

# STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

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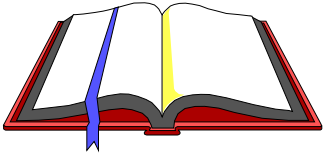
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# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: We shall keep the introduction to this letter short. Like most of the books of the Bible, we can learn about all we need to know from the book itself.

We will begin by considering the title of the book. The title varies from translation to translation, such as:

<u>The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the HEBREWS</u>	KJV
<u>The Epistle to the HEBREWS</u>	The Open Bible (KJV), NAS
<u>The Letter to the HEBREWS</u>	RSV, Amplified Bible
<u>HEBREWS</u>	NIV, Living Bible, Wuest's Expanded Translation
<u>The Letter to Jewish Christians</u>	Phillips Paraphrase

In some cases the term epistle is found and others the more modern English term letter. Since it is obviously a letter, either of these terms is redundant. The Phillips Paraphrase says Jewish Christians rather than Hebrews since that is who they were, but more on this later.

Only the KJV has the name of Paul connected with the letter. The name Paul does not appear in any of the Greek texts except the Received Text translated by Stephens in 1550 and revised by Elzevir in 1624. It is also called by its Latin name Textus Receptus. Since 1624 many additional manuscripts (or partial manuscripts) of the Greek New Testament have been unearthed and so the newer Greek translations, based on this better evidence, leaved the name of Paul off and the book is called simply **pros hebraious**, "to Hebrews".

Did Paul write this letter or not? This has been debated for centuries. There are considerable evidence that he may have (we will not some of this as we go through the book) and there are good arguments for his not being the author. What do we do? We follow Paul's good advice...

*I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.*

Titus 03:09-09

It really makes no difference who wrote the letter. The author of the entire Book was the Holy Spirit and, if the Spirit inspired the human author to omit his name, then it was the will of the God that we not know the name - case closed.

We need to say a few words about those to whom this book is written, the Hebrews. Who were (or are) they? The term appears in the N.T. three times:

*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their*

*widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.* Acts 06:01

From this passage we find that the Jews, including those who had become Christians, were divided into two groups. There were the Jews who believed that the Hebrew language was God's language and one could worship Him in no other tongue. The Grecian Jews, on the other hand, were more broad minded and were willing to read the Septuagint (or LXX standing for 70) which was the Greek translation of the Old Testament, executed in about 400 BC. They didn't mind worshipping God in the Greek language, which they understood better (especially those not living in the Holy Land).

We find Paul saying...

*Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.* 2 Corinthians 11:22

*circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee.* Philippians 03:05

The Hebrew speaking Jews felt that they were "one cut above" the Grecian Jews (or Hellenists) and we see this in Paul's statements. But note the context in which Paul speaks these words, he is not really bragging. It is somewhat of a paradox that this letter is addressed to the "Hebrews" since it is written in Greek! But, this is how the Holy Spirit wanted it and we will let it go at that.

We conclude this introduction by noting that the theme of this book is God's Better Way. It deals with the contrast between the Old Covenant (made with Israel through Moses) and the New Covenant which we have in Christ Jesus. The bottom line is that the New Covenant is not only the better of the two, it is the only one which gives us the promise of eternal life.

The letter was most likely written to refute the Judeaizers and others who insisted that to be a Christian, you had to following the Old Covenant practices (circumcision, etc.). If, indeed, Paul or one of his co-workers wrote this book, they might well of considered it not wise to put their names on it if the audience they were addressing were those who opposed Paul.

Let us now turn to the opening words of the book to learn what God has to say to us today. You say, "What do you mean today, this was written two-thousand years ago?" God has been speaking to mankind from the day He created Adam until today and on into the future. He does so in different ways, however, and this is where this book begins - the way God speaks to mankind.

### God Speaks!

---

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in*

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by*

*God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many*

*various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

*the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

*ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.*

---

Hebrews 01:01-02

Two of the above translations begin with God. While this seems like a fitting place to begin a letter, it is not consistent with the Greek text and so we shall comment on this passage in the order it is in the Greek. The Greek begins with the phrase that is the most troublesome in this passage. We note some variations in its translation.

<i>at many times and in various ways</i>	NIV
<i>at sundry times and in divers manners</i>	KJV
<i>in many portions and in many ways</i>	NAS
<i>in many and various ways</i>	RSV

A literal translation of the Greek does not give its true meaning. The phrase consists of two Greek words combined with the Greek equivalent of and (**kai**). The first word is **polumeros** and the second is **polutropos**. Both words mean basically the same thing. Both begin with the same prefix, which means many. The last part of the first word refers to one part of something. The last part of the second word refers to the manner in which something is done. Neither word is found anywhere else in the N.T.

The fact of the matter is that the two words, connected with "and" for what is referred to in English as a sonorous hendiadys. What on earth is that? A hendiadys is two words combined with "and" to form, in effect, one word with a composite meaning. Sonorous refers to an impressive form of writing. Taken together, it means that these words have been joined to form a very strong expression.

What does this all mean when we apply it to God's speaking? It means that God tried to speak to the Hebrew forefathers in all kinds of ways, trying to gain their attention. You might say he tried every possible way except one which we will discuss later. In what ways did he speak to the forefathers? Let's consider a few.

God often spoke in dreams...

*But God came to Abimelech in a dream one night and said to him, "You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman."*  
Genesis 20:03

*Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."*  
Genesis 31:24

and in visions...

*After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be*

*afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."*

Genesis 15:01

*he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams."* Numbers 12:06

On a few occasions God even spoke both directly and audibly...

*and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up and the Lord said to him, "Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the Lord and many of them perish. Even the priests, who approach the Lord, must consecrate themselves, or the Lord will break out against them." Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.'" The Lord replied, "Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the Lord, or he will break out against them." So Moses went down to the people and told them. And God spoke all these words:"* Exodus 19:12-20:1

And sometimes God spoke in strange ways...

*There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight--why the bush does not burn up." When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."* Exodus 03:02-06

And, perhaps the strangest of all...

*The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" "No," he said.* Numbers 22:30

God tried all sorts of ways of communicating with men. God tried all sorts of times. There were times when God did not speak at all. There were times when God did a great deal of speaking. But none of it was effective. Man still went his own way and turned his back on God. God just couldn't get man's attention.

But God had one other way to speak to man. He reserved this until the very last, after it had become obvious that all of the other methods failed. For about 400 years God had not spoken to Israel a single time. God was silent, then God used his final and most costly resource. What was this?

The verse goes on and says *in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.*

The NIV and the KJV says God spoke to us by his Son. The NAS says in his Son. The Greek has **en huio**, in son.

*God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets* the write says. And there is ample evidence of this in the O.T. Consider...

*"Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the Lord heard this.* Numbers 12:02

*"The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue."* 2 Samuel 23:02

*They went back and told Jehu, who said, "This is the word of the Lord that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh.* 2 Kings 09:36

*at that time the Lord spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said to him, "Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet." And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot.* Isaiah 20:02

*Neither he nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the Lord had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.* Jeremiah 37:02

In these, and in many other references, the Lord spoke to man through various prophets and spokesmen. But here it says that he spoke "in son". To make sense out of this we must supply the missing words, God spoke to us in the person of His Son. God did not speak through His Son. The Son was God and so as the Son spoke, it was God speaking.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* John 01:01

Finally, he identifies this Son as the one *whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe*. If we continue on in John's Gospel, we are told the same thing.

*He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* John 01:02-03

We will have more to say about this later.  
The Son Speaks for He is God!

*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful*

*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by*

*And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of*



*word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

*the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

*His power. When he had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

### Hebrews 01:03

In this one verse we have a lot of theology which we will look into. First there are two statements concerning who the Son is: *The Son is the radiance of God's glory*. What does this first statement mean? We are told that the son is the **apaugasma** of God's glory. This Greek word is found only here in the Bible. The word, without the prefix (**augazo**) is found once...

*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.* 2 Corinthians 04:04

and means "to emit light" or "to shine". The prefix means to shine back or, in other words to reflect light is done by a mirror. Mirrors can be good or poor. Just recently scientist were elated to get the Hubbel telescope into space. The mirror in it was years in the making and was polished and ground to unbelievable stringent specifications. They wanted to see the universe as correctly as is humanly possible. On the other hand, we have the following statement...

*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.* 1 Corinthians 13:12

Christ is a prefect example, a perfect mirror of the glory of God. That is why we have Christ saying...

*When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.* John 12:45

Christ is now in heaven and so we can not actually see him. However, we have the New Testament which tells us about Him. Otherwise we would be like...

*Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.* James 01:23-24

We might forget the glory of God where it not for His word brought to us in the New Testament. To summarize, Jesus Christ is the perfect mirror of God's glory. When we see Christ, we see the radiant glory of God.

The other description we are given is that the Son is *the exact representation of his being*. The Greek word here hardly needs translation, it is **charakter**. This word also is found only here in the Bible. The proper meaning of the word is a tool used in engraving or carving and, in this sense, it refers to that which is the result of stamping or engraving. In other words, Christ bears in his being the exact image of God Himself, just as if one made a plaster casting of God and used it for a mold to make an image.

The term of *his being* is the translation of the Greek word **hupostaseos**. The last part of the word has as a root meaning to stand and hence refers to ones stand or position. The prefix means "under" or what one stands upon. We talk about a person carrying around his "soapbox", which refers to a person carrying something around upon which he stands to make his thoughts known in a public place. In other words, then, Jesus Christ, God's Son, in His very nature is the exact representation of God's basic attributes.

The author of this letter is leaving no doubt about the fact that Jesus Christ is God Himself. Because of this he goes on to say that he is *sustaining all things by his powerful word*. This certainly follows. If God created the world through Christ, it is only natural that Christ is the sustainer of the universe. Paul writes...

*He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Colossians 01:17

But the author then adds a curious statement. He says *after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven*. Unless you have a "desk job", you do not sit down while you are working. I don't believe that Christ was sitting down when the worlds were created through Him. That was work that requires action. When there is something extraordinary to perform, one must stand to his feet and take action.

We are told that Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. He is not always sitting there. Consider the following exceptional case!

*But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*

Acts 07:55-56

In this exceptional case Christ was standing - standing to receive Stephen unto Himself. But the main point of the phrase is that when Christ died on the cross and rose again, he finished all the work there was to do. Our salvation was made secure and so He sat down, His work completed.

The Son is Better than Angels.

---

*So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? And again, when God brings his firstborn into*

*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And*

*having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did he ever say "Thou art my Son, Today I have begotten thee?" And again, "I will be a Father to Him and He shall be a Son to Me?" And when He brings the*

*the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.*

*again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

*firstborn into the world He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels he says, "Who makes his angels winds, And His ministers a flame of fire." But of the son he says, "Thy throne is forever and ever. And thy righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.*

#### Hebrews 01:04-08

We have already noted that the theme of this book is "God's Better Way". We begin already by showing how much better the son is than angels. We shall first have to know what angels are in order to properly interpret this. The term "angel" comes from the Greek word **angellos**. In other words, it is simply a transliteration of the Greek word. Why is this? Why is the word not translated?

To answer these questions, we shall consider one other word, **malahch**, which is the Hebrew word for angel. Neither word means "angel". Both mean the same thing, a messenger.

*Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying: "This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come upon us.* Numbers 20:14

*After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind?" Luke 07:24*

The first verse uses the Hebrew word in its basis sense. The second verse uses the Greek word in its basic sense. When the "messenger" was a human, the word is translated messenger. But when the word is used of some being other than a human being, it is not translated! Is there a name for an angel, or we just have to go with a description of their work?

Some angels, at least, have a generic name, for we find the following references:

*Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. . . Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.* Isaiah 06:02,06

*After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.* Genesis 03:24

*There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.* Exodus 25:22

So we have to common names for "angels", a seraph and a cherub. It is common belief that seraph is a variation of cherub. In either case, the meaning of the word is not known and it is not clear that this term is to be applied to all "angels".

We know of the proper names for two "angels" from the Scriptures. First there is Gabriel . . .

*And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." . . . while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.*

Daniel 08:16,9:21

*The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,...* Luke 01:19,26

The second is Michael,

*"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered.* Daniel 12:01

*But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"* Jude 01:09

*And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.* Revelation 12:07

We really do not know a lot about angels except that they have a higher position than man (but lower than God, of course). Paul does tell us, however, that this will not always be the case.

*Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!* 1 Corinthians 06:03

But Jesus is superior to the angels. What does it mean to be superior? (the KJV has better). The Greek word is **krisson** which is used some twelve times in this book which describes bogs "better" way. Asside from these it is found in such places as follows:

*But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.* 1 Corinthians 07:09

*But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.* 1 Corinthian 12:31

*I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;* Philippians 01:23

*It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.* 1 Peter 03:17

*It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them.* 2 Peter 02:21

The point is that when one has a choice between two things or two actions, one must decide which is better or more proper. this is the sense of the word. God is not here putting the angels down - he simply says that between the Son and the angels, there is no comparison. The comparison is exemplified by the difference in the names.

The names of the Son are: JESUS, CHRIST, MESSIAH and IMMANUEL

*She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."* Matthew 01:21

Technically speaking, his name was Joshua, not Jesus. "Jesus" is the Grecian form of the Hebrew name "Joshua". The Hebrew names means, literally, Jehovah Saves. Hence one of the names of the Son, Jesus, describes his most important role, that of saving His people.

The second and third names are really one in the same.

*For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.* Matthew 24:05

*The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).* John 01:41

The word **Christos** comes from the root meaning to anoint and hence the name refers to the anointed one. It is used in place of the Hebrew word in the second verse, Messiah. The Hebrew word has the same meaning. The name Messiah is found in only a twice in the O.T. (but not in the NIV)

*"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One {Messiah}, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens, {Messiah} the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end,*

*and desolations have been decreed.*

Daniel 09:25-26

The word is found many places in the O.T. and translated as "anointed", such as...

*those who oppose the Lord will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven; the Lord will judge the ends of the earth. "He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."* 2 Samuel 02:10

*Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.* Psalm 84:09

In many cases it refers to the king (David, etc.) or a prophet and in some cases it simply refers to those people whom the Lord has called out for himself (i.e. He has anointed them, making them His). However, the Son is the anointed one and hence it is probably better to preserve the term Messiah.

Finally, we have Immanuel (or Emmanuel).

*"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us."*

Matthew 01:23

It is interesting to note that, while some have Greek equivalents, all of the names of the Son are Hebrew!

We conclude that the names of the Son tell us that He is the (a) Savior, (b) the Chosen One of God and (3) that He is "God with us". Turning now to the names of the angels. ...? We have no name for angels in general. We have the names of two angels. We have the cherubim, which may not include all angels. all we really have is the term angel itself which simply means messenger. Comparing these, we see that the Son truly does have a much better name than the angels and He is likewise superior to angels.

*For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?*

At this point we will begin to learn a peculiar feature of this book. Since it addresses to the Hebrews, this book contains more quotations than any other N.T. book. We begin to see this here. The first is from Psalms.

*I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."* Psalm 02:07

The other is from 2 Samuel

*When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men.* 2 Samuel 07:12-14

Both of these Scriptures are prophetic of the coming of the Messiah - they apply to the

Son. Nothing like this was ever said of an angel. The comparison continues with *and again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."* This is a quotation, again from the book of Psalms.

*All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols--worship him, all you gods!* Psalm 97:7

Now, this doesn't sound much like a quotation from the above passage. This is because many of the quotations found in this book come from the LXX which does not always read the same. In this case we have...

*Let all that worship graven images be ashamed, who boast in their idols; worship Him all ye his angels.* Psalm 97:7 LXX

Turning to angels in this comparison, there is a quotation about them, followed by a contrasting quotation concerning the Son. *In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.*

*He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.* Psalm 104:04

*Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.* Psalm 45:06

Hence the conclusion, the message that is being taught here is not new. There are ample O.T. Scriptures which speak of the Son and His relation with angels.

### The Result of Being Better than the Angels

Because the Son is so much superior to angels, the following is so.

*You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed.*

*Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art*

*"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Thy God, hast anointed the with the oil of gladness above Thy companions" And, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the works of thy hands; They will perish, but thou remainest; and the all will become old as a garment, and as a mantel You wilt roll them up; As a garment they will also be changed.*

*But you remain the same, and your years will never end." To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

*the same, and thy years shall not fail. But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

*But thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end." But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy Feet?" Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?*

Hebrews 01:09-14

*You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.*" It is because the Son loved righteousness and hated wickedness - in other words, he, as God, possessed the attributes of God, that He is above the angels. But this is not new theology, it comes from Psalm 45.

*You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.*  
Psalm 45:07

The next part of this passage deals with a subject we have mentioned before, the Son's roll in the creation and maintenance of the universe. again, this is from the book of Psalms.

*In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.* Psalm 102:25-27

This comparison ends with one more reference to angels with respect to the Son. God never said to the angels what is recorded in Psalm 110:1.

*The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*  
Psalm 110:01

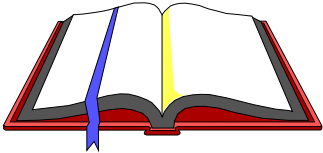
We conclude this chapter, then, with the conclusion that the Son is God in every way and thus much superior to angels. The conclusion with respect to angels is found in the last verse. *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

What is this saying. We noted, under the names of the Son, that He has provided salvation for all. We also noted that He is now seated and the right hand of God in heaven. So now, to those of us who have been saved through the work of the Son, we have the angels to minister to us.



This rather reminds us of the work of an evangelists crusade. The evangelist comes and brings people to the Lord. Then there must be followup workers who follow up on those saved and minister to them. This is the roll of the angels. They are "followup" personnel in God's plan of salvation.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER TWO

In Chapter one we had the introduction to the book which deals with "God's better way" and have seen that the Son is far superior to angels.

This chapter then begins with some practical advice as a consequence of this.

### PAY ATTENTION!

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*We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

*For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through the angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed by us who heard, God also bearing witness with them by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.*

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Hebrews 02:01-04

The chapter begins with **dia touto**, for this reason or because of this. The KJV and the NIV have therefore, which is equivalent, and we must ask what the therefore is there for? It is as we have already mentioned, because of the fact that God has now spoken to us, to you and to me, in His Son and because the Son is far superior to angels and any other beings. It is because God provided for us a New Covenant of Grace rather than the Old Covenant of the Law.

Because of this, we must give heed. The word has an adjective preceding it, **perisoteros** which speaks of abundance or excess. In other words, were are not asked to pay attention, we are asked to give careful attention. We are not to miss a thing!

Pay attention to what? The answer is *to what we have heard*. What have we heard? Well, we have "heard" then entire teaching of the New Testament, the words of the New Covenant. It is these words that we must pay careful attention to. Why?

*So we do not drift away* is the answer. The human mind has an awesome capacity to remember things. We can remember many things. We can remember things that happened long ago. We can not remember everything (nor would we want to). As a matter-of-fact, scientist tell us that we can not, in general, remember things from our distant past without reenforcement.

What this means is that, if you remember some event that happened to you as a small child, it is most likely because you have recalled this event to mind every so often in your lifetime. If something happened as a child and you have never thought of it since, it is extremely unlikely that you can recall it now (except, perhaps, under hypnosis). Every so often the DMV requests that we come in and take a drives examination. This is because they believe that after a period of time your mind needs to be refreshed regarding the rules of the road.

With all this explanation, it should be clear that we need to continually be in our Bibles to keep our minds refreshed. If we do not, we will eventually forget much of what is written for us in the Bible. If we forget the promises and the warnings of the Bible, we miss out on abundant Christian living!

The author warns us how rigid the things of the Old Covenant were. Every word spoken was unchangeable. Every sin had to be atoned for. that being the case, he writes...*how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?* What is meant by this? Escape from what? The Greek word is **ekpheugo**, the root of which means to flee. It is the source of our word fugitive. The prefix means, literally, to flee out of, or more freely to flee away from something. Whatever it is we would need to escape from, we would need to do so if we neglected "such a great" salvation. The Greek word **telikoutos** is uncommon in the N.T., being found only in:

*Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us* 2 Corinthians 01:09-10

*Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.* James 03:04

*Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake.*

Revelation 16:18

There are few words to describe the magnitude of what God has done for us. Now we have two questions. What is there to escape from? How do we ignore salvation? If

we fail to read our Bibles and don't go to church and we don't pray, does this mean that our salvation will eventually disappear? The term ignore comes from **ameleo** and is also found in the following passages.

*"Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'  
"But they paid no attention and went off--one to his field, another to his business.*

Matthew 22:04-05

*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.*

1 Timothy 04:13-16

There are millions of people who have received God's Word and then simply walked away from it. This is what the word refers to. Can one really walk away from his or her salvation? According to William R. Newell, one is ignoring his or her salvation when one or more of the following symptoms is seen:

1. Ceasing to give the attention and earnestness to the things of God and of salvation that once we gave; a growing distaste for Bible reading; willingness to be absent from the assemblies of the saints of God (Heb. 10.25).
2. Absorption in earthly, selfish interests.
3. Increasing deadness of heart toward Christ, His sacrifice, and to the love of God, Who gave Him.
4. Occupation with the affairs and news of this world rather than of the world to come, and our coming Lord.
5. Loss of God-consciousness.
6. Putting away of the thought of a "judgment to come."
7. Finally, living like the "beasts that perish," so far as eternity is concerned.

Hebrews, Verse By Verse, page 40

Now as to the question regarding whether we really can walk away from God and our salvation, Jesus said, when . . .

*The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.*

John 10:24-29

You can try to walk away, you can try to let go of God's hand, but to break a hand clasp

requires a release on the part of both parties. God will not let go. It may appear that He lets some go. But these are the ones He refers to when he says *but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.* No one loses their salvation. The ones who "walk away" and never come back were not God's sheep in the first place.

But what is this warning? Are you really one of God's "sheep". Do you "listen to His voice"? Do you follow Him? According to the above passage if you do not, you are not one of His sheep, you are not saved, you have never been saved!

This section closes with the words *this salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.* Note that there is a confirmation of the salvation we have in Christ.

Confirmation comes for **Bebaioo**, which is found several times in the N.T. For example, we have...

*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.*

2 Corinthians 01:21

But here the word is translated stand firm and in the next verse it is translated strengthened.

*rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

Colossians 02:07

There is a correlation between these terms and confirmed. We find this in the following.

*because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 01:06-08

That's what confirm means - To make strong. In this case confirmation makes our faith strong. This same concept is expressed in...

*Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

Mark 16:20

*For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs*

Romans 15:08

The testimony of the Apostles should serve to confirm and strengthen our faith. The fact that Christ is the fulfillment of the many O.T. promises should build up our confidence. The miracles that Christ and the Apostles performed should add to this.

You may well ask, "But I don't see any miracles being done today - why not?"

There are two answers to this question. First, the miracles and signs that Jesus and the Apostles performed were for the Jews!

*Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him,  
"Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you."* Matthew 12:38

Signs and miracles came to a stop because God's dealing with the Jews came to a (temporary) halt.

*He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."* Matthew 12:39

Signs and miracles will again appear when it is time for God to begin dealing with the Jews again...

*As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"* Matthew 24:33

Signs and wonders of the type we have been describing are not for this age. But on the other hand, if you have not seen any miracles from God since you have been saved, either you have not been saved very long or else your eyesight is poor! There are those who make a distinction between God's miracles and God's divine providence. The former is the occurrence of something that can not possible have happened, something contrary to the laws of nature (like Peter walking on the water). Providence is something that can physically occur but is not expected to - like winning the \$10 million sweepstakes! If you wish to make this distinction, then there are very few miracles performed today but God's providence abounds!

### The Earth Subjected to Man

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*It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.*

*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But*

*For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man that Thou rememberest him? Or the Son of Man that Thou art concerned about Him? Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honor, and hast appointed Him over all the works of Thy hands. Thou has put all things in subjection under His feet." For in subjecting all things to him, He left*

*now we see not yet all things put under him.*

*nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him.*

Hebrews 02:05-08

The author writes *it is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking*. We have been talking about angels and their relationship to the Son. But now a new term comes into view, the world to come. The Greek here is **ten oikoumenen ten mellousan**. We will begin with the first noun "world". There are a number of Greek words for world. Some of the words really mean "land" and are only occasionally translated as "world". There is another Greek word which refers to the "age" and the KJV often interchanges "the end of the age" with "the end of the world" which are more-or-less synonymous. There are two other words, the one used here and the more common word, **kosmos**. We will show below two sets of verses, each taken from Luke, Acts, and Romans. The first uses the word found here, the second the word "kosmos".

*Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.* Luke 21:26

*For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."* Acts 17:31

*But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."* Romans 10:18

Note that the word "earth" in this last verse is another Greek word for "world", but generally refers to land (i.e. dirt).

*For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.* Luke 12:30

*"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.* Acts 17:24

*But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring! I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*

Romans 11:12-15

Wuest, in his book of word studies, says...

WORLD. There are three Greek words in the New Testament translated by this one English word, kosmos, aion, and oikoumene. It should be obvious that if one is to arrive at a full-orbed interpretation of the passages where the word "world" is found, one must know which Greek word is used, and the distinctive meaning of that Greek word. A knowledge of how these words were used in classical Greek, will help us to better understand their use in the New Testament.

The basic meaning of kosmos was "order." It was used in such expressions as "to sit in order." It meant "good order, good behavior, decency, a set form or order." When used of state or national existence, it meant "order, government " it also meant "an ornament, decoration, dress," especially of women. It was used to refer to the universe from the fact of its perfect arrangement. ...

Studies in the Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament

Having said this, he spends nearly five pages describing two of these three words. About all he says about the third is this...

Oikoumene, the third word, made up of the Greek word for "home" (oikos) and the verb "to remain" (meno) , referred in classical Greek to the inhabited world, namely, that portion of the earth inhabited by the Greeks, as opposed to the rest of the inhabited earth where non-Greeks or barbarians lived. Later it was used to designate the entire Roman empire. At the accession of Nero, the proclamation referred to him in the words "and the expectation and hope of the world has been declared Emperor, the good genius of the world and source of all good things, Nero, has been declared Caesar." It was thus a common designation of the Roman Empire in the papyri.

Not much of an explanation considering *one must know which Greek word is used, and the distinctive meaning of that Greek word.* What the word does signify is a combination of the other two. It denotes the physical world upon which we live and also the social/political world in which we live. In other words, things as we know them!

But this is modified with the adjective yet to come. There are two schools of thought on this. One is that the "world yet to come" is the age in which we live as contrasted with the O.T. age of the Law. This does not seem to be consistent with the grammar as this letter was written during this current age. Thus the other viewpoint, that it must be a world yet future.

*It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come* is what the text says. That really answers the question. For consider the following:

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* Ephesians 06:12

The world is still under the control and influence of these spiritual forces of evil, that is, Satan and his co-workers. Certainly God is all-powerful and has the ultimate control, but for now he is letting these other forces have their way. Paul also wrote...

*For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong*



*to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be glorified.* 1 Corinthians 15:22-28

Paul also is writing about a time yet to come. *But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet."* Note that this passage contains the same O.T. reference that the passage in 1 Corinthians had.

*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:* Psalm 08:03-06

As we consider this passage and its quotation, the question we must ask is who is "man". The word is used in the singular, but that does not limit its scope to a single person. Man is the Greek **Anthropos** which refers to mankind but it can also refer to a single person. He, does this passage refer to mankind or to the Son?

It refers to both. Look at the passage carefully! *What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?* Two subjects are named here: man or mankind and the son of man. There can be no question as to whom the son of man is. The term is found over 40 times in the Gospels alone.

*For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."* Matthew 16:27-28

*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* Mark 10:45

*At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.* Luke 21:27

*No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,* John 03:13-14

When the Scripture says *what is man that you are mindful of him* it is an obvious reference to you and to me - to mankind for all we have to do is to go out on a dark night and look at the universe and us, a little speck on a little planet in a little Solar system in a little galaxy... It really makes you wonder how God really could care for such an insignificant object when compared with His vast creation!

*You made him a little lower than the angels;* must refer to the Son. We have always been lower than the angels. But not Christ.

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Philippians 02:05-11

This is where Christ the Son of God became the Son of Man as He, in fact, became man. It was here that he became "a little lower than the angels".

But He did not remain so, God did not leave him in a borrowed tomb, but raised him from the dead so that now, as we have seen before, the son is seated at the right hand of God.

*Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.* One wonders is Christ really has everything in subjection to Him today? Is it the will of Christ that drugs are rampant in this country? Is it the will of Christ that unborn babies are being slaughtered at will? Is it the will of Christ that we have corruption in high places in the government? Is it the will of Christ that most of the movies and TV shows are staged primarily in the bedroom, that a large percentage of teenage girls become pregnant? Most definitely not! It is the work of Satan. He the above statement that we do not see *everything subject to him*.

This may seem strange, but it is important that all things not be subject to the Son right now. Why? Because if this were so you would have no free choice with respect to God. You would have no alternative but to worship Him. You would be subject to him whether you wanted to be or not. This is the age of Grace at work.

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both*

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For*

*But we see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for every one. For it was fitting for Him, for whom all things and through whom all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation*

*the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."*

*both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

*through sufferings. for both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from the Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim Thy name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise" and again, "I will put my trust in Him", and again "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me."*

Hebrews 02:09-13

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. What does it mean to taste death? do this mean that Jesus just partook of a "little bit" of our death, like one might take a taste of some food? The Greek word is **geuo**. In a number of N.T. passages the word does mean just to take a sample of something.*

*There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. Matthew 27:24*

*I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet. Luke 14:24*

*and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside . John 02:09*

*"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? Colossians 02:21*

*now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. 1 Peter 02:03*

In the first three of these passages it is obvious that taste means to just take a little sample. The other two verses are not quite so obvious, but the intent is the same. But then, in each of the four Gospels we have the following:

*I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom. Matthew 16:28*

*And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power." Mark 09:01*

*I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."* Luke 09:27

*At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death."* John 08:52

The difference in usage is simple. one can take a sip of wine from a wine vessel. One can take a sample of a meal. One can not taste a "little bit of death". To do so is like being "a little bit pregnant"!

The passage goes beyond this. He suffered the agony of death for everyone. Does this mean that everyone is saved? *In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.* Note that it says that by tasting death He brought many sons to glory - not everyone.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.* John 03:16-18

Note the three whoevers in the above passage. However, there is only one whoever in the Greek passage and the word is **pas** which means (in this context) everyone. As far as Christ is concerned, He died for everyone. It is up to man whether he or she wishes to be part of the "everyone" that Christ died for.

## II. The Extent of Christ's Death

This also is a subject about which there is much difference of opinion. Did Christ die for the whole world, or only for the elect? If for the whole world, then why are not all saved? And if for the whole world, in what sense? If for the elect only, then what about the justice of God? The answer to these questions is bound up with one's conception of the order of the decrees. Those who take the Supralapsarian view naturally hold that Christ died only for the elect; those who hold Sublapsarian view hold that Christ died, at least in some sense, also for the whole world. It is said that Calvin,

While in his early work, the *Institutes*, avoided a definite statement of his position with regard to the extent of the atonement, yet in his latter works, the *Commentaries*, acceded to the theory of universal atonement. Supralapsarianism is therefore hyper-Calvinistic, rather than Calvinistic. Strong, Op, cit., 777.

1. Christ Died For the Elect, The Scriptures teach that Christ died primarily for the elect. "For to this end we labor and strive because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men especially of them that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10); "even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28); "I pray for them; I pray not for the world,

but for them whom thou hast given me; for they are thine" (John 17:9); "who saved us with a holy calling; not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. 1:9); "even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25); "whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetimes (Rom. 3:25)...

2: Christ Died for the Whole World. The Scriptures also teach that Christ died for the whole world ... and "behold the lamb that taketh away the sin of the whole world" (John 1:29); "who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6); for the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Tit. 2:10); ... "but is long suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9); "that by the Grace of God he should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9) ...

Lectures in Systematic Theology, Thiessen

Obviously, there are two schools of thought. Which is correct (since only one can be)? In a very real sense it is a pointless argument. Consider the following:

Case 1: Christ died for the whole world - but this is only effective for those who receive him.

Case 2: Christ died for those who would and do receive him.

The net result is the same. It is one of the operatives of God that is beyond human comprehension. The problem is no easier to solve than the distinction between freewill and election. I, however, believe that Christ's work on the cross was for all men. Those who receive Him partake of the salvation thus provided. Those who reject Him partake in the judgement to come for not having availed themselves of this grace.

You see, the difference is not for the Christian, it is for the unbeliever!

*Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. For the believer there is an incredible relationship formed. We are brother of Christ. Since He became a man like us, we become like Him and become brothers with Him in the family of God.*

*He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."*

The incredible fact of our relationship with Christ is not new. It was spoken of in the O.T. and so the O.T. is quoted to show this.

*I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.* Psalm 22:22

*I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.* Isaiah 08:17-18

Under the Mosaic Covenant, man was alienated from God. Man could not even come

into God's presence. There was a mediator, the priest, who mediated between God and man. But now, we are brothers of Christ! that makes us the sons of God.

Before we leave this concept, we need to understand the difference between being a son today and a son and in the Biblical sense.

*because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

Romans 8:14-21

In this passage we find two Greek words, **Huios** and **tekno**. The first is translated sons (in the NIV above, double underscored), the second is translated as children (single underscored above). In Hebrew culture, you became a child the day you were born, not surprisingly. On the other hand, you are not a son until you obtained the age of thirteen. (Daughters, as such, do not enter into this discussion).

A child was not a legal heir in a household, only the sons were. now, of course, if you lived until the age of thirteen and your father didn't die in the meantime, one might say you were an heir apparent (i.e. you would eventually become a true heir). If you read the above passage in this light, the passage makes more sense.

Before you can become a son you must become a child. Since we are god's children, we than have the ability to become God's sons. And this is what the author of Hebrews is telling us. We are not just people whom God created (children) but we are part of God's legal family (sons) and therefore receive the benefits of this relationship.

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but A b r a h a m ' s descendants. For this reason he had to be*

*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he*

*Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless he who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but*

*made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

*took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

*He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things that He might become a merciful and high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.*

Hebrews 02:14-18

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. Now here is the term children to which we just referred. In order to become the Son of Man, Christ had first to become a child. He first became a child and then the Son of Man. We could never defeat Satan and the hold he has on us. As such, we might have been children of God but not sons. It was necessary that Christ become our brother so that we could become His brothers. He had to become a child like us, so that we could become the Sons of God like Him.*

*For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. The author emphasizes this fact by saying that Christ had to be made like us "in every way". Let us consider the terms here carefully.*

For this reason is the beginning of this verse. The KJV has Wherefore but this is not the translation of the Greek word which is usually translated thusly. A modern term for the word used here, **hothen**, might be "it then follows that..." It is a word that describes motion. This is followed by the verb **opheilo** which means to owe or to be in debt. Hence...

*"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.*

Matthew 23:16-18

*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. Romans 13:08*

Now Christ did not owe us anything. But there was the Law which demanded its

fulfillment and if Christ were to fulfill it for us, he "owed" it to the law, or, in other words, he was bound to fulfill it. But note that it goes further with the phrase in every way. Christ went all the way. We have already noted that in Philipians.

By doing this He became two things:

a merciful high priest

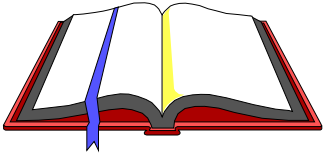
a faithful high priest

Both are necessary. If he were merely faithful, he would not be able to sympathize with us. If he were merely merciful, he might let his mercy take precedence over being faithful. But Christ is both. Why? *Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.* We have already noted that He became like us in all ways which means that he suffered the same feelings that we suffer. He knows how we feel.

Of course, we know that God is omniscient - He knows everything. Christ did not have to become man to "know how we feel", but there are two points to note here. First, it is one thing to know in your mind, another to actually experience something. It is a well known fact that it is hard for one person to comfort another in a particular circumstance unless he or she has had the same experience previously - so that there is a first hand knowledge of the feelings. Second, it proves to us that Christ knows how we feel and therefore can be merciful to us.



# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER THREE

In Chapter One we had Christ presented as better than the angels - as God. In chapter Two we had him presented as the Son of Man, as our brother. Christ was both god and Man.

Therefore...we start chapter three at this point.

*Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.*

*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*

*Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.*

Hebrews 03:01

Chapter Three begins with therefore. Because of what we have learned thus far, we are instructed to do something. *We - holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling* - There are two types of brothers mentioned in the Scriptures.

*In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus"* Acts 1:15-16

In the above passage, Peter was addressing his brothers. His brothers were all Jews - that's why they were brothers. But here the term is holy brothers which is different. The difference is the same as the difference between the Jews being of the physical seed of Abraham while Christians are of the Spiritual seed of Abraham. The therefore is thus addressed to you and I who are the spiritual brothers of Christ.

The instructions are to *fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess*. To fix your thoughts is from the Greek **katanoeo** which is an intensified form of the verb to set your mind to, to pay attention to. Therefore the concept is that we are to pay strict attention to Jesus or, as the NIV has it we are to keep our thoughts fixed on Jesus.

But here Jesus is given a title we are not used to. Apostle? We have been told that the Biblical definition of an apostle was one who had actually seen Jesus and been disciplined by Him. This is true, but the term itself simply describes one who has been sent on a mission. Jesus came to fulfill a mission, to make us his brothers and hence is the apostle of our salvation.

But Jesus also accomplished another task, that of becoming our high priest. As our high priest, He not only secured our salvation but provides us access to God.

### Jesus and Moses

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*He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*

*Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

*He was faithful to Him to appointed Him, as Moses was also in all his house. For He was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.*

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Hebrews 03:02-06

*He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. At this point we take up yet another comparison. Jesus is now compared with Moses.*

*The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey--the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."*

Exodus 03:07-10

Moses was appointed as a apostle to go to Pharaoh and seek the release of his

"house", that is, the Jews. Moses served God faithfully in this capacity, leading the people out of Egypt, delivering the Law to them, and leading them in the wilderness.

Jesus, likewise, is faithful in His house. But what is His house? Let us skip ahead for a moment to verse six. *And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.* We, as Christians, as part of God's family, make up Jesus's house. Both Jesus and Moses represent faithful persons in their houses. But there is a considerable difference as well.

*And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over. Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses.*  
Deuteronomy 34:05-09

One important difference is that Moses died. The command had to be turned over to another, to Joshua. This in itself is interesting in that Joshua is not only a type of Jesus in the O.T. but the name itself is the Hebrew form of the name Jesus. Then, also, we have...

*Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the Lord and where he showed himself holy among them.*  
Numbers 20:11-13

Moses was a great servant of God in the House of Israel, but he was not perfect. On this one occasion, he sinned against God and as a result was not allowed to enter the promised land. Think of it! One small slip and it was all over for Moses. But that is the Old Covenant. The passage goes on.

*Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.* Moses was simply a servant in the House of Israel. He had nothing to do with its creation. While he was a great leader, he was still just a servant of God who did build the house. On the other hand, the spiritual House of which we are a part was built by Christ. We speak of the Church as being the "Bride of Christ" (Ephesians 5) but it is also Christ's creation.

*For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.* God is the builder of the House of Israel. God is the builder of the house of which we are a part. But we just said that Christ was. But Christ is God!

What is the significance of this? Moses could do no more nor no less than what God commanded him to do. We have already seen that just one small slip and Moses was done for. That's because he was simply a servant in the house. But since Christ is the builder of the house, He has control over all. And we, as Christ's brothers, dwell with

Him in this house. *But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house.* Christ is not only the creator but the Son of the household and we his brothers.

But heed the warning affixed to this. *And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.* The author says if we lay hold on our... . The word is **katecho** and means to reach out and grasp for. We find this in the following.

*"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.'*

Matthew 21:38

The KJV has "let us seize on". The tenants saw something they wanted very much and reached out and grabbed hold of it.

*Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.*

Acts 27:40

When the seamen saw their opportunity, they let loose of everything and made for the beach. Spiritually speaking,

*Test everything. Hold on to the good.*

1 Thessalonians 05:21

We are told hold fast to the very best, our salvation! We are to hold onto, specifically, our courage and our hope. The KJV has "confidence" rather than "courage". The word is **parresia** and refers to boldness of speech. One has to have both courage and confidence to speak out for Jesus Christ. We need to do more than just speak up. The other term that goes with this is boast. (The KJV has "rejoicing"). Consider the related verb, **kauchaomai**, which is found in the following.

*Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God;*

Romans 02:17

*He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."*

1 Corinthians 01:28-31

We are not to boast about ourselves. But we are to have the courage to speak out, to boast about the hope that we have in Christ. The opposite of these actions is taken up in the next passage in which the teaching comes from the O.T.

### The Hardening of Hearts - Old Testament Style

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*So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of*

*Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in*

*Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the*

*testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*

*the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, 'They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, 'They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

*days of the wilderness, where your fathers tried me by testing me, and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they do not know my ways; As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" Take care brethren, lest there should be in you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.*

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Hebrews 03:07-12

This entire passage, except for the first part of verse seven, comes from the Old Testament, specifically, from Psalm 95.

*for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways." So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest." Psalm 95:07-11*

The reference is to the event at Meribah. We have once referred to this passage already. Let us review it in its entirety.

*In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. They quarreled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord! Why did you bring the Lord's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!" Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them. The Lord said to Moses, "Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink." So*

*Moses took the staff from the Lord's presence, just as he commanded him. He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the Lord and where he showed himself holy among them.*

Numbers 20:01-13

What did the children of Israel do wrong? We all must have water and they had none. But the proper action is to ask the Lord for it, not to complain that you wished you had never been sacred (in their case, from Egypt). They did not come to Moses and request that he bring the need before God, they rebelled. They rebelled so bad that it made Moses angry - so angry that he struck the rock twice. We have already considered the rest of the story.

Why did this make the Lord so angry? Had not the people complained before?

*That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert!"*

Numbers 14:01-02

*The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed the Lord's people," they said.*

Numbers 16:41

There is no record that they grumbled after this. By why this particular case? Because one of the Lord's choicest servants was caused to fall on account of it! How many preachers today have become victims of a rebellious congregation? Why is it that so few men seek the ministry today? No wonder the Lord was so angry.

The advice to us is the same, not to grumble. *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.* What is the opposite of this? If we are not to grumble, what are we to do?

### The Encouraging of Hearts - New Testament Style

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*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.*

*But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;*

*But encourage one another, as long as it is still called "today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end;*

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 Hebrews 03:13-14

The contrast is encourage. The KJV has exhort which does not really convey the meaning of the Greek. The Greek is **parakaleo**, from which we get "parakelte" or "comforter" (i.e. the Holy Spirit). We find the verb many places in the N.T. Just to list a few we have the following two sets.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.*  
2 Corinthians 01:03-06

*I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.*  
Colossians 04:08

In the above passages it is translated comfort (or encourage). When it is used in a more active sense, we have the following.

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.*  
Romans 12:01

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*  
Ephesians 04:01

*I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.*  
Philippians 04:02

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--*  
2 Timothy 02:01

The differences in the usage if the word is simple. If a brother in doing that which is correct, we should encourage him or her in it. If they are doing what is wrong or not doing what is right, we should plead with them to correct their ways. In either case it is to be with love and compassion.

*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today.* Note another term in this phrase, daily and the phrase as long as it is called Today. For most of us, encouragement and exhortation do not last long. Therefore it is necessary that we encourage one another each day - not just once in a while. Furthermore, we are not to assume a "mañana" attitude and wait until "tomorrow" to encourage a brother or sister that needs we. We need to do it Today. Why the hurry? *So that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.* Let a brother or sister in the Lord go very long

without the encouragement and exhortation and it will be too late! It does not take very long for some Christians to have their hearts hardened beyond encouragement. It is like the potter who must fashion his clay into the proper form before it hardens and becomes useless.

*We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.* We are again reminded that we share with Christ. The Greek is **metochos**, which literally means "to have together with". We have already noted that we are God's sons and, as such, Christ's brothers (and sisters). But we are to hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at first. This sort of reminds us of Revelation two.

*"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands:... You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place." Revelation 02:01,03-05*

### Warning Regarding Lack of Response

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*As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

*While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

*While it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me. For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they should not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.*

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Hebrews 03:15-19

The chapter ends with a warning. *As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."* Paul, in writing to Corinth, said,

*For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our*



*forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.* Hebrews 10:01-06,11

We have been warned not to act the way the Sons of Israel did in the wilderness, during their time of rebellion. The verb is **parapikraino** and has an interesting parallel here (neither the verb nor the noun is used in the N.T. other than in this chapter). Take off the prefix (para) and you have the Greek verb to embitter. Hence we have...

*For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."*

Acts 08:23

*Can both fresh water and bitter\* water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.* James 03:11-14

\* The NAS has "salt here.

The word here has the prefix **para** in front of it, the same as was use of encouragement above. The prefix means to come along side of someone (or something). We may come to another's side to bring them encouragement or we may come to their side to bring them bitterness. It is up to you. But the warning is not to be rebellious as the Sons of Israel were. The warning is that by so doing this you will harden your own heart.

This is an interesting point. The verb is **skleruno** and means to stiffen. We talk of alcoholics today with "scoliosis of the liver" - having a stiff liver. The N.T. talks about some interesting people...

*"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.*

Matthew 25:24

*"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied.*

Mark 10:05

*"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!*

Acts 07:51

In the first verse, the word stiffen is used by itself. It describes a man who is "hard all over". The second verse uses the Greek word **sklerokardia**, which is hard or stiff hearted. The last verse uses **sklerotrachelos** = stiff necked.

Have you ever consider that if you put a lump of wax and a lump of clay out in the hot sun, the wax will melt and the clay will harden. It just depends on the material. It is the same with us. If we practice encouragement and helping others, we will become softhearted. If we are quarrels and complainers, we will become hardhearted.

*Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? What is this question here for? You see, some people may claim that they have something to complain about. But in this case, the Sons of Israel had all be led out of bondage in Egypt. You might say that they had experienced God's salvation. We are not talking about the nominal "Christian" who comes to church once in a while, we are talking about those who have really experienced Christ.*

*And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? Now we are referring to the same group of people. Because they rebelled, God was angry with them. But this verse adds an explanation, rebellion is sin! These people sinned and therefore God left them to die in the wilderness.*

*And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. We close with an interesting phrase, one which we shall see a lot more of. The Sons of Israel did not enter God's rest. Rest comes from **katapausis**. This noun and the related verb are found 13 times in the N.T., 11 times in Hebrews. They are also to be found in the O.T.*

*By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.* Genesis 02:02

God set the example, when His work was completed, he rested. It is supposed to be the same with us. It was supposed to be the same with the Sons of Israel. The Lord made these promises.

*The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* Exodus 33:14

*But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety.* Deuteronomy 12:10

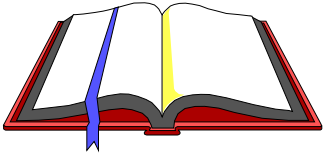
*"Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: 'The Lord your God is giving you rest and has granted you this land.' Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, fully armed, must cross over ahead of your brothers. You are to help your brothers until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land that the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sun."* Joshua 01:13-15

But these people never entered into that rest. Have you entered into this rest? The real rest that we are referring to is when we get to heaven. We are saved, just as the Sons of Israel were saved from Egypt. They wandered all their lives in a land that was

not their own. We live our lives in a world that is not our own. We look forward to the rest that God has promised us when He takes us home to be with him.

What is it that might prevent our eventual rest. The Scriptures says that there is one thing that will prevent it - unbelief. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ - really? If your faith is not real, you will never enter the rest just as they did not enter it.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER FOUR

In chapter three we saw the example of Moses and the Sons of Israel in the wilderness. Because of their unbelief, none of them ever entered into God's rest. In their case - into the land of Canaan. So we begin this chapter with a warning.

### The Warning to be careful!

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*Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.*

*Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

*Therefore let us fear lest while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard.*

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Hebrews 04:01-02

*Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.* God's promise still stands. All of God's promises still stand. The NIV has be careful but the other two translations have let us fear. The word is **phobo** which we find many times in the English - agoraphobia (fear of crowded places), acrophobia (fear of high places) etc. Now we have all read the verse in Timothy,

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.* 2 Timothy 01:07

where the KJV has that God did not give us a spirit of fear. But the words are not the same, hence timidity in the NIV. There are some things which we are not to fear -

*Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.* Matthew 10:28

*Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.* Acts 10:34-35

*"Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.* Acts 13:26

*Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.* Colossians 03:22

*Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.* 1 Peter 02:17

Now the text does not indicate that we reach God's rest or we don't try. It warns that we may fall short of it. The verb **hustereo** means to be behind, in the sense of being late, hence to be left behind, and hence to miss out.

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* Romans 03:23

*I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even though I am nothing.* 2 Corinthians 12:11

*I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.* Philippians 04:12

In other words, it is not a matter of striving to obtain God's rest or not striving. It is a matter of striving sufficiently hard to make it. You may try very hard but not hard enough and hence fall short.

*For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.* What did the Sons of Israel do that they failed to enter God's rest? Were they short in their tithing? Were they short in their service? Were they short in sharing their faith with others? These may all be symptoms, but the Scripture tells us that what they were lacking in was faith.

Specifically, it says that they did not combine it with faith. The word is **sunkerannumi** and is found in only one other place in the N.T.

*while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it,* 1 Corinthians 12:24

This word has a distinction in it that we often make in Chemistry. You can mix water and oil in a flask and what you end up with is a mixture of water and oil. But you can mix sodium hydroxide and hydrochloric acid together and you end up with something altogether different - water and salt. The word used here denotes the mixing of several ingredients together to make a new substance.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* 2 Corinthians 05:17

What happens when you attempt to make your favorite recipe and you leave out a major ingredient? You end up with something other than what you wanted. You leave faith out of Christianity and you do not end up with the new creation Paul refers to and, as such, you fall short of God's rest.

### Those Who Have Entered the Rest

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*Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."*

*For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.*

*For we who have believed have entered that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest." although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works" and again in this passage "They shall not enter my rest."*

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### Hebrews 04:03-05

*Now we who have believed enter that rest.* If this passage ended here it would be great. It says that you and I, all of us who have trusted in the saving work of Jesus Christ, have entered into God's rest. The problem is (a) have we really entered into it, and (b) what is the rest of the passage speaking about?

Certainly, when we go to heaven to be with the Lord we will be in His rest. Are we today? We are supposed to be. In the beginning of Genesis we have it said,

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the*

*seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.* Genesis 01:27-02:03

God had completed the creation and "it was very good". Because of this, God was finished with His work so He "rested from all His work." But then, a little later in Genesis, Adam and Eve messed the whole thing up and God's work was no longer "very good". Thus, God is not at rest today! God and all His heavenly hosts are very busy watching over His saints.

Are you at rest. Have you entered God's rest? You see, when we receive Christ as Savior, we are supposed to allow the Holy spirit to fully indwell in us. We need to strive no longer. We are to rest and let God work through us. When we speak of God's rest, we don't mean that we are to sit around the patio and sip lemonade. It means that we are to stop trying to work things out for ourselves and allow God to work through us.

*Just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" God did not allow the sons of Israel to enter into His rest because they did not follow this principal. Because they refused to accept what God graciously offered, His anger was aroused and He decreed that they would never enter in.*

*And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. We said God was not at rest anymore because of sin. But this passage says His work is finished! What's wrong? For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." God's word with respect to creation, salvation, and the various decrees is finished and God rests from these. But He still have four works to perform:*

- (1) Work in the hearts of the elect to effect their salvation.
- (2) Work in the hearts of the elect to rest in His rest.
- (3) Judge those who did not receive Him.
- (4) Award those who did receive Him.

*And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." Some will never enter His rest because they never enter into His salvation and these will be taken care of in item (4) above. But some, who are saved (or, at least, think they are) will also never enter His rest but trust in themselves.*

*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Ephesians 02:06-09

We have absolutely nothing to do with respect to work in our salvation. We have nothing to do now - except to allow God to do His work through us.

When is the Right Time to Enter?

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*It still remains that some*

*Seeing therefore it*

*Since therefore it*

*will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.*

*remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.*

*remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as it has been said before, "Today if you hear his voice, Do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.*

Hebrews 04:06-08

God, through the ages, gave people a chance to enter into his rest.

*But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety.* Deuteronomy 12:10

The Sons of Israel were supposed to have rest when they entered the promised land. Why did they not have rest? Look at the following promise!

*This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites.* Joshua 03:10

One all these "parasites" were driven out, they would have had rest. And it was God that was going to drive them out! What happened? Consider the following passages.

*But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maacah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.* Joshua 13:13

*However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely* Joshua 17:13

The Israelites did not drive out all of these people. Why not? Was not God supposed to do it?

*"The Lord has driven out before you great and powerful nations; to this day no one has been able to withstand you. One of you routs a thousand, because the Lord your God fights for you, just as he promised. So be very careful to love the Lord your God. "But if you turn away and ally*



*yourself with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you.* Joshua 23:09-13

Here is the answer. It is as we have been saying all along. There is much work to be done through us just as the Israelites were able to rout out these "parasites". But it was not they themselves that did it, it was the Lord working through them!

Yet, in spite of the promises that the Lord gave them, we note that they never did drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. They, to this day, have never driven them all out! They will not until the Lord returns!

*Those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.* This is what we have just noted. The Israelites were disobedient to God's commands.

*Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.* God is merciful and gives us more than one chance (collectively speaking). When Israel entered the land of Canaan, they were disobedient and did not enter God's rest. So God set aside another day and called it "Today". "Set aside" is from **horizo** which we find in passages such as those below.

*From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.* Acts 17:26

*For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."* Acts 17:31

God has set aside a specific time for my response and your response. What day is this? Has it already passed? Is it yet future? God does not say! You see, your day may not be the same day as my day. The day is the day when God calls to you and says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Let's Enter this Rest!

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*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that*

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into*

*There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that*

*rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

*that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

*rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

#### Hebrews 04:09-13

*There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.* The author continues with the theme of God's rest - but here it is amplified, a sabbath rest. The word "sabbath" is a transliteration of the Hebrew word **shabbath** which is derived from the verb **shavvath** which is found in the following:

*By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.* Genesis 02:02-03

so, when we speak of a sabbath rest we are literally speaking of a "rest rest" since that is what the word means. The noun is universally transliterated as sabbath. To be honest, the Greek text does not say a "sabbath rest", it simply is the Greek word **sabbatismos**. The important point is that this is a different word than the word we have been using for rest (the only place in the N.T. where this word is found).

Why does the author use this different word? Note that the text says that there remains this sabbath rest. The Greek word is **apoleipo** and is found in few places in the N.T.

*When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. . . Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.* 2 Timothy 4:13,20

*And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.* Jude 01:06

In these verses the word means to be left behind. But here in Hebrews it is in the passive voice and it means that this special sabbath rest has not yet been claimed.

*Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.* The Sons of Israel did not enter this rest under Moses. They did not enter it under Joshua. They did not enter it under David. They have never entered it. But we have it offered to us - you and me! But note the words *make every effort!* The word is **spoudazo** and means what it says here, make every effort!

*But, brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.* 1 Thessalonians 02:17

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.* 2 Timothy 02:15

*Do your best to come to me quickly, . . . Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers.* 2 Timothy 04:9,21

*As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there.* Titus 03:12

There, we have most of the N.T. references to this word and in each case there is an urgency connected with the request. Included in the meaning of this word is not only the idea of necessity but of urgency and speed.

What is the urgency? If you fail, you will not only fail to enter into the promised rest, but you, as an example to others, may prevent them from entering as well! But how can we be sure that we understand the way? How do we know if we are doing the right thing? How can we be sure that we are not being disobedient? The answer is found in the next verse - a very profound verse.

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

The verse deals with the word of God. Now is this word Christ or is it the written word? Looking at the context, it has to refer to His written word. It is claimed that the Bible, then, is:

- a) living and active
- b) sharper than a two-edged sword
- c) able to penetrate and divide some very closely attached items.

This list sort of reminds us of Superman - (a) faster than a speeding bullet, (b) more powerful than a locomotive, and (c) able to leap tall buildings with a single bound. But this is not strange, the Bible is a Superbook!

First, it is claimed that the Bible is living and active. We need not explain the word living. Something that is living constantly takes on different rolls as the need arises. The Bible, as a living book, has something fresh for each of us each day. We can take

other books and memorize them and, from that time on, there is no change. They still tell us the same old thing that they first told us.

The Bible is alive. When we have a need, we can find within its covers something we never saw before, something that fills our need. But the text says it is active. We know of some people who are alive but that is about all you can say for them, they are not very active. The Bible is active. the Greek word is **energōs**, the word from which we get energize or energetic.

In other words, the Bible supplies us with power. We said it is alive and, as such, it supplies us with power, with energy.

Now the KJV says it is quick and powerful. It may just be that the Bible is "quick" but "quick" here is an old English word for living.

Then we are told that the Bible is sharper than any two-edged sword. note that the text does not just say it is sharper than any sword. It is specific, a two-edged sword.

*And again the Israelites cried out to the Lord, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a foot and a half long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. . . Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. Even the handle sank in after the blade, which came out his back. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed over it.* Judges 03:15-17,21-22

*For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. Let the saints rejoice in this honor and sing for joy on their beds. May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them. This is the glory of all his saints. Praise the Lord.* Psalm 149:04-09

*For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.* Proverbs 05:03-05

*In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.* Revelation 01:16

Most swords we see today have single edges. When two people fence with sabers (usually they use foils so they don't hurt each other), if they swing and miss, they have to swing again since the sword has only one edge. But with a double-edged sword you can inflict a serious wound from any direction. In fact, as seen above, the most common practice was to insert the sword straight in!

In spite of the keenness of the double-edged sword, the Bible is sharper. It is not to be reckoned with lightly. How sharp is it? Look at the things that it can divide. (a) soul and spirit, (b) joints and marrow. Neither the Greek word for joints nor the word for marrow

is found elsewhere in the N.T. We do find the following in the O.T.

*One man dies in full vigor, completely secure and at ease, his body well nourished, his bones rich with marrow.* Job 21:23-24

We assume that the word joints refers to the joints in our skeleton and hence this "sword" can divide the marrow from the bones which contain it - a rather stunning feat! Then there is the division of soul and spirit. Now we believe that all animal life has a soul - that is what gives it its personality. Only man has a spirit. But can you tell the difference between what is your soul and what is your spirit? I can't!

The Bible can do this as well. That is why *it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*. How can we enter God's rest without going astray? We need a well marked road map. God has given this in His Word.

*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* Everything in God's creation is described here. It is described in three ways: (1) not hidden, (b) uncovered, and (c) laid bare before His eyes.

Not hidden is from **aphanos**, the alpha means not and the rest of the verb is a common one that means to make manifest or to make known. One of God's attributes is that He is omniscient = all knowing. He knows everything that there is to know (He would do well on a quiz show like Jeopardy!).

Uncovered comes from **gumnos** which is found in the O.T. in the following way.

*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Genesis 03:06-10*

All the fig leaves in the world can not hid us from God's eyes. In His eyes we are stark naked - bare. God now only knows all things, but He can also see all things.

Laid Bare comes from **tetrachelismena** (if you can pronounce it). The Verb is found only here in the Bible. The related noun is found in verses like...

*But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

Matthew 18:06

*Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?*

Acts 15:10

The word refers to the neck and the verb means to bend the neck. The exact meaning or origin of the metaphore is not really known but probably refers to the practice of taking one by the hand and bending it back to expose the neck, the chest, and the underside of a person. The verb is in the perfect tense which means that God has already done the "bending" and he leaves us in this position so that He may continue to monitor us. You might say, to put this in modern idiom, He causes us to bare our chests! to Him.

Putting these together, we have a very comprehensive statement that there is nothing we can do or think that God does not know about. This goes along with the last verse in which the claim is made that God's Word is alive and can discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. God knows us, He sees us, and has provided His word for use to direct us away from what we think and do that is wrong and toward what is right.

The verse closes with the need for all this - *we must give account*. We have no excuse. God has given us His Word to go by. He observes our works. If we fail, it is not because He has not told us what to do. It is not because He has made a mistake and thought we did something different. We have no one to hold accountable except ourselves.

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*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who was tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may find grace to help in the time of need.*

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#### Hebrews 04:14-16

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*

Returning to the idea of Jesus as our High Priest, we are encouraged again to hold firmly to what we profess. Profess comes from **homologias** which means, literally, to same the same thing. Have you ever watch a swearing-in ceremony, or a wedding where the one who officiates dictates a phrase or sentence and then the person being sworn in repeats this - says the same thing? That's there origin of this word. God does

not ask us to hold fast to the "confession" that Jesus and Allah are equal! God never said that and He has never asked us to profess that. But we do have God's Word and we are to have studies that Word and to have professed that. Noe it says we are to hold fast to this profession.

*For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.* Hitler was an absolute ruler - people had to do as he dictated or else! Christ is also an absolute ruler - there is no other way to heaven except through Christ. But there is a significant difference between the two. Hitler (it appears) had no feeling. He didn't care about people he killed and tortured. He did not care at all about their souls or the problems they might have had. But Christ has experienced everything that we have experienced. To this is added the phrase *yet was without sin*. Jesus provided us with two things.

First, and foremost, He was sinless so that He could be our sin-bearer. But He was not sinless because He was not tempted, but because he was God. As God he can judge us with righteousness. But he can also judge us with compassion.

*Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."* Matthew 15:32

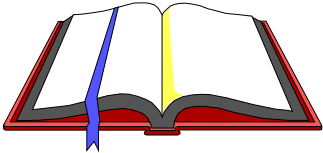
*When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.* Mark 06:34

*"I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat.* Mark 08:02

The N.T. is full of references to Jesus' having compassion for men and acting accordingly. And of course, His greatest compassion was for our need of salvation and His need to die on the cross to provide that!

*Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.* If Christ has done all this for us, do you suppose He will not do "little" things for us as well? The admonition is to approach God's throne with confidence. The KHV has boldly. Is there a difference? The Greek word means to approach openly, freely, and with confidence. Put all of these together and you have boldness!. We close with this invitation to ask God for help in any time of need. not just for the big times of need, but for the little times as well.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Imperfect High Priest

We have seen mention of Jesus as our high-priest in several places in this book so far - 2:17, 3:1, 4:14-15. We shall find about 11 more such references in this book. But we begin this chapter with another type of high-priest, the imperfect high-priest.

*Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was.*

*For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*

*For every high priest taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God in order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself is beset with weakness; and because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people, so also for himself. And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.*

Hebrews 05:01-04

*Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.* What is different about the high priest mention here and Jesus Christ? Here we are told that the high priest is select from among men. But Jesus Christ became man so that He could be our high priest. The text says that the high priest is (a) selected and (b) appointed. Who does the selecting? Consider the following two passages, the only we could find that had to do with this process.

*I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the Tent of Meeting.*

Numbers 18:06

God chose the Levites to be the priestly tribe and certain Levites to be the priests and



a specific Levite to be the high priest. But then,

*Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places.* 1 Kings 13:33

When God did the choosing, things were right. But it was not always God who chose. In this case Jeroboam chose anyone who wanted the job to be priests, we assume some of these were high priests.

Once selected, the person is then appointed to serve as high priest. During Jesus' walk upon the Earth, several high priests were mentioned.

*...during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.* Luke 03:02

*Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas,* Matthew 26:03

*Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all!"* John 11:49

*At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?" Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'"* Acts 23:02,04-05

We find three men mentioned (two at the same time in one reference), Annas and Caiaphas and Ananias. We also find notice that these men apparently served as high priest for one year. Finally, we note Paul's opinion of the high priests!

*He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.* We are told that the high priest, being a man himself, can deal gently with the ignorant and those who are going astray. The Greek word for ignorant, here, is **agnoeo** from which we get the theological term agnostic = not knowing. We are not to take the term ignorant as a belittling term. It simply refers to those who are not aware of some of the things they should know about God.

The second term going astray, likewise is not a belittling term. It is also translated to be deceived.

*He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them."* Luke 21:08

If you do not know what God expects, it is easy to be deceived and to be led astray. But the high priest is able to deal with these people gently. Or is he? Gently is from **metriopatheo** and is used only here in the N.T. and apparently refers to moderation of one's passions. In other words, it does not refer to one who flies off the handle in a fit of rage and neither does it apply to one who has the emotions of a dead fish!

So far, this description could apply to Christ as our high priest, but let us go on! . . .

since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. Now we see why we are talking about the imperfect high priest. This priest is subject to weakness. The word subject here is rather interesting to look into. It is **erikeimai** and is also found in these verses.

*It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin.* Luke 17:02

*For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."* Acts 28:20

The word really means to be total under the control of something - hence subject to it. The human high priests were no better than the people they ministered to and, in fact, had to offer sacrifices for themselves just as they did for others. This is not so when we come to Christ our high priest.

*No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was.* A Jew did not volunteer to be a high priest anymore than someone can walk into the White House and say "I'd like to be president this year!" The high priest had to be called by God. But let's look at a better high priest.

### The Better Priest

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*So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."*

*So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

*So also Christ did not glorify himself so as to become a high priest, but he who said to him, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee," just as he says in another passage, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."*

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Hebrews 05:05-06

*So Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." Even Jesus Christ was appointed to this office - appointed by God. But the text goes even further. And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." God appointed Jesus as high priest, but not like the high priests we have been talking about. Jesus is a high priest after the style of Melchizedek. Who was that? We shall have occasion to look at this man more later, but for now let us consider where he is to be found.*

*After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he*

*blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.* Genesis 14:17-20

This is the only place outside of the book of Hebrews that this man is mentioned except for one quotation,

*The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."* Psalm 110:04

There are several things we can learn about this man. We are told two things about him, his name, which means King of Righteousness and who he was, the King of Peace. This sounds a bit like God himself. For example, we have:

*See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice.* Isaiah 32:01

*"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land."* Jeremiah 23:05

*Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.* Zechariah 09:09

### Christ's Roll as a Priest ad the Order of Melchizedek

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*During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

*Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

*In the days of His flesh, He offered up both p r a y e r s   a n d supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety. although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to t h e   o r d e r   o f Melchizedek.*

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## Hebrews 05:07-10

In this passage Christ's priesthood is described further with, again, the concluding remark *in the order of Melchizedek*.

Are You a Christian Dullard?

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*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

*Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

*Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for some one to teach you the elementary principles of God and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*

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Hebrews 05:11-14

At this point the author of this epistle puts his pen down and considers what more he has to say. Then he considers the people to whom he is writing. He then comes to the conclusion that if he continues to write on using the theme he has begun - the Melchizedek priesthood - his audience is not going to understand him. But God's word must be understandable. Thus from this point on until the end of chapter six, we have a parenthetical section of this book in which we are admonished to hone our Biblical skills so that we might understand the Bible and, especially, the message to follow.

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.* (NIV) or *Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.* (NAS). We would call your attention to the verb in this phrase as evidenced in the NAS translation. It is **gegonate**, which means, as translated above to become. The verb is in the perfect tense - meaning that the readers have long ago became that way with the present result that they are still that way. What way? At this point we need to consider three Greek words which might have been used here. The

first is **argos** which is found in:

*"About the third hour he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing.* Matthew 20:3

*Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.*

1 Timothy 05:13

*Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."* Titus 01:12

*For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Peter 01:08

This word means idle, not doing anything and would not be the proper word to be used. The second word is **bradus** and means to be slow in contrast the to previous word which meant to be idle (i.e. not moving at all). We find this word several times in the N.T.

*He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"* Luke 25:25

*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,* James 01:19

The word simply means slow and has no good or bad connotations, as seen above where it is used in a bad sense in the first verse and in a good sense in the later. It simply means slow.

The word which is used here in Hebrews is **nothros** and is found only here and in the next chapter. It is also found twice in the O.T (LXX).

*It is fit that an observant man and one diligent in his business should attend on kings and not attend on slothful men.* Proverbs 22:29 LXX

*The mouth of an understanding man is praised by man; but he that is dull in heart is had in derision.* Proverbs 12:08 LXX

Unlike the previous word which has not bad connotation, this word is used to describe one who is slow simply because he is lazy. Multon & Milligan show evidence that the word is akin to the Greek word **nosos** which is translated sickness.

*When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.* Luke 04:40

*so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.* Acts 19:12

And we might take the word in this passage to refer to a mental "illness: which causes one to be sluggish. By this, we mean a mental attitude and that not correct and hence causes one to be sluggish.

Now, let's put this together. The author begins with *we have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because...* He would like to go on with the subject he has been covering but there is a very serious problem here. *It is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.* We can not proceed in the study until we do something about this dullness. We have become experts in the subject of Dullness of Hearing! We can sit through TV commercial after commercial without hearing a word the pitchman is saying. We can simply turn our ears off and go on about what we were doing.

It is unfortunate that we have also developed the same proficiency when it comes to the Word of God. Recall that the verb is become. We were not always dull of hearing. When we were first saved the word was *living and active, Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetratrated even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judged the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts.* But that was when we were new Christians and we were hungry for the word - we had never heard it before.

But the Word of God is not new to us anymore. We are, therefore, able to sit through entire sermons and not really hear a thing! We are able to study entire chapters in the Bible and not see a thing! We have all become dull of hearing - some more dull than others. The fact that you are involved in this Bible study would indicate that you have not become as dull as many others, but the fact remains we have all become dull.

Because we have become dull of hearing, the writer is going to find it *hard to explain*. The word here is also hard to explain - **dusermeneutos**. This is the only place it is found in the Bible. We will start with another word - **hermeneuo**, the word from which we get the English word hermeneutic which the dictionary says is concerned with interpretation and explanation. This word is found in a number of places in the N.T. The verb is found in:

*Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"* John 01:38

*"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.* John 09:07

and then one of the things which is hard to explain...

*...and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace."* Hebrews 07:02

Then the noun,

*What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.* 1 Corinthians 14:26

which continues with

*If anyone speaks in a tongue, two--or at the most three--should speak,*

*one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and God.*

1 Corinthians 14:27-28

and finally we have

*...to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.* 1 Corinthians 12:10

The prefix that is attached to the word here, **dus**, according to Thayer is an *inseparable prefix conveying the idea of difficulty, opposition, injuriousness or the like and corresponding to our mis-, un-*.

Since we have become dull of hearing, it is very difficult to interpret the Word of God to us.

What has happened? The author goes on to say, *In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again.* God does not intend any Christian to be only a pupil all of his or her life. Once a Christian gets into the "meat" of the word, he or she is to become a teacher of the word to others. This need not be in the formal sense of a Bible teachers or preacher or evangelist, but certainly we can teach others in our family or in the neighborhood, etc.

The average Christian, even in fundamental evangelical churches is not functioning as a teacher and, according to this verse, has even forgotten what he or she has been taught and needs to be reminded of what they previously had known!

*You need milk, not solid food!* Now, what is wrong with milk? I drink milk with almost every meal (non-fat that is!). What does the Bible tell us about milk? Peter tells us the following:

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,* 1 Peter 02:02

But note the verse carefully! It deals with newborn babes! We do not expect brand new Christians to understand deep spiritual truths. all a new convert must know are the "Four Spiritual Laws". Milk is good for babies. It is the only food you can give very young babies. But we are all supposed to grow. There are very few things so sad as a child who has some physical defect that prevents him or her from growing!

In writing to Corinth, Paul says,

*I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.* 1 Corinthians 03:02

When Paul went to Corinth for the first time, he fed them milk. But now he is lamenting the fact that they still need milk rather than *solid food*. We should be nourishing our spiritual bodies on solid food. We shall not dwell on the Greek here, the translation is quite accurate. We would be chewing on steak and other solid food that will build us up beyond what simple milk can do.

The author sums what we have said thus far with these words. *Anyone who lives on*

*milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. The term not acquainted (unskillful KJV, not accustomed NAS) is from **apeiros** which is found only here in the bible. But remove the alpha in front of it and we find...*

*When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. Acts 09:26*

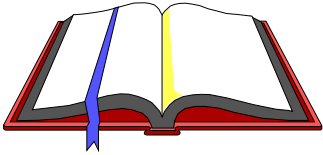
*That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. Acts 26:21*

Without the prefix it means to try. A related verb means to test or to tempt. With the alpha prefix it means untried. It means that if you are still working on the milk of the word, you really haven't "tried" to get into the real meat of the word of righteousness.

In contrast, those who are able to consume solid food are able to judge between what is right and what is wrong because they have been well trained. We shall continue with this discussion in the next chapter.



# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER SIX

### What We Do Not Need to Study

We concluded Chapter Five on the theme that, as Christians, we should be eating strong meat and not drinking milk like babies. In this chapter the author assumes that we have decided to follow this advice

and goes on to say why we need to stop drinking milk (only) and sink our teeth into some strong meat.

*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.*

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.*

*Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and instruction about washings, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement. And this we shall do, if God permits.*

Hebrews 06:01-03

*Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity...* What is the *therefore* there for? Since we should not act like babies, desiring milk, we must leave behind us those things which are the milk of the word. We must leave the *elementary teachings*. The KJV translation is somewhat unfortunate when it says to leave the principals of the doctrine of Christ. We are never to leave the principals! The Greek words is **arches** which simply means the beginnings. We find the same word, used in a temporal sense in John 1:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* John 01:01

We are not to continue dwelling on the things we read in the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet when we were saved. Instead we are to *go on to maturity*. The words *go on* here are interesting. It is from the Greek **phero** which means, simply, to bear or to move. What is interesting is that it is in the Middle Voice and the Subjunctive Mood in the Greek. The author might have used the Imperative here, making it a command for

us to follow, but by using the Subjunctive, he is asking us to voluntarily to do this. The Middle voice means that we are to allow ourselves to be moved. The fact that it is in the present tense means we are to work at it, to move each day.

Each day of our lives should result in our becoming a little more mature as Christians than the day before. This should occur because we, of our own will, allow the Spirit to move us on to more and more advanced teaching from God's word. The author spells out the type of doctrines which we should be able to leave behind us. *Not . . .*

- (1) *laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death,*
- (2) *and of faith in God,*
- (3) *instruction about baptisms,*
- (4) *the laying on of hands,*
- (5) *the resurrection of the dead,*
- (6) *and eternal judgment.*

You and I (if you have received Christ as your Savior) have been delivered from the death due to sin. We have eternal life. This being the case, why should we be studying about repentance - we have already repented of our sins!

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Ephesians 02:08-09

Not only have we been saved, but God has given us this saving faith. Therefore we need not continue to study about how to have faith in God - we have it!

I assume that sometime soon after you were saved, you submitted yourself for Believer's Baptism and were instructed in its meaning. You should also know that, when we received Christ we were baptized into the Holy Spirit. Along with the baptism there may have been a laying on of hands.

*When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.*

Luke 04:40

When Jesus walked upon the earth, He often laid his hands on people to heal them. But now the point we are now considering is this.

*When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money*

Acts 08:18

*For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

2 Timothy 01:06

From these passages, we see that the laying on of the hands is a process which is done when we receive Christ - again, something that should be behind us. Finally, the resurrection from the dead and the eternal judgement are all things which we should have learned as "newborn babes". In fact, it is the eternal judgement that may have opened our eyes and led us into our saving grace. We need not be concerned with these any longer.

Before continuing, one remark is in order. The author does not say that we should forget these things nor that we should not teach them to others. What he does say is

that we should not continue to "relearn" these things over and over again. What happens if we do?

Have you ever been in a church where an altar call is given frequently and seen the same person go forward time after time? Why? Probably (if he or she is being sincere) it is because they were not sure that the salvation "stuck" the first time and they want to make sure that they are really saved. This is what the author is talking about. We should not continue to walk the aisle for salvation, we should be pressing on to become mature Christians.

We have spent some considerable time belaboring these first few verses. We make no excuse for we shall very much need this background as we come to the next passage.

### Why We Need Not Study the Milk of the Word

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*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.*

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*

*For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them to repentance since they crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. For the ground drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God: but if it yields up thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and ends up being burned.*

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Hebrews 06:04-08

*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the*

*heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance...* This is a passage of Scripture that has often been misunderstood and become a foothold for false doctrine. Let us take a look at what this passage really says. Let's removed the explanatory section in the middle and look at the bare facts!

*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened ... if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance...!* This is the key part of this passage. It says that if you have been saved and then lost your salvation, it is impossible to be saved again! This means that these people we mentioned who come forward for salvation each time the altar call is given are only wasting there time.

Does this mean we can loose our salvation, to *fall away*! If it does, you had better be very certain that you never do it since you can never be saved again!

*As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."* Luke 09:57-62

First of all, Jesus has said that He doesn't want any "second-hand" Christians. If you are going to make a commitment to Christ, it is to be a full commitment. You can not follow Him one day and then go back and do something else the next. But even more important...

*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.* John 10:27-29

No one, including yourself, can snatch your salvation away. When you agree to accept Christ, He takes you by the hand. You can try to let go, if you so choose, but He will not. It takes both parties letting go to break the bond. Once saved - always saved.

Now we must look at one little word in this passage, *IF*. This is the key to the passage. I can tell you that if I were an elephant, I would try to fly like Dumbo. But this statement does not at all imply that I could be an elephant. More to the point, I might say, "If I were you I wouldn't do that!" There is no way that I could ever be you, that is why the word if is there.

Now, sometimes in the Bible, the if implies possibility and sometimes even certainty. But this passage does not actually contain the word if. Look at the NAS translation of it. The word if does not occur. The Greek equivalent for if is not in the Greek text.

What, then, is the point that the author is trying to make? He is not dealing with the concept of falling away. He has been dealing with the subject of the beginnings of salvation - how to be saved. The put an end to this matter he includes this very alarming statement. What good is it for you to relearn the means of being saved - since

you can never be saved again anyway? There is no point drinking the milk of the word if the milk is doing you no good.

We need to grow. There has been recently on T.V. a commercial for a bottled water company. It shows a newborn baby with an instruction booklet strapped to his arm with something to the effect, "if babies came with instruction manuals, they would say to give them our water to drink." The implication of the commercial is the babies do not come with instruction manuals. But I have news for you - they do! The instruction manual is the Bible.

In the September 1990 Readers Digest, there was an article called *Why You Can't Program Your VCR*. It goes on to say how many people go out and buy very sophisticated VCRs and bring them home and then use it only to play tapes. Why is this? Because either they don't or can't read the instruction manuals (or both). What a shame to have a sophisticated piece of equipment available and only use a very minute part of its capability - simply because we didn't read the manual and don't know how to use it.

But our bodies and souls are the most sophisticated items we will ever own and we do the same thing here. We struggle through life, barely getting along sometimes, simply because we don't take the time and the energy to read the instruction manual that God gave us.

Some will say, "Well, the Bible is good for teaching us how to be saved and for teaching us moral principals, but the Bible certainly does not apply to the detail of living in modern day america!" They are wrong - they simply do not know what is in their instruction manuals!

*Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.* The passage is followed by this rather strange comment. What does it mean? How does a farmer make a living (other than through U.S. farm subsidies!)? He works very hard to plow and till the land and to plant the seeds of his crop. Then he has to trust in God to bring in the rain that will cause the crops to grow. If he has done a good job on his part, the rain will do its work - it will soak in and germinate the seeds and will produce a good crop. As a result, the farmer will gain the fruit of all this and be blessed. But then the author talks about land that does not produce. Why not? Because the ground was not prepared. It has hard and untilled and the water just ran off.

It is hard a job to learn the strong meat of the Bible as it is to till a field. But, if we want to get spiritual blessings out of this life we must do it. We must know what is in the instruction manual in order to obtain the fullness of life which is available through Christ.

### The Need for Us to Partake of the Meat of the Word

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*Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case--things that*

*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*

*But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation,*

*accompany salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shown toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

*though we are speaking this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have showed toward His name, in having ministered and in ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patient inherit the promises.*

Hebrews 06:09-12

*Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case-...* The author has been very outspoken concerning the fact that we keep drinking milk when we should be eating strong meat. He now softens the blow a little by stating that he assumes that it is the others who are drinking milk but that you and I are doing better. Is the author being sincere or is he trying to flatter us? I believe the answer is "Yes!". He is being sincere, up to a point, but he still is trying to encourage us to go further. The author expect that our lives evidence "better things". What are these? *...-things that accompany salvation.* The author is writing to Christian Jews - Jews who have been saved. He knows that they are saved. What he is expecting is that they are more than saved - that they are doing something about their salvation, that they are doing the things which accompany salvation.

*God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.* He assumes that, having been saved, we will begin to work! All (almost all) of Paul's friends were workers. Just consider the closing of Romans.

*Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. ... Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. ... Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, ... Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.*

Romans 16:03,06,09,12

In writing to Corinth he explains...

*For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he*

*builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*

1 Corinthians 03:09-15

*Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

1 Corinthians 15:58

And in writing to the church at Ephesus, he stresses the importance of our working together.

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

Ephesians 04:11-16

...you have helped his people and continue to help them. Note that there are two verbs in this phrase. The verbs both come from **diakoneo**, from which we get the word deacon. The author first looks at the fact that they had been characterized (the verb is a participle) as those who helped in the past. Then he looks to the present and separates it from the past. He knew they worked in the past, he is not sure that they are now doing so. So he adds the present participle of the verb. Just in case you have stopped being helpful to God's people, you should be continuing as you did in the past.

It is pitiful to seem a paraplegic person, even worse a quadriplegic and worse a person in a coma. None can do the things a person ought to be doing. But most churches are in the same pitiful condition. A person is a paraplegic because parts of his body just don't work. The church is in the same condition because it has members who do not work. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 4 above, each part must do its work if the whole body is to function correctly.

*We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.* The author concludes this section with an expressed desire. He wants diligence to be shown. The Greek word is **spoude** and is found in the following verses.

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.*

Romans 12:11

*But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in*

*this grace of giving.*

2 Corinthians 08:07

*Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.*

Jude 01:03

The word, in all cases, includes the idea of haste. When the author says he wants us to be diligent, he intends that we be that way now, not tomorrow or the next day. The word is accompanied by the verb **endeikumi**

*...in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.* Ephesians 02:07

*Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.* Titus 02:09-10

*...to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.* Titus 03:02

The verb clearly means to demonstrate, to make clear. In other words, we are to make our diligence known to others. Others are to see in us this diligence in doing the share of God's work that he has given us.

While the word includes the concept of haste and no delaying, the verse includes the term *unto the end*. We should begin immediately, we should not stop until the end. The end result of this differs according to the translation you read.

*And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:* KJV  
*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end...* NAS  
*We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.* NIV

The wording of the NIV would indicate that if we do not heed this advice, we may not realize our hope. The NAS is less strong, indicating that we might not realize the fullness of our hope. The KJV would indicate that we are to heed the advice because of this hope. Which is it?

The key to this is the word fullness. It is **plerophoria**. The answer is that the end we seek, is this full assurance of hope. We have hope the minute we receive Jesus Christ as Savior. But our assurance at that point is very weak. It is quite possible that someone of another religious persuasion could come along and shake our assurance of hope. But as we put our faith to work and become an active doer in the church, our assurance grows until, when we reach the end, we have received our full measure of assurance.

Paul wrote,

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous*



*Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

2 Timothy 04:07-08

When Paul had finished fighting the fight, when he had completed his course and done what the Lord expected of him, he had the confidence to say that he had earned the write to wear the crown of righteousness. There was no doubt in Paul's mind as he penned these words, he had full assurance of hope that this was the case.

*We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.* The author now turns to the other side of the coin. We have been speaking of diligence. Now the opposite of that is laziness. There are three Greek words which indicate slowness or idleness. One has no moral connotation and simply means to be late. The second means to be idle, to do nothing and has a negative moral implication. The third word, the one used here, **nophros**, is much stronger. A paraphrase of Trenches comments is below.

**There is a deeper, more inborn sluggishness implied in nophros, and this is bound un in the very life, than in either of the other words of this group. The late person today may become punctual tomorrow. The idle person might grow to be energetic.; but the very constitution of the nophros unfits him for activities of the mind or spirit, he is sluggish of mind.**

*Synonyms of the New Testament, Trench*

The sad fact is that our churches are packed with such people. They sit through sermon after sermon and the message never sinks into their minds. They are too sluggish to appreciate the message they receive. As a result they spend the rest of their lives here on earth doing nothing but pew-warming.

We must exercise our bodies or we will become weak and sluggish of body and not able to do a good day's work. Likewise, we must exercise our minds and souls or we will become of little value spiritually. We must get into the meat of the word and grow! With this admonition to get into the Word and to get busy doing what the Lord put us here for, we return to the study of the priesthood of Christ.

### GOD'S INTEGRITY

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*When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. Men swear by someone greater*

*For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater:*

*For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and multiply you." And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with*

*than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.*

*and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:*

*them an oath given as confirmation is and end of every dispute. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.*

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Hebrews 06:13-18

*When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." Now that we have been away from the main course of study, we will need to be refreshed on what is going on. When God made what promise to Abraham?*

Now, Jesus taught us concerning making oaths. He said,

*"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*

Matthew 05:33-37

And James wrote,

*Above all, my brothers, do not swear--not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.*

James 05:12

What are they saying? Is there something wrong with taking an oath? Not at all. What is very wrong is to take such an oath and then not be able to keep it. How does one take an oath? When you go to court, you (used to) swear on the Bible (I don't believe that is still true). When the President takes his oath of office, he swears on the Bible. You must swear on the basis of a higher authority than yourself. But if you take an oath in God's name, and then fail to keep it, you are in trouble and you put God in bad repute!

In the situation we are studying, it is God that is making the oath. There is no danger in God not being able to keep the promise and so this is perfectly fine. But what promise? The text says it was made to Abraham.

The pervious verse just told us *we do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised*. We assume this to be the same promise.

Let's go to the Old Testament to see if God made any promise to Abraham.

The promise is generally known as the Abrahamic Covenant. Unlike the Mosaic Covenant, this was (and still is) an unconditional covenant.

*... "I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."* Genesis 22:16-18

Note the last part of this promise! *...all nations on earth will be blessed*

Note also that this was not the first time God made this promise to Abraham, for we read...

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."* Genesis 12:01-03

This is the passage that is generally regarded as the Abrahamic Covenant. But note that the Lord simply states here what he would do for Abraham if he left his own country and, depending on God, go where God wanted him. In the Genesis 22 passage, however, God says, *"I swear by myself..."* It was not until Abraham had completely given in to God's will that the oath was taken. It was not an unconditional covenant until this time!

Have you given your life completely to the Lord and allowed Him to control it? God's blessings are unconditional to you if you have. If you have simply read the Four Spiritual Laws and accepted Christ as your Savior and have never grown, do not expect the blessing the Lord promises (other than that of salvation). Just as we read in Hebrews 4,

*Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.* Hebrews 04:01

We note one case of an oath taking that was not made by God, but by a man, by Abraham.

*The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten*

*and the share that belongs to the men who went with me--to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share." After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."*  
Genesis 14:21-15:01

This passage is really interesting if we consider the four verses which precede it.

*After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*  
Genesis 14:17-20

Why is the author of this epistle here making reference to Abraham and God's promise to him? We were speaking of Christ as our High Priest as compared with the Aaronic priesthood and then we moved on to the priesthood of Melchizedek. But the only place we find this man is in connection with Abraham, hence we turn to Abraham to understand this priesthood.

*Men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. It is clear from what is said here that the oath was not made to Abraham only. It was made to all who were included in that oath. But part of the oath reads *and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*. Are you included in "all the peoples on earth"? If so, you are included in the promise, it was made to you as well as to Abraham. He goes on to say *God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged*. According to the Scriptures, there must be two things which confirm an oath. What were these two things in this case?*

*You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God, a covenant the Lord is making with you this day and sealing with an oath,*  
Deuteronomy 29:12

The two things are (1) God's word and (2) God's oath. This would be no good for men because men's word is not "unchangeable" - but God's is! God really would not have needed to make an oath with Abraham since God's word is true and everlasting. But, by making the oath, the promise is all the more sure. The chapter thus ends up with this theme.

## OUR SURETY

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*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus,*

*Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner*

*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has*

*who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.*

*is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

*entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Hebrews 06:19-20

God tells us that this promise is *an anchor for the soul*. The Greek word is **ankuran**, the root of which (**ankale**) is found in Luke.

*Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:*

Luke 02:28

which is translated "in his arms", or more literally, in the arc made by bending his arms about the child. Hence the word we are looking at describes an anchor in the sense that a typical anchor has two curved arms to dig into the sea floor. The only other mention of the term in the N.T. is in Acts 27.

*Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. ... Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.*

Acts 27:29,40

We note several things from this passage. First, the anchors were effective in keeping the ship in position until daybreak. Second, the anchors held so fast that, rather than to take the time and effort to retrieve them, they cut them loose and left them in the sea.

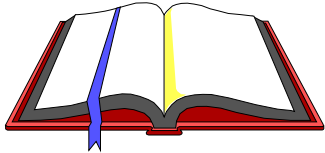
Having served on a Coast Guard lightship for two years, I have had a lot of experience in trusting in an anchor. A lightship is required to remain in a fixed position at all times and at all costs. When a raging storm comes up, the anchor is put to the test as to whether or not it will hold the ship in position. Do they? Often, in very severe storms, the lightship is driven from its position. But very seldom is it the fault of the anchor - it remains firm in the ocean floor. What generally happens is that the chain that connects the anchor to the ship breaks, allowing the ship to drift.

The bottom line is that an anchor is something which may be totally relied upon. If the right kind of anchor is used, it will never allow you to stray.

This promise, then, is a real anchor to keep our soul from drifting away from the spot where God wants us.

The chapter ends with the words *it enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek*. So we are back to the priesthood of Melchizedek. Our anchor is in the fact that Christ is our High Priest and that this priesthood is like that of Melchizedek. But what was that like? We come to this in chapter seven.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER SEVEN

After the parenthesis of chapter 5 and 6 and the discussion of Abraham, we return to Melchizedek and his typification of the priesthood of Christ.

### What Kind of Priest was Melchizedek?

*This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people--that is, their brothers--even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without doubt the lesser*

*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and*

*This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means "king of righteousness"; then also "king of Salem" means "king of peace". Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who became priests to collect a tenth from the people - that is, their brothers - even though their brothers are descended from Abraham. This man, however did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. And without a doubt the*

person is blessed by the greater. In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

lesser person is blessed by the greater. In one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might say that Levi, who collects a tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

#### Hebrews 07:01-10

We have previously commented on the name and title of this man and it is here spelled out for us. We need to comment, however, on Salem. Where is (or was) Salem? The only other reference to this place, other than the one we have seen in Genesis, is in Psalm 76.

*In Judah God is known; his name is great in Israel. His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. There he broke the flashing arrows, the shields and the swords, the weapons of war. Selah*

Psalm 76:01-03

From this passage, and regarding the area of the land of Canaan where this event took place, we presume Salem to be an early name for Jerusalem. While the precise meaning of the prefix (Jeru) is not known, the newer name of Jerusalem probably means "city of peace". If that is really the case, it is not a very appropriate title!

To this description we have added *Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life*. The biggest question which must be answered with respect to this statement is whether or not it is literal. The conservative viewpoint on Biblical interpretation is to take everything as literal unless the Bible states that it is figurative or it is obviously figurative. There is no explicit notice here that this is not literal. But then consider the following:

*The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.* Joel 02:31

There is nothing in this passage either that states that this is figurative. The verse is cited in the N.T.,

*The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.* Acts 02:20

and finally,

*I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red,* Revelation 06:12

There is no reason to believe that the moon actually will become a huge ball of blood. Read these passages in their context and it is reasonably obvious that the moon will appear red like the color of blood. So there need not always be an explicit statement that the verse is figurative.

In this case, there is no statement and there is little in the context to indicate whether or not the comments are to be taken literally or not. There are several possible interpretations:

1) He was a human, like the rest of us and what the text is saying is that the Bible records no father or mother's name or other genealogy and that we are not told about his birth or death.

This is not at all an implausible interpretation. Consider a typical Biblical passage:

*Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Jehoaddin; she was from Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not wholeheartedly . . . Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. As for the other events of Amaziah's reign, from beginning to end, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? From the time that Amaziah turned away from following the Lord, they conspired against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish, but they sent men after him to Lachish and killed him there. He was brought back by horse and was buried with his fathers in the City of Judah.* 2 Chronicles 25:1-2,25-28

Here is the account of one of the lesser known kings of Judah. Note that we are told who his mother was, when (at what age) he began his reign which would also fix the time of his birth, and when he died. In other words we know who one of his parents was and hence a little of his genealogy and when he was born and when he died. Nearly everyone in the O.T. is treated this way - except Melchizedek.

2) He was not a man but only appeared to be a man.

Now Abraham had other experiences like this.

*The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.* Genesis 18:01-02

*Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know." The men turned away and went toward Sodom, but Abraham remained standing before the Lord.* Genesis 18:20-22



*When the Lord had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home. The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.*  
Genesis 18:33-19:01

Here is a case where three "men" appeared to Abraham. From the context we note that one was Christ Himself, having temporarily taken on the form of a man, and the other two were angel who, likewise, appeared in the form of men. Thus, Melchizedek could have been an angel who appeared as a man.

3) Melchizedek was a preincarnate appearance of Christ Himself.

While this is possible, it is unlikely. From Genesis 18 (above) we note that Abraham appeared to have no trouble recognizing that one of the three "men" was the Lord Himself - he addresses him that way. Secondly, it would not make a lot of sense to compare the priesthood of Christ with itself (as would then be the case).

As far as the angel theory is concerned, only two times in the Bible is an angel ever given a name. Furthermore they are never represented as priests - they are always messengers.

It is most likely the case that Melchizedek was an actual human and that God, in His inspiration of the Scriptures purposely avoided any mention of genealogy or birth or death so that he would be a type of Christ. In any case, what he was is not significant here, only what he represents.

*He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.* This passage all hinges on the statement made in this sentence. The importance of the passage hinges on what Melchizedek did (he blessed Abraham) and what Abraham did (paid Melchizedek a tithe). Let us consider these two actions carefully.

Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe (Hebrew **mahgasehr**, Greek **dekatan**) "a tenth". It is of interest to note that this is the first mention of the giving of a tithe in the Bible. There is a brief mention of it in Leviticus 27, but it is not formally introduced until Numbers 18.

*"I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting. From now on the Israelites must not go near the Tent of Meeting, or they will bear the consequences of their sin and will die. It is the Levites who are to do the work at the Tent of Meeting and bear the responsibility for offenses against it. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites. Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the Lord. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.'" The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the Lord's offering. Your offering will be reckoned to you as grain from the threshing floor or juice from the winepress. In this way you also will present an offering to the Lord from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. From these tithes you must give the Lord's portion to Aaron the*

priest.

Numbers 18:21-28

While this is not supposed to be a lesson on tithing, we will make several observations. First, we were told that Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. Very few people practice tithing in this manner. According to this, Abraham gave him ten percent of his "gross income". If you don't believe this, read the Genesis passage carefully!

*And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people and keep the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me--to Aner, Eshcol and Mamre. Let them have their share."* Genesis 14:20-24

Now, in this case, Abraham ended up with practically nothing, he would not keep the spoils that had belonged to the king of Sodom, even though he was legally entitled to them. But note that Abraham made the normal "deductions" from what the king of Sodom was to receive. In other words, the goods that the king of Sodom received where his (Abraham's) net, not his gross. But Abraham had already paid the tithe before he deducted the "cost of living expenses."

The second thing to note is that a tithe is not paid only once. When all the tithes were collected by the priests, they were used to support the priests and the operation of the temple. But, they were to also pay a tithe and keep only the remaining 90%. What does this say? We might say that it means that the preachers are supposed to tithe their salaries as well (I am sure ours do!). The important thing, however, is that the church is supposed to tithe its income (which we have done the past two years) in the form of giving to other Christian work (Missions).

Finally, before you get the tithe set too strongly in your mind, I must inform you that we are not supposed to tithe! That is part of the Mosaic Covenant and applies only to Israel.

*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful ~~giver~~ giver.* Corinthians 09:07

God does not ask us to give ten percent! If you are reluctant to give the Lord ten percent of your income, God doesn't want it! *God loves a cheerful giver*. There is no set amount in the N.T. (although ten percent is certainly a good starting point). You see, you could give fifty percent and it would do you no good at all...

*If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.* 1 Corinthians 13:03

Giving for improper reasons has no value, according to the N.T. But God does expect us to give. In fact, giving is the ministry that God has given to some (but not all)...

*. . . if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do*

*it cheerfully.*

Romans 12:08

Let us return to the reason for mentioning Abraham's tithe here. To whom to do give a tithe? Recall Genesis 12 . . .

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."* Genesis 12:1-3

Of all the people on earth, God chose one man to be special. He did not choose Abraham's father, we traveled part of the way with Abraham. He did not choose Abraham's nephew Lot who accompanied him to Canaan. He chose only Abraham. Through this one man, he raised on one nation that He blessed above all other nations on the face of the earth.

*For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.* Deuteronomy 07:06

And yet Abraham paid a tithe to this Melchizedek! *Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!*

Let us leave this thought for a moment and turn to the Levitical priests.

*Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people--that is, their brothers--even though their brothers are descended from Abraham.* We find notice here that the Levitical priests collected tithes from the descendants of Abraham - implying that they rank lower than Abraham for it was Abraham, specifically, that God blessed. And of course, since the Levites were, themselves, descendants of Abraham, they collected tithes only as representatives for God.

*This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.* Returning to Melchizedek, he received tithes from Abraham even though he was not a Levitical priest. Why? *And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater.* Abraham paid the tithe to Melchizedek who, in turn blessed Abraham. This is proof, then, that he was even greater than Abraham.

We now come to an interesting passage. *In the one case, the tenth is collected by men who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.* The author sums this up by saying that Levi, the father of the Levitical priests, paid a tithe to Melchizedek. How can this be - Levi was born two generations later than this event?

Well, to answer this question we will also have to settle the issue regarding abortion. We begin with that problem first. We begin by asking a seemingly simple question, "When does a man die?" It seems simple, but no one knows the answer! We can tell when a man is alive because of his vital signs. We can tell when a man is dead because of the lack of vital signs. But when does a man pass from one state to the

other?

Do you realize that your body does not die all at once. Even after it is placed in a coffin and buried in the ground, parts of it (hair, finger nails, etc.) continue to grow for a time. Do you also realize that part of your body is already dying? Blood cells die and are passed off. Skin cells die and slough off (that's why you need dandruff shampoo!).

Let's make the problem even more complicated. Suppose a person is in an automobile accident and brought into the hospital in a coma. He remains there for nine months, in a coma, and on a life support system. If, at any time during this period of time, the life support system is removed, the man dies. Now, when does he die? Would you say that he died when he entered the hospital since, from that time on, there was no consciousness and he was unable to live on his own? You might say "Yes, that is when he died," but a court of law would not believe you. It is not until his vital signs disappear that he is legally dead. Neither answer is correct!

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

John 11:25-26

Jesus has promised that, if we believe in him, we will have everlasting life. We will never die (spiritually speaking). As for those who do not believe and accept Christ, we are told,

*He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.*

2 Thessalonians 01:08-09

So a man, spiritually speaking never dies, even though at some point of time his flesh ceases to function.

Now, let's look at the other end! When does a man come into existence? The Anti-abortionists say "at conception". The Pro-Abortionists say "at birth." Who is correct? They say that before that time there is no consciousness and that, if removed from the mother, the fetus would die. Now let me first say that, regardless of anything else, they are dead wrong because babies can live if taken from the mother when they reach a certain age. There must, at some point, be some type of consciousness as well.

But never mind that. Our man in the hospital is neither conscious nor is he able to live on his own. According to these people the man is dead! They do not apply the same standards at the "end of life" that they do and the "beginning of life".

The fact is that neither group is correct Biblically. According to this passage, Levi was "alive and present" when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. This says that a man is alive (spiritually) even before conception! To continue in this light, why are we sinners? We are born into sin because of Adam's sin. Why? Because, theologically, we were with Adam when he sinned.

That a fetus has a conscious soul is attested to in the following passage.

*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and*

*Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. . . As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Luke 01:41,44*

Something that has no conscienceness can not "leap for joy!" In addition, there are a number of Scriptures that speak about God knowing men before they were born. For example -

*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*  
Romans 08:29

*. . . who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood . . .*

1 Peter 01:02

and the following passage indicates that God took specific action in Paul's case before he was born.

*But when God, who set me apart from birth\* and called me by his grace, was pleased (\* Or from my mother's womb)*  
Galatians 01:15

We have included the NIV footnote here since the Greek literally says "from my mother's womb." We will not further follow this argument other than to point out that the Biblical position is that a person (physically) begins to exist at conception. This section, then, has shown us that Melchizedek represents a much higher priesthood than that of the Levites.

### Why Do We Need a Better Priest?

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*If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah,*

*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of*

*Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not being designated according to the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there makes a change in the law also. For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our*

and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning the priests. And this is clearer still, in another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. For it is witnessed of Him, Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

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Hebrews 07:11-17

*If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come--one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?* The author begins this section with a question. Why did Christ have to come and suffer as He did? Simply because the Old Testament provision for deliverance from sin was not working. It was never meant to work!

In Galatians three, Paul teaches us this -

*But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.* Galatians 03:23-26 KJV

Paul teaches that the Old Testament covenant with Moses was never meant to bring salvation to man, only to teach him about in and lead him to it when God provided the means. The most important thing that the Law taught Israel, and you and I, is that man can not keep the law. Since man can not keep it, it is not effective in securing our salvation. As a matter of fact, Paul writes,

*I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"* Galatians 02:21

Paul writes the same thing we have here. There would have been no point in Christ's sacrificial work if the law was all that was needed. Looking at it another way, the Law was really unnecessary (other than as a teaching aide) since God had already made an unconditional promise to Abraham. Paul writes,

*What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.* Galatians 03:17

God made an unconditional promise to Abraham. We have noted that promise quite carefully. The Law did not supersede that promise, it was, again, added solely to teach us that we can't do it on our own by keeping a set of rules.

*For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law.* Now, what does this mean? In what way does the changing of the priesthood change the law? The entire Mosaic Law was based on the foundation of the Levitical priesthood. Take that priesthood away and you find yourself under another set of rules. To give a rather corny example, if you go out to play a ball game and you bring out a group of football umpires and other officials, you had better play football. But, if you exchange these for a group of baseball refs, then you had better start playing baseball.

If we have accepted Christ as our High Priest, there is absolutely no reason to attempt to follow the Mosaic Laws because they belong to another "league."

*He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.* If you have studied the Bible very well, you know that Christ was descended (humanly speaking) from the tribe of Judah. In case you missed this, we have it spelled out for us.

*Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, . . . and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, . . . and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.*

Matthew 01:02-3,06,16-17

That no one from the tribe of Judah ever served at the altar we will not prove. To do so would require beginning back at the beginning when Judah was alive and going through the historical books of the Old Testament up until the birth of Christ and show that no mention is ever made concerning Judah and serving at the altar. Suffice it to say, there are no such references.

*And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.* What are we being told here? On what basis does one serve as a priest?

*In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by*

*lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.* Luke 01:05-10

Zechariah happened to be serving before the Altar when the birth of John the Baptist was announced because he was a descendant of Aaron (and his wife was also). When it was time for a priest to go into the temple, one of the descendant of Aaron was chosen (by lot at this time). What were the qualifications to be a priest? We read above that both Zechariah and Elizabeth *were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.* But all this did was to make him a good priest. He was a priest because "of the flesh", that is, because he was a Levite. It happened that this man was a very good man; in general there were no specific qualifications to be a priest.

There is a rather interesting lesson in all this. We are saved and are Christians, not because we might be good like Zechariah and his wife were, but it all depends on whose family we belong to, the family of God - through Jesus Christ. Christ was a different kind of priest. He was not a priest on the basis of who He was. Humanly speaking, He was a member of the wrong tribe. Spiritually speaking, being God, He did not have to do what He did and hence did not have to become a high priest. He did so because He wanted to. On the other hand, he became our high priest because he had the most important qualification - *on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.* Christ had no beginning of life nor end of days. He truly was a priest like Melchizedek - the best kind of priest.

### Jesus's Oath of Office

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*The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'" Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*

*For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better*

*For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. And inasmuch as it was not without an oath (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an Oath who said to Him, "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, Thou art a priest forever") so much more also Jesus has become a guarantee of a better*



testament.

covenant.

Hebrews 07:18-22

*The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. Now we seem to have a contradiction in the Scriptures. The author tells us that the Mosaic Covenant, with all its laws and sacrifices, "is set aside" (NIV) or "disannuled" (KJV). But Christ testified,*

*"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 05:17-20

Perhaps, the best way to explain this apparent contradiction, is by means of an illustration. Suppose that a certain man is in power of your country and he is cruel and harsh and you wish you could get rid of him. Now there are two ways you might do this. You might hire an assassin to sneak in and murder him. On the other hand, you might find a better man than him and get him to run for the office and get him elected and hence displace the other man.

Christ was not an assisi. He did not come to destroy the Mosaic Covenant because, if He did, so, God would be destroying what God set up - a contradiction for God. What He did do is, once and for all, fulfill all of the requirements of the law so that, in effect, there is no more law.

Take another example. You have a contract with another person. If you didn't like the terms of the contract, you could just tear it up, but that would only get rid of the contract, not the obligation. On the other hand, if someone were to step in and fulfill the terms of the contract, you could then tear it up because the contract would be of no more value.

*And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'" We have already noted that God made doubly sure His promise to Abraham with an oath. We have also noted that a Levite became a priest simply because he was a Levite, not because of anything he did or said.*

Christ has become our High Priest. There should never have been any doubt that he would do so because God said it.

*God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?* Numbers 23:19

*He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind."* Isaiah 15:29

*The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."* Psalm 110:04

"God said, I believe it, and that settles it!" and old but valid statement. What God says, He means. He made a promise to Abraham and He fulfilled it.

*Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*

The word guarantee here (surety in the KJV) comes from the Greek word **enguos** which is found only here in the Bible. It is, however, not uncommon in Greek business literature where we find such passages as ...

*"the father assents to the marriage, and is surety for the payment of the aforesaid dowry"*

*"I will hold your surety, until you pay me the value of the ~~claims~~ claims taken from*  
The Vocabulary of the G.N.T. - Moulton & Milligan

Since Christ guarantees our position, we need not worry about it.

### Why Christ is the Better High Priest

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*Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

*Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He*

*And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for*

*Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede with God for them. Such a high priest meets our need - one who is holy, blameless, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people He sacrificed for*

*sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.*

*this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

*their sins once and for all when he offered himself. For the Law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.*

#### Hebrews 07:23-28

*Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Under the Mosaic covenant, a promise made by one high priest was good only as long as he was high priest. Since they were all mortal, they all did and, with them, any promises they might have made. But Christ is eternal and hence His promises are eternal and it is upon this that we place our hope.*

*Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

Note carefully the words here, "save completely". What does this mean? I was under the impression that a person could not be "partially saved" and more than a woman could be "partially pregnant". The KJV says "to the uttermost", the NAS has "forever". The two terms are loosely equivalent if you assume and an incomplete salvation is one that does not last forever. The Greek word is **panteles**, a compound of **pan** which means "all", just as it does in English, and **telos** which means "completion", "perfection", or "fullness".

The only other occurrence of this Greek term is found in a rather different context.

*. . . and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all Luke 13:11*

Here it is used in a negative sense. This woman could not straighten herself even the slightest amount. Her crippled condition had run its full course and had reached a stage where it could not progress any further. She was the way she would remain the rest of her life. Applying that to our passage, the salvation we have in Christ will never become any more complete than it is right now, Christ has taken care of seeing that there is nothing more to do.

The surprising thing that we have in this verse is this. The Scriptures often speak of Christ and his completed work regarding our salvation. For example, consider the following. Christ says he completed the work . . .

*I have brought you (God) glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. John 17:04*

That He did complete the work is indicated by the fact He is not sitting down.

*But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."* Luke 22:69

*. . . which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,* Ephesians 01:20

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.* Colossians 03:01

Jesus testified that the reason for His first coming was to finish the work that God had for Him.

*"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."* John 04:34

*"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.* John 05:36

When He hung on the cross and was about to die, He said . . .

*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* John 19:30

Now, backing up in our study to chapter four, we had the following.

*Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world.* Hebrews 04:03

which says His work was finished since the creation of the world. Now we are really confused! The work was finish at the creation of the world since God (and Christ) know the ending from the beginning. God knew what had to be done, determined that it would be done, and in God's eyes, that completed it. In man's eyes, it was not completed until Christ dies, was buried and rose again.

This verse, however tells us something different. When Christ died on the cross He paid the penalty for your sins and mine - past, present and future. He paid the price, but there is still one point of the previous covenant that still remains. The work must be applied to us to be of value. Christ died for the sins of the whole world, but the whole world has not received him.

Still further, with regards to you and I, the verse says Christians salvation is being made complete *because he always lives to intercede for them.* Christ died for the sins you committed in the past and the present. He paid the penalty for the sins you will commit tomorrow - but - there must still be a prayer of forgiveness made.

Turn to the old Testament for a moment. God made provision for the sins of the people while they were still in the wilderness. He spelled out that provision in detail in the

Pentateuch. BUT - still, when a man sinned, he had to bring a sacrifice to the priest to obtain atonement. It is the same today. When we sin, there must be a plea for forgiveness. We are told,

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.* 1 John 01:08-10

Forgiveness of sin is not automatic! We are told then, when we sin, we are to confess it and we will be forgiven, based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What about the times we sin and we do not even realize that we have, or we forget to ask forgiveness? Where does that leave us? *He always lives to intercede for us.* Even when we forget, Christ asks for us! We have a perfect High Priest! *Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

*Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.* As noted, He, who was perfect, once and for all paid the penalty of our sins himself. Thus he has the right to intercede for us.

*My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* 1 John 02:01

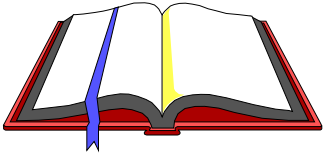
Jesus is not alone in this, for the Holy Spirit, the "other Comforter", also helps out.

*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.* Romans 08:26

The startling conclusion to all of this is that while, in one sense we are saved and always will be, in a very real sense we are only saved from the sins we have already committed. Our salvation is being made complete, day-by-day because Christ continues to provide forgiveness for us each day. This is why the author stresses the importance of Christ as our perfect High Priest, one who loves forever. If Christ were not immortal, there might come a day when He no longer existed and could not speak on our behalf and then where would we be! *For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.*



# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER EIGHT

This chapter continues the theme from chapter seven. It makes a specific contrast between Christ, our High Priest, and the Levitical priest.

### The Difference Between Christ and the Levites

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*The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.*

*Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

*Now the main point of what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.*

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Hebrews 08:01-02

The chapter begins with the Greek word **kephalaion**, the root of which means "head" (like yours and mine). The word is used once again in the N.T. and several times in the O.T. but these references shed no light on the subject.

Realizing that the root of this word is "head", we note the following:

*Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. 1 Corinthians 11:03*

*. . .to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Ephesians 01:10*

In a sense, the KJV expresses it best - *of the things which we have spoken this is the sum*: The author is summarizing what has been said previously and is now going to dwell on the most important part, the "head" (the "main point", NAS).

*We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.* To begin with, note two words in this statement - sat and serves. It is just as we concluded at the end of chapter seven. Christ is seated because he has

completed His work in the sense of paying the penalty for our sins - He was our sacrificial lamb that had to be brought to the altar and slain. But he is not just sitting somewhere and watching sports on TV or reading the evening newspaper. Christ is still performing a vital function. He is now serving in the sanctuary.

Now, how many "sanctuaries" are there (or have there been)? First, the word itself. The KJV has "tabernacle" as does the NAS. Tabernacle is probably not a good term because it is rarely used today and few know what it really means. It is derived from the Latin word for tent. In a literal sense tent would be the best translation since that is what the Greek word here means.

Tent, however, only describes the physical structure and fail to include the purpose of it. This is why the NIV has "sanctuary". Now, how many of these are there? The first was the Garden of Eden. That is gone (at least it is no longer on earth). The first one that we normally think of is the one fabricated by Israel in the wilderness. This is described in great detail in the Pentateuch (Exodus 25-31, 35-40). Have you ever wondered why, in inspiring the Scriptures, God chose to devote 13 full chapters to a description of the sanctuary and its various components? I once decided that I would study these passages very carefully and construct an exact model of it. I soon learned that this could not be done because so very critical architectural detail were missing. If one decides to build a model, "poetic license" has to be used to fill in the details, as is always done on the models you see.

Why would God spend 13 full chapters in the description of the first tabernacle and then, after giving all this detail, leave out some important architectural details? The answer is simple. God does not want us to build a model (or the real thing). Another one already exists. What are its prominent features? Look at Exodus 25-31 and 35-40 and you will find the answer. The features of the first tabernacle were meant to show the features of this new one - they were shadows of what was to come.

Now, we are comparing Jesus, as our High Priest, with the Levitical priest. We here are comparing the place where they serve. Jesus serves *in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man*. Was the O.T. tabernacle not a true tabernacle? Did they do something wrong? This verse says that the true tabernacle was not by man which might imply that. Maybe it was imperfect - what has man done in all of history that really was perfect? I do not believe that this is the real point. It is not that the old tabernacle was not "true" but rather than it was only a picture of what the real sanctuary would be like. It is not unlike the toy typewriters, steam irons, automobiles, etc. that we give our children. They are not the real thing but they are made to resemble the real thing as far as is economical and safe to do.

This is all emphasized in what follows.

### The Two Sanctuaries

*Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. If he were on earth, he would*

*For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on*

*For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. Now if He were on*



*not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

*earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.*

*earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Law; who serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, "See," He says, "that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain." But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been established on better promises.*

#### Hebrews 08:03-06

*Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. This is a rather interesting statement. In it we find that a priest is to do two things: (1) offer gifts and (2) offer sacrifices.*

*But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.*

Romans 05:15-17

We talk about the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross for our sins, but He also made us a gift, the one that Paul speaks of above. Both priests had sacrifices to give, Christ's was, of course, much better.

*If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already men who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. Did you know this? Christ could not have been a priest here on earth - we already had earthly priests who reigned in the earthly sanctuary. We didn't need one more of the same kind. What we needed was a priest who served in a perfect sanctuary, not one made by the hands of men. This sanctuary, of course, is in*

heaven. Outside of the book of Hebrews, the "Tabernacle" (i.e the Sanctuary) is mentioned only once in the N.T.

*After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened.* Revelation 15:05

*They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." We have this mentioned also in Acts.*

*"Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.* Acts 07:44

In this one sentence we have three words which are more-or-less synonyms. These are copy, shadow, and pattern. The last word, pattern, comes from the Greek **tupos** or "type". The O.T. tabernacle was only meant to be a type of the one in heaven. The "copy" is from the Greek **hupodeigma** which in classical Greek was in the form **paradeigma** from which we get the English word paradigm which, according to the dictionary, is "an example or model". Thus, again, we have the connotation that it was a type of the heavenly sanctuary. The last word "shadow".

While "shadow" is an accurate translation (I suppose) since that is what it usually means literally, it is only used in this sense once in the N.T.

*These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.* Colossians 02:17

The conclusion of all this is that all three terms tell us exactly the same thing! The earthly sanctuary was designed for one purpose and one purpose only - to be a model of the real one. Why use three different words? For emphasis! There is to be no doubt of what is meant here. It was important the Moses do the job correctly. If he did not, we would have a distorted view of the real sanctuary (which we can not see) when we looked at it.

*But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises. How much better? Well, it has to be better because it is perfect and the old one was imperfect.*

### What Was Wrong With the Old Sanctuary?

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*For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will*

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new*

*For if the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He said, "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a new*

*make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.*

*covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.*

*covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they did not continue in my covenant.*

Hebrews 08:07-09

*For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.* There's an old saying in the service, "if it still works, don't fix it!" There would have been no point in God making the supreme sacrifice of sending His Son to die on the cross if the Old Covenant worked. But it did not work. It was faulty and so God reminds us of his previous promises regarding the New Covenant. The remainder of this passage (except verse 13) is a quotation from Jeremiah.

*"The time is coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Jeremiah 31:31-34*

The quotation is almost verbatim from Jeremiah. The work of Christ on the cross and His subsequent work as our high priest is not something that was first introduced at Calvary. The promise appears in the O.T. in various forms, such as this one. Not only is the promise there in Jeremiah, but also its surety.

*This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar--the Lord Almighty is his name: "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the Lord, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me." This is what the Lord says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the Lord. Jeremiah 31:35-37*

What could be surer than this promise? *"Will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me."* Ever since Joshua led them across the River Jordan into the land of Canaan Israel has been a nation. It is true that it was dispersed among the nations of the world for nearly 2000 years, but the Israelites never lost their identity. And today they are still a nation! If that is not guarantee enough, we have *only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel.* We have space probes probing space and other searching under the sea, but we have yet to fathom it all.

The quotation from Jeremiah continues with the Lord describing the New Covenant which He would make through His son.

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*This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.*

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more" When He had said "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.*

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Hebrews 08:10-13

*I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.* This was supposed to have been day way back when Israel came out of Egypt.

*Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.*

Deuteronomy 11:18

but God knew that they failed in this. God is omniscient...

*O righteous God, who searches minds and hearts, bring to an end the violence of the wicked and make the righteous secure.* Psalm 07:09

*But, O Lord Almighty, you who judge righteously and test the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.* Jeremiah 11:20

*O Lord Almighty, you who examine the righteous and probe the heart and mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you I have committed*

*my cause.*

Jeremiah 20:12

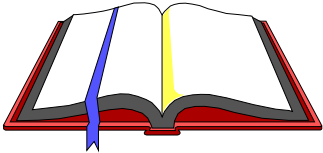
And God will continue to search right up to the end...

*I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.*

Revelation 02:23

The chapter closes with the following summary. *By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.* If Biblical repetition is used for stress, the God really stresses this point. We shall find that all of Chapter 9 is also devoted to this subject.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER NINE

As noted at the conclusion of the last lesson, this chapter continues with the theme of Christ the better High Priest serving in the better Sanctuary. This chapter gives us a rather detailed comparison of the two sanctuaries and their details and services.

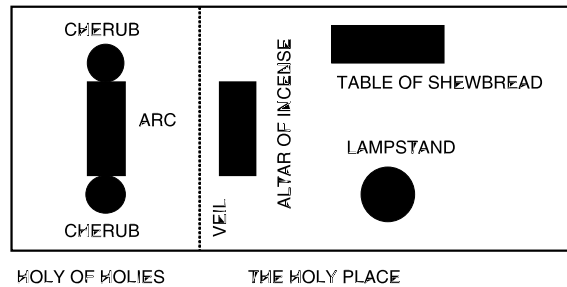
### The First Tabernacle and its Furnishings

*Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.*

*Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.*

*Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. And behind the second veil, there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was the golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. And above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we can not now speak in detail.*

As we begin looking at this passage, there are several specific points that we shall note. One of these concerns what was in the Holy Place and what was in the Holy of Holies. A diagram of the tabernacle is shown below. In it we see that the Holy Place contained three items: (1) The Table of Shewbread, (2) The Lampstand, and (3) The Altar of Incense. The Holy of Holy also contained three major items, (1) The Arc of the Covenant, and (2 and 3) the two Cherubim.



The above text tells us that *in its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread*. Only two major items. It then mentions the Veil which divided the two rooms with the Holy of Holy behind the veil. Then it tells us of *the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover*. It describes a number of objects, many of which were in or on the Ark. But there are four major items mentioned, (1) The Ark, (2 and 3) the two Cherubim, and (4) The Altar of Incense.

Many have thus claimed that we have an error here in the text. This being the case, let us consider the text carefully!

NIV: . . . *the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense . . .*

KJV: . . . *the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer . . .*

NAS: . . . *the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense . . .*

All three translations agree that the Holy of Holies had the golden altar. But look at this!

NIV: . . . *In its first room were the lampstand. . .*

KJV: . . . *the first, wherein was the candlestick . . .*

NAS: . . . *the outer one, in which were the lampstand . . .*

All three translation agree that the lampstand was in the Holy Place. Now, notice the difference - IN and HAVE are two different words. They are different in English and they are different in Greek. IN, Greek **en**, means, according to Thayer:

a: in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space:

Now, of course, you knew that, it is a preposition which denotes this. HAVE, Greek **echo**, is a verb which has many shades of meaning in the N.T. just as our English verb does. The bottom line is that to have something means that it either belongs to you or is in your possession. My house has a spark arrester on top of the chimney - it is not IN my house. It is part of the collection of things which make up my house, but it is not in its interior.

So, you see, the Bible does not state that the Altar of Incense was in the Holy of Holies, only that it belonged to it. And this is a very correct statement. The Table of Shew Bread and the Lampstand were fixtures which had to do with the priests' service in the Holy Place. But the Altar of Incense was connected with the worship in the Holy of



Holies.

Consider the two O.T. references below.

*Place the gold altar of incense in front of the ark of the Testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.* Exodus 40:05

*But Aaron and his descendants were the ones who presented offerings on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense in connection with all that was done in the Most Holy Place, making atonement for Israel, in accordance with all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.* 1 Chronicles 06:49

Both passages indicate that the Altar of Incense was used in connection with the Holy of Holies and therefore belonged to it, even though it was separated from it by the veil.

Another thing worth mentioning is the names of these rooms. The NIV calls the inner room the Most Holy Place, which the KJV calls it the Holiest of all, and the NAS calls it the Holy of Holies. The term originates in the Hebrew.

*Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Put the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place.* Exodus 26:33-34

In this passage is the Hebrew term **kohdesh hekodeshim**. The first word means "holy" or "sanctified" (hence the term "sanctuary"). The Hebrew construction is common and used for emphasis. For example, a well known O.T. verse,

*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.* Isaiah 26:03

The Hebrew has, literally, "peace of peaces" so we might say "the most peaceful peace" or "the peaces of peaces" or "the most peace of all" (following the example of the three translations). An even less obvious examples is found in Genesis.

*Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills.* Genesis 14:10

Literally, the Hebrew has "pits of pits". Again we might call it the "most pitty place" or "the pity of pities" or "the most pity of all".

The gist of all this is that the whole tent was a holy place, set apart for God, but of all of the tabernacle, the place behind the veil was the most sacred. The significance of this will be brought out later.

*But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.* The author lists a number of things connected with the tabernacle and then says we can not discuss them in detail now. Why mention them then? Let's take a look at what is mentioned. We have already noted the major items, let's look at the others.

Three things are mentioned which were placed in the Ark, namely, *the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.*

The first of these is described in Exodus,

*Moses said, "This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of Egypt.'" So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the Lord to be kept for the generations to come." As the Lord commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna in front of the Testimony, that it might be kept. The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.* Exodus 16:32-35

The second is first mentioned in Exodus.

*Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.* Exodus 07:12

and then we have . . .

*The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the Lord's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his own staff. The Lord said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die."* Numbers 17:08-10

The third item, the tablets of stone on which the law was written we find in the following passages.

*He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets.* Deuteronomy 04:13

*The Lord wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the Lord gave them to me. Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the Lord commanded me, and they are there now.* Deuteronomy 10:04-05

Now we come to another apparent contradiction in the text. In Hebrews we had *this ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant*. However, by the time of the kings, we read that the Ark contained only one thing . . .

*There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.* 1 Kings 08:09

What happened to the other two items? Look at the previous passage again carefully! *Put the manna in front of the Testimony. Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony*. There is no contradiction as far as the O.T. record is concerned. Nowhere in the O.T. does it say that the first two items were in the Ark - they were in front of it.

This apparent discrepancy can not be solved linguistically. The O.T. definitely says they were before the Ark, the N.T. says they were in it. Perhaps the best way out of this difficulty is to note the words at the end of the section - *we cannot discuss these things in detail now*. The author might have given us an explanation of why he says these were in the Ark when the O.T. says they were not. The rabbinical tradition in Christ's time was that they were - perhaps they were put there later. At any rate there is no way of knowing because no one (who will admit it) knows where the Ark is today.

We have already spent too much time on the details. If we really wanted to know the details, she would go back to the book of Exodus and study them. The author of this epistle doesn't want us to look at the details but at the overall picture. What the point is here is the difference between the two Holy places and what this typifies.

### The Two Holy Places

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*When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations applying until the time of the new order.*

*Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

*Now when these things have been thus prepared, the priest are continually entering the outer tabernacle, performing the divine worship, but into the second only the high priest enters, once a year, not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that they way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both the gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience since they relate only to food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until a time of reformation.*

## Hebrews 09:06-10

Let us begin with the end of this passage. The things referred to here were of limited duration. They were to be in effect only until to time of reformation (KJV, NAS) of the new order. Now neither terms means what it means today. We talk of the time of the reformation when Luther broke away from the Roman Church. President Bush speaks of the new order in the world today. The term is used only here in the Bible and is **diorthosis** although a related word (the noun form) is found in Acts.

*When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation."* Acts 24:02

The word is a compound of **dia** which denoted in this context transition from one state to another and the word **orthosis** which means upright or straight such as in the following:

*Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.* Luke 07:43

*"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."* Luke 10:28

*So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth."* Luke 20:21

That, of course, is what is meant by reform, to make the transition to a correct or right state from one which is imperfect. God had planned this reformation from the beginning and this is even evidenced in the tabernacle.

Returning to the beginning of this section, we read that *when everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.* The import of what is said here is that the Holy Place was used on a regular continual basis. The Holy of Holies was not used except for the one exception noted above.

Even the high priest could not go into the Holy of Holies at his own choosing . . .

*The Lord said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover."* Leviticus 16:02

The only time the Holy of Holies could be entered was once a year and only with great preparation, some of which is described below.

*"Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take*

*them behind the curtain. He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die. He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover. "He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. No one is to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel. "Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites. "When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat . . .*

Leviticus 16:11-20

The caring for the daily sins of the people was taken care of outside the Holy of Holies. It was a very mysterious place. It was veiled off so that no one could see in nor, as we have seen, enter. The Holy of Holies was, itself, a symbol that the old covenant with the external worship would be one day replaced with a worship in which man could come before God in the "Most Holy Place". *The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.* Now, there was a "way" into the Most Holy Place as we have just seen, but only once a year and under strict rules.

This is the reason why we read in the three synoptic Gospels. . .

*And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split.*

Matthew 27:50-51

*With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*

Mark 15:37-38

*. . . for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last. Luke 23:45-46*

This was the "reformation" spoken of. When Jesus died, the veil was rent to two to show that the Most Holy Place was now accessible by man. But have you ever considered this - what do you suppose the Jews did about the torn veil? Not being believers, I would imagine that they sewed it up and continued as before. But the tearing of the veil was only a sign. It was a sign that we now have access into the real "Holy Place", the heavenly one, not the one in the temple which was only given to provide us with a picture.

*This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations applying until the time of the new order. The work of the priest of old was all conducted externally to the Holy of Holies and, as stated here, was just ritual! As it says, "external regulations". The Greek has "ordinances of the flesh. One really did not have to repent in the O.T. to have his or her sins forgiven (technically, covered up), one merely went through the motions of bringing a sacrifice to the temple. Unfortunately, there are many Christians whose relation with God is no more than this - external. The way to the Holy Place now is through the heart, not through ceremonial rites.*

### How Christ Entered the Most Holy Place

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*When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

*But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, of his own creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bull and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

*When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. As we begin with this section we are confronted with a problem. The NIV speaks of the good things that are already here while the KJV and the NAS have the good things to come. Which is it? The difference is not in which translation you read, but in which Greek text you read. The Nestle texts and the United Bible Society text have the NIV rendering. The "Received Text" from which the KJV was translated has "to come". There is no way, linguistically, to tell which is correct. Actually, there is not a great difference between them. If you consider that the writer wrote this after Christ had completed His work, then the good things had already come. On the other hand, if the writer was writing from the viewpoint of things when Christ came, they were still to come. To you and I it make no difference, the good things have come - as a result of Christ serving as our high priest.*

The important part of this passage is that Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies behind the Holy Place, but he enter "The Most Holy Place", a place in heaven *not man-made*. He serves as the perfect High Priest in the perfect Sanctuary to provide us with a perfect salvation.

*He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Now what is wrong with the blood of goats and calves? They had to be goats and calves without blemish - the pick of the flock. The answer is to be found in several ways.*

*"The multitude of your sacrifices--what are they to me?" says the Lord. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations--I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 01:11-18*

Now, you probably thought of sin as being black!

*When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand.*

Revelation 06:05

There are no scriptures that actually say that sin is black. Black is the color of death and sin leads to death, we often associate the color to sin. But in Isaiah it is said to be red or crimson. Why is it red? It is red because it is covered with the blood of these sacrificial animals. The blood did not take the sin away, it only covered them. This was true from the earliest of times. Even Job stated the following.

*My offenses will be sealed up in a bag; you will cover over my sin.* Job 14:17

In the Psalms we also have the following.

*Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.* Psalm 32:01

*You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins.* Selah  
Psalm 85:02

What men really yearned for was not the covering of their sins, but the washing away of it.

*Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.* Psalm 51:02

Now it is possible!

*And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.* Acts 22:16

So that is what Isaiah is prophesying when he says *they shall be as white as snow.* Instead of being covered with the blood of animals, they are cleansed (washed away) by the blood of Christ.

If you will permit me to use a rather crude example, the blood of animals was like lard in the frying pan of life - it was only useful for the short time it remained in the pan. On the other hand, Christ' blood is like the teflon lining on the non-stick pans - your sins simply slide off and are forgotten.

The section ends with the statement that *the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!* As we have noted before, the O.T. sacrifices were merely rituals. One did not really have to repent at heart in order to come to the sanctuary with an animal sacrifice. But with Christ it is different, there must be an internal cleansing. The passage speaks of the eternal Spirit. This certainly is not a N.T. concept.

*Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.* Isaiah 26:04

*How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.* Daniel 04-03

Not only is it found in the O.T., but it is to be observed in nature itself.

*For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities -- his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.* Romans 01:20

And it was written for the Gentiles to know as well as the Jews...



*...but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him--* Romans 16:26

Finally, we have been talking about Christ serving in the better sanctuary and we read in this connection. . .

*Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.* 2 Corinthians 05:01

And to make the issue complete, we must also note that this eternity applies to sinners as well.

*"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."* Matthew 25:46

*But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin."* Mark 03:29

### Why Christ Entered the Most Holy Place

*For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop,*

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled*

*And for this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of one who made it. For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats,*

*and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the t a b e r n a c l e and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

*both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

*with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people.\, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you." And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. and according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.*

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#### Hebrews 09:15-22

It is rather unfortunate that there are a diversity of words used in the three translations of this passage. We find the words will and testament and covenant being used interchangeably in them. The Greek word is **diatheke**, a word used very often in both the O.T. and the N.T. Its derivation is from a Greek compound which means "to give over to." In its technical sense, It means what the NIV translates it as a "will" - the instrument that instructs others what to do with our possessions after we have died.

A person may make a number of wills during a lifetime but we all know that (1) only one (the last one) has any legal authority and (2) none of them mean anything until the person dies. Like the bumper sticker says "we are spending our kids inheritance." Until we die, the will has no effect.

*For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant.* So Christ is the mediator of the new covenant. Recall what we noted about wills, it is the newest one that counts. If you read this carefully, Christ's "Last Will and Testament" is different than any other that has ever been made. When you and I make a will, we appoint someone to be its executor, usually along with one or more alternates. But this passage says that Christ serves as the executor of His own will! He is the mediator of this new will or covenant.

Again, recall that the will is that *those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance -- now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

*In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood.* There, that is what we have just been saying. There is something here that will pass our notice if we are not careful to note it here. We have been previously talking

about covenants in which one person agrees to do something and the other agrees to do something in return. We also talked about unconditional covenants which are one-sided. But a will is different. First, it is a one-sided covenant, but even more important, it bequeaths all of the possessions of the maker of the will to the heirs. When Christ died on the cross for our sins, he gave us all He had. This is why we are God's sons and brothers with Christ - we possess all that he had.

We will not deal with the rest of this passage on a verse by verse basis, but there is a concept here that you may have never appreciated. *In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.* A number of years back a translation of the Bible, "Good News for Modern Man" was issued which received considerable criticism - and rightly so. In order to make the Bible "more palatable" to mankind, the translators had "paraphrased out" all references to blood. After all, blood is not a pleasant sight and is offensive to some. *Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.* How can one translate a Bible and exclude any reference to blood?

But this is not the concept we are attempting to show. Sometime when you have some spare time, go back read the description of the tabernacle in Exodus. Read the description of Solomon's temple in 1 Kings. From the description given, one would visualize these places as being very beautiful. They were not! Why not? What does this passage say? *In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies.* As soon as these places were dedicated, they had blood sprinkled all over them! This is one of the prices of sin! Can you imagine the picture that this must have presented to the Israelites? They donated their gold and silver and jewels and fine cloth and all for the building of these sanctuaries and then, because of their sins, they were immediately defaced with the smearing of blood. What a picture of the price of sin! It is unfortunate that we have no such visual reminder today.

### Christ Now Appears in the Most Holy Place for Us

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*It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again,*

*It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself*

*Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in heaven to be cleansed with these things, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the*

*the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*

*often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

*high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood not his own. Otherwise He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgement, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.*

#### Hebrews 09:23-28

We shall not comment in detail on this passage. Much of what we have already covered applies here as well. We shall make some observations. We have been talking about the heavenly sanctuary that Christ serves in. This section began with that concept . . .

*The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.* Hebrews 08:01

And finally, in this passage, we are again told straight out that this is where Christ is now serving. . . *he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

There is a phrase in this passage that needs to be explained. The text says that *now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages*. But we do not believe we have come to the "end of the age". The disciples wanted to know when that would be. . .

*As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"* Matthew 24:03

Has the end of the age come and we didn't know it? The answer to this question is dependant on one letter, the letter s. The text says He has appeared at the end of the ages. The word is plural. Not the following passages.

*in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. Ephesians 02:07*

*and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. Ephesians 03:09*

These two passages teach us that many ages have passed and that there are many ages to come. In some of my other studies I have emphasized the difference in the scriptures between "the last days" and "the last day". The last day and the end of the age refer to the same time. But days and ages refer to many eventful times in man's history. The end of the ages referred to here is to be taken as the same as that below.

*the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. Colossians 01:26*

We look now at the close of this chapter in which we find written the following. *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.* The first part of this statement is nothing new to us. But the last part is troubling. It tells us that Christ is coming a second time to bring us salvation. I thought I was already saved! You, no doubt, thought that you were already saved!

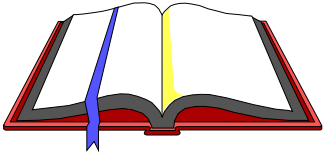
The author of Hebrews is not the only one who expresses this idea. Paul does also.

*And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Romans 13:11*

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life--in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing. Philippians 02:12-16*

In a previous lesson we noted that Christ has paid the price for all of our sins and, in this sense, has saved us. But in another sense, you can not be forgiven for a sin you have not yet committed. When you do commit it, Christ will intercede for you with God the Father and it, too, will be forgiven. In that sense, you are not fully saved until you go to be with the Lord - or, as in this passage, until the Lord comes back for us. Not only will we then be complete spiritually with regard to salvation, but in soul and body as well.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER TEN

The first part of this chapter continues the theme that we have been studying for the last few chapters. For this reason we shall not comment on it verse by verse but simply note some particulars as we proceed.

### Christ's Sacrifice for Us is All We Need

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am--it is written about me in the scroll--I have come to do your will, O God.'"*

*For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God.*

*For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having ones been cleansed, would no longer have consciousness of sin? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired, but a body thou hast prepared for me; in the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure. The I said, 'Behold I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God'"*

## Hebrews 10:01-07

This passage ends with a quotation from Psalm 40, namely

*Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced ; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require. Then I said, "Here I am, I have come--it is written about me in the scroll. I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."* Psalm 40:06-08

Which does not read quite the same. Below we have written the two passages one above the other, the passage from Psalms being in italics.

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,  
*"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,*  
 but a body you prepared for me;  
*but my ears you have pierced ;*  
 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.  
*burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.*  
 Then I said, 'Here I am --it is written about me in the scroll--I have come  
 to do your will, O God.'  
*Then I said, "Here I am, I have come--it is written about me in the scroll. I desire  
 to do your will, O my God;*

The first and third phrase are essentially the same, the fourth is about the same except that the words "I have come" are omitted in the Hebrews passage.

But consider the following passage:

*Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not; but a body hast thou prepared me; whole burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin thou didst not require. Then I said, Behold I have come: in the volume of the book it is written concerning me, I desire to do your will, Oh my God, and they law in the midst of my heart.*  
 Psalm 40:06-08 LXX

When the passage is read from the Greek O.T. (LXX) the citation is virtually identical. In other words the author of Hebrews referred to the Greek version. But why? Is the LXX inspired and the Hebrew not? What are we to think?

First, you must understand what the Hebrew text is saying. This is explained in the book of Exodus.

*"These are the laws you are to set before them: "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free, without paying anything. . . "But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life."*  
 Exodus 21:01-02,05-06

If a Hebrew servant delighted in his master and wished to remain with him for life, then his ear was pierced as a sign that he belonged to the master, "body and soul". It was a most earnest sign of affection and dedication.

When you consider it, then, the two phrases are equivalent. For Christ to serve the Father "body and soul", He first had to have a body - and God prepared it.

Does this really explain the difference? Note the one other difference - The Hebrew says I have come to do your will while the Greek says I have come I desire to do your will. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Greek translators have taken this statement in Psalms and translated it from a past event to an event what (at that time) was still to take place. In the Hebrew of Psalm 40 the promise was made - the piercing of the ear. In the Greek, some 1000 years later (and 400 years before Christ) the words are turned into prophecy regarding the fulfillment of this with the incarnation of Christ.

*First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

*Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

*After saying the above, "sacrifices and burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast not desired nor hast thou taken pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, "Behold I have come to do thy will," he takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we who have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ Jesus once for all.*

Hebrews 10:08-10

These verses summarize what we have just been considering.

### Christ Our High Priest - a Summary

*Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same*

*And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can*

*And every high priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can*



sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down on the right hand of God, waiting for that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind will I write them," He then says "and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

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#### Hebrews 10:11-18

This section concludes the comparison of Christ Our High Priest with the Levitical priesthood. Several O.T. passages are quoted in this summary. The first is in Psalms.

*The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle. Arrayed in holy majesty, from the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."*

Psalm 110:01-04

You might note that we have had quotations from this Psalm before in Hebrews. It is used here to emphasize the fact that, which Christ is now seated at the right hand of God, He will not remain there forever. He will return as we have been promised in other Scriptures.

The other quotation is from Jeremiah.

*"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the Lord. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

Jeremiah 31:33-34

You might also note that this Scripture has been quoted below. In other words, this section summarizes what we have been studying for the past several chapters. The summary is important because we are now going to get to the practical part of this epistle.

### What We Ought to Do "Therefore"

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*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*

*Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*

## Hebrews 10:19-25

THEREFORE - what is it "there for"? Two reasons are listed, namely (1) *since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place* and (2) *since we have a great priest over the house of God*. We have spend several chapters discussing the difference between Christ, our High Priest and those of the Old Covenant and how, because of Him, we can enter the Most Holy Place since the veil has been rent. Because of this great work, we are urged to do a number of things.

First *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith*

You may remember that this is the thought that introduced the long study we have had concerning Jesus our High Priest (Hebrews 4:16). Second *let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess*, and thirdly, *let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds*. Let us examine these three things which we have been exhorted to do.

Before we can do anything with or for God, we must "draw near". To do this we need, first of all, a sincere heart (NIV, NAS) or a true heart (KJV). The KJV is literal, the Greek word means "true". The Greek word **alethinos** is derived from the Greek **lanthano** which means to be hidden or, hence to be unaware. We find this in a number of Scriptures.

*Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret.* Mark 07:24

*Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed.* Luke 08:47

*The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.* Acts 26:26

*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.* Hebrews 13:02

*But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. . . But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.* 2 Peter 3:05,08

The word we are looking at has an alpha in front of it, so it means "not being that way" - not being secretive, not being forgetful or naive. When you consider that, to the Greeks and the Hebrews of the day, the "heart" was what we might consider the mind, the term would refer to be open minded. We need such an open mind when we draw near to God so that He might put His thoughts into it.

With open minds we will have the *full assurance of faith* that is needed, for we know that

*. . . faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.*  
Romans 10:17

Once our minds have been opened and we have heard and accepted the message and been purified so that we are fit to draw near to God, we must, secondly, hold fast! The KJV and NAS say hold fast . . . without wavering, the NIV says hold unswervingly. We have seen this term before in Hebrews 3:6 and 3:14. But here an adverb is used with the verb, **aklines**. It is found only here in the N.T. Without the alpha prefix it is found several places. One place is in Luke.

*Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*  
Luke 09:58

The root of the word is the word for "bed" and hence the verb means to lie down (or sometimes to bow down). We are to hold fast and never let our guard down. To consider an example, watch a boxer in the ring. He can go for nine rounds and be winning when, for one split second he lets his guard down and the opponent lands a blow that knocks him out. We are not to "hold fast" some of the time, or most of the time, but all of the time - without a second of letdown.

But having done this, we come to the third thing we are to do. It is, in a sense, the most important. Now the first two are extremely important. If we do not "come near" we will have nothing to "hold fast" to. If we do not "hold fast", we can not take step three. We say that step three is the most important in the sense that too few Christians really take heed of step three.

The third step involves several actions: (1) our actions toward others, and (2) our actions with respect to ourselves. There is that old saying that says JOY is "Jesus first, Others second and You last". We have this idea here. We must first draw near and hold fast to Jesus Christ. Then we are to think of others. We are to *consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds*. While the NIV has spur, the NAS has stimulate, and the KJV has provoke. The Greek word is uncommon, **paroksusmos**, which is found only here in the N.T. It is found twice in the LXX.

*In furious anger and in great wrath the Lord uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."*  
Deuteronomy 29:28

*I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety.*  
Jeremiah 32:37

The verb form of the word is found several places in the N.T.

*While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.*  
Acts 17:16

*It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*  
1 Corinthians 13:05

In fact, this is the only place in the Bible where it is used in a good sense. It is no wonder that there are variations in its translation. One has to find a good word to replace words like wrath and distress and anger. Note that we are not looking for

antonyms but synonyms that have a good sense. The KJV's provoke is too literal and not positive enough. The NAS's stimulate is a "good" enough word, but not very strong. We have an English word, paroxysm, which is a transliteration of the Greek. If you don't know what that means, it is not a very good term to use. Its synonyms include attack, convulsion, fit, seizure, spasm, eruption, explosion, and outburst, all of which convey the strength of the word, but not the proper meaning for this context. Perhaps we might paraphrase this as follows: *consider how we might pump up each others adrenalin ...* We need to really encourage each other to continue doing good deeds and loving one another.

Have you considered how necessary this is? Keeping a church alive and well is a tremendous task. Then there are a fair number of members in any church whose only function is to warm the pews on Sunday mornings. This means that there are a quite a few in the church who must work consistently and a few who must devote great effort to keeping the church going. If someone does not look out for these workers and pump up their spirits once in a while, it is very easy for them to become discouraged and quit. We talk a lot about Christian love and brotherhood - talk is cheap! When it really comes down to loving all of the brethren, it is no easy matter. again, we need to encourage one another if all of the brethren are to feel that they are loved.

This is what we are to do for others. Now, for ourselves, *let us not give up meeting together*. The NAS has not forsaking our own assembling together and the KJV reads much like the NAS. Forsake is a painful word. We find it in passages like those below.

*And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" --which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* Mark 15:34

*. . . Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. . . . At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.*

2 Timothy 04:10,16

With "T.V. churches" available, the temptation to forsake the real church is even the more stronger. Christians are not meant to be alone. Christians must meet together regularly. The more anti-Christian the world becomes, the more important it is for us to band together for strength. It is a time-worn example, but it still fits. A group of coals, piled together in the forge, can be used to heat, melt, and form steel. A coal, removed from the forge and placed by itself soon grows cold and is of no use. The September 6 devotional in the *Daily Bread* hits the nail on the head...

#### PREVENTING ACCIDENTS

*But concerning brotherly love . . . we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more. - 1 Thess. 4:9,10.*

According to a study by the Centers for Disease Control, injuries are the nation's fourth leading cause of death. In 1985 alone, 57 million people in the United States were injured, at the cost of about \$ 158 billion! The study explained that many of the accidents could have been prevented by following some simple precautions.

This made me wonder how many spiritual mishaps in the church could have been prevented by showing a little love and by cautioning one another. A new believer gets tangled in false doctrine and we say

critically, "I don't know what happened to her. She seemed to be a growing Christian." But if someone had taken the time to instruct and nurture her in the faith, things could have been different. A mature believer falls into sin and someone says, "I never expected him to succumb to that temptation." But greater sensitivity to others' needs and more expressions of loving concern could have prevented the fall. Yes, many spiritual mishaps could be avoided. A word of warning by a concerned brother or sister could keep a person from yielding to temptation. Time spent in prayer could help that one remain true to Christ. brotherly love and wise precaution go a long way in preventing spiritual accidents. - P R V

*Someone gave me a cheering word,  
Of which I was in need;  
And faith was bolstered once again  
By Just that tiny deed. -Sheldon*

We have been told what not to do, not to neglect our times of fellowship. Next we are told that such a practice is not uncommon. *Some are in the habit of doing this.* Habit is from the Greek noun **ethos**. We find the related verb in the following passages:

*Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd.* Matthew 27:15

*He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.* Luke 04:16

*As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,* Acts 17:02

It describes what one does on a regular basis. It describes one habit pattern. The noun is found in several passages.

*Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.* John 19:40

*"I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges.* Acts 26:16

In these passages where the noun is found, it almost has the effect of law. It denotes a strong practice of doing something. It is the source of our English word ethic.

There are some legalistic Christians that insist that you must be at church every time the doors are open. I don't know what these people would do if they belonged to a large church where there are three services on Sunday morning! But, of course, legalistic people are not the ones to cause a church to grow - so they need not worry. But seriously, the admonitions in not that we should never miss church. The admonition is against those people who make it a practice not to attend church. It refers to people who only go to church if there isn't something better to do on Sunday morning.

Finally, we are not to neglect our church attendance, but we are supposed to

*encourage one another.* The word encourage (echort in KJV) comes from the same Greek word used for the "Comforter"

*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;* John 14:16

*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* John 14:26 KJV

*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:* John 15:26 KJV

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* John 16:07 KJV

That is one of the primary purposes of coming together as a church, that we might be a comfort to one another. The section closes with the words *and all the more as you see the Day approaching*. The NIV has the word Day capitalized. They have done this because it refers to a particular day.

*"It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.* Luke 17:30

*This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.* Romans 02:16

*The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.* Romans 13:12

*He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 01:08

*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. . . . so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ,* Philippians 01:6,10

This day is fast approaching and, as it come nearer, times will get worse and worse and we will have more and more need of the comfort we can provide each other. When one looks at the world in 1990, he might be inclined to think that may the humanists are right - "Look, Russia is no longer a serious enemy, Communism is falling, freedom is breaking out!" Don't kid yourself. We are just looking at the silver lining of the cloud that is going to cover the earth when "the day" is about to come.

*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge*

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge*

*For it we go on sinnig willfully after receiving the knowledge of truth,*

*of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

*of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgement, and the fury of a fire which will consume adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." and again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

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Hebrews 10:26-31

This section begins with a very grave warning - *if we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.* It deals with those who deliberately sin. The NAS and KJV have willfully. The word is **hekousios**. It is used only one other place in the N.T.

*Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;*

1 Peter 05:02

Other forms of the word are found in the following:

*But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced.*

Philemon 01:14



*For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope*

Romans 08:20

*If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.*

1 Corinthians 09:17

So this passage deals with the person who sins by choice, not by compulsion. We all sin. We sin 'most every day. But it is not because we want to. It is the old sin nature at war with our new spiritual nature. Sometimes the sin nature wins out. We are not discussing this. We are talking about the person who sins and doesn't care at all. In fact, he or she probably plans to do what they do, knowing full well that it is sin.

But look at what will happen to this person! *A fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.*

It must be that we are talking about the unsaved. But the text clearly states that it refers to *we who have received the knowledge of the truth.*

The we would certainly indicate that this is referring to Christians.

Let us consider three passages which deal with the fire of judgement.

*The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"*

Luke 12:42-49

Three kind of people are dealt with in this passage. The first will be *cut to pieces and assigned a place with the unbelievers.* The second will *be beaten with many blows.* The third will *be beaten with few blows.* Of these, only the first is assigned a place with the unbelievers, the others are only punished for they misdeeds. Note that all appear to receive some punishment.

*Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of*

*slaughter. You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.* James 05:01-06

James has much condemnation for these people. Their sins will eat at their flesh *like fire*. But there is no indication that these people will not be saved. So, finally, we come to the last passage.

*If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.* 1 Corinthians 03:12-15

The problem is that many Christians do not feel that they have any responsibility and can do as they please. They can! Didn't Paul say:

*"Everything is permissible for me"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"--but I will not be mastered by anything.* 1 Corinthians 06:12

*"Everything is permissible"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible"--but not everything is constructive.* 1 Corinthians 10:23

Christ's blood has paid the penalty for our sins. We have been forgiven every sin we ever committed. we will be forgiven every sin that we commit in the future. But that does not give us the liberty to go out and willfully sin!

The question is asked of us if *a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?*

Again, we must emphasize the difference between punishment and death. This is to be seen in the following passages that all have to do with Christians and all have to do with punishment.

*I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete. You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as he. For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down, I will not be ashamed of it. I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters!* 1 Corinthians 10:02-09

*It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who*

*do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.* 1 Thessalonians 04:03-06

*In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect ~~love~~.* 1 John 04:17-18

In fact things were really bad in Corinth, to the extent that Paul wrote...

*Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.* 1 Corinthians 11:27-30

God went so far as to take some of the "saints" at Corinth home with Him rather than to allow them to continue in the grave sin. When you put this altogether, you have the meaning of this passage.

*For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. These are very sobering words. Remember Christian brother - Jesus Christ has paid the ultimate cost for your sins so that you are no longer condemned to Hell. But you are still responsible for leading a life as free from sin as is possible for you. If you just go your way without regard to sin, you will still be saved, but you will not go unpunished.*

### The Call to Persevere

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*Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you*

*But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing*

*But remember the former days, when after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for*

*knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.*

*in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

*yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of an endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come and not delay. But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.*

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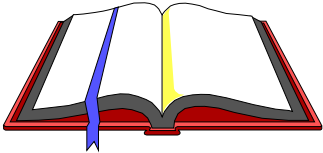
Hebrews 10:32-39

It would seem that this section is not addressed to us. *Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.* I trust that none of us have gone through the afflictions noted here. Remember that this epistle is addressed, primarily, to the Christian Jews of the first century. They certainly did undergo such afflictions. There are those in various parts of the world that have gone through such afflictions in modern times.

What are we to do with this section that have not undergone such afflictions? This does not apply to us - or does it? It ought to apply all the more to us! If those who had suffered such great affliction did not shrink back in their faith, how much more we are responsible for not shrinking back. In addition, there is a strong likelihood that we may suffer such afflictions if the Lord tarries much longer.

We must be faithful! If we are to be faithful, we must know what faith really is, and this is the subject of the next chapter.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER ELEVEN

We come to the best known chapter of this epistle - the "Faith Chapter". There is good reason for it to be called this since it so precisely defines what real faith is. We begin with the basic definition.

### Faith Defined

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

Hebrews 10:01

So begins the definition of Faith. Let us begin in an even more elementary manner by considering the word itself. The word is **pistis**. It is derived from the Greek word **peitho** which means to persuade. We find it used in connection with Paul on a number of occasions.

*Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.* Acts 18:04

*And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all.* Acts 19:26

*They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.* Acts 28:23

The word for faith then derives from this and refers to those who have been "convinced". Paul wrote to Timothy,

*I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.* 1 Timothy 01:05

This might have been translated "I have faith that this lives in you also." With this background, let's see what the text has as a basic definition. It is defined by two terms:

1) <i>being sure of what we hope for</i>	NIV
<i>the substance of things hoped for</i>	KJV
<i>the assurance of things hoped for</i>	NAS

*putting our full confidence in the things we hope for  
the title deed of the things hoped for  
the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen*

Phillips  
Wuest

LB

One ought to be careful with the Living Bible expression and not interpret something as anything. The only thing we can be sure of, or have faith in, are those things that God has promised. We note that difference in Wuest's translation, with the title deed. This aspect of faith is but two words in the Greek - we will look at each.

**Hupostasis** is the second word in the Greek but gets translated first. In a technical sense, it refers to a foundation. The word itself consists of a preposition under and the word for to stand - a foundation is what stands under everything else. The word is found in the following passages.

*For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we--not to say anything about you--would be ashamed of having been so confident.*  
2 Corinthians 09:04

*In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool.*  
2 Corinthians 11:17

as well as in two places in Hebrews that we have already studied.

*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*  
Hebrews 01:03

*We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.*  
Hebrews 03:14

Confidence comes from having a sure foundation. You recall the parable -

*I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."*

Luke 06:47-49

And that foundation?

*For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*  
1 Corinthians 03:11

Having a sure foundation allows us to have faith that what has been promised to us - what we hope for, will come. Now, the bottom line to all this is that faith is not something that is "wishy-washy" or something that is to be had without any basis. We have faith by having a foundation.

Now the other term that is used to describe faith.

2) *being certain of what we do not see  
the evidence of things not seen.  
the conviction of things not seen.  
being certain of things we cannot see  
the proof of things which are not being seen  
...even though we cannot see it up ahead.*

NIV  
KJV  
NAS  
Phillips  
Wuest  
LB

The key Greek word for this section is **elenkos**. It is usually used in a bad sense. Take the following as examples.

*Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.* 1 Timothy 05:20

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* 2 Timothy 3:16

*But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.* James 02:09

What does this word mean when used in the good sense? The answer lies in the basic meaning of the word. To rebuke or convict a person, you must show that they are guilty. You must put together facts that show a person to be guilty and in need of rebuke. The basic meaning of the word, then, is the process of laying down the facts which lead to conviction. In this case, we take the facts that we have been given in the Scriptures as those which lead us to the conviction that the facts which we can not see and verify are also true.

If you put your hand on the side of a kettle of water and pull it away quickly because it is burning your hand, you can be convinced that the water inside is also hot, even though you can not see it.

But, we have been technical long enough. The rest of the chapter deals with the definition in terms of human experience - examples.

*This is what the  
ancients were  
commended for.*

*For by it the elders  
obtained a good report.*

*For by it men of old  
gained approval*

Hebrews 11:02

The Universe

*By faith we understand  
that the universe was  
formed at God's  
command, so that what  
is seen was not made*

*Through faith we  
understand that the  
worlds were framed by  
the word of God, so that  
things which are seen*

*By faith we understand  
that the universe was  
formed at God's  
command, so that what  
is seen was not made*

*out of what was visible.*

*were not made of things  
which do appear.*

*out of what was visible.*

Hebrews 11:03

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. . . Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.*

Genesis 01:01,02:01-02

In the Hebrew text of Genesis 01:01 is the verb **bara** which, universally in the O.T. means create out of nothing. No fundamental Christian has (or should have) any doubt that God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in therein. No fundamental Christian has (or should have) any doubt that God created all this for a purpose and that this purpose is laid out for us in the Scriptures. This is one thing that we all should be able to accept by faith. This, then, is the first example of faith.

### Abel's Faith

*By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.*

*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

*By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.*

Hebrews 11:04

We are all familiar with the story of Abel, but it won't hurt to review it.

*Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering. . .*

Genesis 04:02-04

The author of Hebrews tells us that *by faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did*. What does this mean? The account in Genesis says nothing about faith!

We have already seen the Biblical definition of faith. Faith is based on the conviction



that God means what He says and that He will do as He promises. We will not embark into a study of Genesis to show that God expected a blood offering, not an offering taken from the ground which God had cursed. Abel had faith that God meant what He said. Cain, on the other hand, must have not had the strong conviction of God's word. Cain represents many today who interpret God's will the way they want to rather than according to what it says.

But the notice about Abel does not end here. *And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.* Now what does this mean? How does a dead man "still speak?"

*Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."* Genesis 04:08-10

Abel did not die in vain. From the account of Cain and Abel, we learn the difference between doing God's will and doing it our own way.

### Enoch's Faith

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*By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.  
6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

*By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

*By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before he was taken up he was pleasing to God. And 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 seek Him.*

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Hebrews 11:05-06

Next we come to Enoch. Now the Bible tells us very little about this man.

*When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. . . . When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. And after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God*

took him away.

Genesis 05:18,21-24

In the book of Jude we have a strange remark . . .

*Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones" Jude 01:14*

We have no record of Enoch's prophecy, but apparently, he was a prophet of God. What we do have in Genesis is that Enoch walked with God. The only other person of whom this is said is Noah (whom is next on the list).

*This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Genesis 06:09*

It is not hard to see that walking with God and pleasing God go hand in hand. Both require faith in God. In the Genealogy of Genesis, there is no mention of most of the others seeking out God. They just were born, had kids, and died. There are a lot of people who do the same thing today. But it was different with Enoch and God rewarded him for it.

### Noah's Faith

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*By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

*By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became and heir to the righteousness which is according to faith.*

---

Hebrews 11:07

We now come to Noah. This is, perhaps, the easiest illustration of faith.

*But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Genesis 06:08-09*

Noah, like Enoch, walked with God. But God gave Noah a very important job to do.

*So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out." Genesis 06:13-14*

You must consider these instructions in context. Up until the flood, there had never been any rain on the earth. We can not really tell exactly where Noah lived, but it is likely hundreds of miles from any sea (if there were any before the flood) large enough to float such an ark.

Noah labored for 120 years building this ark. We can surmise that he was the laughing stock of his neighborhood. "Hey Noah, where do you plan to go boating?" It would take an enormous amount of faith to spend such a long period of time building such a large ark. Twice in the Genesis account we read the words . . .

*Noah did everything just as God commanded him.*

Genesis 06:22

*And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.*

Genesis 07:05

Thus Noah's faith saved him and his family. It also condemned the rest of the world. Don't you suppose that, in 120 years, Noah had time to get the word out? Others could have built arks - but they didn't. They had no faith - only Noah and his family. As a result,

*Every living thing that moved on the earth perished--birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.*

*Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died.*

Genesis 07:21-22

Thus we have only Noah and his family!

*Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.*

Genesis 07:23

### Abraham's Faith

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*By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

*By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for a city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*

## Hebrews 11:08-10

In these three verses we have two "by faiths". Altogether there are three of them associated with Abraham and another for Sarah. The first tells us how he went out as God requested him to do.

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran.* Genesis 12:01-04

For one hundred years Abraham moved from place to place and never had a home of his own. He never was able to settle down in a land of his own. One hundred years later we read . . .

*Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east. Altogether, Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.* Genesis 25:05-08

When you have the time, read from Genesis 12 to Genesis 25 and see if Abraham ever complained. It is true that he made mistakes. He was impatient about the promised son he was to receive. But he never complained nor doubted God.

Abraham, we are told was looking for something quite different, *he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.* Abraham did not spend those 100 years looking for something he could see, he looked for something he could not see - *being certain of what he could not see.*

*He was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.* All three translations have him looking for a city... The Greek word is **ekdechomai** which means to receive from (someone). It also came to mean to expect to receive from and hence to wait for.

*No one, then, should refuse to accept him. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.* 1 Corinthians 16:11

*Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.* James 05:07

*While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.* Acts 17:16

Note what the above three passages all have in common. The person is not waiting - hoping that he might receive something. They all refer to people who are waiting to

receive something that they know is going to come. Paul awaited his fellow workers, knowing they would come when it was time. The farmer waited for his crop to grow and since he expects to have one, he is patient all through the fall and spring.

Abraham waited for what he had faith was going to come - even though he could not see it. He believed in spite of not seeing it because a city that is built by God is not visible, it is in heaven. Abraham didn't worry about getting a possession in the land of Canaan. He believed that, through faith, he would receive a far more important possession.

### Abraham and Sarah's Faith

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*By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be*

*Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath*

*By faith even Sarah herself receive the ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she consider Him faithful who had promised; therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. all these died in faith, without receiving the promise, but having seen them and welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called*

*called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.*

*prepared for them a city.*

*their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

Hebrews 11:11-16

There is a problem as we begin this section. The NIV says "By faith Abraham ..." while the other translations have "By faith ... Sarah ...". Which is correct? The answer is that the NIV paraphrases this section. The section is still considering the faith of Abraham and, by faith, he did receive a son. However, the paraphrase slights Sarah. *By faith even Sarah herself receive the ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.* The verse clearly speaks of Sarah's faith. Let us compare Abraham and Sarah in this regard.

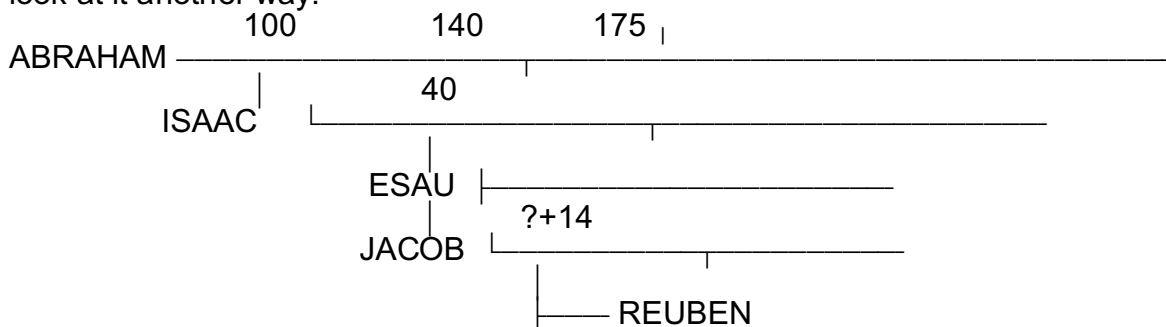
*Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?"*  
 Genesis 17:17

When God promised Abraham a son, he laughed. He was too old, Sarah was too old. How could this be? But then we read about Sarah's reaction.

*Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure?" Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."*  
 Genesis 18:11-15

Sarah's immediate reaction was the same as Abraham's. Note, however what else is said, *Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh."* We have no record of Abraham repenting because of his laughter, but Sarah did. The thought, after the initial reaction, was very sobering to her.

God promised Abraham (and Sarah) that they would have *descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore*. Did they? How many Jews are there today? How many have there been? Then, when you consider that the Christian is Abraham's spiritual descendant, how many does he have? But look at it another way.



└ etc.

Abraham was 100 years old before he had Isaac. Ishmael, not show above, was born sometime earlier. Isaac was 40, and Abraham 140 years old before Esau and Jacob were born. So far (as far as we know), Abraham has 4 children (plus, problem some children of Ishmael). We don't know how old Jacob was when he begin having sons, but we do know he had to be a teenager and that he served seven years twice for his wives. This would mean that either Abraham was very old or else he had died before Reuben and the others came along. During their lifetimes, Abraham and Sarah did not see their descendants as the stars of the sky! They had but a few.

The text tells us that *they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance*. What this means is that they say a few of the descendants and realized that they were the beginning of the promise. They say the beginning, but the complete fulfillment was off in the distance.

*They admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.* This was the attitude of Abraham and Sarah, as well as others in their line. The Greek says what they did - **homologeō** which means to say the same (thing).

The word is fairly common in the N.T. and means to promise...

*"As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased.* Acts 7:17

to admit...

*However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,*

Acts 24:14

to profess...

*For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.* Romans 10:10

and, occasionally, to praise...

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name.*

Hebrews 13:15

(Here the NIV has "confess" but the KJB has "give thanks" as does the NAS) Here the word means to "admit", or to "agree with each other". "Agree" to what? to the fact that they were both *aliens and strangers* here on earth. Is there a difference between these two terms? There is a difference, but the two terms go together. The same terms are applied to us.

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household,* Ephesians 02:19

but this is used in an opposite sense, we will return to this later. The terms are used elsewhere in the N.T. for Jewish Christians.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.* Peter 01:01

*Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.* 1 Peter 02:11

The difference in terms may be seen in their O.T. origins.

*Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.*

Genesis 15:13

This term could also be translated as alien. It means that you are different than most of the people around you. It was the case of Israel in Egypt. Perhaps the word strangers is the most fitting word. The Israelites were "strange" people. Their descendant was this strange man (Abraham) who came from the land of the Caldeans with this strange language. More than this, these "strange" people had the silly notion that there was only one God and that one could not worship no other. To the inhabitants of Canaan, these were strange people indeed. They just did not fit in!

As Christians, we do not fit into our society either. As time goes on, we fit in less and less. More and more a person who expresses a living relation with God through Jesus Christ and believes that the Bible is more than just a collection of folk lore is regarded as weird!

*I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they lived as aliens.* Exodus 06:04

The other term (aliens in the above passage) is best translated as sojourners except that the term is little used today. Few know what it really means. It is derived from a Latin expression which means to stay for a short time. The following passage is a good one to illustrate its usage with respect to Israel.

*"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants.* Leviticus 25:23

The land of Canaan did not belong to Israel - God just permitted them to live there for a while. It was God's land. To us as Christians, the "world is not our home, we're just a passing through."

To summarize this, Abraham and Sarah and their offspring recognized, by faith, that they were a different people and a transient people. God simply put them where they were for a while to serve His purpose. God had a place for them to live where they would not be different or transient, a place not seen, but a place they believed awaited them

As Christians, we too share this hope (or, at least, we should).

*If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity*



*to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country--a heavenly one. Think of it! There was nothing that prevented Abraham and Sarah, or Isaac and Rebecca, or Jacob and his wives, from returning to Ur of the Chaldeas (or to Haran). God did not chain them down in the land of Canaan. They would have been much better off had they returned if one speaks in a material sense. The reason they stayed as strangers and sojourners in the land of Canaan was because they believed that God would eventually give them the place to dwell that He had promised.*

*Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. We will not comment on this last part of this section other than to note the tense of the verb - prepared. God has already done it. This applies to us as well. If we have real faith it means *being certain of things we cannot see* - being certain that God has a place prepared for us as well.*

*In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.* John 14:02-03

### Abraham's Ultimate Faith

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*By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.*

*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promise was offering up his only begotten son; it is he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he received him back as a type.*

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Hebrews 11:17-19

*But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."* Genesis 21:12

God promised Abraham that Isaac would be the son through whom the blessing would come (and not Ishmael). Abraham believed this. But then, God told Abraham to do something else.

*Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." Early the next morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"* Genesis 22:01-07

God asked Abraham to offer Isaac up as a sacrifice. But how could Abraham receive God's promise though Isaac if Isaac was dead? In spite of this situation, we note that Abraham wasted no time in obeying God's command.

There is a lesson to be learned from this. Why, do you suppose, did Abraham respond so quickly? Why didn't he wait a few days, or a week or more?

- ] He always obeyed God immediately.
- ] He needed time to think it over first.
- ] He was afraid if he waited, he wouldn't do it.
- ] All of the above.

I believe that the answer is the last one. As Christians we need to obey God without first questioning whether God is right or not; God is always right. But God may ask us to do things we would rather not do. The longer we wait to do them, the harder it is to do them. I am sure that one of the thoughts on Abraham's mind was to do this task as quickly as possible. Why? We will see later.

*Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.*

Genesis 22:08

What did Abraham mean by this answer to Isaac's question? This is not a study of the book of Genesis so we will not take a long time to answer this. Suffice it to say here that Abraham went in faith that, regardless of what he did with respect to Isaac, God would keep his promise.

*Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.* From this text we would assume that Abraham actually believed that he was going to have to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice. This was the ultimate test since God had never asked for a human sacrifice before. Abraham had faith that God would then raise Isaac from the dead. God had never required a human sacrifice before and neither had He raised anyone from the dead before. The first resurrection did not occur until much later.

*Just as Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, the woman whose son Elisha had brought back to life came to beg*

*the king for her house and land. Gehazi said, "This is the woman, my lord the king, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life."* 2 Kings 08:05

God kept his promise although not in the way that Abraham (probably) envisioned.

*"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:08-11

God does not always do things the way we expect. Abraham expected God to raise Isaac from the dead. God had a different way which better satisfied His plan and he executed it. You see, God wanted to give us a picture of the substitutionary death of the Lamb of God and He did so with Isaac.

Finally, the account in Genesis tells us that God tested Abraham. What kind of test was it? It was a test of Abraham's faith. Did he have real faith? Abraham passed with flying colors - would you?

### Isaac's and Jacob's Faith

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*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.*

*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come. By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.*

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Hebrews 11:20-21

First, concerning Isaac, we are told that he blessed Jacob and Esau *in regard to the future.*

Concerning Jacob, Isaac gave the following blessing:

*So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness--an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed."* Genesis 27:27-29

Concerning Esau, Isaac gave this "blessing":

*His father Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."*

Genesis 27:39-40

This does not sound like much of a "blessing". It sounds more like a curse to me. You must read this passage carefully (in the Greek text). The text says that *Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau*. It does not say that Isaac blessed Jacob and Isaac blessed Esau. In the Greek, this sentence has a compound object and hence only one blessing is involved. Secondly, you must understand the term blessing. It is from the Greek **eulogeo** which means, literally, to speak well. It often means to ask God to give "good things" to another, but it may also speak of invoking God to do good things through another. This he did through Jacob and by not giving the job to Esau.

We must not miss the point of this passage. The point is that Isaac, as he lay on his death bed, still believed that God was going to provide what was yet unseen and yet hoped for. Thus he passed this faith and hope on to his seed.

*Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the Angel who has delivered me from all harm--may he bless these boys. May they be called by my name and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase greatly upon the earth." When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." He blessed them that day and said, "In your name will Israel pronounce this blessing: 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'" So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.*

Genesis 48:15-20

The primary point of this second verse is the same as that of the first. Jacob, as his days were coming to an end retained the faith of Abraham and Isaac and passed it on. Why, however, is the blessing to Ephraim and Manasseh mentioned (i.e. Joseph's sons) and not the blessing to Joseph himself and his eleven brothers?

In Genesis 49, the "blessings" for the twelve sons are given. Of these, (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Dan, and Benjamin) 6 were uncomplimentary, (Gad, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali) were neutral and only two were lengthy and complimentary. These are the blessing for Joseph and Judah. Judah was blessed in that his tribe would be the rulers of Israel (especially David and Christ) but the personal blessings to Judah were not complimentary. It ends with the following words.

*He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will*

*be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk*

Genesis 49:11-12

On the other hand, the real blessings of Israel went to Joseph and his sons.

*"Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine near a spring, whose branches climb over a wall. With bitterness archers attacked him; they shot at him with hostility. But his bow remained steady, his strong arms stayed limber, because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, because of your father's God, who helps you, because of the Almighty, who blesses you with blessings of the heavens above, blessings of the deep that lies below, blessings of the breast and womb. Your father's blessings are greater than the blessings of the ancient mountains, than the bounty of the age-old hills. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.*

Genesis 49:22-26

### Joseph's Faith

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*By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.*

*By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.*

*By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.*

---

Hebrews 11:22

Another reason why the blessing of Joseph was mentioned in the last section is that it leads into this section concerning him and his bones.

*Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, "God will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place."*

Genesis 50:22-25

As in the previous sections, we are dealing with the faith of these men at the end of their lives. Joseph's faith was such that he made his seed promise to take his bones to a place not yet seen by him. At the time he made this request, the Israelites had been in Egypt about 75 years. It would not be for another 325 years that the exodus would occur. At this time, Israel was not a great nation, only a small clan of people. Yet Joseph had the faith that God would deliver them as promised.

### Moses' Parents Faith

*By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*

*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.*

Hebrews 11:23

Here, again, the NIV differs from the NAS and the KJV which read "By faith Moses.. In this case, however, the NIV is correct. It was Moses' parents who exhibited faith here, not Moses himself.

*Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months.* Exodus 02:01-02

In Exodus 2 Moses is called a "fine child" or "beautiful" (NAS) or "goodly" (KJV). "Goodly" is the most literal translation of the Hebrew word **tov**. The word is a common adjective corresponding to our word good. Perhaps the best example of its use here is in the following:

*God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.* Genesis 01:04

*God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.* Genesis 01:10

*The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.* Genesis 01:12

*...to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.* Genesis 01:18

*So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.* Genesis 01:21

*God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.* Genesis 01:25

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.* Genesis 01:31

In the various steps of the creation, God observed that what He had done was "good".

While we certainly can assume from these statements that these things were not bad, the statements imply more than just quality (i.e. bad, poor, ok, fair, good, excellent) but conformance. The things were according to what God desired and that is what was good about them.

Moses was a good child. So were a lot of other Hebrew babies. But this baby stood out as one being special. The Greek word used here is **asteios** which is derived from the Greek word for city. The only other N.T. reference to this word is found below.

*In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair\*, and nourished up in his father's house three months:* Acts 07:20

*\*Or [was fair in the sight of God]*

The word is found three times in the O.T. Once in Exodus 2:2 and in the following:

*The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me.* Numbers 22:32

*He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man.* Judges 03:17

Both of these need explanation. The first the word is preceded by the Greek word for not. So its meaning is the antonym of reckless which, according to the WordPerfect Thesaurus is judicious or circumspect. The second verse is harder to explain. The problem is that the LXX (apparently) reads different than the Hebrew text.

*And he went, and brought the presents to Eglom king of Moab and Eglom was a very handsome man.* Judges 03:17 LXX

This is probable a mistake in the LXX since the word for FAT is **stear** which could be easily change to asteios.

At any rate, the Hebrew word is so common it is hard to know what the exact meaning is and the Greek word so rare it is hard to know the meaning. All we can say is that Moses' parents must have seen something in Moses that was *from a distance*. By faith they believed that there was something in Moses that could not be seen but must taken by faith. So they hid him.

### Moses' Faith

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*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather*

*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God,*

*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the*

*than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

*than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

*people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking for a reward.*

Hebrews 11:24-26

We now turn to Moses himself.

*One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?" The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known." When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.*

Exodus 02:11-15

How do we reconcile this O.T. account of Moses' early years by the statement we have in Hebrews? It says that he chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. There would seem to be a difference between choosing something and fleeing for ones life! Read the passage from Exodus carefully. *Glancing this way and that and seeing no one...* This was the point at which he did his choosing. Note that the previous verse says that he watched his brethren. This would imply that he stood there and studied the situation. He had time to decide whether he was going to intervene or not. His final choice was (1) to aline himself with the Hebrews by helping them and (2) hopefully to do this without cost (i.e. getting caught).

Moses made only one mistake. The next time he tried to help the Hebrews, the response he got was *"Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?"* All of a sudden he was a "man without a country." Eventually Pharoah found out and rejected him. The Hebrews rejected him, he had to flee. But it all started out by his making a choice.

Why did he make such a choice? *He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.* What reward was he looking for?

*Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years. But I will punish the nation they serve as*



slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. *Genesis 15:13-14*

Moses was brought up in Pharaoh's court. He was well educated. He could even count and read the calendar. It had been nearly four hundred years since Jacob and his family had come into Egypt and settled there. It may have been that it had been more than four hundred years. When they first came they were guests of the Pharaoh.

*Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become much too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh.* Exodus 01:06-11

It was only after Pharaoh died and a new king took his place that Israel came under bondage. In any case, the clock was running out. Moses would have been looking for the fulfillment of God's promise. Because of this he chose the enslaved Hebrews for associates rather than the wealth of Pharaoh's palace.

This was a blind faith. There was no indication that this blessing was about to happen. In fact, how could Moses have known that it would be him that led Israel out of Egypt. He simply had to act in faith.

### Moses' Faith Applied

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*By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.*

*By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

*By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. By faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that he who destroyed the firstborn might not touch them.*

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Hebrews 11:27-28

We read in Exodus that Moses fled from Egypt. We read this here, but this passage says he did not fear the wrath of the king. Is there a contradiction? Note that the passage in Exodus does not have the word afraid and the word fled are not in the same

sentence. Sure he was afraid - he was afraid of his brethren who misunderstood him. Yes, Pharoah tried to kill him. But that is not the reason he left, he did not leave out of fear.

In this same passage we have his faith exercised in the Passover. Moses' faith was weak when God met him in the burning bush. But by the time of the last plague, Moses' had really learned to trust God. He trusted Him in His word that he would spare the first-born of Israel.

### Israel's Faith

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*By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.*

*By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.*

*By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days.*

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### Hebrews 11:29-30

Here are two great acts of faith on the part of all the Israelites. It must have been terribly frightening to pass through the Red Sea. After all, right when you were in the very middle, the sea could come rushing in again and you would drown. There was no visible means of keeping the sea back. It could return at any moment - and it did when the Egyptians were there.

The faith demonstrated at Jericho was of a different nature. There was no particular physical danger in marching around the city every day for six days. There was no particular danger in marching around the city seven times on the last day. But consider the following!

*And he ordered the people, "Advance! March around the city, with the armed guard going ahead of the ark of the LORD." When Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets before the LORD went forward, blowing their trumpets, and the ark of the LORD'S covenant followed them. The armed guard marched ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard followed the ark. All this time the trumpets were sounding. But Joshua had commanded the people, "Do not give a war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then shout!" So he had the ark of the LORD carried around the city, circling it once. Then the people returned to camp and spent the night there.*

Joshua 06:07-11

Can you imagine how all this looked to the inhabitants of Jericho - and anyone else in the area? First those armed men marched past. Then there were the men carrying a strange looking chest. Following this were those fellows making a racket by blowing on long rams horns. Then, strangest of all were those strange people who marched by in utter silence. Israel would have been the laughing stock of all the land of Canaan had not the walls of Jericho come down.

Now, if they had attached the city with battering rams and weapons, they might have had reason to hope that the walls would fall. Had they taken any action that might logically lead to the destruction of the city it would have been reasonable to believe that God would be on their side and they would win. But what the Lord had commanded them to do was utter nonsense! How could that possibly lead to the destruction of Jericho?

If was only by faith that made them sure of what they hoped for that they were able to carry this out.

### Rahab's Faith

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*By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.*

*By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*

*By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she welcomed the spies in peace.*

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Hebrews 11:31

So far, we have been dealing with the faith of God's people. Now the account turns to a pagan woman - a prostitute at that. Before we begin, there are those who claim that she was an "inn keeper" and not a "prostitute". Is there any merit in this?

*And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's\* house, named Rahab, and lodged there.* Joshua 02:01

*\*Or possibly [an innkeeper]*

We have included the footnote from the NIV here which indicates the alternate interpretation. What was she? Look at the following passages.

*And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.* Exodus 04:24 KJV

*And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night.*

Joshua 04:04 KJV

There is a Hebrew word for inn and it is used in these (and other) verses in the O.T. It is **mahlohn** (מלון) which means inn or lodging place. There could be a cognant noun which meant innkeeper but, since there were none mentioned in the Bible, it is not found. The term used of Rahab is **ishah zonah** (אִתְּהָ זוֹנָה) which means female prostitute. It is used 37 other times in the O.T. and all 37 instances clearly refer to a female prostitute.

The Greek word in this passage is the source of our word porno(graphy). This leaves little doubt of the moral character of this woman - at one time. But she changed.

*Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death." Joshua 02:08-13*

At this time, Rahab was probably a middle aged woman. What the Lord had already done for Israel had literally "scared the Hell out of her." She had forgotten her pagan gods and come to see that the Lord is God. She acknowledged Him as God.

But she went further than that. Even though there was no logical reason why this odd group of people could take the city, she knew the city was done for. The funny part of this is that, according to her words, *all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you*. Everyone else was afraid, but only Rahab responded. Only Rahab had faith.

### The Faith of the Victorious

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*And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword;*

*And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword,*

*And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made*

*whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies.*

*out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.*

*strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.*

Hebrews 11:32-34

*And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about . . .* The author was quite correct. This chapter is, by far, the longest chapter in this book. It is longer than any chapter in many of the books of the Bible. And if the author had gone on to talk about all these others, we would never have finished.

The entire O.T. is the story of faith. It is especially a story of faith because of the few who had it. It is not hard to have faith when everyone around you shares that faith. It is very difficult when you are alone like many of the prophets were.

*Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* John 20:29

These people in the O.T. never had the opportunity to see the promised Messiah and yet, not seeing, they believed. Faith is "the evidence of things not seen."

### The Faith of the Unfortunate

*Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated-- the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes*

*Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered*

*Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yea also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being afflicted, ill-treated (men for whom the world was not worthy) wandering in deserts and*

*in the ground.*

*in deserts, and in  
mountains, and in dens  
and caves of the earth.*

*mountains and caves  
and holes in the ground.*

Hebrews 11:35-38

The last group of people we looked at were victorious because of their faith. This group is different, they had faith in spite of the fact that they were not victorious (humanly speaking). If you read this passage carefully, you will note that this group contains the saints of the N.T. In fact, most of the references here are to people in the N.T.

MARY & MARTHA: *Women received back their dead, raised to life again.*

*"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"*

John 11:21-26

PAUL ET. AL. *Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison.*

*Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28*

STEPHEN ET. AL. *They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword.*

*At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the*

*apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.* Acts 07:57-08:02

It is a lot easier to have faith when things are going well than when they are not. Or is it? When is it that you really put your trust in God? When things are great and you can lick the whole world, who needs God? But when you are in deep trouble and powerless, then is when you really need Him.

It would be hard to say which of these two groups of people had the greater faith. They both had great faith.

### Faith's Conclusion

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*These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.*

*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

*And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*

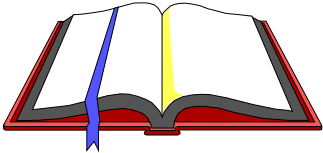
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Hebrews 11:39-40

This final statement would seem to indicate that the saints of the N.T. were not to be included in the last section. In a sense, maybe that is true. But those we noted were all Jews (Christian Jews). The completion of faith, its perfection, was when you and I, Gentiles, began to participate in the work of Jesus Christ and God's full promise to Abraham was fulfilled.

We have spent a lot of time dealing with the question, "What is faith?". Having now answered that, we need to go on and see what to do about it. This is in the next chapter.

# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER TWELVE

We have just completed a lengthy chapter that answered the question, "what is faith?" Having answered that question quite completely, we go on this chapter. Here we deal with what is to be done as a result of this faith.

### The Christian's Run

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*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.*

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Hebrews 11:01-02

There are many books on the shelves of Christian Bookstores dealing with "the Christian's walk." But this chapter tells us that the Christian should run. Let us take a look at this advice. First, we are given the reasons we should run and, then, we are told how to run.

*Therefore...* There is that word again! It appears some ten or eleven times in this book. Each time we are to conclude that the advice to follow is based on the evidence presented. In this case the point at issue is *a great cloud of witnesses*. What witnesses? The answer is those we considered in the last chapter; men and women who had conquering faith.

What we need to consider is the term used here, cloud. Why not use some other word? According to the WordPerfect Thesaurus, the following could be used:



assembly, company, gathering, party, throng, circle, or band of witnesses. There are other words that could have been used but are less fitting. But the Thesaurus does not list cloud as a synonym of any of these.

Clouds in the Scriptures may refer to those white fluffy objects from which we sometimes get rain, but often they do not. Consider the following.

*While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"* Matthew 07:15

*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.* Acts 01:09

*"At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.* Matthew 24:30

*"Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."* Matthew 26:64

The one verse we really ought to consider is the one below.

*After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.* 1 Thessalonians 04:17

The clouds in this passage are not rain clouds, but the saints who were already in heaven with Jesus and who return with Jesus to welcome their brethren. It is the same cloud we are considering here. Picture, if you will, an arena with the stands filled with the Old Testament saints, men and women of faith, who are all gathered there to see your performance in the arena. You are set to run a race and they are going to observe your performance. With that kind of audience, you want to be sure to do your very best.

Before we look at the instructions for running this race, we will look at some other races. Paul, apparently, was fond of races. Consider the many references below.

*However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.* Acts 20:24

*I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in Galatia* Galatians 02:02

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.* 2 Timothy 04:07

All of Paul's life was a race. He endeavored to complete the race - and he did. He also gave us advice about running.

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

1 Corinthians 09:24-27

and he chastised those who failed.

*You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?*

Galatians 05:07

Solomon, the man of wisdom, also made an observation concerning racing.

*I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.*

Ecclesiastes 09:11

This is a rather negative comment on racing, but there is some truth to it. We will see it as we study this passage. In 1 Corinthians 09:24-27 (above) Paul says that we must follow the rules if we are to win the race. So, let us look at these rules.

- 1) *Let us throw off everything that hinders.*
- 2) *Let us throw off the sin that so easily entangles.*
- 3) *Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*
- 4) *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*

We are given the four rules above. The first two deal with the preparations for the race; the last two with the running of it.

First, we are to get rid of the weight (KJV) or encumbrance (NAS) or everything that hinders (NIV). The Greek word that is used here is **onkos** (ογκος) which is used only here in the N.T. From classical Greek, it appears to refer to that which is bulky. Some things are light. Some things are heavy but still relatively easy to carry. But there are some things that, regardless of their weight, are just bulky and awkward to carry.

Can you imagine trying to run a race while carrying a sheet of plywood? They are not all that heavy, but you would have one very difficult time running with one in your hands. So, the advice is to get rid of things in our lives that making running the race clumsy. Are there things in your life that are not bad, but seem to interfere with you living the way Christ would have you live? Does the TV take up so much of your time that you don't have time to do the things the Lord has put on your heart to do? Then do something about it. Do not try to run the Christian race with things that make the running difficulty.

Second, we are to get rid of the sin the so easily entangles. What sin is that? The Greek calls it the **euperistatos** (εϋπεριστάτας) sin. Again, this word is only found

here in the N.T. The literal meaning of the word is to surround well or to encompass well. Well may be taken here as a synonym of easily. Moulton and Milligan give the following four possible definitions:

*(1) easily avoided, (2) admired (well surrounded), (3) easily surrounding (easily besetting), and (4) dangerous (having easy distress).*

The context would seem to eliminate the first meaning. If we have to take care to throw off this sin, it must not be easily avoided. The other three definitions all really have the same impact. A sin may easily beset us because it is something desirable (admired) and, because of this, it is dangerous.

The bottom line is that we are not talking about deep grievous sins. We are talking about the daily temptations that distract us off onto the wrong track. We need to develop a sin consciousness so we can see these sins coming and avoid them. If we do this, the first definition is also true, they are easily avoided if we can see them coming.

Now we come to the actual running. There are all kinds of races, ranging from the 100 yard dash to the marathon. If you are running the 100 yard dash, you had better run for all you are worth; you will loose otherwise.

But the race we are talking about is a marathon to end all marathons. Paul began his race when the Lord met him on the road to Damascus. He did not finish the race until many years later (2 Timothy, above).

When we consider that the race is a marathon, the advice we have seen above in other passages makes real sense. *The race is not to the swift.* says Solomon. We have already noted this. You only pull out all the stops for the 100 yard dash. *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,*

is Paul's addition. He didn't say that he won the race, he merely said he finished it. For many people, it matters little that they come in first in a marathon, only that they complete the course and make a good showing. There is nothing wrong with letting Billy Graham or Hudson Taylor or Paul or one of the others win the race. What is wrong is not finishing it.

Thus, the rule is *run with perseverance the race marked out for us*. Some translations have the word patience. I have run across many Christians in my lifetime who have been saved and, almost immediately, began running the 100 yard dash. They were at every church meeting. They witnessed to people every day and twice on Sunday. They joined the choir and sponsored youth activities. To look at them, one had to envy their zeal and fire. Today, most of them are sitting on the sidelines, about 100 yards from the starting line, exhausted and discouraged.

If you are going to make it until the Lord calls you home, you must pace yourselves and run with patience. But, of course, if you do this, you may end dead last. Is there a way that you can pace yourself so you will run neither too fast nor too slow? That is where rule four comes in.

*Fix your eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of your faith.* This is a terrible illustration, but it seems to fit. Have you ever seen greyhound dogs race. There is a mechanical rabbit that moves on a track ahead of the dogs and the dogs are to follow the rabbit. The dog that turns its eyes on some other object in the arena looses the race. If you following Jesus' leading, you will go neither too fast nor too slow. You will

be running the race the way you are supposed to run.

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*Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*

*For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

*For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.*

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Hebrews 12:03-04

We have been advised to run the race with patience. That means not running too fast nor running too slow. The advice is that if you run according to the rules above, you will not suffer the two ills mentioned here.

You do not want to run too fast so *that you will not grow weary*. There are enough burned-out Christians in the world today, do not join their ranks. Keep your eyes on Christ and do not get ahead of him.

You do not want to run too slow lest you get so far behind in the race *that you will lose heart*. There are, also, enough Christians in the world who have never tried to run the race in earnest and have gotten sidelined and lost heart. The only way to true fellowship with Christ is to run with Him, not ahead of Him, not behind him.

Finally, the author reminds us that we have it easy. If you think the life you are now living is made tough because of your walk with the Lord, simply remember what He had to endure! Maybe people tease you for your walk and give you a bad time. They did so to Christ, but ever so much stronger. They persecuted Christ to the point that He shed his blood for us. No, brother, do not get discouraged in your race with Christ.

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

1 Corinthians 10:13

### The Christian's Chastisement

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*And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make*

*And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the*

*and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, Do not regard lightly the*

*light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.*

*chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

*discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline. But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

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Hebrews 12:05-08

Christian brother, do not expect to run in this race without being corrected. We note the final words of this section, *if you are not disciplined, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons*. Would you rather be a **nothos** (νοθος) or a **huios** (huios)? The first word appears only here in the Bible and the KJV rendering, *bastards*, is certainly a graphic translation of it. It means to be born of a woman other than your father's wife. The most notable Biblical example of this is with respect to Isaac and Ishmael. Both were sons of Abraham. Ishmael was the first-born. But he was not Sarah's son and so did not receive the inheritance from Abraham, he was a "nothos." Isaac, on the other hand, received the blessing and was a "huios".

In this passage, a passage from Proverbs is cited.

*My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father\* the son in whom he delighteth.* Proverbs 03:11-12

*\*Hebrew; Septuagint [/ and he punishes]*

A generation or two ago this passage would have made real sense. Today, unfortunately, there are far too many fathers who do not discipline their children. There are far too many children who have no legitimate father - no father at all, only a mother to raise them. But it is Gods will that we punish a child when such is needed.

*Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.* Ephesians 06:04

Some might take this verse to mean that fathers are not supposed to discipline their children. They are simply to give them *training and instruction*.

Let us consider the words used in this passage: (a) discipline, (b) rebuke, (c) punish. Discipline comes from the Greek **paideuo** (παιδεω). The first part of the word, its root, is Greek word for child. Basically it means to train children. Now that does not sound like it involves any punishment. Consider the following passage.

*For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him."* Luke 23:22

Here the word is actually translated punish and certainly means it. If you do not believe this, read on in the Gospel and see what they did to punish Jesus.

The second word is rebuke. It is from **elengcho** (ελεγχω), rebuke is a good translation of it.

*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.* Revelation 03:19

Here, we have both words used together. again, it speaks of the Lord's work toward us. The rebuke may be applied to the unsaved . . .

*When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:* John 16:08

But is especially important for Christians. In Paul's advice for Pastor Timothy and Pastor Titus, he wrote the following:

*Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.* 1 Timothy 05:20

*This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith* Titus 01:03

*These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.* Titus 02:15

So Paul teaches that we are to be rebuked (a) publicly, as an example to others, (b) sharply, so that we will take notice and correct our ways, and (c) with encouragement. A Christian should not be rebuked without a work of encouragement and help.

The last word is punish. The word is **mastigao** (μαστιγω) and is usually translated to scourge. Paul underwent such treatment. Jesus underwent it.

*. . . and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"* Matthew 20:19

*Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.* John 19:01

*As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"* Acts 22:25

God was not light in His punishment. The world has not been light. We are not to be light when severe punishment is needed. Neither will God withhold serious punishment from us when we need it.

Before we go on to the next passage, note that God's rebuke may come in the form of hardship. God may not take us out and throw stones at us or beat us with sticks. But God may withhold his blessings from us as punishment.

### Chastisement's Results

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*Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

*Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

*Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live? Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, they we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

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### Hebrews 12:09-11

The first verse here may have been true in the day that this letter was written, but today? Is it true that *we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it*. Not all would agree with these words today - all should. Even today, though, the child who has been properly disciplined will nearly always respect it. The problem is with children whose discipline has not been correct.

At any rate, when God does this disciplining, it is done correctly. Most of us who have raised children realize that it is painful for both the child and the parent to administer punishment. But the parent realizes that, eventually, it will result in good for the child. Eventually the child will recognize its value.

When God disciplines us, it may not be pleasant. It may be downright painful. But we can always be assured that the end result will be for our good; *it produces a harvest of*

*righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

### Avoiding Chastisement

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*Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.*

*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

*Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance though he sought it with tears.*

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Hebrews 12:12-17

We have been looking at God chastisement of us. Now we come to the section which tells us what to do to avoid punishment. Verse 12 is a citation from Isaiah 35.

*Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.*



Isaiah 35:03-06

Two Greek verbs are used here which tend to be synonymous. The first is **periem** (παριημι) which means in a literal sense to be out of sorts. It means to not behave normally. With reference to the hands, then, it refers to hands that have lost their strength.

*I hear a cry as of a woman in labor, a groan as of one bearing her first child--the cry of the Daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands and saying, "Alas! I am fainting; my life is given over to murderers."* Jeremiah 04:31

or

*For I have heard thy groaning as the voice of a woman in travail, as of her that brings forth her first child; the voice of the daughter of Zion shall fail through weakness and she shall lose the strength of her hands, saying, "Woe is me! for my soul faints because of the slaughter"* Jeremiah 04:31 LXX

*On that day they will say to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands hang limp."* Zephaniah 03:16

The second verb is **paraluo** (παράλω) and means, literally, loose in the side.

*We have heard reports about them, and our hands hang limp. Anguish has gripped us, pain like that of a woman in labor.* Jeremiah 06:24

This might be translated and our hands are paralyzed since the word is the source of our word paralyzed. We see this in the following N.T. references.

*Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus.* Luke 05:18

*With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed.* Acts 08:07

The phrase refers to Christians who are too weak to accomplish anything. What, then, do we do to obtain such strength? We are to make sure that the way we walk is straight (NAS) and level (NIV). This will cause **iaomai** (ιαομαι), a curing rather than **ektrepo** (εκτρεπω), a disfigurement.

The first word is found in the following passages.

*"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.* Acts 09:34

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.* James 05:16

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."* Peter 02:24

Note that, while the word may refer to physical healing, it often refers to spiritual healing. The second word is the antithesis of this.

*Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.*

1 Timothy 05:15

*Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,*

1 Timothy 06:20

*They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

1 Timothy 04:04

We began this chapter with the Christian's Run. We talked about the race track. Can you imagine running on a track that was littered with stones and other debris? If you were not extremely careful, your foot could land on one of these and you would end up turning your ankle. You would be laid up and out of the race for quite some time. On the other hand, a strained muscle that is healing needs to be exercised. It must be exercised in a place where it will not experience any unusual strains.

If you want to become stronger in your Christian run, you had better make sure that the path is smooth and level and free from objects that would trip you up. This is the principle. Now, what are the specifics?

- 1) *Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy.*
- 2) *See to it that no one misses the grace of God.*
- 3) *See to it that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*
- 4) *See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless.*

First, to make the path even and smooth, we must live in peace with everyone. This does not mean that it is possible to do so. Some do not wish to live in peace with us. The instruction is "to make every effort". The Greek word is **dioko** (διωκω) which has many meanings.

#### To make run or flee

*Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town.*

Matthew 23:34

#### To press on

*Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,*

Philippians 03:13

#### To harass

*I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,*

Acts 22:04

#### To run after

*Men will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them.*

Luke 17:23

#### To seek after

*What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue*

*righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith* Romans 09:30

*Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.* Romans 12:13

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.* Romans 14:19

*He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it.* 1 Peter 03:11

The last two verses echo what we have here in Hebrews. We are to work at making peace with everyone. It matters not that we will not obtain peace with everyone, but we can try. We can do your best. By doing so, we will become holy, set apart, as those who walk with Jesus.

Then we are to see that no one misses the grace of God. We are to look after our brother. We are to see that he or she learns God and obtains God's grace. What does this have to do with our running? The one who does not truly possess God's grace will become bitter. The bitterness will well up in him and he will become a troublemaker. You see, this advice goes with the first - to make peace with all men. If you want peace, see to it that your brother or sister is in God's grace as well as yourself. This was point three.

Finally we are to watch out for sexual immorality amongst our brethren. Why does the author single out this sin? There are a lot of other sins which we might watch out for as well. Apart from drugs, there is no one more basic cause of moral decay in this country than sexual immorality. It is bad enough that it is in the world. If it gets into the church, it will destroy it. I have seen churches ruined by it; the pastor's wife runs off with the choir director; the TV preacher hires call girls, etc. To run the race without twisting your ankle, see to it that sexual immorality among the brothers is stopped at once. Paul was strong on this!

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast--as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.* 1 Corinthians 07:01-07

### Mount Zion is Not Mount Sinai

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You have not come to a

For ye are not come

For you have not come

*mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."*

*unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)*

*to a mountain that maybe touched and to a blazing fire and to darkness and to gloom and a whirlwind, and a blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." And so terrible was the sight that Moses said "I am full of fear and trembling.*

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Hebrews 12:18-21

The description given above refers to the giving of the law in Exodus. We note the following two passages.

*On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up and the LORD said to him, "Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out against them." Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.'" The LORD replied, "Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the LORD, or he will break out against them." Exodus 19:16-24*

*When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen.*

*But do not have God speak to us or we will die."*

Exodus 20:18-19

In between these two passages is the giving on the Ten Commandments. We probably don't give much thought to this occasion but to Israel it was a fearsome time. As we shall see at the end of this chapter *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. Missionaries tell us of tribal people who live in great fear of the "spirits", especially the evil ones. But the O.T. times were not times of peace. One could not really have peace with such an awesome God because one could never be sure that all sin was atoned for.

Speaking somewhat facetiously, maybe there were actually more than ten commandments. *Those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded*. Maybe God had more but this was all that the people could bear. We don't really mean this. The point is that the Ten Commandments were enough to strike fear into the hearts of Israel.

Why are we, then, not so fearful?

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*But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

*But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, and the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and the spirits of righteous men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.*

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Hebrews 12:22-24

We have not had the Mount Sinai experience. we have come to a different mountain, Mount Zion. Now where (or what) is Mount Zion? Zion is a mountain in the city of Jerusalem. It is first mentioned in 2 Samuel.

*The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City*

of David.

2 Samuel 05:06-07

It is first mentioned as Mount Zion in 2 Kings.

*"This will be the sign for you, O Hezekiah: "This year you will eat what grows by itself, and the second year what springs from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Once more a remnant of the house of Judah will take root below and bear fruit above. For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant, and out of Mount Zion a band of survivors. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this." 2 Kings 19:29-31*

It is mentioned frequently in the Psalms (and also in the Prophets).

*Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise, in the city of our God, his holy mountain. It is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King. God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress. Psalms 48:01-03*

*Then he rejected the tents of Joseph, he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim; but he chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved. He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever. Psalm 78:67-69*

*Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed. 'And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls. Joel 02:27-32*

This last passage refers to a future time as does the last passage in the Bible to make reference to it.

*Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. Revelation 14:01*

For us, Mount Zion is not in Jerusalem. It is for the Jews. Note the words of this passage carefully. *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God.* We are not talking about a physical mountain, but a spiritual one. We are not talking about laws that have to do with our physical beings as did Israel, but of principals which apply to our souls.

Whatever Mount Sinai was, Mount Zion is the opposite. Mount Sinai was to be feared, Mount Zion is to be sought after and enjoyed. Mount Sinai is the source of our Grace as Christians.

### Do Not Refuse the Consuming Fire

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*See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."*

*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.*

*See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." And this expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.*

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### Hebrews 12:25-29

The end of this chapter begins with a solemn warning and ends with one. *See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks . . . and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire.* These are strong words. The passage begins with a command **Βλεπετε** (Βλεπετε) - Watch out! Watch out for what? *That you do not refuse him who speaks. Refuse* here is the same word we had in verse 19 - *those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded.*

There is an antithesis of this.

*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

2 Timothy 04:01-04

Men, even today, do not want to know the truth about God. They turn away from it and refuse to hear it just as Israel at Sinai said "enough, we don't want to hear anymore!"

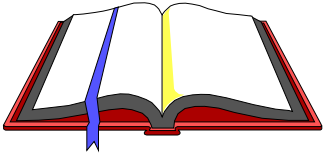
We have been given so much more, we need to be all the more careful that we stay true to God. How is this done? We are told in this passage. We are to *worship God acceptably with reverence and awe*. Now, these are nice sounding words, but what do they mean?

Let us begin with worship. The Greek word is **latreuo** (λατρευω) which means, literally, to serve for hire. Some think that worshipping God is simply a pious folding of the hands or some such activity. The Greek word, however, indicates a more strenuous activity. The corresponding Hebrew word in the O.T. is **Haved** (דָּבַע) which also means to work. Now we are not talking here about works, what we are saying is that active worship is work.

Acceptably here is literally, well pleasing. Our worship is to be aimed at doing what pleases God - not us! And we are to do this with all the reverence (respect) and awe (awareness of how great God really is) that is due Him.



# HEBREWS



A STUDY IN THE EPISTLE TO HEBREW CHRISTIANS  
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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

This is the concluding chapter in this book. It begins with a number of practical things we can do to honor our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives.

### Helpful Advice for Christians

*Keep on loving each other as brothers.*

*Let brotherly love continue.*

*Let love of the brethren continue.*

Hebrews 13:01

Keep on is the translation of a common Greek word and it means just that. The Greek word for love **agapeo** (αγαπεω) is not used here. The Greek is all one word **philadelphia** (φιλαδελφια) = brother-love. It is a word for fellowship. The first item on the list is a call for fellowship one with another. This is the most vital factor in the life of the church. The church can overcome all manner of evil if there is unity among the brethren.

*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*

*Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

*Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.*

Hebrews 13:02

Next to the brethren, we are to love the stranger in our midst. We were to continue brotherly love. Since we come into contact with stranger less often, the admonition is to not forget. It is not an ongoing action, it is one which we must practice when the occasion presents itself. Interestingly, the noun here is related to that in verse 1. It is **philozenias** (φιλοζενιυς) - stranger love. Same root - different person. We should treat strangers in our midst the same as we treat the brethren.

We are to have love for those in the church. We are to have love for the outsider who comes to our church. But then we have the next verse in which we are to remember those who can not come to our church.

*Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.*

*Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.*

*Remember the prisoners as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves are in the body.*

### Hebrews 13:03

There is the old saying "There but by God's grace go I" in reference to some derelict, some one in dire straits. This verse does not necessarily say we are to start a prison ministry, although that might be considered. It means that we should be aware of the needs of all those around us who are in bondage, rather physical (i.e. in jail) or in spiritual bondage.

We have considered those in the church, those who happen in, and those who can't. Next we turn from the church to the home.

*Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*

*Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

*Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

### Hebrews 13:04

We are to have a proper love relationship at home with our spouses. This is just as important as our relationships at church. There is even a warning that comes with this advice. Finally, we come to our relationship with ourselves.

*Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

*Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you," So that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"*

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 Hebrews 13:05-06

Again we have a Greek word with love in it. this one has an alpha in front of it. We are to be not money-lovers. This is not to say we are not supposed to have any. It means that we are to have our eyes on Christ and not the new Cadillac in the showroom. There is a promise with this one. We need not be overly concerned with money because God has promised to care for us. (The citations being from Deuteronomy 31:6 and Psalm 118:6). We are told to be content with what we have. What do we have?

*Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely--be content with your pay."* Luke 03:14

There is nothing wrong with being paid for our work. But we should be content with that and not be consumed with finding other ways to obtain money.

*But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.* 1 Timothy 06:08

Being content with our pay should be sufficient. It should be sufficient to provide us with food and clothing. That is all we really need. There is another contentment we are also to seek.

*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us"* John 14:08

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.* 2 Corinthians 12:09

God has promised to provide us with all that we need and we should be content with that.

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*Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*

*Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.*

*Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.*

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 Hebrews 13:07

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness*

*of Christ.*

Ephesians 04:13

The advice is to follow those who have been our leaders and imitate their lives. Why? According to Paul, it was Christ who gave us these leaders and the reason was that we might be built up.

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*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them.*

*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today. yes and forever. Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were thus occupied, were not benefitted.*

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Hebrews 13:08-09

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* There is something lacking in this translation. It begins well enough. It describes Christ during two periods of time; the past and the present. During these two periods of time Christ might be characterized as be the same, that is, without changing.

The implication of the last part of the verse is that, since Christ has always been the same and still is, it follows that He will always be the same. It reminds me of the joke about the old farmer. As they were riding down the road in the old buggy, the wife says, "Honey, how come we don't snuggle up on the seat of the wagon like we used to?" to which he replied, "Well, I donno, seem like I'm sitting where I've always say!" If you relation with Christ is changing, it is not because Christ is changing.

There are those who claim the Christianity has to change with the times. In some respects it does. I begin doing my Bible studies with a pencil, paper, Bible and Strongs Concordance. Then I got a good typewriter and learned some Hebrew and Greek. Now I use a computer and some good computer resource tools. But the lessons are not any different, only the mechanics.

We may have to change some of the mechanics of our Christian walk, but none of the premises. There's the old song *Standing on the Promises of God*. Someday I think I'll write one *Standing of the Premises of God*. We are told *do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods*. Note the word ceremonial associated with foods.

Religion has changed. It is no longer fashionable to have a worship service in which the primary emphasis is public worship and teaching. It is now the in thing to have all sorts of entertainment, multimedia presentations, sessions on child rearing and coping

with martial problems and many other things too numerous to mention. This text says to stick with Christ as He always has been. Stay with the his teachings and abide in grace.

### The Final Comparison

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*We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.*

*We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*

*We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Hence, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.*

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### Hebrews 13:10-14

We have come to the final comparison between the Law and Christ; the Old Covenant and the New. We have study this contrast in many aspects in this book. There is, however, and interesting phrase here. Where was Jesus crucified? On Golgotha - outside of the city gate. He was not only crucified, but an outcast, evicted from the royal city which belongs to Him and murdered an outcast.

Today, if you want to follow Jesus you have to be an outcast as well. Why? To begin with, we used to think of the "world" as being predominately "Christian" (we use the quotes to include all sorts of sects and the Roman church) and there being small parts of the world that have other religions.

Today, the Near Eastern religions are playing an ever increasing role in public affairs. It is not unlikely that the Eastern religions will begin to do so as well. So Christianity is not on the upswing.

In addition, true Christianity is making up a smaller and smaller segment of "Christianity" today. If this were not so, the moral values of this country would not be slipping so fast. True Christians, if they had sufficient say in the matter, would not permit it. Statistically, America is still predominately "Christian" but this type of

Christianity is not supporting real Christian causes. We are becoming more and more, outcasts in society.

Brother, If Christ suffered what He did, outside the gate, we can stand up for our beliefs and be counted for Christ. We do not need to change with public opinion. So the final warning here is *Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.*

### The Final Instructions

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*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

*By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

*Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of our lip that give thanks to his name. and do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

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### Hebrews 13:15-16

The final words of encouragement deal with our responsibilities. We have three responsibilities to be considered. These are: (1) to God - we are to continually praise God; (2) to others - we are to do good and share with others, and (3) to ourselves - if we take care of the first two, we will be pleasing to God. The text doesn't just say pleasing, it says well pleasing.

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*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.*

*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.*

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 Hebrews 13:17-19

With respect to the second item, we have it broken down into three parts. We are to help (1) our leaders - the ones with whom we have direct contact; (2) all leaders - men who are respected in broader circles as Christian leaders, evangelists, Bible teachers, and the like; and (3) the person whom God has given a special burden to you for - some missionary, like Paul.

We are to help out the first group by being agreeable and not cantankerous. Let me assure you that being in positions of leadership is not a lot of fun. It is even worse when the people whom you represent are a bunch of "nerds". We are to help our leaders, not test their leadership abilities.

We are to pray for the second group. You know, we forget that they are people too! A typical example is the missionary. We think of several missionary couples living out in a field somewhere in the world just having a wonderful time of worship and service together. It just doesn't work that way. Missionaries get discouraged too. They sometimes have trouble getting along with other missionaries. It is not even uncommon that they have troubles with their spouses. After all, if we have trouble here at home where things are relatively nice, consider that trouble one might have in more severe circumstances.

Finally, if God has put a burden for a certain Christian leader in your heart, for God's sake (and his or hers), pray for this person! Do you realize that you may be the only person who is really actively praying for them? If you fail to do it, who will?

### The Benediction

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*May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you t h a t w h i c h i s wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

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 Hebrews 13:20-21

And so we have come to the benediction of this book. We will not comment on it. It speaks for itself. The letter, however, is not quite ended.

The Post Script

*Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter. I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you. Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings. Grace be with you all.*

*And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.*

*But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I shall see you. Greet all of your leaders all of the saints. Those from Italy greet you. Grace be to you all*

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Hebrews 13:22-25

We have not made mention as we went through this letter who the author was. We noted to begin with that it was anonymous. We might have made notes of a number of things throughout this book which might indicate that Paul wrote it. They may or may not indicate this. We must, however, admit that this post script to the letter is definitely Pauline.

There is the mention of brother Timothy and his coming. There is the implication that the letter was written from Rome. Then finally, consider this.

*My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.* 1 Corinthians 16:24

*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* 2 Corinthians 13:14

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers.* Galatians 06:18

*Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.* Ephesians 06:24

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.* Philippians 04:23

*I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.* Colossians 04:18

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* 1 Thessalonians 05:28

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.*



2 Thessalonians 03:18

*...which some have professed and in so doing have wandered from the faith. Grace be with you.* 1 Timothy 06:21

*The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.* 2 Timothy 04:22

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.* Philemon 01:25

Looking at the final line of each of Paul's letters, we will let you draw the final conclusion.

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