**)
- 11:24-26** “**Moses**” rejected possible rulership in Egypt when he chose to join the children of Israel in their difficulties (**Ex 2:10-12**). Moses valued the worst aspect of the godly life more than the best the world had to offer. He chose God’s riches rather than the riches and pleasures of Egypt. The pleasures of sin are transient. The possibility of “**reward**” is the most frequently mentioned motivation for enduring in the faith. For example, see: **Matthew 5:10-12** and **16:24-27**; **1 Corinthians 3:12-15**; **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**; **2 Timothy 2:11-13**; **1 John 2:28**; **Revelation 22:12**.
- 11:27** People of faith always see more than those who rely on their natural intellect, and are only able to endure in this life by “**seeing Him who is invisible**.”
- 11:28** In observing the first “**Passover**”, Moses not only believed that the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door posts would protect Israel’s firstborn (**Ex 12:1-28**), but his faith went beyond the type to the Lamb of God (**1 Peter 1:19**).
- 11:29** By faith the children of Israel crossed “**the Red Sea**” and followed Moses into the wilderness (**Nehemiah 9:9,11,12**). Our lives inspire other people to either trust God or to distrust Him. God sometimes allows His children to get into places of testings and trials which are very frightening. Often in our journey of faith we are caught between the proverbial ‘rock and a hard place’. In impossible circumstances we have nowhere to turn but to God. God wants us to stand still and watch Him work, and then to go forward in faith (**Ex 14:13-16**).
- 11:30** The defeat of “**Jericho**” (**Joshua 6:1-16,20**) demonstrates that God is not confined to our rational ways of doing things!

Isaiah 55:8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.

:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

- 11:31** “**Rahab**” (**Joshua 2**) believed in the reports she had heard about the children of Israel and their God, and by faith she believed that they would conquer mighty Jericho. Since the Israelites promised to spare all those in her house, Rahab’s house became a house of faith. The red cord hanging from her window represented Christ’s blood, and Jesus was literally descended from Rahab through His mother Mary (**Luke 3:23-32; Matt 1:5**; Heli was Mary’s father).
- 11:32** Read the histories of these saints: “**Gideon**” - **Judges 6:11-8:28**; “**Barak**” - **Judges 4:1-24**; “**Samson**” - **Judges 13:1-16:31**; “**Jephthah**” - **Judges 11:6-40**; “**David and Samuel**” - **1,2 Samuel**. Many of the “**prophets**” were illustrious examples of the power of faith as well.
How encouraging to see that God uses ordinary people, in spite of their weaknesses and failures, and because of Calvary, He only remembers the good He accomplishes through them (**Isaiah 43:25**).
- 11:33** The reference, “**stopped the mouth of lions**,” is to the remarkable case of Daniel (**Dan 6:10-23**).
- 11:34** Three Hebrew youth “**quenched the violence of fire**” (**Dan 3:8-30**).
- 11:35** Examples women in the Old Testament who “**received their dead raised to life again**” are the widow of Zarephath (**1 Kings 17:9, 17-24**) and the Shunammite woman (**2 Kings 4:18-37**).
- 11:37** Zechariah was “**stoned**” (**2 Chron 24:20, 21**). According to Jewish tradition, the prophet Isaiah was “**sawn in two**”. Urijah was “**slain with the sword**” (**Jer 26:20-23**). “**Wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins**” is probably a reference to Elijah (**2 Kings 1:8**).
- 11:39,40** The members of the ‘Hall of Faith’ “**did not receive the promise**,” the Messiah, so our relationship with God is even better than theirs was because we are able to approach Him through His Son.
The full fruition, being “**made perfect**”/complete, belongs to heaven.

Chapter 12

- 12:1** The imagery here draws upon an athletic contest with spectators, or “**witnesses**”, in an amphitheater.
The reference to “**a cloud**” is interesting in light of the fact that the

return of Jesus is often associated with clouds (**Rev 1:7; Acts 1:9-11; Matt 26:64, 24:30; Dan 7:13**).

Like a runner who trains with “**weight**”s but removes them at the time of the event, we are exhorted to exercise ourselves unto godliness here by removing from our lives the things that trip us up or slow us down in following the Lord.

Note that the Lord places before each and every saint a course to follow. Some days it may be a sprint; on other days it may be a low hurdle or even a high hurdle; other days may be a marathon. For every part of the “**race**”, God provides the grace. Therefore, perseverance is key to victory, as Paul knew (**Phil 3:12-15**).

12:2,3 How do we keep on running and not get weary? By “**looking unto Jesus,**” literally, “**ever looking unto Jesus**”. This phrase carries the idea of having eyes for no one but Jesus. The Greek word indicates the act of looking away from things that might distract us. We need to consistently focus on Christ instead of our own circumstances. Remember Peter’s attempt to walk on water (**Matt 14:25-31**)? Note that for every believer, Jesus is “**the Author and Finisher**” of their faith. He began a good work, and He will be faithful to complete it (**Phil 1:6**). By continually looking to Him, we find that He also sustains our faith.

“**For the joy**” He would soon experience by returning to the presence of his Father, Jesus “**endured the cross, despising the shame,**” i.e., disregarding the shame of crucifixion. Peter wrote that Jesus is the example of suffering unjustly while submitting to the will of God (**1 Peter 2:19-24**). No doubt some of these Hebrew saints were being persecuted in a big way, but they (and we) are exhorted to keep our eyes on what Jesus endured for us.

The word “**consider**” here involves the idea of comparison. As an accountant would compare the various columns of a balance sheet, believers should compare their sufferings to the sufferings Jesus Christ endured on their behalf.

12:4 “**Striving**” in Greek means “wrestling”, thus continuing the imagery of athletic competition. Because we are now alive in Christ (**Rom 6:11-13**), sin (personified) is our opponent. C.H. Spurgeon said, supporting the new birth, “*Dead men don’t wrestle.*”

- We must constantly be on guard because “the flesh lusts against the Spirit” (**Gal 5:17**).

12:5-6 How many times we find ourselves in trouble simply because we forget what Scripture says! The quotation is from Proverbs **3:11,12**. “**Chastening**” is the evidence of a father’s love. The Lord’s discipline is not a venting of wrath; it is part of the necessary process of bringing us to spiritual maturity and true holiness (**Psalms 94:12-13**).

Neither suffering for righteousness nor personal chastening in the life of a Christian is a punishment. Chastening is the work of a loving Father ridding us of ungodly and destructive attitudes, habits, or actions. Satan tells us that any chastening means that God is through with us. However, all chastening that we experience is undeniable proof that He does love us!

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Of course the greatest proof of His love was on Calvary (**John 3:16**).

12:8 Lack of discipline, then, is a sign of illegitimacy. Also, in Roman culture an “**illegitimate**” son was one who had no inheritance rights. Again, it is so important for us to have a Biblical understanding of the purposes of God in discipline.

Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.

:18 For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.

Deut 8:2 And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

:3 So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

12:9 When we examine Scripture we find the only command for children is to obey. If we are to submit to our imperfect earthly fathers, how much more shall we submit to our heavenly Father “**and live?**”

12:10 We can be sure God’s discipline is good for us. The Greek word for “**holiness**” here is unusual; it points to God’s holy character. *“The aim of God’s chastisement of His people is to produce in them a character like His own.”* (Morris)

It stands to reason that for me to be conformed to the image of Jesus, God has got a lot of work ahead of Him, and I’d better have my spiritual hard hat on, because until I’m laid in a box, I am going to be under construction.

12:11 Again the writer draws upon athletic imagery. There is no joy the first time you go to the gym and work out; you get aches and pains. No diet for the present time seems to be joyous; there is the tendency to quit before you get the results. You see, I want to look like the guy on the Bow-flex machine after one workout!

A Christian needs to be a spiritual visionary that looks beyond the

pain or discomfort of the now, for the ‘Bow-flex look’ in the near future. Just like giving up on the diet, or the daily exercise, a person is apt to ‘give up’ the spiritual discipline that the Lord is working in his/her life. God’s chastening is meant to help us grow, not to beat us down! The end results of the chastening process are **“the peaceable fruit of righteousness”** and a holiness like our Father.

12:12,13 Borrowing the language of **Isaiah 35:3**, we are now admonished to ‘get back into the gym’ and be strengthened so that we can endure the race of faith.

12:14 In all of our relationships, good or bad, we are to seek **“peace”**. Without holiness **“no one will see the Lord”**. This has been interpreted two ways. One, without holiness in our lives, nobody will be able to see the reality of Jesus Christ in us through the new birth. A second interpretation is that if a person is not walking in holiness (separation), he/she will not see the Lord, for the pure in heart will see God (**Matt 5:8**). I think that both of these interpretations are right on.

12:15 When a child of God does not understand His chastening work, he/she is apt resist the circumstances and fight the will of God, but in doing so, becomes bitter instead of better. ‘Why does this have to happen to me?’ ‘God doesn’t care any more!’ ‘It doesn’t pay to be a Christian!’ This attitude will only produce self-pity and **“bitterness”** of soul. When bitterness is unchecked in a person’s heart, it will affect all of those around him, with the end result being defilement, because bitterness is often displayed by sowing discord and strife. It is possible to **“fall short of (“fail to obtain” - RSV) the grace of God”**. Believers should watch out for each other so that none of their number will fail to take Christ’s grace, and thus drop out of the race.

12:16 It is **“profane”** to treat God’s blessings as nothing! For one helping of food Esau threw his birthright away (**Gen 25:29-34**). He is an example of one who despises the value of spiritual things in preference of the things of the world, and in doing so loses any future blessings.

12:17 Another translation (TEV) is, **“he could not find a way to change what he had done”**. This means the decision Esau made to forfeit the blessings of the birthright could not be reversed even though he sought **“diligently with tears”** to change it (**Gen 27:32-38**).

12:18-22 In these verses the author compares the Mosaic covenant with the New Covenant by contrasting the two mountains of Sinai and Zion. At Mount Sinai the Israelites received the Law from God with fear and trembling, for God displayed at that time His awesome power (**Ex 19:10-20:26**); but Christian believers have come to a heavenly

Jerusalem on **“Mount Zion”** through the blood of Jesus. This correlates to the contrast between the child born to Hagar and the child born to Sarah seen in **Galatians 4:22-31**. We are children of the promise, children of **“the heavenly Jerusalem”**.

The perfect tense in Greek, translated as, **“you have come”** (v 22), indicates the present result of a past action. While from our time-limited perspective we do not yet experience the reality of this verse, from God’s perspective, given the absolute certainty of His Word, we are already in heaven (**Eph 1:3; Rev 4,5,21,22**).

12:23 The word **“firstborn”** is plural in Greek, **“firstborn ones”**, referring to all the genuine believers who, as God’s sons and daughters, have the full rights of adopted children (**Gal 4:5-7**).

The phrase **“registered in heaven”** speaks of our enrollment as citizens of heaven, because our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life (**Rev 21:27**).

12:24 The **“blood”** of Jesus **“speaks”** here with quite a different message than that spoken by Abel’s blood (**Gen 4:10**). The blood of Abel called for revenge; the blood of Jesus calls for pardon and forgiveness of sin. The atoning death of Christ has established the New Covenant (**Luke 22:20**). Christ’s blood speaks from heaven for salvation and forgiveness. This is grace! Christ is a Minister of grace. The New Covenant is a covenant of grace, not of legalism, nor of ritual. We are married to Jesus in a loving covenant.

12:25 A clear warning about the sixth peril noted in **Hebrews**, denying the faith, is now seen. The danger of rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ is far greater than the danger of rejecting that which was given by Moses. To refuse to repent and believe the gospel means that a person is left to face the Lord as Judge, with the end result being eternal punishment.

12:26 The quotation is from **Haggai 2:6**.

12:28 We have been set free from dead works to **“serve”** Jesus Christ. We are called to be servants of the living God (**Heb 9:14**), and to serve the Lord **“acceptably with reverence (devotion) and godly fear”** (awe). We are exhorted to serve Him with gladness (**Psalms 100:2**).

12:29 There is something interesting about **“fire.”** The very same fire that purifies silver also purges away impurities. God refines the good and destroys what is worthless.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is one of fire (**Matt 3:11**).

Chapter 13

- 13:1** **John 13:35** “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.
“**Love**” is the most powerful bond within the body of Christ. It is the fruit of the Spirit (**Gal 5:22**). It is the only acceptable motive for which we will receive any reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**Rev 2:4**). Between the two chapters (**12,14**) in **1st Corinthians** on the gifts of the Spirit is the love chapter, because charisma without love = zero.
- 13:2** In those days, as is the case in many Asian nations today, hospitality to strangers was considered to be sacred duty, a privilege.
Gen 18:1 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.
:2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,
:3 and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by your servant.”
Matt 25:35 “For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in”.
How important it is for us to recapture the meaning of this in our culture. Kingdom hospitality is so important for relationships to grow in the church.
1 Tim 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;
Rom 12:13 ... given to hospitality.
1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.
- 13:3** There are Christians in prison in other countries whose only ‘crime’ is loving our Lord Jesus, and who need our prayers and help. Also, one of the most important ministries in the church is the Prison Ministry, because the Christian faith is one of compassion, reflecting its Founder, Jesus Christ (**Matt 9:36-38**).
- 13:4** This is one of those verses that carnal or lukewarm believers, and many unbelievers, do not like. This “**marriage**” is that which Jesus talks about in **Mark 10:7-8**, quoting **Genesis 2:24**, and is between one man and one woman, exclusively. There is no Biblical justification for sex outside of the bond of heterosexual marriage, PERIOD!
- 13:5** The word “**conversation**” (or “**conduct**”) means ‘way of living’. As certainly as the Lord condemns sexual sin, He likewise condemns “**covetousness**”. Our contentment is not to come from things; our

contentment is to come from Christ, for He has said, “**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**” Jesus also said that He would not cast out anyone the Father gives Him (**John 6:37**). Since He will never leave nor cast away any who come to Him, I am secure in Christ.

- Contentment is to be a characteristic of the abiding child of God.

Phil 4:11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content.

1 Tim 6:8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

Paul also noted, “godliness with contentment is great gain.” (**1 Tim 6:6**) When a person can sincerely say, “The LORD is my shepherd”, then they are also able to say, “I shall not want.” (**Psalm 23:1**)

13:6 If Scripture (**Psalm 118:6**) says that we may “**boldly**” say this, I think it is the will of God for us to boldly say this, for His word is His will.

Matt 10:28 “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

13:7 Leaders in the body of Christ are called to “(speak) **the word of God**”. Jesus said, “Feed My sheep.” (**John 21:17**) Peter passed that along to church elders with the words, “Feed (or, “*Shepherd*”) the flock of God which is among you” (**1 Peter 5:2**).

Scripture does teach spiritual authority within the local church, but not to the point of the Nicolaitans, who lorded their authority over the lay people. See **1 Thessalonians 2:1-13** and **1 Peter 5:1-7**.

One way that teachers are to teach is by example, and that is what is being referred to here at the end of the verse.

13:8 Jesus has the same divine characteristic of immutability (changelessness) that Jehovah has (**Malachi 3:6a**). That means that His love for me today is a constant. That is why **Jude (21)** can exhort us to keep ourselves in the love of God. Since Jesus is alive and unchanging, that means that He is just as able to help us in our lives today as He was able to help those who came to Him 2000 years ago.

13:9 Scripture talks about “wind(s) of doctrine” and “doctrines of devils” (**Eph 4:14; 1 Tim 4:1**). Beware of spiritual novelties that blow in and through the church. Scripture also warns about those who would abuse the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith (**Gal 1:6-9**). How important it is for us to establish our hearts in the grace of God! This means that we will purpose to ever draw nearer to Jesus Christ, who is “full of grace and truth” (**John 1:14**).

13:10 We do not “**serve**” a temple or a church; we serve the living Jesus!

13:11,12 The animals' bodies were taken **"outside the camp"** to be burned, and Jesus was also sacrificed outside the city walls. The animal blood referred to here was that used for the sin sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (**Lev 16:11,14-17,27**). That is in contrast with the blood of Jesus Christ, which sanctifies His people forever (**Heb 9:12**). Often it is necessary to go outside the camp of organized religion and ritual to find Jesus Christ, because you cannot put new wine into an old wine skin (**Mark 2:22**). Some of these Hebrews needed to get beyond Judaism to find the Messiah. Despite all of the beautiful pictures and types revealed in Judaism, Judaism does not save. Nor does any other religious system save. Salvation is not in a place, nor in a denomination; it is in Jesus Christ (**Acts 4:12**).

13:14 We are looking for the glorious **"city"** of God. **Revelation 21** and **22** give us such a beautiful description of that city, which Jesus has gone to prepare for us (**John 14:2,3; Heb 11:13-16**).

13:15 As Christians, we also offer sacrifices to God, but the sacrifices that please the Lord are from our hearts. God wants a joyful, willing **"sacrifice of praise"**, not cold, meaningless words. Another sacrifice with which the Lord is well pleased is "a broken spirit ...and a contrite heart" (**Psalms 51:17**). We are told that we should also offer God our very lives as living sacrifices (**Rom 12:1**) in loving service, not grudgingly, for He loves a cheerful giver (**2 Cor 9:7**).

13:16 We are to **"share"** (**"communicate"**), that is, to "help out, distribute what we have to those in need". To do this is to be very Pentecostal (**Acts 2:38-45, 4:31-35**).

James 2:14 What does profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

:15 If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food,

:16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body; what does profit?

:17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Prov 19:17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.

13:17 This verse has been carried to extremes, with a so-called "shepherd" who oversees all a person's activities. Actually, a teacher should teach us to submit to God, not to himself.

13:18 I can "Amen" this verse, and I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart for your prayers and encouragement!

13:20 We make our **“peace”** with God when we accept His salvation for us through Christ, but the peace of God is a further step. We need to appropriate it in every situation by committing ourselves totally to Him. Note that Jesus is the **“great Shepherd of the sheep”** (**Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11; John 10:1-16**).

Another thing to note is that the power of the blood of Jesus Christ has guaranteed an **“everlasting covenant”** for those who trust in Him. When the plan for man’s redemption is mentioned in Scripture (**Luke 24:25-27; Isaiah 53**), the focus of the work necessary to accomplish that is in the singular, Jesus Christ. An earlier chapter in already referenced how in the volume of Scripture it was written about Jesus coming to do the will of the Father (**Heb 10:7**).

- Remember the prayer of Jesus in the garden (**Mark 14:36**)?

13:21 When we yield ourselves to the work of God the Holy Spirit in our lives, the end result is that He is glorified. God is working in our lives **“both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”** (**Phil 2:13**)

13:23,24 It is because of the close relationship between Paul and **“Timothy”** that some believe that Paul wrote Hebrews. This language implies that Timothy had been arrested and afterwards set free. Of this imprisonment, or just where it occurred, there is no other history. **“Those from Italy greet you.”** The epistle was, therefore, written from Italy, which harmonizes with Paul’s long imprisonment there.

13:25 How fitting that this epistle, written to those struggling with legalism, ends with reference to the grace of God.

- **“Grace be with you all. Amen.”**

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