The Book of HEBREWS

Teacher's Edition

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The Book of Hebrews

Weekly Homework

Reading:
5 Times through each section of Scripture that we cover in class each week.

Bible Memory Verses:
Date: Reading in _____: Memory Verses:

EXAMS: The students will be given exams throughout the semester to take home and do. The exams will cover the class notes; the memory verses; and whether or not you completed your reading assignments.

Section 1: Hebrews 1:1-3

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Part 1 - "What God Did Through His Son"

Theme and Outline of Hebrews 1:1-3

Realize how great Jesus Christ really is!

See what God the Father did and is doing in His Son, Jesus Christ. . .

I. God SPOKE to us in His Son (v. 1-2a)

II. God RULES the universe via His Son (v. 2b)

III. God CREATED all things through His Son (v. 2c)

IV. God REVEALED Himself in His Son (v. 3a)

V. God SUSTAINS creation by His Son (v. 3b)

VI. God ATONED FOR SIN through His Son (v. 3c)

Section 1: Hebrews 1:1-3

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Part 1 - "What God Did Through His Son"

Introduction to Hebrews:

Author: God via an unnamed New Testament apostle or prophet; some say Paul, others say Apollos, Barnabas, or Luke. God left the writer unmentioned because this book's purpose is to exalt Jesus Christ and not any human being.

Date: Sometime before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. (a fair guess - 64-68 A.D.)

Title: Hebrews; An Exhortation to Hebrew (or Jewish) Christians

Purpose: To encourage Jewish Christians to be secure in their relationship to God through the person and work of Jesus Christ

Hebrews is a book of admonishment so as to encourage the Jewish believers not to revert back into Judaism, but to rest confidently in Jesus Christ.

Theme: The Supremacy (preeminence, superiority) of Jesus Christ. Christ is *"better"* than anyone or anything, and His work did that which no man or sacrifice could accomplish; namely: permanently remove the penalty and power of sin.

Have you ever had something, but didn't realize the value of it until sometime later?

Perhaps its value "hit home" with you when you lost it, or had to get a replacement, or had others take interest in it.

The Hebrew Christians had Jesus Christ but didn't appreciate Him, or have a mature confidence in His all-sufficiency.

Hence, they struggled with assurance of salvation and were tempted to go back under the Old Covenant into dead Judaism.

Realize how great Jesus Christ really is!

See what God the Father did and is doing in His Son, Jesus Christ...

I. God SPOKE to us in His Son (v.1-2a)

V. 1

"Sundry times" - God gave His Old Testament revelation at various time periods. Each bit of revelation would build on the former. "Progressive Revelation."

"Divers manners" - God revealed Himself in different ways.

a. Miracles - the mighty acts of God in history. When God spoke by "event revelation," He always had a messenger to interpret it with "word revelation."
EXAMPLE: the Exodus - Ex. 5:1-2, cp. 7:4-5; Ps. 106:7-9.

b. Theophanies - physical appearance of God to man.
   1) Natural theophany (appearances in nature) - Ex. 3 (burning bush) Ex. 13:21- 22 (pillar of cloud and fire)
   2) Auditory theophany (God's voice could be heard) – Ex. 19:1-3; Lk. 3:22.
   3) Bodily theophany (The Angel [Messenger] of the Lord) - a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ - Gen. 16:10; Judges 2:1ff.

c. Urim & Thumim - two precious stones, used like lots, to determine God's will for Israel - Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; Dt. 33:8).

d. His Word
   1) Direct words (Ex. 33:11)
   2) Direct writing (Ex. 31:18)
   3) Dreams (Dan. 7:1)
   4) Visions (Ez. 1:1)
   5) Scriptures - the written Word (Ex.17:14, 24:4,7; Dt.31:24; II Tim.3:16)

"The fathers" - The Jewish patriarchs (Hebrew forefathers)

God had to reveal Himself, because man by nature is unable to discover God (can't see Him or know Him); also because man by the fall is uninterested in discovering God. Because of sin, man hides from God and is dead spiritually.

V. 2

"These last days" - The entire New Testament era is called the Last Days.

The time period between Christ's first coming and His second coming is noted as a period of the "Last Days." With God, a thousand years are as one day.

In accordance with the theme of the superiority of Christ, the writer of Hebrews shows His superiority over the prophets by revealing Christ as the last and final spokesman for God (SEE: Hebrews 2:2-3)

Mohammed was not "the seal of the prophets." Jesus is the final authority.

There were no flaws, errors, or mistakes in Christ's words, because when He spoke God was speaking.

Everything Jesus said was God's Word because Jesus is God.

That is why Jesus taught with *"authority, and not as the scribes"* (Mk. 1:22).

Practical Application:

If you want to know what God thinks about life, death, human relationships, morals, ethics, priorities, divorce, etc., see what Jesus said about it!

If you want God's way of righteousness, salvation, forgiveness, etc., see what Jesus said about it!

II. God <u>RULES the universe</u> via His Son (v.2b)

"Heir" - the word referred to the one to whom a father would leave his property when he died.

Christ, after His resurrection and exaltation, became the chief owner of all things.

Psalm 24:1 - *"The earth is the Lord's."*

"All things" - not some things.

He is the "firstborn" ruler (preeminent one) because He made everything (Col. 1:15-18).

He who owns all has a right to all.

Practical Application:

Everything you own ultimately belongs to Jesus Christ (not just "spiritual things").

Even your body is His (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Jesus rules! And will yet rule! (SEE: Psalm 2)

We are joint-heirs because of our union with Christ (Rom. 8:17).

III. God CREATED all things through His Son (v.2c)

"By whom. . . he made" - Creation was accomplished via (by means of) the Son. God the Father planned creation, but the Son performed it by the power of His Word (Heb. 11:3).

Col. 1:16 - *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."*

Jesus is Creator:

John 1:3 - "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Eph. 3:9 - "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Jesus created everything.

1)All beings and things "in heavens and in earth"
2)All that is material and immaterial
3)All laws, governing authorities and powers

"In Heaven" - Jesus created the angelic realm (the host of angels including Michael and Gabriel; the cherubim and seraphim, etc.)

"In earth" - everything from the Swiss Alps to the Islands of Hawaii; every kind of plant, tree, fruit, vegetable; every animal, fish, reptile and insect. And the crown of His creation - mankind - was made by and for Jesus Christ.
No wonder the elements obeyed His voice; and the demons trembled in His presence and respected Him. He is LORD of all, Creator of all!

It does not matter where it is (location); or what it is (essence); or how it is ("the powers that be") -- Jesus made it all.

The powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1) particularly of Jesus Christ!

When Jesus became man, He worked as a carpenter. A fitting trade for the one who built the universe, and yet what a humble trade. What humiliation for the Creator who spoke the world into existence to work much of his 33 years on earth using the simple tools of man and the elements of His own creation, to construct with.

It seems that Scripture teaches that every work God did, He did through the instrumentality of His Son.

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (Jn. 5:17).

"The worlds" - two words: *tous/aionas*. Lit. "the ages."

According to Rabbinical use, the word refers not only to the periods of time, but to the content of the world (Reinecker, p. 664). The word refers to time, space, and the material world.

Jesus not only was involved in the initial creative process of the world (as the word *kosmos* would indicate), but He has also been actively working in this universe throughout the ages, as the word *aion* implies.

IV. God <u>REVEALED Himself</u> in His Son (v.3a)

"Brightness" - Radiance, outshining of splendid light.

Christ is the Shekinah Glory of God.

Jesus radiates God's glory. He does <u>not</u> simply reflect it (as the moon reflects the sun), but He radiates it. He is the source of the glorious glow! (cp. Rev. 1).

"He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (Jn. 14:9).

"Express image" - The exact representation, the precise reproduction.

Christ perfectly and completely gives us a visible image of the invisible God.

To see Christ is to see God, because He is the *"image of the invisible God"* (Col. 1:15).

Cp. Col. 2:9 - "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Christ in "<u>bodily" form</u> (in a visible form) contains (presently) all of the fullness of deity!

The KJV says: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: <u>God was manifest in the flesh</u>" (I Tim. 3:16).

"Since no mere creature can perfectly reveal God, Jesus Christ must be God" (Wiersbe, p. 49).

V. God <u>SUSTAINS creation</u> by His Son (v.3b)

cp. Col 1:17 - "Consist" ("sunistami") - lit. to stand together; to hold together; to cohere.

Jesus is the "principle of <u>cohesion</u> in the universe" (Lightfoot).

Jesus Christ Himself is the "<u>unifying band</u> which encompasses everything and holds it together" (Lohse).

> "A guide took a group of people through an atomic laboratory and explained how matter was composed of rapidly moving electric particles. The tourists studied models of molecules and were amazed to learn that matter is made up primarily of space. During the question period, one visitor asked, "If this is the way matter works, <u>what holds it all together</u>?" For that, the guide had no answer." (Wiersbe, p. 50).

Practical Application:

Who keeps the planets each in place? -- Jesus

Who keeps the orbit of the earth around the sun consistent? -- Jesus

Who keeps the seasons (of spring, summer, winter, and fall) regular? -- Jesus

Who keeps the Laws that govern life on earth (EX: gravity, etc.) intact? -- Jesus

Who keeps nations from becoming totally unglued and civilizations from destroying each other? -- Jesus

Who, then, will interrupt the present order of all things in the Day of the LORD? (Rev. 5:12-17; 15-17) -- Jesus!

Who alone can keep your life and family from erupting and exploding and becoming unglued? -- Jesus!

"Upholding" - to sustain and carry. The word describes not only support but movement. Christ holds all of creation up, but also is moving it in the direction He has sovereignly decreed. Everything is moving right on course.

How does Christ sustain creation? By His spoken Word (*rhemati*), which has strength and authority by His sovereign power (*dunamis*).

VI. God <u>ATONED FOR SIN</u> through His Son (v.3c)

"By Himself" - (middle voice) No one helps Jesus purge us. Not angels, "saints," man's works, etc.

"Purged" = cleansed and purified. To wash away by cleaning.

Christ's sacrificial death at Calvary did the cleansing work.

(SEE: Heb. 9:26, 28; 10:10-14).

"What can wash away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus!"

"Sat down" - Because the work of salvation is done, finished, over.

"Right hand" - A place of power and honor (no one else in the universe has this right! Jesus is greatly supreme!)

Section 2: Hebrews 1:4-14

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS CHRIST

Part 2 - "What God SAID about His Son"

Most of the world is totally ignorant as to who Jesus Christ really is. Some view Him as a great teacher; to others He is a holy man (guru), to others a prophet like Moses, to others a misguided troublemaker, to others an incarnate angel (J.W.'s).

It does not matter what men say about Christ. What matters is what God the Father says about Him.

Satan's main goal and mission is to blind people's minds as to who Jesus really is.

He will constantly question the nature and work of Jesus Christ (cp. Mt. 3:17 - God the Father said, *"This is my beloved Son"* . . . Satan replied, *"If thou be the Son of God . . ."* (4:3).)

In verses 1 - 3, the greatness of Jesus Christ is seen by what God the Father DID through the Son.

I. God SPOKE to us in His Son (v. 1-2a)
II. God RULES the universe via His Son (v. 2b)
III. God CREATED all things through His Son (v. 2c)
IV. God REVEALED Himself in His Son (v. 3a)
V. God SUSTAINS creation by His Son (v. 3b)
VI. God ATONED FOR SIN through His Son (v. 3c)

Now in verses 4 - 14, the greatness of Jesus Christ is seen by what God the Father SAID about the Son.

In verses 5 - 14, the writer of Hebrews demonstrates the superiority of Jesus Christ over angels. He does this by comparing and contrasting statements God the Father made about both.

By beginning the Epistle to the Hebrews with a comparison of Christ to angels, the writer (under God's inspiration), is demonstrating the superiority of Christ over everyone and everything. In that he is comparing Christ to the highest class of created beings in the universe, it naturally proves that Christ is also superior to everything under angels.

Realize how great Jesus Christ really is!
(He is infinitely superior to even Angels!)

See what God the Father said about His Son, Jesus Christ in comparison to Angels...

Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...

I. In <u>NAME</u>, He is my <u>"SON"</u>: *Honor Him!* (v.4-5)

V. 4

"Being made" - <u>not</u> *poieo* (to create), but *ginomai* (to become).

Jesus eternally existed supreme over angels, but during His humble incarnation He had been lower than the angels (Heb. 2:9). However, after His resurrection and exaltation, He *<u>"became"</u>* better again, in the sense that He now reigns as heir of all things and has an exalted name to prove it!

Christ as *"heir of all things"* (v. 2) also has a corresponding title: ***"Son of God."***

The phrase *"son of God"* does not imply that God had offspring. The phrase is a Hebraism meaning "one <u>identified</u> <u>with</u>."

In Hebrew understanding the term "son" could include the idea of physical generation (i.e. male offspring) but that is not the fundamental idea. Rather, the basic idea is <u>identity</u>. A "son" is one who partakes of the qualities and characteristics of that person of which he is said to be a son.

The term "son" does <u>not</u> necessarily mean "offspring" or "progeny" but specifically refers to being "<u>one with</u>" or being "one <u>identified</u> with" someone or something

Examples:

I Tim. 1:12 - Paul called Timothy "My own <u>son</u> in the faith.") (cp. Jn. 5:18).

John 17:12 -Judas is identified with <u>perdition</u>
(the "son of perdition")

Acts 4:36 -Barnabas is identified with <u>consolation</u> ("son of consolation")

Jonah 4:10 -The Gourd is identified with <u>Night</u>
("son of a night" i.e. here today & gone tomorrow)

People don't put much thought into the significance of names today, as they did in Bible days. A name back then often reflected the person's character or personality. So it is with Christ's excellent name.

V. 5

God never called an angel His son, but He referred to Jesus Christ as "Son."

"While the angels collectively may be termed *"the sons of God"* (Job 1:6), no angel would be given this title individually. It belongs uniquely to our Lord Jesus Christ" (Wiersbe, p. 22).

Christ has eternally held the position of "Son of God" as evident by the Old Testament references to His Sonship.

Psalm 2:12 - "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Prov. 30:4 - "Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His son's name, if thou canst tell."

Daniel 3:25 - "The form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Nebuchadnezzar clearly saw a divine being who appeared different than the other three men in the furnace).

". . . This day have I begotten Thee" - A quote of Psalm 2:7.

This Messianic psalm anticipated the Father begetting His Son from the grave.

The term *"begotten"* is not describing His origin, but His authority, as proven by His resurrection.

Acts 13:33-34 - *"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."*

Rom. 1:4 - *"And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."*

"I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son" - A quote of II Samuel 7:14, which was a statement to King Solomon and Israel's subsequent kings, yet it had ultimate prophetic fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...

II. In <u>NATURE</u>, He is <u>GOD</u>: *Worship Him!*(v.6-9)

V. 6

"Firstbegotten" - lit. "firstborn" (*prototokos*) - to the Hebrew mind, the "firstborn" was a title of preeminence, honor, high rank; one with authority.

"Let all the angels of God worship him" - A reference to the LXX Psalm 97:7, where God calls on all of the strong ones (*Elohim* - Heb.) to worship Him.

When Christ was born in Bethlehem, the Bible says, "*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* (Luke 2:13-14).

For an angel to worship the Christ child would be the height of blasphemy if that child was not <u>God</u> (deity) who came to earth in the flesh.

Sacred Scripture forbids the worship of anyone or anything apart from God (Deut. 6:13, 10:20).

Jesus receives worship (Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Jn. 9:35, 38; 20:28, 29; Lk. 24:51, 52; by angels - Heb. 1:6; by all men - Phil. 2:10. [Note: Peter (Acts 10:25, 26), Paul (Acts 14:11-18) and angels (Rev. 19:10 refused to be worshipped.]

Angels also worshipped Christ by serving Him when He was on earth (Mt. 4:11; Lk. 22:43).

V. 7

God ***"maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."***

The most God said of his angelic messengers (in Psalm 104:4) is that they are as the wind: free floating invisible spirit beings. And some are as burning fire (EX: the Seraphim = from a verb meaning "to burn"; Is. 6:2; cp. with Num. 21:6).

V. 8

In verse 8, God the Father refers to His Son as "*God."* (a quote of Ps. 45:6-7). Several times Jesus referred to the Father as "God" But now the Father calls his Son *"God."*

Throughout the New Testament, Jesus Christ is specifically identified as *"God."*

Jesus is Directly Called "God."

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Mt. 1:23).

1. He is called God by John.

John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (the "Word" refers to Jesus - v. 14).
I Jn. 5:20 - "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."
Rev. 21:7 - "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

2. He is called God by Thomas.
Jn. 20:27-29 - "...and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said, Because ye have seen me, thou hast believed..."
If Thomas erred so seriously in addressing Jesus as God, why was there no correction by Jesus? And why did Jesus commend his faith?

3. Jesus refers to Himself as God.
John 5:17-18 - "But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."
John 10:30 - "I and my Father are one." [Note the reaction of the Jews (v. 33) - "...Thou, being a man, makest thyself God." Jesus shortly after this said, "...that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand" (v. 38, 39).
John 14:9 - "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father..."

4. He is called God by the writer of Hebrews.
Heb. 1:3 - "His Son...who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person..."

5. He is called God by the Apostle Paul.
"Israelites...whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all God blessed forever. Amen." (Rom.9:5)
Acts 20:28 (Luke quoting Paul) - "...Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."
Phil. 2:6 - "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."
Col. 1:15 - "Who is the image of the invisible God."
Col. 2:9 - "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." ("fullness" = completeness or perfection; "Godhead" = to have the same essence as God)
I Tim. 3:16 - "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."
Titus 2:13 - "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (cp. I Jn. 5:20; Rev. 21:7; Is. 9:6)

To call Him God but not mean it is to take the name of God in vain, and to share God's glory with another.

V. 9

"Fellows" - **fellow heirs; colleagues; believers, who as joint heirs will rule and reign with Christ.**

Christ stands unique because He is the only one who perfectly and consistently loved right and hated wrong. Even the best believers have sometimes wavered between the two.

Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...

III. In <u>WORK</u>, He is <u>CREATOR</u>: *Thank Him!*(v.10)

Life did <u>not</u> <u>evolve</u>. It was supernaturally and instantly created.

The writer now quotes Psalm 102:25-27, and under inspiration applies it to Christ. Jesus is the Lord (*kurios*) God, who "in the beginning . . . created the Heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

Jn. 1:3 - *"All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made."*

Col. 1:15-16 - *"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."*

Note: Hebrews 1:2

Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...

IV. In <u>EXISTENCE</u>, He is <u>ETERNAL</u>: *Trust Him!*(v.11-12)

V. 11

"They shall perish" - The earth and Heavens will be brought to ruin by God.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away. . ."

"But thou remainest" - *"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." "I the Lord change not."*

"They all shall wax old" - The earth and heavens (sky and outer space) deteriorate with time. It is a scientific law that the earth does not improve in complexity with time, but in actuality is deteriorating with time, leading to entropy. The sun emits tons of irreplaceable energy every day, and eventually will burn out.

We often live our lives as if the things on this earth were permanent (one day, all will be burned up - II Pet. 3:10).

V. 12

"Creation is like an old garment, which will one day be discarded in favor of a new one" (Wiersbe, p. 24).

"A new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 22:1).

God will roll it all up one day (Rev. 6:14 - *"as a scroll"*), or here, as a garment. But Jesus Christ remains the <u>same</u>. After the Millennium, the heavens and earth will flee away (Rev. 21:11). But His years will never end.

"Thou art the same" - Jesus today is just as kind and compassionate as when He said, "*Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Mt. 11:28-30)*

Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...

V. In <u>POSITION</u>, He is <u>RULER</u>: *Submit to Him!*(v.13-14)

V. 13

"Right hand" - The place of <u>honor</u> and power (authority)

Jesus as king of kings and Lord of lords is sitting on His throne and one day all who hate Him, deny Him, blaspheme Him, etc., will be subjected under His feet.

V. 14

Christ is reigning from Heaven, while the angels are out working for Him by serving the saints.

Everyone who is saved and will inherit salvation has at least one "guardian" angel, who serves us in ways we can't imagine.

They serve us under Christ's jurisdiction and command. He gives the orders and they obey.

Section 3: Hebrews 2:1-4
"Pay Attention"

Introduction: v.1a -
If people faced serious consequences for neglecting messages delivered by angels , how will any of us escape if we neglect the message of Jesus Christ?

"Therefore" - Whenever you see the word "therefore," you must back up in the context and see what the "therefore" is there for.

In chapter 1 God showed the superiority of Christ over angels.

See what God the Father said about His Son, Jesus Christ in comparison to Angels...

Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...
I. In NAME, He is my "SON": Honor Him! (v.4-5)
Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...
II. In NATURE, He is GOD: Worship Him! (v.6-9)
Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...
III. In WORK, He is CREATOR: *Thank Him!* (v.10)
Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...
IV. In EXISTENCE, He is ETERNAL: *Trust Him!* (v.11-12)
Jesus Christ is superior to Angels...
V. In POSITION, He is RULER: *Submit to Him!* (v.13-14)

In the previous context, God demonstrated the superiority of Christ over angels for a reason. He now gives that reason.

"We ought" - It is necessary; it is binding; it behooves us; we must! (not a mere suggestion to pay attention to Christ).

"Heed" - Careful attention. The word was commonly used in describing the care and cautious attention by those who would carefully watch where they were going as they would bring a ship to land (Rienecker, p. 666).

Paying "close attention" to Christ's Word implies four things:
- Hearing it intently
- Believing it willingly
- Submitting to it wholeheartedly
- Obeying it consistently

"The more earnest heed" - If people paid attention to messages delivered by prophets (v. 1) and angels, we must give even more attention to the messages delivered by Jesus Christ.

"The things" - The Gospel message and the description of life for the New Testament believer as given by Christ.

"Which we have <u>heard</u>" - Not everyone had a Bible, so they would hear it orally read or its message preached.
(How much more accountable are we who have plenty of available Bibles)

**** Be very careful to pay close attention to everything Jesus Christ has said!***
Failure to do so results in two dangerous consequences:

When you don't pay attention to what Jesus has said,

I. You face the danger of <u>DRIFTING</u> from His Word (v.1b)

"Slip" - To <u>flow away</u>; as a river would carry objects away from one's reach.
The word was used of something slipping from one's memory or of a ring slipping from one's finger or of a ship drifting away from its moorings (Reinecker, p. 666).

The word *"slip"* is passive, implying that there are forces outside of ourselves which may wrench the Word from our hearts if we are not serious about it.

If God's Word does not penetrate the heart of one who hearts it, the devil (like a hungry vulture) will pick away that seed which was sown into the heart of the hard-hearted unbeliever (Mt. 13:19 - *"When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.")*

What things do you pay attention to, so you don't lose them? (jewelry; boyfriend or girlfriend; your car in NYC, etc.)

Do we even think of giving as much heed to retaining last week's Sunday sermon, or yesterday's devotional reading? We are too casual about our Christianity.

If you don't hold on to it, you may lose it!

Can you imagine accidentally dropping a diamond ring off of a boat in the middle of the ocean, or having an expensive hat blow off your head from the top of the Empire State Building, or having your boat drift away down river and off the falls?
In this context of professing Christian Hebrew believers, some professed, but did not possess the truth. Hence the opportunity of mentally losing God's salvation plan was a real danger.

To let something pass by which deserved our greatest attention is the height of folly.

"Use it or Lose it" applies to spiritual exercise as well as physical.
"It is easy to drift with the current, but it is difficult to return against the stream" (Wiersbe, p. 27).

When you don't pay attention to what Jesus has said,

II. You face the danger of <u>BEING JUDGED</u> by His Word (v.2-4)

V. 2

When did "<u>angels</u>" speak?

God announced the birth of John the Baptist & Jesus via angels.

God gave the Law to Moses via angels (Acts 7:53 - *"Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it"*; Ps. 68:17 - *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord ia among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place"*; Cp. Deut. 33:2)

God spoke to Abraham about the impending judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah via angels (Gen. 18).

We had better listen, because...

A. When the Lord speaks, <u>HE DOES WHAT HE SAYS</u> (v.2-3a)

V. 2

"Steadfast" - Firm, dependable, guaranteed to be fulfilled.

"Transgression" - (lit. to "step beside"); to ignore by stepping over God's boundaries

"Disobedience" - (lit. to "hear beside"); to ignore by refusing to listen.

"A just recompense of reward" - A fair and righteous pay back or punishment

V. 3

"How shall we escape?" - How can we flee from, avoid, or get away out from payment for ignoring God's Word.

We often deceive ourselves into thinking we are exceptions. "Yeah, I see what happened to others who went down the wrong path, but that won't happen to me; I'm different; God and I have this deal worked out. . ."

No one avoids the unalterable principle of sowing and reaping!

"Neglect" - to be unconcerned about something.

"Neglect" - many don't view neglect as so serious.
Some would justify their neglect by saying:

"After all, I don't <u>hate</u> God's great salvation."
"After all, I don't <u>oppose</u> God's great salvation."

"Hell is undoubtedly full of people who were never actively opposed to Jesus Christ, but who simply neglected the Gospel." (MacArthur, p. 39).

"So great salvation" - God's salvation, of all subjects, must not be ignored. It is the "greatest" subject, planned by the greatest Mind (God's), provided by the greatest Person (Jesus Christ), preached by the greatest Teacher (the Holy Spirit), promising the greatest benefits (eternal life and abundant life).

We had better listen, because...

B. When the Lord speaks, <u>HE BACKS UP WHAT HE SAYS</u> (v.3b-4)

1. God's great salvation plan was first <u>spoken by Jesus Christ</u> (v.3b)

"At the first" - at the beginning of the New Testament era

"By the Lord" - Jesus Christ in the flesh on earth

It was Jesus who said:

"I am the living water"
"I am the true vine"
"I am the door"
"I am the good Shepherd"
"I am the bread of life"
"I am the light of the world"
"I am the resurrection and the life"
John 1:12; 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:37; 10:27-30; 14:6

[Note: The Ultradispensationalists don't believe Christ's message of salvation applies to us. We should consult Paul, they would say (implying two different Gospels). The writer of Hebrews would strongly disagree with them.]

2. God's great salvation plan was then <u>confirmed by the Apostles</u> (v.3c)

"Confirmed" - to guarantee something by showing how valid and secure it is.
God had eye and ear witnesses of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, messages, etc.

3. God's great salvation plan was <u>authenticated by God's miraculous power</u> (v.4)

"Witness" - God gave additional testimony to the world of the truthfulness and faithfulness of the Apostolic message and messengers

God always vindicated or authenticated His messengers.

Exod. 4:28-30 - *"And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel: And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people."*

Exod. 14:31 - *"And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and his servant Moses."*

Elijah; Daniel; Paul; Peter, etc.

Rom. 15:19 - *"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*

II Cor. 12:13 - *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."*

Note: The participle ***"bearing"*** describes the <u>past</u> tense Aorist verb *"confirmed"* (v. 3). The past tense verb indicates that God is <u>not</u> now presently confirming the Gospel with miracles, but that He did in the <u>past</u>!

Mark 16:20 - *"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."*

"Signs" - An experiential indication of supernatural power, showing that god is speaking, working, moving, etc. (all signs point to God as He pours out new revelation or steps into history to begin a new work).

"Wonders" - something which causes amazement.

"Miracles" - dynamic, supernatural powers

"Gifts" - i.e. sign gifts, such as healing, miracles, tongues, interpretation of tongues

"According to His will" - Not the will of man, but God. He sovereignly sent signs and miracles as He wished and desired; not because people wanted to exercise such gifts (I Cor. 12:4 - *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit")*

The church has been built on the foundation of the Apostles and New Testament prophets (Eph. 2:20). Such foundation layers do not exist today.

Faith Healers

Not only did God breath life into the early Church (Acts 2), but He also gave gifts to men (Eph. 4).

Sign gifts = to validate God's messengers.

"Believe Me for My work's sake"
"We know that You are a teacher come from God..." (how did they know?)
"The works that I do bear witness"
"And truly many other signs did Jesus"

Men may have denied His words, but they could never deny His works.

*The validation (mark) of a God-ordained ministry today is not sign gifts, but a lining up with the complete Word of God. The sign gifts were to the Apostles and their associates (II Cor. 12:12).

Signs would serve as big billboards to advertize a new message.

Are the sign gifts still around today? To answer this ask, "Are the Apostles still around today?" Or: "Is God still pouring out new revelation today?"

They ceased by the time Hebrews was written (*"was confirmed" unto us by them* [apostles]" -- past tense).

Phil. 2:25 - Epaphroditis was sick unto death.
II Tim. 4:20 - Trophimus have I left ...sick
II Cor. 12:7 - thorn in the flesh (Paul couldn't even heal himself)
James - Is any afflicted? Let him pray.
"Take a little wine [medicine] for thy stomach's sake"

To give the early Church a "jumpstart" God gave sign gifts.

If sign gifts did pass away, what is all of this "hocus pocus" going on today?

Much of the so-called healing and healers are:

1. Fraudulent claims by greedy charlatans

   --pre-planned
   --mind manipulation
   --75% of people with physical problems today are psychosomatic. They feel healed through a serge of adrenalin until they leave the healing service.

2. Satan and his demons can perform signs and wonders

   Mk. 13:22 - "shall show signs and wonders"
   Mt. 7:22 - "cast out demons in Thy name"

   How do witch doctors validate their message? Black magic, voodoo

   II Cor. 11 - "Satan, an angel of light"
   "Believe not every spirit"

   Even if sign miracles were done today, they would have to be done according to the Scriptural pattern:

   Healings were most always used on unbelievers.
   Healings were most always used wherever they went.
   It would be fishy if only believers were being healed.

Section 4: Hebrews 2:5-18
"Why God became a Man"

Introduction:
Whereas chapter one expanded on Christ's deity, chapter two expounds His humanity (during His incarnation).

Having demonstrated Christ's superiority over angels [both in His person, works (1:4-14), and words (2:1-4)], God now explains why Christ for a time ***"was made a little lower than the angels."***

When Christ became a man, He voluntarily took on limitations that would confine Him, limit Him, and make Him dependent. When Christ became a man, He took upon Himself some of the limitations of flesh and blood.

Christ's changes during incarnation:

a. A change in His dwelling-place
(from the presence of the Father to the presence of men - Jn. 6:51)

b. A change in His possessions
(from riches to poverty - Luke 8:59; II Cor. 8:9)

c. A change in His reputation among men
(from glory to obscurity - Jn. 17:5; Phil. 2:6, 7)

d. A change in His position
(from equality with God [in authority] to servanthood - Mt. 20:26-28; Phil. 2:6, 7)

e. A change in His form (bodily appearance)
(from the form of God to the likeness of men - Phil. 2:6-8)

Note concerning these changes: All the changes were temporary

1) Jesus returned to His dwelling-place with the Father (Jn. 17:11).

2) Jesus reclaimed His riches with the Father (Jn. 16:10; Rev.5:12)

3) Jesus has been exalted to a place of glory among spiritually-minded men (Jn. 17:5), and will soon be honored by all men (Phil. 2:9, 10; Rev. 5:12)

4) Jesus is again occupying the place of rulership (authority) over all creation (Col. 1:15 - "the first born of all creation"; Mt. 28:19)

5) Jesus will appear in a glorified human form throughout eternity
(Acts 7:54, 55; Rev. 1:17, 18; 5:6; 22:16)

When Jesus became incarnate, He took upon Himself a genuine human nature. NOTE: Although Christ became total man, He did not become sinful man. He had a human nature but not a sin nature (Heb. 4:15, 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22).

He had the identical nature which Adam had before the fall. Christ is called "the last Adam" (I Cor. 15:45).

Scriptural evidences of Christ's humanity:

1) Christ possessed the essential elements of human nature.
   a) Jesus had a body (Heb. 2:14, 16; I Jn. 4:2, 3)
   b) Jesus had a soul (Mt. 26:38)
   c) Jesus had a spirit (Lk. 23:46)

2) Christ expressly called Himself, and was called, "Man."
   John 8:40 - "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth."
   Acts 2:22 - "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God . . ."
   I Timothy 2:5 - "One mediator . . . the man Christ Jesus."

3) Christ frequently called Himself "the Son of man" (Lk. 19:10) - a title which identified the eternal son of God with the mortal sons of men.
   By the term "Son of man," Jesus clearly and fully identified Himself with mankind.

4) Jesus exercised all the attributes of human existence.

   a) Birth (including pre-natal development -Lk. 2:6, 7)
   b) Growth and development (Lk. 2:40, 52)
   c) Physical appetites
      (1) Hunger (Mt. 4:2)
      (2) Thirst (Jn. 19:28)
      (3) Sleep (Mt. 8:24)
   d) Emotions
      (1) Anger (not sinful anger) (Mk. 3:5)
      (2) Sorrow (Jn. 11:35)
      (3) Compassion (Jn. 13:23)
      (4) Anguish of soul (Jn. 12:27)
   e) Human restrictions and limitations
      (1) Fatigue (weariness - Jn. 4:6)
      (2) Exhaustion (Lk. 22:43)
      (3) Time/space limitations (Mk. 11:13)
      (4) Death (Jn. 19:30)

The Mystery of mysteries involves the eternal Creator of the universe, who had all power, all authority, and all honor; and yet humbled Himself so low in order to become man and take upon Himself man's limitations (SEE I Tim. 3:16).

Philippians 2:5-8 describes the self-emptying ("kenosis") of Christ.

The word "kenosis" comes from the Greek word "kenoo" (Phil. 2:7), which means "to empty."

The doctrine of Christ's Kenosis (self-emptying) is succinctly stated as follows: "Christ voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of certain of His divine attributes while He was on earth."

Note concerning this statement:

1) Christ was and is fully equal with God the Father (v. 6) (cp. John 5:18, 10:30).

2) Though equal with God, Christ humbled Himself voluntarily (v.7)

3) Christ did not empty Himself of His deity, but rather He emptied Himself of the display of His deity.

   He deserved the recognition of God, yet "He made Himself of no reputation" in the eyes of men.

   The most dramatic result of Christ becoming man is that through He was God, He would no longer be immediately recognized or honored as God by men.

4) Christ did not surrender any attribute, but rather the independent use of certain attributes.

   In the Kenosis, Jesus the Son became perfectly subservient to the Father (John 8:28, 29; Heb. 10:7) and perfectly dependent upon the Spirit (Acts 1:2; Heb. 9:14).

5) Christ only surrendered the use of certain divine attributes.

   Jesus never surrendered an attribute of His inner nature or character (EX: holiness, righteousness, truthfulness, faithfulness, love, mercy, grace, patience).

   Jesus did surrender the independent use of His attributes of ability to the leading and will of the Father.

   EX:the ability to do all (omnipotence; Mt. 28:19)
   the ability to know all (omniscience; Mk. 13:32)
   the ability to decide all (omnisapience; Lk. 2:52)
   the ability to be everywhere (omnipresence; Jn. 14:28)

   Christ surrendered the use of His "omnirelative" attributes, not His "immanent" attributes.

6) Christ's self-emptying was limited to the time He was on earth before His resurrection and glorification.

Today, Christ has all authority (Mt. 28:19) and all glory (Jn. 17:5) and full exercise of all of His "omnirelative" attributes (Rev. 1:13-18; 5:12, 13)

*** Why did Jesus (the Son of God) become a man?**
(Why did the One superior to Angels, become "a little lower than the angels"?)

Jesus became a man to...

I. Regain man's lost dominion (v.5-9a)

V. 5
"The world to come" - The inhabited earth which will be ruled over by Christ and His saints in the future 1,000 year Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6).

Angels will not be in charge of that Kingdom, but Christ (the son of man) and redeemed mankind will be.

V. 6
"In a certain place" = SEE: Psalm 8:3-9

V. 7
"A little lower" - Both in degree and time (both in quality and quantity, man is lower than angels).

In the present, man has limits that angels do not have (we need food, sleep, shelter; function by five senses).

In the future, glorified man will be superior in nature to angels.

Man was set over God's creation in Gen. 1:28 - *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."*

V. 8
"Not yet all things put under him" - Man, via the Fall, lost his complete dominion over creation.

"But we have a serious problem here, for it is obvious that man today is not exercising dominion over creation. Certainly man cannot control the fish, fowl or animals. In fact, man has a hard time controlling himself" (Wiersbe, p. 28).

V. 8b
The curse on the ground, and the fear of man in animals, has made the dominion of man over nature a difficult task. At the present time, nature is *"subjected to futility"* (Rom. 8:19-20). In the future Kingdom, however:

Man will be changed (Is. 2:2-4)
Animals will be changed (Is. 2:2-4; 11:6, 8-9)
Plants will be changed (Is. 35:1-2)

V. 9a
What the first "Adam" lost to Satan, the second "Adam" regained for us.

"But we see Jesus" - "He is God's answer to man's dilemma. Jesus Christ became man that He might suffer and die for man's sin and restore the dominion that was lost because of sin. When our Lord was here on earth, He exercised that lost dominion. He had dominion over the fish (Lk. 5:1-11; Mt. 17:24-27; Jn. 21:1-11), over the fowl (Lk. 22:34, 60), and over the wild beasts (Mk. 1:12-13), and the domesticated beasts (Mk. 11:1-7). As the Last Adam (I Cor. 15:45), Jesus Christ regained man's lost dominion. Today, everything is under His feet (Eph. 1:20-23)." (Wiersbe, p. 28)

Jesus became a man to...

II. Experience death for every man (v.9)

Christ had to temporarily become lower than the angels because angels cannot die.

"By the grace of God" - we did not deserve our Lord to humble Himself so low as to die a shameful death to pay for our sins.

"Grace" = **G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense

"Taste death" -

God became man so that He might die for men.

*Since God is eternal, and since He is pure Spirit (Jn. 4:24), He could not die.

Therefore, He subjected Himself (in the person of Christ) to a temporal and mortal body so that death might be possible.

--Matthew 20:28 - "...give His life a ransom for many."
"The Son of God became the Son of man so that we--the sons of man--might become sons of God."
--I Tim. 1:15 - "...came into the world to save sinners"
--John 6:51 - I will give my flesh..."for the life of the world"

The main purpose of Christ's incarnation was ***"for the suffering of death."***

Christ was born to die. "Those tiny hands fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb were made to take two great nails. Those little feet were made to climb a hill and to be nailed to a cross. That sacred head was made to wear a crown of thorns, and that tender body wrapped in swaddling clothes was made to be pierced by a spear" (MacArthur, p. 63).

"Taste death" - to fully experience death.

"For every man" - for all people (lit. everyone); not a select few. The Bible does not teach a Limited Atonement. (it is limited in its application but not in its provision).

Christ's death is sufficient for all, but is only efficient for those who believe.

Jesus became a man to...

III. Identify with sanctified men as "brothers" (v.10-13)

V. 10

"It became Him" - It was fitting for God the Father.

"For whom are all things" - God is the <u>goal</u> of creation (we were created for Him)

"By whom are all things" - God is the <u>cause</u> of creation (we were created by Him; cp. Col. 1:16)

"Captain" - (*archegon)* - author, head, leader, pioneer
It was necessary that Jesus, the Pioneer of our salvation, be qualified to provide salvation by suffering to pay the price necessary.

"Perfect" - complete or adequate
Jesus could not be an adequate Savior if He hadn't become a man to suffer for man's sins.
"***Perfect***" = complete; to finish the full course.
God became man so that He might completely know human life & suffering by personal <u>experience</u>.
[NOTE: Knowledge is cognitive and experiential - Christ "<u>learned</u> obedience" (Heb. 5:8); that is, He learned by <u>experience</u> that which He had only known cognitively previously.]

Because Jesus experienced human life & suffering:

a. He is able to <u>encourage</u> those who are troubled (Heb. 2:17-18).

b. He is able to <u>strengthen</u> those who are tempted (Heb. 4:15-16).

V. 11
"All of one" = Both the Holy Lord Jesus Christ and saved saints are united to the same Heavenly Father.

--He as the *"only begotten Son"* (Jn. 3:16)

--We as <u>adopted</u> Sons (Ro. 8:15-16; I Jn. 3:1)

This unity and oneness as joint heirs gives Jesus Christ the opportunity to call us "brothers." Because we share the same Father [Jesus via His eternal relationship with the Father and we via our new birth experience], Jesus is not ashamed to call us ***"brother."***

He is not ashamed to call us brothers; are we ashamed to call Him Lord? (Wiersbe)

V. 12
"The Church" - the "called out ones" (both New Testament and Old Testament saints - *ekklesia* here refers to that future congregation which will be assembled in Heaven).

By citing Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17-18, the writer of Hebrews looks forward to the ultimate prophetic fulfillment of those texts, which we who are saved will realize in God's future Kingdom, as Christ stands in the midst of His *"brethren"* and praises God the Father for giving us to Him.

Jesus became a man to...

IV. Remove man's fear of death (imposed by Satan) (v.14-15)

V. 14a
"The Son of God became the Son of man, so that we, the sons of man, might become the sons of God."
Christ took upon Himself human flesh and blood so that He might die to free us from death.

V. 14-15
Satan was defeated at the cross in that he no longer can taunt us and provoke us to fear death because we know that Christ's death brings eternal life to us.

V. 15
We don't need to fear death. We don't need to dread what lies beyond the grave! When you realize the love of God for you (as demonstrated at Calvary), you no longer have to live in torment, because God's love casts out all fear! (I Jn. 4:18). Hezekiah feared death (Is. 38:10-12, 18); Stephen did not (Acts 7); Paul did not (Phil. 1:21 - *"to die is gain"*).

Do you know with 100% certainty where you will spend eternity?

Jesus became a man to...

V. Mediate between God & Man as "High Priest" (v.16-17)

V. 16

Jesus didn't just become a man; but He became a Jew, entering the human race through the line of Abraham.

V. 17

"It behooved Him" - It was absolutely necessary. For Christ to be a mediator as a High Priest and to make reconciliation, He had to become a man.

The two natures were absolutely necessary in order for Jesus to be a Mediator between God and men (I Tim. 2:5).

Job 9:32-33 - Job looked for a "daysman" (or arbitrator, who understands both god and man and can bring them together in harmony -- Ryrie Study Bible note).

Hebrews 4:14-16 - In order for Jesus to be our "Great High Priest" in heaven, He must be God and man.

Hebrews 7:24-26 - Christ is our intercessor as high priest. Being God and man, He can bridge the gap between the mortal and immortal, between the human and the divine.

I John 2:1 - Jesus can be our advocate (defense attorney summoned along side) because He is the God-man.

"Reconciliation" - Christ fully satisfied the just demands and wrath of God and has made peace between sinful man and a holy God.

The two natures were absolutely necessary in order for Jesus to be an adequate sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Jesus had to be God in order to be an infinite sacrifice - To satisfy the just demands of God (I Jn. 2:2 - "Propitiation . . . for the whole world"; cp. Rom. 3:25; Is. 53:11).

Jesus had to be man in order to be a suitable sacrifice - to die for men, He had to become man. Otherwise, His sacrifice would not have equaled the payment which men were required to pay.

Jesus became a man to...

VI. Encourage & Assist men through their temptations (v.18)

Angels cannot feel what we feel. They being pure spirit beings cannot identify with us in our weaknesses and needs. But Jesus can. (Wiersbe, p. 30)

How real was Christ's temptation?

Because of Christ's divine attribute of holiness (absolute separateness from all sin and impurity), sin was an impossibility.

If this is so, was the temptation legitimate (real)?

Yes, because it is possible to attempt the impossible.

Though Christ was not able to sin, His temptation was nonetheless real and awful.

[Important principle: "Only the sinless Individual can know the power of temptation in its <u>full intensity</u>, because only that individual endures until the temptation is broken. We who fall <u>never know the full power</u> of temptation, simply because we yield before we experience the <u>full measure of the demonic onslaught</u>. Christ knows all there is to know of Satan's power to tempt, simply because He withstood the full measure of such temptation." --Bookman, notes, p. 25]

"Succour" - to come to the aid of one in need, and to help. (SEE: Heb. 4:15)

HYMN: "There's Not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus"

Section 5: Hebrews 3:1-6
Consider Christ Superior!

Introduction: (v.1-2)

V. 1

"Wherefore" - The writer of Hebrews now builds on what he previously said.

Having demonstrated why God (in Christ) became a man, he now shows how faithful that God-man was when he came to earth.

He does this by comparing and contrasting Him with Moses.

This expose' on Christ's supremacy to Moses is addressed to ***"holy brethren"***; that is, to believers who have been declared righteous based on their union to Jesus Christ, and have been set apart from the world unto God.

"Brethren" - Because we are adopted children of God, we are called "brothers." We are related to each other and to Jesus Christ, who is not ashamed to call us brethren, as just previously stated (2:11).

"Partakers" - Participants, sharers, partners.

As "holy brethren" we don't merely know about God's heavenly calling, but we share in it! We are not spectators of it, but participants in it.

"The heavenly calling" - the invitation to salvation which came not from man on earth but from God in Heaven.

God from Heaven invites sinners to Heaven, and those who respond to His invitation become partakers of that invitation.

"Consider" - the only imperative in this paragraph (v. 1-6). The word implores us to fix our minds on something. To allow some truth to penetrate deep into our minds.

Who is it that deserves such serious attention? Answer: Jesus Christ.

"This is no quick glance at Jesus Christ! It is a careful consideration of who He is and what He has done." (Wiersbe, p. 34)

"Apostle" - The word means "a sent one," an ambassador (not necessarily implying an office of apostle, like the twelve; EX: John the Baptist was called an Apostle, in the sense of a sent one.)

Rather, speaks of the function of an apostle, which is to faithfully carry out a mission; it refers to one who is commissioned as an authentic representative.

Jesus was sent by God the Father to announce to the world God's *"Heavenly calling"* to eternal life (John 17:3 - *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."*)

Jesus Christ was sent as God's "last word" to sinful man (Wiersbe, p. 34).

"High Priest" - our mediator; the God-Man who provides the bridge for man to God by His sacrifice at Calvary and His abiding intercessory work for us.

Both words "apostle" and "high priest" refer back to chapter 2 to the incarnation of Christ. As a "sent one," *"He was made a little lower than the angels"* (2:9), and as a "High Priest" He provides reconciliation for us (2:17).

"Profession" - (*homologias)* the same word which means "to confess" or literally "to say the same thing." A "profession of faith" means to agree with God, to "say the same thing" God's Word says about sin, salvation, and the Savior.

"All true believers 'say the same thing' when it comes to their experience of salvation" (Wiersbe, p. 34).

V. 2

"Faithful to Him" - Jesus was perfectly faithful to carry out the will of God the Father who sent Him.

> John 4:34 - *"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."*
>
> John 6:38 - *"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."*

Because of the rank in the triune Godhead (I Cor. 11:3), Christ when He came to earth submitted Himself to the Father and fulfilled His plan of salvation.

(God the Father planned our salvation [Eph. 1:4-6]; God the Son performed our salvation [Eph. 1:7-12]; God the Holy Spirit preserves our salvation [Eph. 1:13-14])

Moses, who at the age of 80 led 2 million Jews out of Egypt through the desert of the Sinai peninsula for 40 years, is clearly the greatest human leader to ever live.

Moses was faithful, but not perfectly faithful (EX: the disobedient incident of his striking the Rock rather than speaking to it - Num. 20:1-13)

Jesus and Moses have some things in common. For example, they both introduced covenants and initiated new dispensations. Moses, the Old Covenant; Jesus, the New Covenant.

"For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jn. 1:17).

*** Consider how Jesus Christ is superior to Moses!**

I. Christ is superior to Moses, as a BUILDER is superior to a BUILDING (v.3-4)

V. 3

"Counted worthy" - When Christ's glory is weighed with Moses' glory, Christ's infinitely outweighs Moses'.

"Glory" - that which shines; that which radiates a glow or brilliance (SEE: II Cor. 3:7ff)

Jesus outshines Moses as the sun outshines the moon, as the cause of light outshines the effect of that light, as the light bulb (source) outshines the room it has lit (effect).

God's glory is not shared with anyone! (Is. 42:8). Yet Jesus shared the same glory as the Father before the world was created (Jn. 17:5).

He who built the universe is Jesus Christ!

John 1:1-3, 14 - *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth"*

Col. 1:16-17 - *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*

Heb. 1:2 - *"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"*

He who built the nation of Israel is Jesus Christ!

He gave a son to Abraham named Isaac (Gen. 18:1-14; cp. Jn. 8:56).
He guided the nation as the shekinah glory cloud and pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21)
He provided water for Israel out of a rock (I Cor. 10:4)
He protected and conquered for Israel as the Captain of the Lord's host (Josh. 5:13-15)

He who built the Church is Jesus Christ!

"I will build My church..." (Mt. 16:18)

"Builded" *(kataskeuzao)* - to construct and furnish

"The word expresses more than the mere construction of the house. It includes the supply of all necessary furniture and equipment" (Reinecker, p. 672).

Christ built the world and all things therein (Ps. 24:1).

V. 4

"Every house is builded by some man" - Nothing happens by evolution or chance. Every building on earth has been built by someone. An architect planned it and a carpenter built it.

"He that built all things is God" -
Gen. 1:1 - *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"*

Heb. 11:3 - *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."*

Ps. 33:6-9 - *"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."*

If Jesus is Creator then He must be God, because God had no help in creation (Is. 44:24 - *"Thus saith the LORD, they redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.")*

Since the Builder is to be honored (valued, esteemed highly) above the Building. . . we should love the Creator more than the Creation; we should worship the Creator and not the creation; we should serve (live for) the Creator rather than the creation.

II. Christ is superior to Moses, as a <u>SON</u> is superior to a <u>SERVANT</u> (v.5-6a)

V. 5

"His house" - God's household, or stewardship, given to Moses to manage: namely, the nation of Israel.

"As a <u>servant</u>" - (not *doulos* or *diakonos*, but *therapon* [akin to "therapeudic"], meaning one who brings aid and help to people as an attendant, a dignified servant, one who voluntarily and willingly serves as an honorable servant.

What type of spiritual aid did Moses bring to his household, Israel? What service did he render?

"For a testimony. . ." - Moses was a witness of One who would come to speak on God's behalf in the future. He testified of Christ!

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me" (Jn. 5:46).

SEE: Deut. 18:18-19; cp. with Acts 3:22-26

V. 6

"But Christ [implied: "was faithful"] ***was a Son over His own house" -*** While Moses was a servant (attendant), Jesus is a <u>Son</u>.

While a servant of a King <u>works</u> in a house, the Son of a king <u>owns</u> the house and <u>rules</u> the house.

Christ being the "Son" is the rightful heir of all things. All of the Father's property is His by right of inheritance.

Jesus demonstrated the superiority of a Son over a servant by saying: "*And the servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* (Jn. 8:35-36)

"Whose house are we" -

Christ's relationship to His people is illustrated in several ways in the New Testament:

--The Body of Christ (Rom. 12; I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:4-16)

--The Bride of Christ (Jn. 3:29; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7, 9)

--The Temple of God (I Cor. 3:17, 6:19-20; Eph. 2:21, 22)

--The pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15)

--The Building (house) of Christ (I Cor. 3:9-11)

1) The Builder is Christ (Mt. 16:18)

2) The foundation is the Gospel about Christ (I Cor. 3:10-11)

3) The cornerstone is Christ (Eph. 2:20; Acts 4:11)

4) The building stones are believers (I Pet. 2:5)

Conclusion: (v.6b)

Since Christ is superior to Moses, no one should revert back to the Law of Moses, but continue in the grace of Christ.

A proof that you are Christ's *"house"* is if you don't cave in under pressure, if you "hold fast" (firmly hold onto without letting go).

Compare such perseverance of the saints with 3:12, 14.

That which distinguishes a true Christian from a false one is his divinely-bestowed ability to endure until the end (cp. Mt. 24:13). A true child of God will never become an apostate (I Tim. 4:1; I Jn. 2:19).

"If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed" (Jn. 8:31).

God's righteous ones may and will at times fall, but they get up again! (Prov. 24:16).

God is not teaching us that we keep ourselves saved; what He is teaching is that if we are saved, we will keep on keeping on!

"Confidence" - a bold assurance of truth

"Rejoicing" - a boasting in the hope anchored in Christ (not self)

By comparing Christ to the greatest Jew to ever life, it becomes clearly evident that no one compares to Jesus Christ.

He is above and beyond anyone and anything.

--Should we ever be ashamed of Him? (should we "blush to speak His name"?)

--Shouldn't we be faithful to Him? (we have every reason to keep our full confidence in Him to the end)

Song: "We Will Glorify"

"WE WILL GLORIFY"

We will glorify the King of kings,
We will glorify the Lamb;
We will glorify the Lord of lords,
Who is the Great I AM.

Lord Jehovah reigns in majesty,
We will bow before His throne;
We will worship Him in righteousness,
We will worship Him alone.

He is Lord of heaven, Lord of earth,
He is Lord of all who live;
He is Lord above the universe,
All praise to Him we give.

Hallelujah to the King of kings,
Hallelujah to the Lamb;
Hallelujah to the Lord of lords,
Who is the great I AM.

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Section 6: Hebrews 3:7-19
HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS

Introduction: Verses 7-8

V. 7

"As the Holy Ghost saith" - The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95:7-11, a psalm most likely penned by David--yet he attributes it to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the Author of Scripture!

"Today" - God never promises us a tomorrow on earth. His exhortations are always to be applied today. *"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation"* (II Cor. 6:2). *"Boast not thyself of tomorrow"* (Prov. 27:1). *"Ye know not what shall be on the morrow, for what is your life. . . vapor"* (James 4:14-15).

The devil's biggest lie is: "You can do it later". . . "Procrastinate" . . . "You have plenty of time."

"Today" - D.L. Moody - "Go home and think about what I've said" (MacArthur, p. 88).

This may be the last time (final day) God ever speaks to you on earth.

Listen to God especially well when you are young. The most difficult people to reach are old people because they have a tendency to become set in their ways. Many hearts have been closed for so long that they have "rusted shut."

"Hear" - A commonly repeated phrase of Jesus: *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."*

"His voice" - God's voice is specifically heard in the pages of His Word, the Bible.

V. 8

"Harden not" - God softens hearts, but man hardens his heart.

"Provocation" - Refers specifically to the time when the nation of Israel had a conflict with God's will and rebelled against God by refusing to believe Him and to conquer the land of Canaan.

At Kadesh-Barnea, twelve spies were sent out to survey the land of Canaan (Num. 13:26-27). Ten returned with an evil report which discouraged the faith of the nation (13:28-33), and two (Joshua & Caleb) returned with a good report (Num. 14:7-9). The nation determined unanimously to not follow God's will and to not take the land by faith (Num. 14). As a result, a curse was pronounced on the nation: all would wander for 40 years in the desert, and everyone 20 years old and upward would perish there.

V. 9

"Tempted" - With evil hearts, the nation put God to the test time and time again.

(Num. 14:22-23)

Ten times God had displayed His power, and ten times the nation displayed unbelief.

Ten times God was put to the test:

1.At the Red Sea (Exod. 14:11-12)
2.At Marah (Exod. 15:23-24)
3.In the wilderness of Sin (Exod. 16:2)
4.In connection with manna (Exod. 16:20)
5.In connection with manna (Exod. 16:27)
6.At Rephidim (Exod. 17:1-3)
7.At Horeb (Exod. 32:7)
8.At Taberah (Num. 11:1)
9.The mixed multitude (Num. 11:4)
10.At Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 14)

Today if you hear His voice,
***Harden not your hearts!**

When a person's heart is hard . . .

--he tests God rather than trust Him (v. 9a)

One who tests God is one who seeks after signs and wonders rather than trust God's promises (EX: the rich man in hell - Lk. 16).

--he refuses to believe despite visible evidence (v. 9b)

The evolutionist is an example of one who has all the visible evidence of a Creator around him (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20), yet he refuses to acknowledge the Creator.

--he grieves God's heart and invites His indignation (v. 10a, 11a)

Nothing saddens God's heart like unbelief. *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."*

"He that, being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

--he looses his inner moorings and drifts astray (v. 10b)

"Err" - to go astray, to wander off course.

Before one errs in actions, they will err in their heart.

Deluded thoughts and reasonings in the heart lead to a misdirected lifestyle.

--he remains willfully ignorant of God's ways (v. 10c)

"Ways" - God's path, the right road.

A lack of direction will result in the life of one who hardens himself against God.

--he forfeits God's best for life and eternity (v. 11)

"Rest" - Temporally: the Promised Land of Canaan (and all of its blessings) was forfeited

Eternally: Heaven

How can you avoid becoming spiritually hard hearted?

I. Examine the condition of your heart (v. 12)
--Today, so you don't depart from God tomorrow

"Take heed" - A word of <u>caution</u>. Look out! Pay attention!

Just as periodic visits to the cardiologist can aid you in knowing the condition of your heart, so a simple request for God to reveal to you the condition of your spiritual heart is in order.

Has He given you a new heart? (cp. Jer. 31:33-34; cp. Heb. 10:16-17)

"Take heed <u>brethren</u>" - This admonition is given to people who call themselves"brethren." (They are "brethren" in the sense that they profess salvation, profess to be children of God)

There is a need for all of us to examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5 - *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?")*

"Departing" *(apostenai)* - to apostasize; to abandon a view once held; to depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1).

People don't depart from God because they once had a believing heart and lost it and became an unbeliever. They depart because they were never genuine believers to begin with. Inside themselves was ***"an evil heart of unbelief."***

Take a personal inventory. Could there be an evil heart of unbelief in you today? (It is better to find out ow than to find out after death)

The test of your faith is:

1.The <u>peace</u> of God imparted to your heart (Jn. 14:1-2)
2.The <u>fruit</u> (works) of God (the results that faith has produced in your life - James 2)

II. Stay in constant fellowship with fellow believers (v. 13)
--Who will encourage your heart

"Exhort" - *(parakaleo)* to encourage. The Encourager (the Holy Spirit) uses human vessels to encourage His people.

All of us need our faith encouraged. We all need a Barnabas in our life.

"One another" - emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the encouraging (Mutual encouragement).

We need each other (we are in a sense mutually dependent).

If you faith to gather with God's people, you will simply fail.

"Daily" - Emphasizes the continual need for encouragement (not just once a week or once a year).

Perhaps we cannot gather all together every day of the week, but you can. . .

--use the phone
--visit a friend from church
--mail a card

This idea of encouraging each other is most clearly stated in Heb. 10:24-25.

ILLUS: the coals in the fireplace

III. **Beware of the hardening effects of sin** (v. 13b)

We provoke each other unto love and good works so as to live holy and Godly. Such provocation helps us to sin less and to keep our hearts soft.

"Hardened" - sin has a hardening effect on our hearts.

--It hardens us against loving God and others (Mt. 24:12)

--It hardens us against obeying God

Hard-hearted people are too stubborn to accept God's will; they want their own.

EX: *"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives. . ."* (Mt. 19:8)

Every time you give in to a sin, you become more and more calloused to it, more and more insensitive to its abhorrent nature, less and less afraid of its damaging effects.

"Deceitfulness" - Sin says, "You can flirt with me and not be hurt." "You can from time to time dabble around with me and not be affected."

Use the ILLUSTRATION of "Plastic Steel" putty (when the two elements are mixed, the catalyst of one hardens the other).

Conclusion: Your faith at the finish line reveals whether or not you belong to Christ (v. 14-19).

V. 14

"Partakers" - sharers; one who possesses Christ.

Those whose faith endures manifest by their endurance that their faith was real.

V. 15

A repeat of 3:7-8, also re-emphasized in 4:7.

V. 16

"Not all" - Not Joshua and Caleb; not those under 20 years of age.

V. 18

The sin which keeps a soul from Heaven is unbelief.

V. 19

Unbelief bars the door to eternal life. Faith (belief) opens it.

SEE: John 1:12, 3:15-18, 3:36, 5:24, 20:31

The condition of you heart will determine your reception of the seed of God's Word (Matthew 13 - the four soils).

--Cement is workable when soft
--Clay is moldable when soft
--Plaster/compound is pliable when soft
--Bonds Plastic Filler is useful when soft

If God is going to alter/grow/mature anything in our lives, we must have tender hearts.

Have you grown insensitive to the "*still small voice"* of God?

Has your reception become calloused?

Are you as easily moved (touched), affected by God's Word as you used to be?

If not, it may be time to ask God to tenderize your heart once again.

Section 7: Hebrews 4:1-13
"DON'T MISS IT!"

Theme and Outline of Hebrews 4:1-13

***Don't miss out on God's eternal Rest!**

I. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you don't have the right mixture of hearing plus believing (v. 2)

II. You will miss God's eternal Rest
although He has already finished the work for your salvation, if you don't believe (v. 3-15)

III. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you gamble with tomorrow, when you should believe TODAY! (v. 6-11)

IV. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you don't let God show you the true condition of your heart (v. 12-13)

Introduction: Verse 1

Things we miss:

--The subway train or the bus
--the flight out of JFK
--the big sale
--the doctor's appointment
--some spectacular sight (a shooting star, an eclipse, the President coming through town, etc.)

To miss such things is not the end of the world, but to miss Heaven (God's place of eternal rest) is the worst tragedy.

V. 1

"Therefore" - God now draws a personal application to the end of chapter 3. Having presented Israel (of the Exodus) as an example of hard-hearted unbelief (3:7-18) and having shown how they did not enter God's promised land because of unbelief (v. 19), he now says, *"The same applies to <u>YOU</u>!"* (4:1).

Just as their unbelief barred them from God's place of temporal rest, so your unbelief will fence you off from God's eternal rest.

Nothing is as delightful as <u>rest</u> after a weary day. To lay your head on a soft pillow and cuddle up in a comfortable position with crisp sheets lightly covering you . . . and to relax every muscle and doze off into "La-La Land."

"His Rest" - God's promised, eternal place of bliss.

This life may be filled with turmoil, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with work, sweat, tears, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with war and trouble, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with trials and tribulations, but God promises a future rest.
This life may be filled with heartache and pain, but God promises a future rest.

"Fear" - Many don't trust God's promises because they don't see their <u>need</u> to do so. There is no fear of God in most people. To fear God is the first step to taking His promises seriously. *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."* (Prov. 9:10).

"Come short" - (*hustereo*/hysterectomy) - the word means to <u>miss out</u> on something; to be <u>without</u>; to <u>lose out</u> on something.

Multitudes of humanity will miss Heaven by a mere 18 inches (that's the average distance from a man's brain to his heart). Some understand with their head, but don't believe in their heart (EX: Judas; Simon - Acts 8).

***Don't miss out on God's eternal Rest!**

I. You will miss God's eternal Rest if you don't have the <u>right mixture</u> of <u>hearing</u> plus <u>believing</u> (v. 2)

"Gospel" = good news

God's good news to the Israelites was that they could enter His rest if they believed His promises. The same Good News applies today!

"The Word preached did not profit" - These are zero benefits to coming to church and hearing the Word preached, if you do not intend to trust the truth God delivers to you from His Word.

Hearing the Gospel is essential (Rom. 10:14), but it is not enough.

Hell will be full of people who knew the truth (Mt. 7:22-23).

There is *"no rest"* for the hearers only!

Dreadful consequences fall on the life of one who hears but doesn't heed (Mt. 7:26). Don't be *"hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (Ja. 1:22).

Knowing the truth does not profit if not believed; it simply heightens the guilt and condemnation of the one who knew it yet failed to respond (*"To whomsoever much is given. . . much shall be required"*; cp. Ja. 3:1).

"If you run a red light and a policeman pulls you over and starts to give you a ticket, you do not show him your copy of the state driving laws as your defense. You do not try to establish your innocence by telling him you have read the booklet many times and know most of the regulations by heart. Far from making you innocent, this would make you all the more responsible for living up to the laws and all the more guilty for breaking them. Knowing the law is an advantage only if we obey it. "For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law," Paul says, "but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision" (Rom. 2:25)." (MacArthur, p. 100)

God's equation for spiritual profit is. . .
Listening & Believing = Benefit
Knowing & Trusting = Blessing
Hearing & Heeding = Heaven

II. You will miss God's eternal Rest
although He has already <u>finished the work</u> for your salvation, if you don't <u>believe</u> (v. 3-15)

V. 3a

In every dispensation God's requirement has remained the same for salvation:
<u>Belief</u>
While believers will certainly rest, unbelievers will certainly experience God's wrath.
What God promises, He performs both positively and negatively.
Positively, we who believe will rest. And negatively, those who do not believe, will not.

"Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" - No unbeliever will benefit from God's provision even though that provision may have been provided for them from the foundation of the world.

The kingdom was provided before the foundation of the world. Matt. 25:34 - *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."*

Christ was *"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world"* (Rev. 13:8).

He was scheduled to die and shed His blood before the foundation of the world (I Pet. 1:20).
In God's mind, the world of Christ at Calvary's cross was so guaranteed to occur, that He states it as already having occurred (a "done deal").

Even though Christ has already paid the price for everyone's sins, no unbeliever will benefit in the payment that has been made on their behalf (II Peter 2:1 - *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction.")*.

V. 4

"Seventh day" - Incidentally, the Sabbath (Saturday Rest) was a foreshadowing of the Rest to come in Christ (Col. 2:16-17). The New Testament believer is under no obligation to keep the Sabbath, which was a sign between Israel and God (Exod. 31:12-17). However, you are wise to rest one in seven (this principle still applies).

A <u>future</u> rest was provided by God in the <u>past</u>.
<u>Creation / Rest</u>

God worked six days and rested on the seventh and has been resting (ceasing from creative activity) ever since. You can enter into His rest, if you trust the work He did for you from the foundation of the world.

V. 5

"My rest" - The rest God promises is <u>His rest</u>; the rest He provides because of His finished work.

III. You will miss God's eternal Rest
if you gamble with tomorrow, when you should believe <u>TODAY</u>! (v. 6-11)

V. 6

Although others rejected God's invitation, the invitation still stands today; God's door to rest still remains open for you to enter.

Christ is that *"door"* (Jn. 10:9).

The word translated *"unbelief"* means to be <u>unpersuaded</u> of something.

The song "Almost Persuaded" is the saddest song in our hymnbook.

V. 7

By appealing to ***"David"*** (in Ps. 95:7), God is showing that His promise of rest was <u>not</u> limited to the Old Testament Israelites who exited Egypt. But the invitation is still open <u>today</u>.

"After so long a time" - The time difference between God's invitation for Israel of the exodus to enter His rest, and David's quote in Ps. 95:7-11 was a long time. That span of time proves that the call to enter rest was <u>not</u> limited to the wilderness wanderers, but still applies <u>today</u>!

God does not promise you a "tomorrow" on earth; He calls for you to heed His voice <u>today</u>!

When God repeats something, He does so for emphasis. Note the word "Today" in 3:7, 13, 15, and 4:7.

II Cor. 6:2 - *"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*

V. 8

"Jesus" - not Jesus Christ, but the man whose name was "Jesus" in the Old Testament - namely, Joshua. Jesus (*iesous)* is the Greek form of the Hebrew word *Yashua* (Joshua).

If Joshua gave Israel the only "Rest" God had intended, David would not have spoken of another day of Rest. Canaan's rest was not the only rest God had in mind. In fact, Canaan's rest is sort of a type or foreshadowing of the ultimate rest God had planned for the future.

"Many cults promise their followers happiness, wealth, and health in this life. The bible does not. The Rest God promises is spiritual, not physical (macArthur, p. 104) and eternal not temporal.

V. 9

The ultimate Rest awaits God's people (God's people are those who believe--whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free!)

V. 10

In Heaven, the burdens of life will be over. WE will cease from the travail of this life; from work as we know it, just as God has ceased from His work at Creation and at Calvary.

Believe NOW! and you will rest later! Trust christ as your investment for Heaven now, and you will enjoy the benefits in your future.

V. 11

"Labour" - (*spoudazo)* a different word than the word "works" (*ergon*) in verse 10. God is not teaching a works salvation. He is not saying work to enter His rest; but rather: Be earnest to enter His rest. Be eager about God's future rest. This word describes the attitude not the action of one who would enter God's rest.

The need for God's rest is urgent.

Entering tomorrow's rest, depends on today's faith.

Don't be like the Israelites, who changed their tune too late. At first they said, No, we can't go in, and later they said, We have changed our minds. (Num. 14:40-45).

Once you die, it is too late to change your mind about Christ and His rest.

IV. You will miss God's eternal Rest if you don't let God show you the true condition of your heart (v. 12-13)

A. God's Word reveals all (v. 12)

"The Word" - *logos* - God's written revelation to man -- the Bible.

"Quick" - It's alive (not a dead Book)

"Powerful" - It's energetic (not weak and inoperative)

"Sharper" - It cuts cleaner, quicker, and deeper than any sword

"Piercing" - It penetrates to the very core of a man's being

"Soul & Spirit" - man is a 3 part being (body, soul, and spirit - cp. I Thes. 5:23).

Soul and spirit are two invisible, immaterial aspects of man. Man's "soul" is that invisible aspect of man which relates to life (living in the natural realm) and his "spirit" is his invisible aspect which relates to God (communing in the spiritual realm).

"Joints and marrow" - an expression to show the penetrating power of the Bible to go to the very inner parts of man's being.

"Discerner" - a critic or judge

The Bible accurately critiques man's inner ***"thoughts"*** (judgments; opinions) and ***"intents"*** (attitudes, motives) of the heart.

The Bible tells it like it is (it pulls no punches; beats around no bushes; reveals men --even the greatest of them-- to be sinners in need of the grace of God).

In context, what verse 12 is saying is this: "Let God's Word show you the true condition of your heart." Do you believe or disbelieve? Is your heart one of faith or unbelief? SEE: 3:12 - *"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."*

B. God's Eyes <u>see</u> all (v. 13)

"Manifest" - No one can conceal or hide anything from God.

"Naked" - without a covering

"Opened" - exposed, vulnerable

"With whom we have to do" - All of us will give an account of himself to God.

You may successfully hide the true you from man, but you cannot hide from the one you must one day reckon with!

One day all masks will be removed and all disguises ripped off.

Unmask yourself today, so God doesn't have to in your future!

Conclusion:

We don't believe,
--When we <u>hear</u> but don't <u>heed</u> (v. 2)
--When we <u>know</u> but don't <u>trust</u> (v. 3)
--When we <u>wait</u>, but don't <u>respond</u> (v. 4-10)
--When we <u>conceal</u> but don't <u>let God reveal</u> (v. 11-13)

One word disqualifies you from God's rest. If this one word is true of your life, you will forever forfeit God's rest-- that one word is "<u>unbelief</u>".

Are you at rest in your spirit?
Are you free from fear, anxiety, and guilt? Or are you tossed to and fro, running from one philosophy to another, one religion to another, one lifestyle to another in search for rest?

No rest for the wicked (SEE: Rev. 14:9-13)

God's rest is still available today no matter who you are or what you have done.

"In his younger manhood Mel Trotter was as debauched as can be imagined. His children were starving because he spent his money on alcohol. His little girl died of malnutrition when she was about four. The neighbors gave enough money to buy her some new clothes and a casket to be buried in. In the middle of the night Trotter broke into the mortuary, took the clothes off his dead child, and exchanged them for a drink. Not long afterward, however, Jesus Christ reached down and changed his life, and he became one of the greatest preachers America has ever known." (MacArthur, p. 99).

Rest in God's promise of free grace in Christ today!
Sing Hymn: "Search Me O God."

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Section 8: Hebrews 4:14-16
"A High Priest You Can Trust"

***Be confident in your Great High Priest!** (Jesus cares for you!)

I. Our Great High Priest Saves;
Have Confidence in Your <u>PROFESSION</u> of Him (v. 14)
("Let us hold fast our profession")
Your confidence in Jesus should remain steadfast because of:
A. <u>WHAT</u> He is: *"Our <u>Great</u> High Priest"*
B. <u>WHERE</u> He is: *"Passed into the Heavens"*
C. <u>WHO</u> He is: *"Jesus, the Son of God"*

II. Our Great High Priest Sympathizes;
Have Confidence in Your <u>PRAYERS</u> through Him (v. 15-16)
("Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace")
Available and Attainable:
A. <u>Mercy</u> (He does not give us what our sin deserves)
B. <u>Grace</u> (He does give us what we don't deserve)

Introduction:

Hymn: "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, no not one. . ."

***Be confident in your Great High Priest!**
(Jesus cares for you!)

I. Our Great High Priest Saves;
Have Confidence in Your <u>PROFESSION</u> of Him (v. 14)
("Let us hold fast our profession")

"Then" (therefore) - Having urged us all to examine the genuineness of our <u>faith</u> (to see if we really <u>believe</u> God's Word - 4:1-13), the writer now urges us to <u>hold on</u> to that faith we profess.

Many professing Jewish Christians were tempted to return to Judaism ("The Hebrew Christians who received this letter were sorely tempted to return to the religion of their fathers. After all, any Jew could travel to Jerusalem and *see* the temple and the priests ministering at the altar. Here was something real, visible, concrete. When a person is going through persecution, as these Hebrews were, it is much easier to walk by sight than by faith. Some of us have doubted the Lord under much less provocation than these people were enduring." - Wiersbe, p. 46).

Having shown Christ to be superior to prophets (1:1-4), angels (1:5-2:18), and Moses (3:1-6), God now shows Him to be superior to the Old Testament priests and priesthood.

Beginning now in 4:14 and continuing all the way through 10:23, the writer shows Jesus Christ as our Great High Priest (with 5:11-6:20 being a parenthesis [an interjected thought] in between).

God begins and ends this presentation of Jesus Christ as High Priest the same way; by exhorting the readers to have persistent faith in Him.

4:14 - *"Let us hold fast our profession."*
10:23 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith."*

Note: the thought of 10:19-23

"Hold fast" - (*krateo)* to strong hold on. The emphasis of this word s on the strength of our faith in Christ.

This exhortation is similar to the words God gave to Joshua - *"Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed"* (Josh. 1:9)

"Profession" -(*homologias)* - Confession; lit. to say the same thing as another; to agree with.

When it comes to salvation, we who are saved agree with God regarding the way into eternal life.

In the book of Hebrews the term *homologias* is not referring to confessing sin, but to confessing faith; to profess belief in God's salvation.

NOTE: Heb. 3:1 - *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" . . .* Heb. 10:23 - *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised;)"*

"These Hebrew Christians were tempted to give up their confession of faith in Christ and their confidence in Him (SEE 3:6, 14). It was not a matter of giving up their salvation, since salvation through Christ is eternal (5:9). It was a matter of their public confession of faith. By returning to the Old Testament system, they would be telling everyone that they had no faith in Christ (SEE Gal. 2:11-21). This kind of unbelief would only bring reproach to Christ's name." (Wiersbe, p. 48)

We can grip firmly the faith we profess because of the character of the One our faith is in. This one worthy of our profession is none other than Jesus Christ.

Your confidence in Jesus should remain steadfast because of:

A. WHAT He is: *"Our Great High Priest"*

"We have" - This High Priest is personally ours. He does not say, *"There is a great high priest,"* but rather, *"We have a great high priest."* Showing how personally related to us Jesus is.

Three classes of priests:

1)"Priest" -Many from the tribe of Levi who offered sacrifices and interceded for the people

2)"High Priest" -One man, who once a year went into the Holy of Holies with blood, on Yom Kippur

3)"Great High Priest" -Exclusive office of Jesus Christ
At Calvary, the priesthood was abolished by God.

The ultimate sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:14), and the tearing of the Temple veil (Mt. 27:51) marked the end of the priesthood and sacrificial system. Any ecclesiastical priesthood today is an abomination to God! (Both Catholics and Mormons have a priesthood)

The veil was ripped from *"top to bottom,"* showing God did the tearing and not man (Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38).

As ***"the Great High Priest,"*** Christ is the sole mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5).

Any religion with priests who mediate between men and God is an open defiance to the finished work of Christ and His role as the Great High Priest.

B. WHERE He is: *"Passed into the Heavens"*

"Passed into the Heavens" - Our Great High Priest does not work at a manmade temple somewhere on earth, but rather is exalted beyond the first and second Heaven (air and space), and is seated in the third Heaven on the right hand of God the Father (Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2).

Aaron and his successors ministered in the Tabernacle and then the Temple, but Jesus ministers in a heavenly tabernacle which is far better than an earthly one.

C. WHO He is: *"Jesus, the Son of God"*

"The Son of God" - A title of deity (Just as Christ's title "Son of Man" identifies Him with man, so the title "Son of God" identifies Him with God). (Even the Father calls Him *"God"* - Heb. 1:8).

He is not merely a Son of God, but stands unique as "the" Son of God.

Jesus, being both God and man, can, as Great High Priest, reconcile man to God.

God wants us to have on the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17) - Not to doubt, but to know that we have eternal life (I Jn. 5:13).

Do you have that blessed assurance?

Because of His position, pre-eminence, and person, Christ is worthy of our confidence.

II. Our Great High Priest Sympathizes; Have Confidence in Your PRAYERS through Him (v. 15-16)

("Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace")

V. 15

"Not . . . cannot" - a double negative makes a positive; Jesus is touched.

"Touched with the feeling" *(sumpatheo)* - to suffer along with; "to share the experience of someone, to sympathize with someone. The word is not to be understood in a psychological sense, but rather in an existential sense. The exalted One suffers together with the weakness of the one tempted." (Michel, cited by Rienecker, p. 677).

"Infirmities" - areas of weakness; struggles wherein we lack strength. Vulnerable areas of our life that are easy prey for temptation.

"In all points" - In all areas that could be tempted (Mt. 4:3ff)

--Lust of the flesh (body)

--Lust of the eyes

--Pride of life (I Jn. 2:16)

"Tempted" - (passive) Jesus was tempted from <u>without</u> (by the world [Mt. 19:3; Mk. 8:11; Jn. 8:6] or Devil {Mt. 4]).

"Yet without sin" - Two possible ideas: without a sin nature; or without sinning.

Jesus never missed the mark of His own divine standard. Jesus is the only One who never ever sinned (Heb. 7:26; I Pet. 2:22; II Cor. 5:21; Is. 53:9).

Jesus could only be tempted (passive) by someone <u>outside of Himself</u>.

[His natures--divine and human--were sinless (Heb. 4:15, 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22). Therefore, His temptation could not come from within Himself as it does with mortal men (Ja. 1:13-15). Rather, the source of temptation had to come from without.]

Jesus could only be tempted in respect to His <u>human nature</u>, not His divine nature.

Christ's human nature had needs (appetites for food, drink, sleep, etc.), but His divine nature had no needs and no unsatisfied desires. Therefore, His divine nature could never be a target for temptation. Such an attempt would be foolish.

Christ was "in all points tempted like <u>as we are</u>" (in respect to His human nature).

Because of Christ's divine attribute of holiness (absolute separateness from all sin and impurity), sin was an impossibility.

If this is so, was the temptation legitimate (real)?

Yes, because it is possible to attempt the impossible.

Though Christ was not able to sin, His temptation was nonetheless real and awful.

Important principle: "Only the sinless Individual can know the power of temptation in its <u>full intensity</u>, because only that individual endures until the temptation is broken. We who fall <u>never know the full power</u> of temptation, simply because we yield before we experience the <u>full measure of the demonic onslaught</u>. Christ knows all there is to know of Satan's power to tempt, simply because He withstood the full measure of such temptation." --Bookman, notes, p. 25

Many wonder how Jesus could know what we go through if He never experienced sin. A surgeon can know all about heart surgery without ever needing surgery himself. Jesus never sinned but understands sin better than any man (MacArthur, p. 113).

V. 16

Many times people are reluctant to go to someone they view as unapproachable, harsh, unbending, unforgiving, unmerciful (EX: the boss of Larry Tims, who was the boss of Joe Carlone, who was the boss of me at Stanley Works). Many people have this warped view of God.

"Most ancient rulers were unapproachable by the common people. Some would not even allow their highest-ranking officials to come before them without permission. Queen Esther risked her life in approaching King Ahasuerus without invitation, even though she was his wife (Esther 5:1-2). Yet any penitent person, no matter how sinful and undeserving, may approach God's throne at any time for forgiveness and salvation--confident that he will be received with mercy and grace." (MacArthur, p. 115).

"Therefore" - Because Jesus is sympathetic (v. 15), we can have boldness in going to Him in prayer.

"Boldly" - with confidence. Confidence in what?

1) that Jesus bears, cares, and shares with us in our weakness; 2) that Jesus will not reject one who genuinely comes to Him; 3) that Jesus will answer our requests regarding victory over
sin.

"Unto the throne" - not to the confessional booth, but straight through to headquarters! Directly to God.

"The throne of grace" - the gracious throne of the throne from which grace flows. Although God is to be feared (10:27, 31), He (unlike Allah) gives grace (unmerited kindness) to the penitent. Because God's wrath against sin has been propitiated by our Great High Priest, we can now approach Him without fear.

There was a Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:17-22) in the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament Tabernacle, but no common person could enter. Priests could go up to the veil, and the High Priest once a year could go beyond. Yet we can go anytime and under any circumstance to enter the Throne of mercy and find help.

Available and Attainable:

A. Mercy (He does not give us what our sin deserves)

"Mercy" - God's withholding of judgment and wrath (Heb. 8:12). Everyone who sincerely asks for mercy receives it (Ex: the Publican - Lk. 18:13).

B. Grace (He does give us what we don't deserve)

"Grace" - not the grace of salvation, but the grace of strength to live victoriously.

"To help" - to help specifically with the area of temptation; to help in our area of *"infirmity."*

The Lord helps by not allowing us to bear more than we can endure and by providing an exit door from temptation (I Cor. 10:13 - "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but god is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.")*

"In time" - at a good time; at the right time; God's help is well-timed . . . "Just when we need Him most."

Section 9: Hebrews 5:1-10
"A SUPERIOR Priest You Can Trust"

Introduction:

The theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Jesus Christ. In the previous chapters, He is revealed to be superior to the Old Testament prophets (1:1-4), angels (1:5-2:18), and Moses (3:1-6). Now His superiority over the Old Testament Jewish priesthood i shown (4:14-10:21).

Our High Priest is Jesus Christ!

***Christ is superior to any other priest who ever lived!**

I. Jesus: A <u>COMPASSIONATE</u> Priest (4:15a; 5:1-2)

V. 1

"For" - Gives a further explanation of a previous thought.

Back in 3:15, Christ is shown to be a great High Priest who cares about our infirmities.

He sympathizes with us because He Himself experienced temptation -- *"YET WITHOUT SIN."*

Now the writer of Hebrews, continuing that thought, compares and contrasts our sympathetic yet <u>sinless</u> High Priest with the sympathetic yet <u>sinful</u> Old Testament High Priests.

Day after day, month after month, year after year, every time a Jewish priest sacrificed an animal, it was a reminder of man's sinfulness which needed a blood atonement.

The innocent having its blood shed on behalf of the guilty.

For man to be reconciled to God, there had to be a sacrifice in between the two.

V. 2

"Compassion" - (*metriopatheo*) to have balanced feelings; a right measure of feelings toward someone.

"The word was used in Aristotelian philosophical tradition in the sense of moderating one's feelings or passions so as to avoid excesses either of enthusiasm or impassivity. The word indicates that an earthly high priest is not to pass over the sin of his fellow man without any regard at all; however, on the other hand, he is not to allow himself to be caught up in his passion and pity for the sinner, but rather he is to have a controlled feeling of sympathy" (Rienecker, p. 677-8)

"Ignorant" - Those who <u>don't know</u> God's Word and ways

"Out of the way" - Those who are <u>misguided</u> and led astray; those prone to wander and err due to their ignorance.

"Compassed with infirmity" - Surrounded by weakness. The human high priest would look at others and see their inadequacies; then he could look in any direction regarding his own life and see weak spots, short-comings.

"Compassion. . . for he himself also" - Israel's high priest could have sympathetic feelings for the people he interceded for because he knew that he himself shared in the same weaknesses.

<u>Principle:</u> When you realize your own weaknesses at every turn, you then have the capacity to have compassion on others who share your Adamic nature.

Many fail to show compassion to others who err, because they never see their own depravity.

II. Jesus: A <u>SINLESS</u> Priest (4:15b; 5:3)

V. 3

"By reason hereof" - Because of the human high priest's infirmity (weaknesses due to his sin nature), he had to offer sacrifices for himself as well as the people (Heb. 9:7 - *"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 sinless Christ, however, did <u>not</u> (Heb. 7:27 - *"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.")*.

Not one evil or untrue word ever came from His lips. Not one evil deed was ever performed by His hands. Not one evil thought ever passed through His mind. Jesus was without sin!

Although Jesus is sinless, He is still *"the friend of sinners"* (Mt. 11:19).

III. Jesus: An <u>ORDAINED</u> Priest (5:4-6)

V. 4

"No man taketh this honor unto himself" - There wee not to ever be any self-appointed priests in Israel. They had to be from the line of Levi, and the high priest from Aaron's lineage.

When King Saul attempted to offer sacrifice, a ministry reserved for the priests, he was judged by God (Pfeiffer, p. 43).

"Korah and his fellow rebels tried to make themselves priests and God judged them (Num. 16). When King Uzziah tried to enter the temple and burn incense, God smote him with leprosy" (II Chron. 26:16-21) (Wiersbe, p. 50).

No "priest" today in any religion (RCC, Mormon, Episcopal) could qualify to be a priest. They were <u>never</u> called of God.

Don't ever assume an office or position in ministry unless you are absolutely sure God called you.

V. 5

"Glorified not Himself" - Although He was God, Christ *"made Himself of no reputation"* (Phil. 2:7); God the Father honored His Son (Jn. 8:54 - *"Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God")*.

Application: Don't glorify yourself; let God lift you up. (Lk. 14:11 - *"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.";* James 4:10 - *"Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up")*.

"Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee" - A quote from the Messianic Psalm 2:7.

This text, as quoted in Acts 13:33-34 and Romans 1:4, is a reference to Christ's resurrection.

V. 6

This declaration (quoting Psalm 110:4) by the Father, again shows how Christ did not take the honor of High Priest independently, but God the Father bestowed it on Him.

IV. Jesus: An <u>OBEDIENT</u> Priest (5:7-8)

V. 7

Before Calvary, Jesus anticipating the weight of the sin of the world and the abandonment of the Father, requested for that awful cup to pass from Him (Jn. 12:27; Mt. 26:39-44).

He ***"was heard in that he feared" -*** The Father always hears the request of one who, like Christ, has a submissive, reverence attitude; one with a willingness to do the will of the Father no matter what the cost.

The Father heard Christ's desperate request, yet it was His will not to remove that cup (EX: Paul's request for his thorn to be removed).

Will you be submissive to God's will no matter what?

V. 8

"Learned obedience" - Christ experienced obedience even unto *"the death of the cross"* (Phil. 2:8).

You often learn more from suffering than any other way.

Lit. Christ learned "<u>the</u> obedience." A particular obedience is in view; namely, obedience regarding the cross.

Are you willing to obey as Jesus did?

V. Jesus: A <u>SAVING</u> Priest (5:9)

"Perfect" - Not in essence, but in action, Christ completed or finished the task of redemption, with full integrity and unflinching submission.

"It is finished" (Jn. 19:30).

"Author" = Cause or source.

Because of Christ's work of suffering, He now is the source from which salvation flows (EX: our piped-in water has its source in the Catskill Mountains).

"Eternal" - The Old Testament priests never provided anything that was eternal, because they were <u>not</u> eternal and their sacrifices were not eternal.

"All them" - Not some of them.

"That obey Him" - All who obey His call to salvation receive it.

Mt. 11:28 - *"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

Jn. 7:37 - *"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."*

Rev. 22:17 - *"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

"Obey" -

"*A great company of the priests were obedient to the faith"* (Acts 6:7). *"But they have not all obeyed the Gospel"* (Rom. 10:16). *"Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth"* (I Peter 1:22). Once we have put our faith in Jesus Christ, and thus obeyed His call, we experience His eternal salvation. (Wiersbe, p. 56).

VI. Jesus: A <u>UNIQUE</u> Priest (5:10)

"Our Lord could never have been a Levitical priest, because he was born of the tribe of Judah (7:14) and not the tribe of Levi. Thus, He must be associated with another order of priests, that of Melchizedek" (Ryrie note).

Melchizedek was a king and priest who lived before God established the priesthood in Israel.

He established a <u>type</u> of Christ (was a pre-figuring of Christ).

Section 10: Hebrews 5:11-6:20
"Go on to Maturity!"

* Each one of us must *go on to maturity!*
4 Reasons why we should mature in Christ:

I. **We must go on to maturity because <u>COMPLACENCY IS DANGEROUS</u>** (5:11-14)

II. **We must go on to maturity because <u>STARTING OVER IS IMPOSSIBLE</u>** (6:1-6)

III. **We must go on to maturity because <u>FRUIT IS EXPECTED</u>** (v.7-11)

IV. **We must go on to maturity because <u>GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY</u>** (v.12-20)

Introduction:

Nothing was so feared by seamen in the days when ocean vessels were driven by wind and sail as the doldrums. Occurring usually in the part of the ocean near the equator, the doldrums abound in calms, squalls, and light, baffling winds. There, the weather is hot and extremely irritating. The old sailing ships, when caught in the doldrums, would lie helpless for days and weeks, waiting for the wind to blow again.

Have you been caught in spiritual doldrums? Or have you been mechanically going through the motions of outward Christianity, but have lost the joy and assurance of your salvation?

Hebrews is a book of rebuke, encouragement, and exhortation. These Hebrews were Jewish Christians who were experiencing pressure and friction from within and without. In their "former days" when they had just been saved, they endured afflictions and mockings. They had confidence in the promises of God, and patiently did His will. Now, however, discouragement had begun, which led to doubt, then to neglecting the benefits of the salvation which they possessed. Because they ceased to go forward in their Christian life, they began to face the temptation of drifting back.

Hebrews 6:1 says to *"go on unto perfection"* (completion or maturity). "Go on" = be carried onto - passive (God moves us on!)

* Each one of us must *go on to maturity!*

4 Reasons why we should mature in Christ:

I. We must go on to maturity because <u>COMPLACENCY IS DANGEROUS</u> (5:11-14)

6:1 - ***"Therefore"*** -- a continuation of thought from chapter 5.

The writer in chapter five described how Christ was superior to the Old Testament priesthood and the writer was about to compare Him with the Old Testament priest and king Melchizedek, but abruptly stopped to interject a parenthetical warning (exhortation).

A. Complacency can cause spiritual dullness (v. 11)

The saying "use it or lose it" could apply to these believers ("Evangelize or fossilize"). Because of <u>neglect</u>, they became apathetic and lazy - acquired an inability to perceive the Word of God.

"Dull" - slow moving in mind; to be forgetful

Acts 7 - Stephen's message brought conviction - they stopped their ears (refusal to believe closes the ears).

Unbeliever = deaf
Backslider's ears are <u>dull of hearing</u> spiritually (calloused)

They became dull on their own (active tense).

Simple-mindedness necessitates simple explanations.

B. Complacency can cause stunted growth (v. 12-14)

"<u>Age</u>" alone does not produce maturity. Can't just say, "Give me time and I'll grow out of my hot temper, selfish ambitions, jealous spirit, etc."

ILLUS: of principal of school whose chose a teacher with ten years experience to fill an administrative job. Another teacher was upset and said, "I have 25 years of experience. Why wasn't I chosen?" The principal replied, "No, you are wrong. You do not! You just have one year of experience 25 times."

ILLUS: Stunted fish because of the lack of food/water conditions.

"First principles" - rudiments, A-B-C's, basics

Their need for a <u>teacher</u> indicates they never grew.

Their need for milk indicates they never grew (nothing wrong with milk, but something is wrong if you stay with only that - I Pet. 2:2)

ILLUS: New Britain Memorial Hospital: crippled/retarded people. Physical and mental retardation is a sad thing, but spiritual retardation is even sadder. It's inexcusable.

Typical of the book of Hebrews is the sharp contrasts which it makes of people. Verse 14 describes the Christian who does not need pre-digested food. He is of full age (mature). He has his senses exercised (trained).

"Who by reason of use" - habitual application of God's Word; stepping out by faith.

Result: Skillful perception; spiritual sensitivity

V. 11- 14 - The writer of Hebrews (and God) feels the sorrow that a parent would feel if their child only matured so far.

V. 12

Every believer should eventually be equipped to teach - it's expected! (Jews who boasted of authority in spiritual matters [and thus obligated themselves] lacked ability).

They had been saved for some time (long time since conversion).

"To whom much is given, much is required" (accountability).

"Again" indicates that they were taught before.

Because they needed the basics taught to them, this shows that they even forgot simple A-B-C's/ Old Testament truths. They actually regressed, went backwards (like forgetting Greek or Hebrew if not acted upon and used).

Immaturity is revealed by the diet - ***"milk"***

V. 13

Note the use of sarcasm - equating them with infants.

A milk diet indicates inexperience.

The word of righteousness includes more than basic elements.

V. 14

Just as milk is for the infant, solid food is for the adult.

"Who by reason of use" - habitual application of the Word results in skillful character, disposition, or condition.

Increased knowledge of the meat of the Word results in increased perception, sensitivity in spiritual matters.

Perception comes through habitual exercise.

Spiritual perception is for distinguishing between good and bad (like the banker who knows counterfeit money because of habitual contact with the real thing).

Applications for 5:11-14 -

These Hebrews were going through <u>same</u> experiences year after year. Today many Christians suffer from prolonged adolescence, merging into premature senility! They come to church and sit, soak, and sour!

They had no answers to help anyone else out of a problem (ILLUS: of Harold Camping, who can't explain the simple gospel).

A mark of immaturity is:

1) Inability to instruct others
2) Inability to discern good from evil (EX: Galatians)
   --they are doctrinally undiscerning
   --give in to passing theological fads
   a. Some are emotionally gullible - moved by emotional appeal, hence are personality followers
   b. Some are intellectually gullible - attracted to speakers who sound great - but tie in philosophy, human logic, etc.

Immaturity is <u>costly</u>! <u>You</u> lose out on deep truths you are to be knowing and living. Your people will lose out (if you are a pastor).

<u>Maturity comes by practice</u> - Acting on what you believe, stepping out on it, putting it into practice . . . *"Therefore, go on to maturity"* (6:1).

II. We must go on to maturity because <u>STARTING OVER IS IMPOSSIBLE</u> (6:1-6)

When a Christian becomes complacent, he hears the Word of God preached it rolls off him like water off the back of a duck. He becomes a dead Christian, a backslider, a doubter of the Word of God (Many people feel that they lose their salvation and need to be saved again).

A. Your Christian life is a life of **<u>GROWTH</u>** (v.1-3)

They were to <u>leave</u> the teaching about Christ, teachings that led them to Christ, preparatory teachings. Like elementary school which is preparatory. As a calculus student has moved on from elementary math.

"Let us go on unto perfection (maturity)" -

Paul, writing to the Philippians, said, *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended* (attained total perfection), *but this one thing I do . . ."*

To go on to perfection (maturity) is to fulfill the purpose for your being saved.

(Salvation is not just a fire escape from hell)

We have become God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10).

Our goal should be *"to be conformed to the image of Christ."*

"Not laying again the foundation" - key words

They feared falling away. Rather than trusting, they went back.

Foundation teachings did not need repeating. Foundational principles - preparatory; pointed to Christ.

1."Dead works" = works with no connection to character; motions of religion. For most Jews, life was a ritual - continual sacrifices.

2."Baptisms" = teachings about Jewish ceremonial washings, and also the baptism of John the Baptist (cp. 9:18). Levitical cleansings.

3."Resurrection" = Old Testament saints looked for. Job cried out that after his body had decayed, *"yet in my flesh shall I see God."* (Job 19:25-27; Ps. 17:15; Is. 53:10, 12).

4."Judgment" = motivation to turn from sin (Is. 66:24).

These truths pointed out to a Jew that life on this earth was not everything, but, as John the Baptist preached, they must *"flee from the wrath to come."*

They were to go from shadow to substance . . .
from type to antitype . . .
from husk to kernel . . .
from dead ritual to living reality.

*These truths pointed to the Author and Finisher of our faith (Jesus). Because they were saved, they did not need to re-lay these foundational truths again, since they had the Foundation Himself.

ILLUS: of a sky scraper continually re-laying foundation.

Their besetting sin was lack of faith in the Word of God. So they tried re-examining their salvation.

V. 1

"Having left" - graduated from elementary school which prepared men for full revelation in Christ.

Maturity is a work of God - Note passive verb; cp. v. 3 - *"If God permits."*

Believers must yield, allow God to carry/move them on to it, with no resistance! (*"He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it. . ")*

Maturity should be the goal of every believer.

Immaturity is seen by <u>unnecessary</u> <u>repeated</u> activity.

Don't try to add <u>legalistic</u> foundations to the pure simple gospel! *"For other foundation can no man lay..."*

<u>Applications for 6:1 -</u>

"Let's get on with it!"

Perfection = not sinless perfection (I Jn. 1:8).

Paul says he and some of Philippians were perfect (3:15), then says he was not yet (3:12).

"Not laying again" - Foolishness of laying a foundation and tearing it up and relaying it over and over.

One man has said, "You know, I have discovered an interesting thing about American Christians. They do not usually comes to church to learn anything. Whatever they do not yet know themselves, they think is heresy! What they want to hear is the same old stuff so they can say 'Amen, brother, Amen, preach it!'."

"Dead works and faith" - conversion truth

"Baptism, laying hands" = ordinances

"Resurrection, eternal judgment" - prophecy

(p. 82, Roy Stedman)

"I ain't what I oughter be, and I ain't what I'm gonna be, but I sure ain't what I was!" (testimony of a simple, but sincere woman).

These people are saved! You can't mature in something you haven't begun. They would not be called infants if they had never been born!

V. 2
Some teachings can cause preoccupation.

Some teachings are stepping stones.

Some teachings are to be left and moved on from - these were teachings taught under the Law (six principles taught in Old Testament to prepare the godly in Israel for coming Messiah).

Washings - oral tradition EX: ceremonial cleansings of Jewish elders (Mk. 7:4; Lk. 11:38). Old Testament cleansing from impurity (EX: touching a corpse); Levitical cleansings.

V. 3
All spiritual growth depends upon God's working. Future plans should always be made in total subjection to divine permission (I Cor. 16:7; Ja. 4:13-15).

B. Your Christian life is a life of **NO RETREAT** (v.4-6)

In verses 4 - 6 the author paints a picture or describes a situation, to demonstrate the absolute foolishness (folly) of their going back to Jewish foundational teachings again.

1. You have spiritual privileges (v.4-5)

"Those" - speaking about Christians in general (speaking hypothetically)

"Once for all" - complete (do you remember your salvation experience when your eyes were opened for the first time?) (unsaved man is spiritually blind).

"Enlightened" - Heb. 10:32 - *"Former days after. . . you were illuminated."*

"Tasted" - to fully experience, as *"Christ tasted death"* (Heb. 2:9). ILLUS: of child who experiences by putting things in mouth. Ps. 34:8 - *"O taste and see..."* Acts 10:10 - Peter became hungry and *"would have eaten."* Ps. 34:8 - *"O taste and see that the Lord is good..."*

"Partakers" - shareholder; possessor of the Holy Spirit. Participant (3:1 - *"partakers of heavenly calling";* 3:14 - *"partakers of Christ";* 12:8 - *"partakers of chastening")*

"Understand the Word of God" - which came to fruition in Christ.

A Christian in the first century saw: ***"powers"*** (mighty works, miracles, signs) (a foretaste of eternity) (Heb. 2:3-4).

V. 4
Initial spiritual enlightenment occurs only <u>once</u> - Heb. 10:32 - *". . . former days, in which, after you were <u>illumined</u>."*

Initial spiritual enlightenment occurs only by God's working (passive). Light ----- gift ----- Holy Spirit ----- Word ----- miracles

Believers are <u>made</u> (by God) partakers of the Holy Spirit.

V. 5
They experienced/saw how God's Word came to fruition in Christ. They experienced God's sign miracles vindicating the authenticity of His Word.

The Aorist tense in the five participles points to conversion experience.

2. You cannot begin over (v.6)

"Fall away" - fall beside; side step; get off the main course.
(It's impossible to start over, because it's impossible to fall away)

Restate their problem: Fear of falling away; so they retreated and tried relaying foundational truths.

Impossible for a genuine Christian, if he fell away, to be renewed.
Why? Because he can't fall away.

V. 6
It is impossible to reach the ultimate, then <u>side-step</u> that path and experience something greater!

"Fall away" - can't mean losing salvation -- 7:25 - *"save to the uttermost..."* (forever).

3. You cannot re-crucify Christ (v.6b)

If it were possible for a Christian to lose his salvation (which it is not), he could never get it back again, unless Christ died a second time.

This is why R.C.C. is blasphemous in the Mass (*"no more sacrifice for sin"* - Heb. 10:26).

ILLUS: Like saying this to a class of students: "It is impossible for a student having <u>once</u> enrolled in this course, <u>if</u> he turns the clock back (which cannot be done) to start the course over. Therefore, let all the students go on to deeper knowledge."

Although we cannot go back, we can go on! No matter what the past.

An epidemic among Christians is doubting their salvation -- Go on to maturity.

SEE: Gal. 3:1-3 (v. 3 - *"perfect"* = mature).

Are you satisfied with your maturity level? Don't come to church and just sit, soak, and sour!

V. 6
Falling beside/aside <u>is</u> possible! But falling aside and experiencing <u>another</u> conversion experience is <u>not</u> possible. Especially the way the Hebrew Christians wanted or thought they could experience it - by re-sacrifice, etc.

The reason this "neo-repentance" conversion experience is impossible is because there is no more sacrifice for sin! (Heb. 10:26).

Any attempt to place validity in any other sacrifice puts Christ's work to open shame.

There is no second cross, or second cross experience. No such thing as being saved a second time (though it might be convenient sometimes). Can't start the Christian life over.

III. We must go on to maturity because **FRUIT IS EXPECTED** (v.7-11)

Jesus said in Matt. 7:20, *"By their fruits ye shall know them."*

Verses 7 & 8 teach the identity of the believer.

Verse 7 speaks of a true believer whose fruit is an indication of his heart. Spiritual productiveness is a manifestation (proof) of the operation of divine grace.

Verse 8 in contrast illustrates an unbeliever who brings forth worthless fruit.

Is there an indication by the way you live that you are a believer? If you are not saved, "What are you waiting for?"

V. 9
"We are persuaded (confident, convinced) ***better things*** (fruits) ***of you"***
ILLUS: Old man on his death bed - regrets life.

My friend, where are the fruits in your life? Fruits of the Spirit? Where is the love, where is the joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control) in your life?

V. 10
Although these Hebrew Christians lacked fruits now, they did demonstrate them when they first were saved.

V. 11
Your problem may be, as it was with these Hebrew Christians, that you are not diligently showing ***"full assurance of hope unto the end."*** You are not trusting God's promises.

We sing "Standing on the Promises," but do we live it?!

IV. We must go on to maturity because
<u>GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY</u> (v.12-20)

"When God makes a promise, faith believes it, hope anticipates it, and patience awaits it."

A. God's promises are <u>sure</u> (v. 12-17)
V. 12
"Follow" (imitate or mimic) those who are inheriting the promises.

"You are not the first to launch out on the glories and perils of the Christian faith. Others braved the dangers and endured the tribulations before you and won . . . the Christian is not treading an untrodden pathway. He walks where saints have trod."

Read V. 13-15
Abraham received his promise - the Jewish people today are living proof - though he was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born.

B. God's promises are <u>unchangeable</u> (v. 18-20)

1. Because God is unchangeable
He can't break His Word.
We have a strong consolation (encouragement), who have rested in the Son of God.
"City of refuge" - to provide protection and freedom

2. Because Christ is our anchor (a symbol of security)
"Cast all your care upon Him."
The hymnwriter showed this by penning these words: "What have I to dread, what have I to fear, leaning on the everlasting arms; I have blessed peace with my Lord so near, leaning on the everlasting arms."

3. Christ is our forerunner
He rose from the dead and is in Heaven awaiting our following.
Our lives are hid with Christ in God (Col. 3).

Conclusion: Each Christian is chosen by God to experience a life that is exciting, growing, and maturing. Every day we (as believers(ought to be getting better. The reason is simple: If we don't, we become worse. No one ever stays the same.

"The Christian life is like a bicycle; if you don't go forward, you will eventually fall down."

Go on to maturity, because:
--Complacency is dangerous
--Starting over is impossible
--Fruit is expected
--God is trustworthy

Section 11: Hebrews 7
"IN THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC"

***Notice <u>how great Jesus Christ is</u> by comparing Him with Melchisedec.**
Jesus Christ, being a priest in the order of Melchisedec, is in the greatest order of priests because of. . .

I. **The <u>OFFICES</u> He holds** (v. 1)
(He is both King and Priest)

II. **The <u>NAMES</u> He has** (v. 2)
(His names are "King of Righteousness" and "King of Peace")

III. **The <u>PEDIGREE</u> He came from** (v. 3)
(He has no earthly, priestly, Levitical, written genealogy)

IV. **The <u>TITHES</u> He received** (v. 4-6a; 8-10)
(He didn't give tithes, but received them)

V. **The <u>BLESSING</u> He bestowed** (v. 6b-7)
(He is the "Blesser", and therefore is greater than the ones He blesses)

VI. **The <u>NEW LAW</u> He brought** (v. 11-19)
(He did not bring carnal commands but the power of an endless life [v. 16])

VII. **The <u>ORDINATION OATH</u> He obtained** (v. 20-21)
(He is not ordained by men on earth, but by God in Heaven)

VIII. **The <u>ETERNAL MEDIATION</u> He provides** (v. 22-25)
(He is never replaced as Priest because He will never die)

IX. **The <u>SINLESS NATURE</u> He possesses** (V. 26-28)
(He is not a sinner offering sacrifices, but a Savior offering Himself)

Introduction: Verses 1 - 3

V. 1 - ***"For this Melchisedec" -*** The writer of Hebrews now returns to a subject he had planned to expound upon in 5:10, but was stopped short to interject the parenthetical exhortation in 5:11 - 6:20.

Having shown Christ to be superior to the Old Testament prophets, Moses, angels, and priests, the writer now shows Christ's supremacy over the Old Testament Levitical <u>order</u> of the priesthood.

Since Jesus Christ was not from the line of Levi but from Judah (7:14), He would not qualify to be a Jewish priest, unless He could be linked to another order of priesthood.

To the Jews, who were big on tracing the genealogical pedigree to see who could qualify to be a priest, Christ could never qualify were it not for "the Melchisedec factor." (Incidentally, no legitimate Jewish priesthood could exist today, since all the genealogical records were destroyed in 70 A.D.).

Christ is not a Levitical priest but a "Melchisedecal" priest.

Comparisons are often a helpful illustrative tool (EX: how often we compare one person with another). In Hebrews 7 Christ is compared to Melchisedec.

SEE: Gen. 14:18-20. After Abraham's conquest of the confederacy of kings (who took his nephew Lot captive [v. 12], he was met by a unique individual named Melchisedec (who was either a preincarnate appearance of Christ or was a historical person, a type of Christ).

SEE: Psalm 110:1-7. A Messianic psalm proclaiming Christ as *"priest forever after the order of Melchisedec"* (v. 4).

"Priest" - a priest was a mediator between God and men, one who would intercede with a sacrifice to appease God's offended holiness.

Jesus Christ was <u>not</u> of the tribe of Levi, but Judah; therefore, He could not be a Levitical priest. He is in a superior order of priests -- namely, *"the order of Melchisedec"* (5:10, 6:20; 7:17, 21b)

***Notice <u>how great Jesus Christ is</u> by comparing Him with Melchisedec.**

Jesus Christ, being a priest in the order of Melchisedec, is in the greatest order of priests because of. . .

I. The <u>OFFICES</u> He holds (v. 1)
(He is both King and Priest)

No Old Testament Jewish priest also held the office of king. Only in Melchisedec and Christ does one man hold two offices at the same time.

Jesus rules as King and mediates between God and men as Priest.

In the Old Testament the throne and the altar were separated (Reason: Only Christ as this right to hold both offices).

Anyone, even a king, who tried to invade the priests' office was judged by God (EX: King Saul (I Sam. 15); King Uzziah (II Chron. 26:19).

SEE: Zechariah 6:9-13.

Joshua the post-captivity High Priest of Israel is a <u>type</u> of *"Joshua"* (Jesus Christ).

Note: V. 12-13 speaks of Christ, who will reign as <u>king</u> and mediate as <u>priest</u> (v. 13).

II. The <u>NAMES</u> He has (v. 2)
(His names are "King of Righteousness" and "King of Peace")

"Tenth" - a tithe; 10% of all the plundered goods.

Melchisedec's name means: "King of Righteousness."
"Melchi" from *Melek* = King
"Sedec" from *Sedeq* = Righteousness

(It is interesting to note that the city of Jerusalem will one day be called "The Lord our Righteousness" -- Jer. 33:16 -- because of the Lord Jesus' rulership over the New Jerusalem.)

"Salem" = Heb. *shalom* = peace

Jeru<u>salem</u> means the city of peace; hence Melchisedec was the king of Jerusalem ("Salem" being an abbreviated form of Jerusalem; perhaps the word is shortened here with the ultimate view towards Jesus not merely being the king of the city of peace, but of peace itself).

III. The <u>PEDIGREE</u> He came from (v. 3)
(He has no earthly, priestly, Levitical, written genealogy)

Actually, I could rephrase this point III to state: "The Pedigree He never had." (although Melchisedec had one, it was never recorded, so that he could serve as a type of Christ, who in terms of His divine nature, had no pedigree).

"Without father...mother...descent...neither beginning of days nor end of life" - ie. no <u>recorded</u> genealogical records of father, mother, descent, nor birth or death dates.

Melchisedec was sort of a man who "dropped out of nowhere." "Now you see him, now you don't" as far as the written record is concerned. Just three brief historical verses describing him (Gen. 14:18-20).

"Since there is no account of Melchisedec's death <u>as far as the record is concerned</u>, it seems that Melchisedec is still serving as a priest and king. This is another way in which he is like the eternal Son of God" (Wiersbe, p. 74).

Christ (in essence) came from <u>Heaven</u> (He is the *"true bread (manna) which came down from Heaven"* - Jn. 6:51). He is *"the Lord from Heaven"* (I Cor. 15:47).

The first half of this verse seems to indicate that Melchisedec was Christ incarnate; however, the second half, which states *"<u>made like unto</u> the Son of God,"* supports the fact that Melchisedec was not actually Christ but was a man who held an office "<u>like unto</u> Christ." (I believe he was a type of Christ)

IV. The <u>TITHES</u> He received (v. 4-6a; 8-10)
(He didn't give tithes, but received them)

V. 4
The fact that Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec <u>pre-law</u> may indicate that tithing is an abiding principle of God (not limited to the Old Testament Israelites).

According to II Cor. 9 and I Cor. 16, God wants our giving today to be:
1)Bountiful (II Cor. 9:6 - tithing is the "kindergarten" of giving)
2)Deliberate (planned - v. 7a)
3)Cheerful (v. 7b)
4)Regular (I Cor. 16:1-2a)
5)Proportionate (v. 2b)
6)Anonymous (v. 2c)

V. 8
The Levitical priests would eventually die, but Christ lives on!
Remember, when you give, you are ultimately giving to Christ (Mt. 25:40).

V. 9-10
<u>The Line of Abraham</u>

Abraham. . . Isaac. . . Jacob. . . Levi. . . Aaron. . . Aaron's sons

Levi, who was born three generations later, is said to have existed (in seed form) in the loins (insides) of Abraham (and thereby had part in giving tithes <u>to</u> Melchisedec, showing Melchisedec's supremacy over Levi). [NOTE: This fact of Levi being in the loins of Abraham also demonstrates the doctrine of "seminal headship." That the human nature is passed on from the male seed.]

V. The <u>BLESSING</u> He bestowed (v. 6b-7)
(He is the "Blesser", and therefore is greater than the ones He blesses)

V. 6b
One might expect that the man who had the promises of the land, seed, and blessing would do the blessing, Instead, Abraham receives it.

V. 7
Without dispute or doubt, the one who has the ability and authority to bless is greater than the ones he blesses.

Do we bless God or does He bless us? He blesses us, and we can only thank Him for His blessing.

VI. The <u>NEW LAW</u> He brought (v. 11-19)
(He did not bring carnal commands but the power of an endless life [v. 16])

V. 11
If something is perfect, it never needs a replacement. Yet David prophesied (Ps. 110:4), that One would function as a priest after a new, unique order.

V. 12
If one element of the Law could be changed (I.e. that being the Law regarding the priesthood), this would also necessitate an alteration of the Law itself.
Note: Christ came not to destroy it but to fulfill it. We are not under the civil and ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic Law today. This ended at Calvary, with the torn veil in the Temple.

V. 13
No man from the tribe of Judah ever ministered at the Temple's altar.

V. 14
Christ: *"the Lion of the tribe of Judah"* (Rev. 5:5).

V. 15
It was clearly essential that if anyone was to ever serve as Priest (outside of the line of Levi), he would have to be of the order of Melchisedec.

V. 16
"Who is made" - who is made a priest
"Not after the Law of a carnal commandment" - that which gave the Old Testament priests their <u>authority</u> was a legal regulation regarding ancestry; but Christ's authority to act as priest does not stem from a written law to regulate human affairs, but from His power of a never-ending existence as God! Carnal commands can be changed or end, but that which is eternal (as Christ Himself is) never ends.

V. 17
The stress here is on the words *"<u>forever</u>."*

V. 18
The point: When a Law becomes weak and useless, it is disannulled (or set aside; no longer binding). (EX: Laws that are no longer on the books today in America).

V. 19
"The Law made nothing perfect" - The Law could not save; only condemn (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:19).
This is a good verse for anyone seeking to be saved by the keeping of some law (EX: 7th Day Adventists; Jehovah's Witnesses; Roman Catholics, etc.)
The word ***"hope"*** shows that a certain "hope" (or confident faith) replaced "law." Our hope is in Christ and His finished word. Only in Christ are we reconciled to God. No law or priest can do this.

VII. The <u>ORDINATION OATH</u> He obtained (v. 20-21)
(He is not ordained by men on earth, but by God in Heaven)

It wasn't as if Christ assumed an office without being sworn in. However, His ordination didn't come from man but from God the Father.

VIII. The <u>ETERNAL MEDIATION</u> He provides (v. 22-25)
(He is never replaced as Priest because He will never die)

V. 22
Jesus was a guarantee of a better covenant than the Old Covenant (a covenant of promises sealed with His own blood).

V. 23
Many priests were needed to replace the former dead ones, but we need only One who lives forever! -- Jesus Christ

V. 24
Christ's priesthood will never change because He will never change; He will never die; He will never be replaced.

V. 25
"He" - Jesus does the saving.

"Uttermost" - Completely to the end (to save <u>forever</u>).

"To God <u>by</u> Him" - *"No man cometh unto the Father but <u>by</u> Me."* (Jn. 14:6). God saves exclusively through Christ (not Christ plus Mary or saints, etc.).

"Intercession" - mediation; cp. I Jn. 2:1 - *"advocate."*

IX. The SINLESS NATURE He possesses (V. 26-28)
(He is not a sinner offering sacrifices, but a Savior offering Himself)

V. 26
"Holy" - There is no sin in Him.

"Harmless" - There is no badness in Him.

"Undefiled" - There is no impurity in Him.

"Separate from sinners" - There is no connection between Christ and sinners (as far as His nature is concerned).

The Old Testament priests could not perfectly mediate, because they were sinners who often times, rather than serving the people, abused the people (Ezek. 34) and their office (by drunkenness - Is. 28:7)

V. 27
Christ sacrificed Himself only once (for the people's sins). He never had to offer a sacrifice for His own sins (he had none).

[The daily, repeated Roman Catholic Mass is an abomination to God]

V. 28
"Infirmity" - human weakness.

God's oath, which came after the Law (In Ps. 110:4), appointed the Son to be your High Priest forever. --Is Jesus your confidence?

CONCLUSION:

In light of Hebrews 7 . . .

1) Any human priesthood today is an abomination to God (a violation of Christ's exclusive right as mediator).

2) We should not look to man for atonement (to satisfy God), but to Christ.

3) We have One who makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:34).

4) We have eternal security in Jesus (Heb. 7:25).

Section 12: Hebrews 8
"A BETTER OFFER"
(The Superiority of Christ's High-Priesthood)

*** What Jesus Christ has to offer is better!** *(Better than what any other person, religion, or promise can offer!)*

I. Our High Priest is elevated to...
A BETTER <u>POSITION</u> (v.1)

II. Our High Priest is ministering at...
A BETTER <u>TABERNACLE</u> (v.2, 5)

III. Our High Priest has offered...
A BETTER <u>SACRIFICE</u> (v.3-4)

IV. Our High Priest is mediator of...
A BETTER <u>COVENANT</u> (v.6-13)

The "New Covenant" comes with better <u>promises</u> (v.6b)

A. Promise # 1 - The New Covenant promised REPLACEMENT OF THE OLD COVENANT (v.7-8; v.13)
B. Promise # 2 - The New Covenant promised to be DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT THAN THE MOSAIC COVENANT (v.9)
C. Promise # 3 - The New Covenant promised a TRANSFORMATION OF THE INNER-MAN (v.10)
D. Promise # 4 - The New Covenant promised to establish an ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (v.10b)
E. Promise # 5 - The New Covenant promised to usher in a UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (v.11)
F. Promise # 6 - The New Covenant promised a PERMANENT REMOVAL OF SIN (v.12)

Introduction:

When people really understand and believe who Christ is and what He offers, they will NEVER TURN AWAY to the "beggarly elements" of any other religion, person or philosophy.

V. 1
"The sum" - what follows is a brief summary of the <u>main points</u> or a synopsis of the <u>key truths</u> (lit. "<u>head</u> principles") that have been previously mentioned.

(Hence, if you are just beginning today in our study of Hebrews, I will summarize the chief points that have led up to this eighth chapter.)

All points relate to Jesus Christ as our "High Priest."

In the same line of reasoning as chapter 7, showing Christ to have an order of High Priesthood better than the Aaronic (levitical), now the writer shows us that Christ Himself is a better High Priest with a better position, tabernacle, sacrifice, and covenant.

"We have" - Christ is not merely the High Priest, but He is our High Priest. We can claim Him as our own!

*** What Jesus Christ has to offer is better!** *(Better than what any other person, religion, or promise can offer!)*

I. Our High Priest is elevated to...
A BETTER POSITION (v.1)

Many in our world are admired because of the height, fame, and glory of their position or office (EX: President, senator, corporate executive, religious ranking, etc.). None compare to that of Christ's!

The Levitical High Priests would be standing and working, offering sacrifices at a man-made tabernacle or tent.

Our High Priest, however, is not here viewed as standing, but as ***"seated"***, indicating that His work is complete and over. *"It is finished!"*

"There were no chairs in the Old Testament tabernacle because the work of the priests was never finished" (Wiersbe, p. 84).

"The right hand" - the seat of honor [only the most honored guests could sit at the right hand of a king]; also it is the seat of power (authority) [cp. notes on Heb. 1:3].

"The majesty" - the Father; the word speaks of the Father's greatness.

"The heavens" - the third heaven; Paradise (II Cor. 12).

II. Our High Priest is ministering at...
A BETTER <u>TABERNACLE</u> (v.2, 5)

V. 2
"Sanctuary" - Holy Place, set-apart place

"True tabernacle" - the real tent; the ultimate place where the ultimate High Priest ministers.

"Which the Lord pitched" - which the Lord erected or set-up. Not a man-made model which was subject to flaws in workmanship, decay, and ruin with time. Nothing man does can ever match what God does. Try as he may, man's best efforts will reveal defect and will manifest his limitations due to his finiteness and mortality.

"Not man" - Although God did manifest His glory in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, no earthly, man-made structure could contain Him.

"The heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (I Ki. 8:27).
"The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48; cp. 17:24).
[Note: No church building is God's House, in the technical sense.]

V. 5
The High Priests would serve in microcosms of the macrocosm; types of the antitype.
"Example" - pattern, copy of the true.
"Shadow" - a dim reflection of the reality.

"Make all things according to the pattern" - These stern words were a reminder that that tabernacle which was built on earth was to be a type or model of the real one in Heaven, shown apparently by vision or word revelation to Moses while on Mt. Sinai (Exod. 25:40).

Note: The word *"pattern"* (*tupos*) was the stamp or impression struck from a die or seal (Reinecker, p. 691).

We tend to get so wrapped up in the shadow that we forget the substance (Note: Col. 2:17, etc.).
Sometimes we get so preoccupied with the tangible that we forget the spiritual; so preoccupied with the visible that we forget the invisible; with the temporal that we forget the eternal.

Living for religious *"shadows"* and *"patterns"* is like admiring the portrait or picture of an old friend (which stirs your memory of him/her). "One day the friend shows up and says, 'Hello. Here I am in the flesh in person.' But the one he has come to see continues to look at the picture, never recognizing his friend's presence." (MacArthur, p. 216).

III. Our High Priest has offered...
A BETTER <u>SACRIFICE</u> (v.3-4)

V. 3
Just as it was the High Priest's primary job to offer sacrifices, so it was Christ's primary job to offer a sacrifice. The ultimate reason He came to earth was to offer Himself as an offering of a sweet-smelling savor which would satisfy the offended holiness of God.

V. 4
We don't need more priests; we have the ultimate Priest, who has made the ultimate sacrifice, to make the ultimate payment for our sin!

IV. Our High Priest is mediator of...
A BETTER <u>COVENANT</u> (v.6-13)

V. 6
"Covenant" - A binding promise. Heb. *"berith"*; Greek *"diathekes."* A blood-bought "cutting" of a sacrifice which guaranteed the fulfillment of the terms of the agreement.

The "New Covenant" comes with better <u>promises</u> (v.6b)

A. Promise # 1 - The New Covenant promised
REPLACEMENT OF THE OLD COVENANT (v.7-8; v.13)

V. 7
God would never have mentioned a "new covenant" in Jer. 31:31-34 if the old "first" one had been without defect. It wasn't a defect in the covenant itself, but rather a defect in man (Israel's part) to keep the conditional terms of the covenant (v. 9).

V. 8
"Finding fault with <u>them</u>" [not <u>it</u>] - It was with the <u>people</u> of the covenant that God found the real fault. God perfectly kept His end of the contract.

The Old Testament covenant could <u>not save</u>; if it could, a New Testament covenant would not have been needed.

"I will make a new covenant" - It's <u>not</u> <u>man</u> planning His way to God; but God revealing His promises to man.

The Lord establishes His own terms for people to be right with Him. You can't come to God or enter His Heaven on your terms, but on His!

"Israel. . . Judah" - the Northern and Southern division of the tribes of the Jewish Nation.

"With the house of <u>Israel</u> and. . . <u>Judah</u>" -

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, it is very clear that this promised new covenant with its benefits is with the nation of Israel and is future (to be realized in the Millennium).

However, the New Testament speaks of a new covenant as having been already <u>provided</u> by the death of Christ and benefitted of by the church.

Questions now arise such as:

1) How many "new covenants" are there?
2) Is there a separate covenant for Israel and a separate one for the church? and
3) Is the new covenant promised to Israel fulfilled in the church?

At this point it is important to note that amillennialists use the New Testament references to the new covenant (promised to Israel through Jeremiah) to prove that the church as replaced Old Testament Israel and is fulfilling ("spiritually") the promises of that covenant; hence there is no need for a future literal millennial kingdom. This view is erroneously arrived at as a result of improper hermeneutics (not interpreting the Bible literally). In a reaction against this view, some dispensationalists (in guarding their system of theology) have arrived at the belief in <u>two</u> distinct "new covenants" - one for the church and one for Israel.

I believe that there is and will be only <u>one</u> "new covenant," and that this covenant promised to Israel (Jer. 31:31) is <u>to Israel</u> (cp. Is. 59:20-21; Jer. 32:37-40; Ezek. 16:60-63, <u>37:21-28</u>) and is <u>not</u> fulfilled by the church, nor is it even partially fulfilled by the church, as far as the specific details of that covenant are concerned.

However, the New Testament does teach that **the church is an indirect beneficiary of the soteriological benefits of the provision of the new covenant.** The basis for this belief is found in the fact that the necessary shedding of blood (to make a covenant) has been <u>provided</u> by Christ and <u>is</u> (present tense) <u>applied</u> or <u>appropriated</u> eternally to all believers in this dispensation. The Lord's supper is a symbolic and illustrative memorial of these truths (Mt. 26:28; I Cor. 11:25).

It is true that Christ came for *"the lost sheep of Israel"* and died for *"this elect nation"* (to shed the blood necessary for a new covenant), but He also died for the world (I Jn. 2:2). Because of Israel's rejection (Rom. 11:11)--which was preknown by the foreknowledge of God--the whole world has been given the offer of becoming recipients of the spiritual, soteriological benefits of the death of Christ (Gal. 3:13-14). Therefore, the church (saved Jews and Gentiles) are benefitting because the new covenant has been provided for. Israel as a nation (because of unbelief) has not yet received the literal fulfilled benefits of this new covenant (which will include more than salvation).
Israel will see total fulfillment of the promised "new covenant" when Christ Himself ushers int he millennial kingdom (Rev. 20:1-6). The Apostle Paul said that ". . . *blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be* [future] *saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins"* (Rom. 11:25-27).

Though God did provide the new covenant with the "once for all" sacrifice of His Son, He was not under compulsion to immediate fulfill the promises that come with it. On the contrary, God could not do so because of Israel's unbelief. The fulfillment to Israel has been postponed. Postponed fulfillment does not annul the covenant. Therefore, one should not spiritualize Scripture to find the fulfillments promised to Israel in the church.

V. 13

As far as God was concerned, the old order of things was done away at Calvary, although the Jewish people still worshipped at the Temple. It would not be long before even that Temple and its sacrificial system would be destroyed in 70 A.D. by Rome and would vanish away. (Today, the Muslim "Dome of the Rock" sits on the property where the Solomonic and Herodian Temples sat).

B. Promise # 2 - The New Covenant promised to be DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT THAN THE MOSAIC COVENANT (v.9)

The Old Covenant was a conditional covenant which promised blessing if Israel obeyed and cursing if they did not obey.

The New Covenant is unconditional (i.e. not dependent on our keeping it; rather, it rests exclusively on God's grace and mercy).

C. Promise # 3 - The New Covenant promised a TRANSFORMATION OF THE INNER-MAN (v.10)

Not on stone or paper to be forgotten, neglected, or lost, but . . .
"Into their mind" - (deep within their understanding and thought life)
"In their hearts" - (in the very core of one's being, the center of intellect, emotion, and will)

"The Law of Moses could declare God's holy standard, but it could never provide the power needed for obedience" (Wiersbe, p. 92).

D. Promise # 4 - The New Covenant promised to establish an ABIDING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (v.10b)

The purpose of the New Covenant was to establish a relationship between sinful man and a Holy God [Christ died *"that He might bring us to God"* (I Pet. 3:18).] People don't need mere religion, but a relationship with God.

E. Promise # 5 - The New Covenant promised to usher in a UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (v.11)

In the Millennium, not one person who enters it will be ignorant of God. And they won't just know <u>about</u> Him, they will <u>know Him</u>.

Now is the time of evangelism; then, all will recognize Christ for who He is!

F. Promise # 6 - The New Covenant promised a PERMANENT REMOVAL OF SIN (v.12)

The Old Testament laws (including sacrifices) *"brought a remembrance of sins, not a remission of sins"* (Heb. 10:1-3, 18) (Wiersbe, p. 93).

"Remember no more" - i.e. God will never hold our sins against us any more. Unlike so many people who say, "I forgive you" and then throw the sins back into our face, God will not!

Section 13: Hebrews 9-10
"ONE SACRIFICE DID IT ALL!"

***Christ's one sacrifice did it all!**
(His sacrifice fulfilled the Law, satisfied God's holy demands, and accomplished our salvation completely)

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

I. Provide You With "ETERNAL REDEMPTION" (9:12)
II. "PURGE Your Conscience From Dead Works" (9:14)
III. "PUT AWAY" Your SIN (9:26)
IV. "SANCTIFY" You as Totally Holy (10:10)
V. "PERFECT" You "FOREVER" (10:14)
VI. Enable You to "ENTER" the "HOLIEST" (10:19)

INTRODUCTION: Hebrews 10:12; cp. 7:26-27

A contrast of sacrifices:

--The O.T. sacrificial system (Lev. 1-9)

--Christ's death on Calvary (Mt. 26-27; Mk. 14-15; Lk. 22-23; Jn. 18-19)

The O.T. Sacrifices offered:

--No finality (they were endlessly offered year after year) (Heb. 10;1-2)

--No efficacy (they could not permanently remove sin) (Heb. 10:3-4)

A theme in Hebrews is to show the supremacy of Christ.

A key word is "*better*" (occurs 12 times).

Christ is superior to prophets (1:1-4), angels (1:5-2:18), Moses (3:1-6), the Old Testament priesthood (5:1-10:39).

Christ has provided a better "*hope*" (7:19), a better "*testament*" (covenant) (7:22; 8:6), a better "*sacrifice*" (9:23).

10:12

--A solitary sacrifice ("*one*")

--A substitutionary sacrifice ("*for sins*")

--An eternal sacrifice ("*for ever*")

--A completed sacrifice ("*sat down*")

"One sacrifice" - The word "*one*" or "*once*" is the major emphasis of chapters 9-10 (9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14).

The sacrifice of the Mass is such an abomination because it is a repeated "sacrifice" when the sacrifice of Christ is complete.

The Mass - "Ludwig Ott, a Roman Catholic theologian, explains this perpetual sacrifice dogma, which was made official by that church at the Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century. 'The holy Mass,' he writes, 'is a true and proper sacrifice. It is physical and propitiatory, removing sins and conferring the grace of repentance. Propitiated by the offering of this sacrifice, God, by granting the grace of the gift and the gift of Penance, remits trespasses and sins however grievous they may be.' In other words, God's satisfaction regarding sin depends upon the weekly mass. That is why attending mass is so important to Catholics."

"For sins" **=** On behalf of (*huper)* of sins committed by mankind (not His own - He was sinless - Heb. 7:26-27).

"For ever" - for all time; into the perpetual ages.

His sacrifice paid for the sins of all time and it will never need repeating. The work is completely done; it will never need to be done over.

"Sat down" - A picture of the completion of Christ's work. ***"It is finished"*** (Jn. 19:30). (The O.T. priests could never sit down; they were always on their feet offering up sacrifice after sacrifice, etc.).

The Levitical system had 24 orders, in each of which were hundreds of priests" (MacArthur, p. 255)

ILLUS: "An evangelist tells a story from the days when he held tent meetings years ago. One day, after a series of meetings was over, he was pulling up tent stakes. A young man approached him and asked when he had to do to be saved. The evangelist answered, 'Sorry, it's too late.' 'Oh no,' was the response. 'You mean it's too late because the services are over?' 'No,' the evangelist said, 'I mean it's too late because it's already been done.

Everything that could be done for your salvation has already been done.' After explaining Christ's finished work to the young man, he led him to saving faith."

***Christ's one sacrifice did it all!**

(His sacrifice fulfilled the Law, satisfied God's holy demands, and accomplished our salvation completely)

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

I. Provide You With "<u>ETERNAL REDEMPTION</u>" (9:12)

"By His own blood" - Note: Not "with" His own blood (as if He retrieved it literally from the ground and carried it to Heaven).

"By" - (by means of; through) It was through His shed blood that He died and entered Heaven.

"Obtained" - Christ Himself (middle) once and for all time (Aorist) secured (lit. found) eternal redemption for us.

Redemption is a "done deal."

It has already been provided by Christ.

"Redemption" - to release someone by the payment of a price (cp. Rom. 3:24).

We have been released from the slave market of sin and Satan and have been set free by Christ the price He paid to "*free*" us was not silver or gold but His precious blood (I Pet. 1:18-19).

Only Jesus liberates; only He sets free. Only His redemption can loose the chains of sin and guilt; only His cross can break the shackles of bondage to moral corruption.

Our "*redemption*" is not temporary (here today and gone tomorrow) but is <u>eternal</u> (never ending).

Can you imagine enjoying the glories of Heaven, and then 5,000 years into your bliss having an angel come up behind you, tap you on the shoulder and say, "Your time is up, you must leave now"! Such will never occur.

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

II. "<u>PURGE</u> Your Conscience From Dead Works" (9:14)

Just as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies with sacrificial blood, the Lord Jesus entered the Father's holy presence (through the Holy Spirit), to signify the completion of His pure sacrifice on your behalf.

"Purge" - to totally cleanse or purify

"Conscience" - Every time the Old Testament saints conscience was bothered by sin, He would have to offer sacrifices and practice ceremonial cleansing rituals, etc.

These dead works no longer have to be done.

True, our "conscience" is bothered when we sin, but our conscience is not bothered because of a need of another sacrifice. Jesus cleans guilty consciences.

Many religious people today (who do not know Christ) have defiled consciences that require a sacrifice or cleansing through some ritual or ordinance. If they only knew that such "dead works" can never purge them.

The time the Old Testament saint spent on "*dead works*" we no longer have to spend. Our time can be spent serving God because atonement is over! Those time-consuming ceremonies give way to a life of service to God.

"Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace of wash away the stain.
Christ the heavenly Lamb takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they."
(Isaac Watts)

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

III. "PUT AWAY" Your SIN (9:26)

If Christ's one sacrifice was insufficient, He would have had to offer Himself over and over since the dawn of creation.

"End of the world" - at the completion (consummation) of the ages.

"Put away" - to do away with sin once and for all.

This was His purpose in coming into the world. If our sin is not "*put away*" (stripped off from us and thrown infinitely away), we could never enter the presence of a Holy God.

All of my past, present, and future sins have been "*put away*" never to be found again, by Christ. Psalm 103:12 - "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*"

II Sam. 12:13 - "*And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*"

John the Baptist saw Jesus as the Lamb who "*takes away*" the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29).

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

IV. "SANCTIFY" You as Totally Holy (10:10)

"Sanctified" - (perfect passive participle) - by God's will, Christ's one sacrifice has made us permanently holy. We have positional sanctification in Christ. We are totally holy (set apart from sin) in God's eyes.

We have the "*righteousness of God in Him*" (II Cor. 5:20). Without holiness no one would see God (Heb. 12:14). We have been set apart from all defilements, stains, blemishes.

Christ gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:26-27 - "*That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*")

The word "*sanctified*" means to become a "saint" (the word "sanctified" and "saint" stem from the same Greek word).

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

V. "PERFECT" You "FOREVER" (10:14)

"Perfected" - (perfect tense) to make complete; to bring to God's goal once and for all time. To be perfectly finished; you are "*complete in Him*" (Col. 2:10). By ourselves we are far from perfect (we "*come short...*"), but by Christ's one sacrifice we are considered "*perfect*" in God's eyes (the Law could never do this - 10:1).

How long will a blood-bought child of God be perfected? Forever!

This is a great text for eternal security.

Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient to:

VI. Enable You to "ENTER" the "HOLIEST" (10:19)

Because of Christ's finished work (and the rent veil), we can enter the Holy of Holies in Heaven (by prayer) without a human mediator.

Because of Christ's sacrifice, we can boldly do that which no Old Testament saint or priest could do. We can enter the Holy of Holies every day.

--Without bringing blood or sacrifice
--Without needing a mediator (I Tim. 2:5)

The Old Testament High Priest had to enter the Holy of Holies with blood and with purify in his life. He would be killed if he failed to meet these requirements (hence, bells and a rope were tied on to him so that he could be heard and retrieved if he should suddenly die within the Holy of Holies).

What a privilege to enter the throne room of God - what right do we mortals have to boldly enter God's presence whenever we want?

We have no rights on our own; but because of Christ's sacrifice we qualify to enter. We are cleansed and suited to enter.

(We can't even enter the President's office when we want, but we can with the God of the Universe).

CONCLUSION:

If the whole work of salvation was finished by Christ, and if He paid the whole debt for my sin, what is there left for me to do? Nothing!

I simply believe God's Word that my debt has been paid in full, enjoy the benefits of His sacrifice, and express a life of appreciation by obedience to His Word.

"It is finished; the battle is over!
It is finished through God's own Son.
It is finished; Glory Hallelujah!
It is finished; the victory is won!"
(Ron Hamilton)

Section 14: Hebrews 9:1-28
"Better BLOOD"
(The Superior blood of Jesus Christ)

*** All of the blood shed in the O.T. could not accomplish what Christ's blood did!**

I. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus entered a <u>better Tabernacle</u> (v.1-12)
(A contrast of Entrance Rights into the tabernacle: <u>Earthly</u> Tabernacle vs. <u>Heavenly</u>)

II. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus provides a <u>better Cleansing</u> (v.13-14)
(A contrast of Cleansings: <u>Flesh</u> vs. <u>Conscience</u>)

III. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus mediates a <u>better Covenant</u> (v.15-24)
(A contrast of Testaments: <u>Old Covenant</u> vs. <u>New Covenant</u>)

IV. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus gave a <u>better Sacrifice</u> (v.25-28)
(A contrast of Sacrifices: <u>Repeated animal Sacrifices</u> vs. <u>Complete Sacrifice of Christ Himself</u>)

Introduction:
Warning: There is a craze today regarding Vampires and consuming blood (on TV & in the movies) This craze along with cannibalism is inspired by demons. Drinking blood is a part of Satanic worship. Satan likes to mock truth and pervert truth. He knows that no one is saved apart from the blood of Christ (shed on Calvary's Cross), so he mocks this truth by enticing his people to eat blood. (Note: The Jehovah's Witnesses misunderstand this teaching and prohibit blood transfusions).

Leviticus 17:10-f
10 ¶ And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.
11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.
12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.
13 And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.
14 For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

ILLUS: How essential our blood is to our life!

--It carries nutrients to various parts of our body.
--Without it we would die (it is our life - "*The life of the flesh is in the blood")*
--If it becomes infected or contaminated, we become ill.
--The red blood cells carry oxygen.
--The white blood cells fight infection (via antibodies).
--The plasma carries digested food.

Just as we depend on our physical blood to sustain our life on earth, so there is a sense in which we depend on the blood of Christ to give us life for eternity.

Many have shed their blood, and we have reaped the benefits:

EX: the Founding Fathers of USA
EX: the blood of martyrs, who died for their faith ("The blood of the saints became the seed of the Church")
EX: the blood of many of our military men was shed in WW I and WW II to keep us and other nations free

Ever since the fall of man into sin in the Garden, the blood of the innocent has been shed to provide an atonement or "covering" for the guilty sinner.

EX: God's sacrifice for Adam & Eve
EX: Abel's offerings to God
EX: Noah sacrificed (brought more than two of certain animals on board the Ark for sacrificing)
EX: The Exodus blood
EX: The Old Testament sacrificial system

But none of those sacrifices and none of that blood could effectively and completely and permanently wash away sin!

The word "*Blood*" occurs eleven times in Hebrews 9 (vv. 7, 12, 14, 18-22, 25).

What God does in Hebrews 9 is show by way of contrast the supremacy of Christ's blood over the animal blood of the Old Testament.

The theme of chapter 9 involves Christ's "better blood" and the theme of chapter 10 involves Christ's "better sacrifice."

*** All of the blood shed in the O.T. could not accomplish what Christ's blood did!**

I. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus entered a <u>better Tabernacle</u> (v.1-12)
(A contrast of Entrance Rights into the tabernacle: <u>Earthly</u> Tabernacle vs. <u>Heavenly</u>)

V. 1
"Ordinances" - regulations or righteous requirements.

"Worldly sanctuary" - <u>earthly</u> Holy Place

V. 2
"Candlestick" - lampstand
(symbolizing: God is our <u>light</u>; cp. Zech. 4:1-6; Rev. 4:5, 5:6)

"Table and shewbread" - symbolizing: God's Presence and <u>provision</u>

V. 4
"The golden censor" - golden altar; Whereupon was the incense; symbolizing: God hears <u>prayer</u>

"The ark of the covenant" - symbolizing: God keeps His <u>promises</u>
"Manna" - Symbolizing: God is our <u>sustainer</u>
"Aaron's rod" - symbolizing: God is our <u>authority</u> (leader)
"Tables" - symbolizing: God is our <u>law-giver</u>

V. 5
"Cherubim" - illustrative of the angels who stand near God's throne in Heaven.

"Mercy Seat" - would have blood sprinkled on it on Yom Kippur; Symbolizing: God did not look at the broken law; He saw only the blood and had mercy.

V. 7
"Not without <u>blood</u>" - the <u>emphasis</u> here is on the importance of the blood

V. 8
"The Holy Ghost" - God's Spirit authored the Old Testament Law.

"Not yet made manifest" - By having the Holy of Holies be closed off from all except the High Priest once a year, the Holy Spirit was illustrating how sinners had no direct access into God's Holy Throne.

The fact that he entered "*every year*" (v. 7) shows that no final offering was ever made for sin.

V. 10
"Reformation" - the New Order brought about by Christ, who brought about the New Covenant.

V. 11
"More perfect tabernacle" - Heaven itself (cp. v. 24)

V. 12
In the same way that the High Priest entered the Tabernacle by means of sacrificial blood, so Christ entered Heaven by means of His blood, once and for all.

"Redemption" - release and forgiveness by means of a price paid

"Having obtained" - Christ gained (purchased) your salvation for you (it's not of our works or religious deeds)

"Eternal" - <u>never ending</u> pardon

II. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus provides a <u>better Cleansing</u> (v.13-14)
(A contrast of Cleansings: <u>Flesh</u> vs. <u>Conscience</u>)

If the blood of animals could ceremonially clean the flesh, how much more could the blood of God clean our spirit and clear our conscience?

We no longer have to live with a guilty conscience. We don't have to appease our conscience with dead works (religious ritual); we are now free to serve God without having to bring a sacrifice first.

III. With BETTER BLOOD,
Jesus mediates a <u>better Covenant</u> (v.15-24)
(A contrast of Testaments: <u>Old Covenant</u> vs. <u>New Covenant</u>)

V. 15
"Transgressions that were under the first testament" - Christ's death atoned for sinners who lived in the Old Testament (cp. Rom. 3:25).

The Old Testament saint was, as it were, "saved on <u>credit</u>" (based on a future payment).

V. 16
For a "will" to be enacted (in force), the one who wrote it and agreed to it must die.

The New Covenant did not begin prior to Christ's death.

V. 18-22
The Old Testament Mosaic Covenant was put into force by the blood shed by sacrificial animals.

Every covenant was sealed with blood: The Abrahamic; Davidic; Old, and New Covenants.

V. 23
If the "patterns" (copies, earthly examples) of Heavenly things required blood for cleansing, entrance, and usefulness, how much more do Heavenly things!

V. 24
"In the presence of God for us" - Christ mediates for us as our Intercessor (Rom. 8:34; I Jn. 2:1).

IV. With BETTER BLOOD,

Jesus gave a <u>better Sacrifice</u> (v.25-28)

(A contrast of Sacrifices: <u>Repeated animal Sacrifices</u> vs. <u>Complete Sacrifice of Christ Himself</u>)

V. 26

If Christ's once and for all sacrifice were not sufficient to save our souls, He would have to suffer continually year after year since the fall of man.

"Put away sin" - to annul (EX: marriage annulment) or "do away with" sin. We appear before God just as if we had never sinned.

V. 27

"Appointed" - reserved; God knows the day; we all have an appointment to meet God. Are you ready?

--The Judgment for the <u>unbeliever</u> is the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

--The <u>believers'</u> is the Judgment Seat of Christ (the *Bema* seat) (II Cor. 5:10; II Tim. 4:1).

V. 27-28

Just as men die once (v. 27), so Christ died once (v. 28). Men die because of their sin (Rom. 6:23), Christ died for our sin.

"Without sin" - without having to pay for sin; the payment is over! Complete! Finished!

Conclusion:

That past, completed sacrifice gives present blessings!

Because Jesus over 2,000 years ago shed His blood for sinners, believers now have the following blessings:

1) Propitiation
Rom. 3:25
Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

2) Justification
Rom. 5:9
Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

3) Redemption(Eph. 1:7; cp. Acts 20:28; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:12; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:9)
Eph. 1:7
In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

4) Intimacy with God
Eph. 2:13-14
But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

5) Forgiveness (Col. 1:14; Rev. 1:5)
Col. 1:14
In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

6) Reconciliation (peace)
Col. 1:20-21
And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

7) Boldness in prayer
Heb. 10:19
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;

8) Sanctification (Heb. 13:12; cp. Rev. 7:14)
Heb. 13:12
Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

9) Power to overcome
Rev. 12:11
And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Appendix

Much confusion exists today over the issue of the blood of Christ. Debate rages concerning the nature and efficacy of Christ's blood. Questions are asked such as:

"Is Christ's literal blood efficacious or is His death efficacious or is it both?"

"Is Christ's blood 'eternal'? or did it originate at His conception in the womb of Mary?"

"When we sing 'Are You Washed in the Blood?', 'Saved by the Blood,' 'There is Power in the Blood,' 'Nothing but the Blood,' etc., what blessed truth are we communicating?"

To answer these questions, the student of God's Word must not speculate and go beyond what the Scripture clearly teaches. The Bible clearly teaches the following propositions:

a. The shedding of blood is absolutely essential for remission of sins (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22)

"The atonement is the scarlet cord running through every page in the entire Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds; it is red with redemptive truth." (William Evans, cited by Borkert/Pulliam, The Blood of Christ, Calvary Baptist Theological Journal, Fall, 1987, p. 1).

b. Christ had to die a bloody death to atone for man's sin.

1) The Old Testament sacrifices pre-figured Christ's bloody death (Gen. 3:21; 8:20-21; Exod. 12:1-28; Lev. 1-7, 16-17, etc.)

2) The New Testament reaffirms the necessity for Christ to die by shedding His blood (Heb. 9:11-10:18)

"Christ could not simply bleed without dying, neither could He die without bleeding; both were necessary for man's salvation" (Borkert/Pulliam, p. 3).

c. Both Christ's offering of His body and His shedding of blood were necessary for redemption.

1) The Lord's table is a reminder of this truth (Mt. 26:26-29)

2) The book of Hebrews emphasizes both Christ's offering of His body and His blood for the redemption of man.

Christ offered His bodyChrist shed His blood
9:269:12, 14, 22
10:5, 10, 12, 1412:24
13:12

d. Christ's blood was literal, physical, human blood

Jesus was the God-man. Total God and total man. His spiritual nature was totally divine; His physical nature was totally human.

"According to the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ, the human nature of Jesus Christ must be genuine and complete. This would also require ordinary human blood just as it requires ordinary human flesh, ordinary human bones, etc. The Scriptures confirm this truth (Heb. 2:14 - "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Jesus] also Himself took part of the same")." (SEE: Borkert/Pulliam, p. 5)

Beware: Any view which denies the literal, human blood of Jesus is akin to Gnosticism and Docetism, which deny Christ's humanity (I Jn. 4:2-3; II Jn. 7)

e. It is not merely the blood, but the shed blood on Calvary's cross that saves
(when the proper emphasis is placed on the word "shed", the modern confusion over the blood issue is resolved).

"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28; cp. Mk. 12:24; Lk. 22:20).

"Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

1) The cross of Christ and the blood of Christ are theologically indivisible in Scripture -

"And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (Col. 1:20).

2) Christ's death and blood are linked together in Scripture. "Christ died for us. . . justified by His blood" (Rom. 5:8-9).

3) Jesus' suffering is linked with His shed blood.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate" (Heb. 13:12).

4) Note the connection between Christ's blood, his offering of his flesh and His death on the cross in Eph. 2:13-16.

"By the blood (v.13). . .in His flesh (v.15). . ."by the cross" (v.16)

*Salvation is provided because of the fact that Christ's literal, physical blood was shed on the cross to make atonement for sin.

To be precise: We are saved by Christ's one-time act of shedding His blood (Heb. 9:22) and not by some supposed enduring "eternal" blood that was retrieved from the ground under the cross, carried to Heaven and literally sprinkled on the mercy seat (an erroneous view promoted by the commentator John A. Bengel).

Interesting Analogies:

Note: In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the blood of the animal was applied to the horns on the altar (Exod. 29:12; Lev. 4:18). Just as the horns held the sacrifice to the altar, so Christ was fastened to the cross by spikes - the blood applied to the horns was perhaps a symbolic foreshadowing of Christ's blood that would spurt out when He was held to the cross.

Note: The rest of the blood was then poured out at the base of the altar into the ground. In similar manner, Christ's blood was spilled below the cross (Exod. 29:12; Lev. 1:15; 3:2; 4:18, 25, 30, 34, etc.; cp. Jn. 19:34).

f. Whenever the Bible speaks of salvation by "His blood," it is speaking of the momentous, great, final, complete, and fully efficacious sacrifice that Christ made once and for all on Calvary!

Section 15: Hebrews 10:1-18
"Better SACRIFICE"
(The Superior Sacrifice of Jesus Christ)

I. **With a BETTER SACRIFICE,**
Jesus has <u>satisfied</u> God's <u>righteousness</u> (v.5-9)
(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>divine satisfaction</u>)

II. **With a BETTER SACRIFICE,**
Jesus has <u>provided</u> for our <u>holiness</u> (v.10)
(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>complete sanctification</u>)

III. **With a BETTER SACRIFICE,**
Jesus has <u>secured</u> our <u>future</u> (v.11-14)
(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>absolute eternal security</u>)

IV. **With a BETTER SACRIFICE,**
Jesus has <u>changed</u> our <u>heart & mind</u> (v.15-16)
(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>inner transformation</u>)

V. **With a BETTER SACRIFICE,**
Jesus has <u>forgotten</u> our <u>sin</u> (v.17-18)
(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>permanent forgiveness</u>)

Introduction: v.1-4

V. 1

"Shadow" - the same word Paul used in Colossians 2:17 -- "*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ*" (Col. 2:16-17).

It is amazing how fallen man persists in clinging to "<u>shadows</u>" when they could cling to the very image of the person of Jesus Christ.

--The Law's Tabernacle was an inferior replica (pattern) of the one in Heaven (9:9, 11, 24).

--The Law's Priesthood was an inferior pattern of Christ's perfect High Priesthood.

--The Law's sacrifices were an inferior pattern of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.

SEE: Salvation syllabus. NOTE: the various types of sacrifices and how they typified Christ.

"Good things to come" - God has some good things coming in the future: a new Heaven and earth; a new Jerusalem, etc. No more pain, sorrow, or suffering! (Rev. 21 - 22)

How sad it is to see devout, yet Biblically-ignorant, religious people re-offer sacrifice after sacrifice on man's altars seeking forgiveness by their efforts.

EX: the Catholic woman who daily prays the Rosary (says 20 "Hail Mary's" and "Our Father's"), attends daily Mass, performs all the rituals

EX: The Muslim who falls on his face three times daily seeking to appease Allah

EX: The Seventh Day Adventist who faithfully observes the Sabbath and the Old Testament Law (particularly the 10 Commandments) to attain salvation

EX: The New York Church of Christ devotee who gets baptized for what he thinks achieves forgiveness and faithfully disciples people, making sure he and they never miss a single service -- all so he can gain salvation.

EX: The Jehovah's Witness who weekly stands on street corners and hands out Watchtower literature earning "brownie points" with the organization and (he thinks) with God.

"Perfect" - complete; lit. to reach God's standard or goal of perfection.

If an offerer could be perfected by the sacrifice he brought, he would never have to bring another one!

V. 2

"No more conscience of sins" - no more guilty conscience. Such guilt impressed the tender-hearted sinner with a need to bring a sacrifice for forgiveness.

If any sacrifice man brought to God could permanently "purge" or cleanse his soul, he would never have to re-offer additional sacrifices.

V. 3

At every Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), people's sins are thrown back into their faces as mourning and sacrifice have to be made anew for them.

V. 4

The blood of animals could at best provide a temporary covering of sin (Lev. 17:11); it could never permanently lift and remove sin off of the sinner.

The Old Testament saint was therefore saved, as it were, "on credit" based on a real future payment for sin.

The Levitical priesthood had 24 orders of priests, a schedule which continually supplied new shifts for the men to offer up continual sacrifices.

"It is estimated that at Passover as many as 300,000 lambs would be slain within a week" (MacArthur, p. 246). Yet all 300,000 could not take sin away.

** All of the lambs, bulls & goats sacrificed in the Old Testament could not accomplish what Christ's sacrifice did!*

I. With a BETTER SACRIFICE,

Jesus has <u>satisfied</u> God's <u>righteousness</u> (v.5-9)

(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>divine satisfaction</u>)

V. 5

This Messianic prophecy in Psalm 40:6-8 would find fulfillment in Christ.

When Christ came into the world, He did not have to offer sacrifices, but His own body which He would give to be crucified as the ultimate sacrifice for mankind.

"A body hast Thou prepared Me" - A quote from the LXX (Septuagint).

Psalm 40:6 in the KJV reads, "*Mine ears hast Thou opened.*"

"'*Open ears*' signified a readiness to hear and obey the will of God. . . '*Open ears*' indicate a body ready for service." (Wiersbe, p. 111).

V. 6

"No pleasure" - God was <u>not</u> satisfied (in terms of His wrath being completely appeased and His perfect, holy standard being satisfied) with any of the animal offerings presented on Israel's altars.

--It would take an <u>infinite</u> sacrifice to satisfy infinite holiness.
--It would take a <u>perfect</u> sacrifice to satisfy perfect holiness.
--It would take a <u>righteous</u> sacrifice to satisfy righteous holiness.

God takes no pleasure in any of man's attempts (no matter how great and sacrificial and sincere they may be) to appease Him and earn His forgiveness.

"*All of our righteousnesses* (to appease God) *are as filthy rags*" (Is. 64:6).
SEE: Isaiah 53:10-11 -- The only sacrifice which pleased and satisfied God was that of His Son.

V. 7

"Lo" - Look, behold, take notice!
"I come" - the pre-existent Christ came into the world
"It is written of Me" - so much of the Old Testament is specifically written about Jesus Christ.
"To do thy will" - Christ fulfilled the desires of God the Father (do you?)

V. 9

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second" - God was prophesying through David that He would take away the first covenant (which required animal sacrifices) that he might establish the second covenant (testament) which would be sealed with the blood of His own Son.

II. With a BETTER SACRIFICE,

Jesus has <u>provided</u> for our <u>holiness</u> (v.10)

(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>complete sanctification</u>)

"By the which will" - In fulfillment of God's will (desire) Christ was sacrificed that we might be sanctified.

[NOTE: In contrast to the teaching of the Unification Church of Rev. Moon, it was not a failure for Christ to die, rather He fulfilled His will!]

"Sanctified" - <u>set-apart</u> (positionally) from the rest of fallen humanity; made <u>holy</u> in God's sight; to achieve a position of <u>sainthood</u>.

[In Catholicism one becomes a saint because of what <u>they</u> achieve in this life (EX: Mother Theresa)]

In Christianity, one become a saint because of what Christ achieved for us when He offered His body.

The Old Testament saint was temporarily sanctified to serve God; but we are permanently sanctified by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ.

III. With a BETTER SACRIFICE,

Jesus has <u>secured</u> our <u>future</u> (v.11-14)

(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>absolute eternal security</u>)

V. 11

"Standeth" - as opposed to Christ having "*sat down*" (v. 12).

There were no chairs in the Tabernacle because the priests' job was never over.

V. 12

"For ever" - for all time; into eternity; perpetually.

V. 13

"Expecting" - Because His work of redemption is over, Christ is pictured as "seated" and <u>waiting</u> for His return for judgment.

V. 14

The reason Christ can remain seated until His return is because His one offering for sin is sufficient, enough, fully capable to "perfect" those who have been sanctified **<u>forever</u>**!
No additional work is needed.

"Perfected" - (a past action of perfecting us with on-going continual results). The same word Jesus used on the cross when He said, "It is finished." It refers to completeness; Christ has imputed to us a complete perfection. He has brought us toy God's goal for righteousness.

IV. With a BETTER SACRIFICE,

Jesus has <u>changed</u> our <u>heart & mind</u> (v.15-16)

(Christ's finished sacrifice provides <u>inner transformation</u>)

V. 15

"The Holy Ghost" - The writer of Hebrews credits the Holy Spirit for writing Jeremiah 31:33-34, as He had been previously credited for authoring the Old Testament Law or Pentateuch (Heb. 9:8).

V. 16

"Laws into their hearts . . . minds" - Because of Christ's coming to dwell in the hearts of believers via His Spirit, we have an "unction" whereby we have a keen sense of right and wrong (the learning of Scripture confirms a knowledge God imparts at conversion).

V. With a BETTER SACRIFICE,

Jesus has forgotten our sin (v.17-18)

(Christ's finished sacrifice provides permanent forgiveness)

V. 17

"Sins" - Every time we missed God's standard (we came short of God's mark of righteousness).

"Iniquities" - every time we disregarded God's Law and acted lawlessly (rebelliously).

Sin is man's greatest problem; therefore, forgiveness is man's greatest need!

Psychiatry and drugs may cover the symptoms of man's deepest problem, but only Christ (the Great Physician) can remove the problem.

Call His name "Jesus" the angel said, because "*He shall save His people from their sins*" (Mt. 1:21).

"Remember no more" - God will never recall our sins and hold them against us.

The omniscience of God would prevent Him from losing anything from His memory; but the grace and mercy of God will prevent Him from throwing our sin back into our face.

V. 18

"Remission" - forgiveness. If something is forgiven, a repayment for the wrong committed is unnecessary.

To "forgive" means to release the debt owed by the sinner and to forget about requiring payment for the damage done.

OLD TESTAMENT ANNUAL SACRIFICES

(One Time Per Year)

Two Key Days which illustrate the perfect Sacrifice - Jesus Christ, who cleansed us once and for all time

NAME	RITUAL	SACRIFICE	MEANING	SYMBOL
Passover (Lev. 23:4-5; Exod.12:1-13)	Celebrated on the 14th day of first month. 1) The lamb was w/out blemish (Exod.12:5; I Pet.1:19) 2) The lamb was killed (Exod.12:6; John 12:24,27) 3) The lamb's blood applied (Exod.12:7; Heb.9:22)	Sacrifice was roasted in fire and totally eaten by offerers and families. The blood was sprinkled on the door posts.	The deliverance of Christ's sacrifice	Christ is our **Passover Lamb** (Jn. 1:29; Mt. 26:17-29; I Cor. 5:7)
Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Lev. 16:1-34)	Celebrated on the 10th day of the 7th month. 1) The priest did all the work (cp. Heb. 1:3) 2) The priest offered for himself (v. 11) (Christ didn't need to - Heb. 7:26, 27) 3) Two goats for sin offering: a) 1st goat - slain (v.15-19) b) 2nd goat - sin-bearer (v. 21-22) Christ became our Sin-bearer (Is.53:4,12; I Pet.2:24; Jn.1:29) 4) The blood sprinkled in Holy of Holies (v. 27) (Heb. 9:7, 11-14)	One goat was sacrificed (bearing the penalty of sin). The other goat was led into the wilderness never to be seen again (picturing the removal of sin).	The forgiveness of Christ's sacrifice	Christ is our **scape goat** who removed our sin II Cor.5:21

NOTE: The word "atonement" found 16 times in Lev. 16 means to cover (cp. Gen. 6:14; Lev. 17:11). The Old Testament saints were saved "on credit" in anticipation of the cross (Heb. 10:4, 11). Old Testament sacrifices covered sin; Christ's blood cleanses from (removes, takes away) sin (Jn. 1:29; I Jn. 1:7)

OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES

A 5-Dimensional View of the Perfect Sacrifice
Jesus Christ, Who Cleanses Us Daily

NAME	RITUAL	SACRIFICE	MEANING	SYMBOL
Burnt Offering (Lev. 1:1-17)	--Voluntary offer --Laying on of hands --Slain by offerer --Blood poured --Animal totally burned up	Totally burned "Wholly consumed" (Cp. Rom. 12:12)	The fullness of Christ's sacrifice	Christ was the **complete** sacrifice (Heb. 10:5-7)
Meal Offering (Lev. 2:1-16)	--Fine flour mixed with frankincense, oil, salt (no leaven)	A pure gift to God (cp. Heb. 10:14)	The flawlessness of Christ's sacrifice	Christ was the **perfect** sacrifice (Heb. 7:26-27)
Peace Offering (Lev. 3:1-17)	--Spotless lamb or goat --Laying on of hands --Slain by offender --Part sacrificed/part eaten	A peaceful fellowship between God and man (cp. Rev. 3:20)	The fruitfulness of Christ's sacrifice	Christ is our **peace** with God (Col. 2:20; Eph. 2:17)
Sin Offering (Lev. 4:1-5:13; cp. 6:25-30)	Offering was burnt outside the camp (v. 11, 12, 16:27)	For sins committed against God's commands (general atonement) (cp. I Pet. 2:24)	Covers the principle of sin	Christ is the atonement for sin's **guilt** (Heb. 13:11-12; Jn. 19:17-20)
Trespass Offering (Lev. 5:14;6:7)	An offering plus restitution is given (5:16, 6:5)	For sins committed against God's "holy things" and against His commands (specific atonement) (cp. I Jn. 1:9)	Covers the practice of sin	Christ is the atonement for sin's **damage** (Is. 53:10)

NOTE:

1. The first three offerings (burnt, meal, and peace) are called a "sweet smelling savour" (cp. Eph. 5:2 - Christ became a "sweet smelling savour" to the Father).

2. The last two offerings (sin, trespass) are called a "non-sweet savour" (cp. II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13 - Christ became a sin offering and a curse for us).

Section 16: Hebrews 10:19-25
"CHRISTIAN ESSENTIALS"
(New Testament Necessities)

Let us not neglect our New Covenant Essentials of the Christian life.

I. ***"Let us <u>draw near</u>"***
in <u>APPROACHING GOD IN PRAYER</u> (v. 19-22)

II. ***"Let us <u>hold fast</u>"***
in <u>ASSURANCE OF SALVATION</u> (v. 23)

III. ***"Let us <u>consider one another</u>"***
in <u>ASSEMBLING WITH THE SAINTS</u> (v. 24-25)

Introduction:

Some things are <u>essentials</u> in life.

V. 19

"Therefore" - The Lord now makes a practical application based on previously stated truth and precious promises.

In Verses 22-24, the writer of Hebrews uses three cohortatory subjunctive verbs (with imperatival force) to rouse believers to action.

Note: The three-fold repetition of the phrase ***"<u>Let us</u>"*** (v. 22, 23, 24). (Whether or not you like salad, this is the "lettuce" passage of God's Word!)

***Let us not neglect our New Covenant Essentials of the Christian life.**

I. ***"Let us <u>draw near</u>"***
in <u>APPROACHING GOD IN PRAYER</u> (v. 19-22)

V. 19

"Brethren" - <u>Believers</u> qualify to approach God.

"Boldness" = confidence, assurance that something is okay (permissible).

EX: The kings of the Old Testament could not be approached without being summoned (EX: King Ahasuerus & Esther).

Even today, one cannot gain audience with a president, prime minister, or king without an invitation or special permission. Yet we have the awesome privilege of going to the King of kings and Lord of lords any time, anywhere, under any circumstances, with any burden, with any request.

"The holiest" - "the innermost sanctuary of the Holy of holies into which, under the old dispensation, the people were forbidden to enter." (Rienecker, p. 702).

What gives us the right to approach God with such boldness? We can approach God's Holy throne because:

1. Christ shed his ***"blood"*** (v. 19)

2. Christ is the ***"veil"*** (we go through) (v. 20)

3. Christ is our ***"High Priest"*** (v. 21)

4. Christ has cleansed us (purified us) (v. 22)

Note: Four key elements were connected to entering the Old Testament Holy of Holies --

1) sacrificial <u>blood</u>; 2) the <u>veil</u> of the temple 3) one <u>High Priest</u>
4) a ceremonial <u>cleansing</u>

Just as the High Priest could not enter the Holy of Holies without a blood sacrifice (which he would sprinkle on the mercy seat), so our Savior entered Heaven having shed His blood. Because of His blood, we have access to the throne room of God.

V. 20
"New" - fresh, not old and stale

"Living" - not dead and ritualistic (fellowship is with a <u>living person</u>)

"Consecrated" - dedicated (EX: how Solomon inaugurated the Old Testament temple with sacrifices)

Just as the Old Testament High Priest had to walk through a curtain to approach God, so we have to go through a person to approach God. This person is Jesus Christ; who allowed his flesh to be ripped open at Calvary, to obtain our access into God's presence. Now we pray "in the name of Christ" - we approach God <u>through</u> Him.

V. 21
"An high Priest" = singular; our only mediator (I Tim. 2:5)

"Over the house of God" - Jesus is in charge; in command of Heaven.

V. 22
"Draw near" - to come close; to approach (cp. Heb. 4:16).

"With a true heart" - with sincere motives; without pretention; religious hypocrisy.

When you pray, don't impress God with your ornate prayers ("thee's" and "thou's")

Talk to Him with a genuine heart.

"In full assurance" - the key krux of the book of Hebrews surrounds the <u>assurance</u> or <u>confidence</u> believers can have in the sufficient person and work of Jesus Christ (who is "better" than what the Old Testament offered).

"Hearts sprinkled" - something the Old Testament hyssop sprinklings of blood could not do. Those sprinklings never could reach the heart.

"Bodies washed" - Alluding to the Old Testament ceremonial washings for purification.

*Both inside (heart) and outside (bodies) have been cleansed by God.

II. ***"Let us <u>hold fast</u>"***
in <u>ASSURANCE OF SALVATION</u> (v. 23)

"Hold fast" - to <u>tightly cling</u> to God's promises.

"Profession" - *homologia* - to confess or agree with God.

To say the same thing in your heart that God says in His Word.

Salvation involves not mere lip profession, but inner agreement with God - "You said it, I agree with it, and that settles it!"

"Without wavering" - to not swerve or drift of the course.

To not veer off in our confidence, but to stay right on track.

"For he is faithful" - our security is solely based on God's faithfulness to His promises. What He promises, He performs (Rom. 4:21).

Definition: The Hebrew word for faithfulness literally refers to the firmness or stability of God. The Greek word means to be trustworthy; believable; reliable; dependable.

God's faithfulness is an extension of His truthfulness. It is called "transitive truth". In the same way that God's righteousness is His holiness in action, God's faithfulness is His truthfulness in action.

When we say God is faithful, we are saying "God is worthy of my faith" or "I can have full faith in Him."

The Bible describes God as a God of <u>trustworthiness.</u>

"He abideth faithful" (II Tim. 2:13); "He cannot lie" (Tit. 1:2); and "His Word is truth" (Jn. 17:17).

Paul had confidence in the trustworthiness of God when he said to Timothy "I know whom I have believed, and am <u>persuaded</u> that He is able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

Assurance is as simple as 1, 2, 3!

1. **I am <u>saved</u> because I <u>BELIEVE</u>**
   (Acts 16:31; John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:37)

2. **I am <u>safe</u> because of the <u>BLOOD</u>**
   (Heb. 9:22-28; 10:10-<u>14</u>)

3. **I am <u>sure</u> because of the <u>BOOK</u>**
   (Titus 1:2; I Jn. 5:13; II Tim. 3:15-16)

"The Lord . . . forsaketh not His saints; they are preserved forever" (Ps. 37:28).

(1)God's salvation comes with an irrevocable <u>promise</u> - Titus 1:2 - "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" (cp. Heb. 6:12-20).

(2)God's salvation comes with an unconditional <u>guarantee</u> - I Cor. 1:8, 9 (v. 8 - "confirm" = guarantee).

God does <u>not</u> say, "I will keep you saved <u>if</u> you do . . ." Our security is not dependent upon our faithfulness to Him (this would be works salvation) but on <u>His</u> faithfulness to us.

Some might twist this blessed truth, to then say: "This means I can live anyway I want." No.

Because God is faithful to us (since we are His children by the new birth), He will be faithful in disciplining us (heb. 12) so that we will not be able to live anyway we want. Also, because of what He did for us, we will not <u>want</u> to live anyway we want.

Unlike the unfaithfulness prevalent (in marriages etc) in our society today, God will never be unfaithful to His Bride. He promises, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Do you have on the "helmet of salvation"? Knowing you are saved is a vital prerequisite to victorious living!

Our "Knowing" is based primarily on God's promises

Did you:
"receive" [Jn. 1:12]
"believe" [Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31]
"come" [Jn. 6:37]
"call" [Rom. 10:13]

III. ***"Let us consider one another"***
in ASSEMBLING WITH THE SAINTS (v. 24-25)

"Consider" = to pay careful attention to one another; to focus our thoughts on the needs of others; to take interest in one another; being thoughtful or considerate of others is the idea.

"To provoke" - a strong word, meaning to incite (EX; of a mob); to spur on (EX: of a horse); to stimulate a response; to stir up to action; to irritate; to push someone or practically compel them into doing something.

NOTE: The word order is not "good works and love" but "love and good works." Why? Because good works flow out of an attitude of love. Love is the motivation to good works.

"To love" - an agape love toward God and man (Mt. 22:37-39); having such love will fulfill every law! (v. 40 - cp. Rom. 13:8 ["Owe no man anything, but to love on another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"]; and Gal. 5:14 ["For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"]).
True love may confront and love may rebuke, but true love never neglects.

--Passive Christianity is unBiblical!

--Laissez faire ("hands off") Christianity is sin!

--Being an isolationist, or spiritual hermit or monk is a violation of Heb. 10:24
After the exhortation of V. 24, the question now is: "How can we provoke one another?" "In what setting does this mutual encouragement take place?"

Answer: In the assembly (v. 25)

When a believer becomes lax in his assembling with God's people, other believers are to speak to him about it and provoke him to do what is right.

A. We have an important WARNING to assemble (v. 25a)

"Forsake" = to leave behind; to neglect something or forget about it.

Just as Christ will never abandon His bride (Heb. 13:5), so we should never abandon our brothers.

To forsake the assembly is to be inconsiderate of others (Note: the participle *"not forsaking"* is modifying the verb consider [v. 24]).

"The assembling" = the gathering together ("epi-sunagoga"). This word points to a specific gathering; and an organized gathering.

"As the manner of some is" - Skipping church is not merely a contemporary problem, but has been a frustration to pastors throughout church history.

"Manner" = habit or custom, a pattern of life

"Of some" = thank God not every believer has this problem; just "some"

The best habit any believer could have is to be faithful to at least each of the main services of their church.

Why do people forsake the assembly?

1. Because they are not saved

   I Jn. 2:19 - "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

2. Because of sin

   a. Laziness
   b. Worldliness
   c. Embarrassment (to face their friends after they became unfaithful)
   d. Because of ignorance (of the importance of church attendance or of God's command)

   A Christian who says he worships God every Sunday morning on the golf course is really worshipping golf on God's course!

Prepare for Sunday on Saturday. Beware: the devil begins working on Saturday to disrupt your Sunday!

Excuses that keep believers from church:
1. Headaches, muscle aches (SEE: Green ILL. #171)
2. Visitors at home
3. Inadequate clothing
4. Common colds
5. The weather (too cold, hot, rainy)
6. Too tired
7. Children have the sniffles

Let's declare next Sunday a "No-excuse-to-stay-home" Sunday!

What do you miss when you miss?
--You miss out on perhaps hearing the very message you needed to hear

--You miss out on being a blessing to someone else, by your words of encouragement or by simply the encouragement that your presence brings (ILLUS: the Empty Restaurant)

Never minimize the importance of your presence
Ask yourself, "Is my example of faithfulness to my Christian brothers a stepping stone, or a stumbling block?"

B. We have an important REASON to assemble (v. 25b)

"Exhorting" - a word intended to convey the opposite of forsaking. Rather than forsaking one another, we should be exhorting one another.

The main purpose of church is exhortation! That is, encouragement and comfort that comes from the public preaching of God's Word!

Such exhortation is God's way of equipping each church member to serve Him (SEE: Eph. 4:11-12)

"Most people think of the church as a drama, with the minister as the chief actor, God as the prompter, and the laity as the critic. What is actually the case is that the congregation is the chief actor, the minister is the prompter, and God is the critic" (James Kennedy).

We all need exhortation! Heb. 3:13 - "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

"It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what a believer gets from the assembly, but rather on what he can contribute (give) to the assembly" (Wiersbe, p. 115)

So many people today are not looking for a place to serve but for a place to be served.

There is strength in knowing we are not alone. We have the greatest support group available! We are a co-dependent and unified body!

C. We have an important TIME to assemble (v. 25c)

"And so much the more" = And all the more

The Lord is telling us that assembling will be all the more important, as ye see the day approaching.

What is meant by the phrase ***"the Day?"***

ANSWER: "The Day of the Lord"

The phrase "the day" is a technical phrase when it occurs without an antecedent, pointing to a most momentous Day; a great and awesome Day; a vitally important Day - namely, The Day of Christ's return (Rapture) and the wrath of God which follows.

"The Day" = the Day of Christ's return (SEE: heb. 10:37)

Rom. 13:11-12 - *"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."*

II Thes. 2:2 - *"That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand."*

Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16 - *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" . . . That ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ . . . Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice int eh day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."*

"Ye see the day approaching" - The mention of us "seeing" the time of Christ's return drawing near is indicative of the fact that there will be clear, visible indications that Christ's coming is near; yea, even prophetic fulfillments which will precede the Day of the Rapture.

SEE: II Thes. 2:1-3. Two definite signs that will transpire before the Day of Christ are:

1) Apostasy (v. 3a; cp. I Tim. 4:1_

II Tim. 3:1-4 - "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"

2) Antichrist's appearance (v. 3b)

If there was ever a time when assembling together was important, it is today! The day is approaching! Apostasy is on the horizon; the greatest onslaught of the devil's deceit and destruction is yet ahead. You need to learn God's Word! Be faithful to its proclamation. Arm yourself for what lies ahead!

ILLUS: of the fireplace (Green #170)

Section 17: Hebrews 10:26-39
"DON'T DETOUR FROM CHRIST!"

*** TAKE no detour from Christ**

I. The marks of a <u>Defecting Apostate</u> (v.26-31)
(The marks of one who "draws back unto perdition")

II. The marks of an <u>Enduring Saint</u> (v.32-39)
(The marks of one who "believes to the saving of the soul")

Introduction: v.39 -Some will "draw back" away from Christ and others will stay on the right track. Which one will you be?

In verses 26-39, the writer of Hebrews describes two different groups of people. These two types or categories of people are summarized in verse 39:

1)*"Them who <u>draw back</u> unto perdition"* (destruction in hell)

2)*"Them that <u>believe</u> to the saving of the soul"*

God prophesied a great end-time <u>apostasy</u> which shall precede Christ's return -

I Tim. 4:1 - *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils"*

II Thes. 2:3 - *"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition"*

The need to faithfully assemble will become increasingly greater as that Day of the End draws closer and closer.

A major emphasis in Hebrews is on the importance of <u>persistence</u> in the faith. Such "right to the end" confidence is described as a mark of the true believer.

Compare:

Hebrews 3:6, 14 - *"But Christ is 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...For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"*

Hebrews 6:11 - *"And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."*

*** TAKE NO DETOURS FROM CHRIST!**

I. The marks of a <u>Defecting Apostate</u> (v.26-31)

(The marks of one who "draws back unto perdition")

To defect is to turn away from a previous loyalty; to abandon, reject, renounce, disown, change sides, veer around, do an about-face, or detract from a former allegiance.

The causes of apostasy:

1.Persecution (Mt. 24:9-10)
2.False teachers (Mt. 24:11)
3.Temptation (love for the world - II Tim. 4:10)
4.Neglect (to fail to come to true faith - Heb. 2:3)
(MacArthur, p. 274-5)

A. An Apostate makes a <u>deliberate decision</u> to turn away from Christ (v.26a)

The ***"we"*** is hypothetical. The "we" does not mean that the writer thought that he might become such an apostate. On the contrary, he confidently states in verse 39, *"But <u>we</u> are not of them who draw back unto perdition..."*

***"Sin"* -** the present tense implies a continual, long-term decision to miss God's mark or standard of righteousness.

***"Willfully"* -** deliberately; intentionally; to decide to commit the sin spoke of in this context.

What "willful sin" is God speaking of in this context? Is He speaking of any deliberate sin we commit? (EX: if you intentionally lie, steal, covet, or lust, etc.)

If He is, then all of us would end up in hell, because all of us have chosen to yield to temptation at one time or another after becoming saved.

John clearly declared that none of us (even the best of believers) can say, *"I have not sinned"* (I Jn. 1:10; cp. 1:8)

The willful sin spoken of in this context is a deliberate decision to turn way from the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. To draw back away from trusting Christ and His sacrifice. Proofs:

1) The sin being described in this context is the sin of rejecting a knowledge of the true way of salvation (v. 26b)

2) The sin being described in this context is turning to other sacrifices for sin, when God says *"there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"* (v. 26c)

3) The sin being described in this context involves *"trodding under foot the Son of God*" and considering His shed blood as *"unholy"* (i.e. common)

4) The sin spoken of in this context involves casting away one's confidence in Christ; hence the admonitions not to do so (SEE: v. 23, 35)

The theme of Hebrews is on the supremacy, and therefore the complete sufficiency, of Christ and His sacrifice for sins. To reject Christ is to reject the whole point of this Epistle.

B. An Apostate rejects truth he <u>clearly understood</u> at one time (v.26b)

"Knowledge" - A <u>complete</u> (head) <u>knowledge</u> (but not genuine belief)

An apostate is one who heard the gospel, could tell others the gospel, made a superficial profession of faith in the gospel, even attended a gospel-preaching church for a time, but eventually he/she reveals his true colors (cp. I Jn. 2:19) (King Saul and Judas Iscariot are two examples)

"Eventually, sometimes even after years of pretense and self-deception, the unbeliever who acts like a believer finally falls away. He gives up, loses interest, and goes his own way. . . with no more regard for the Lord's way or the Lord's people. . . the process of falling away may be gradual, but at some point a conscious decision is made to. . . reject the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." (MacARthur, p. 273).

It is better to never know the truth, than to know it and turn from it (SEE I Pet. 2:20-22).

C. An Apostate (may look for but) <u>will not find another means of salvation</u> (v.26c)

"No more sacrifice for sins" - other than Christ's sacrifice, there is none that is efficacious, none that can remove sin. To reject Christ's sacrifice is to reject your only hope for forgiveness.

D. An Apostate becomes God's adversary and is <u>destined for a fiery judgment</u> (v.27)

Unbelief is man's way of saying "No" to God, of saying "I want nothing to do with God."

Hell fire is God's way of saying "You may have your wish."

E. An Apostate "sins against light" and therefore <u>heightens his guilt & condemnation</u> (v.28-31)

1. To turn from the Son of God is worse than <u>rejecting Moses' Law</u> (v.28-29a)

2. To turn from the Son of God is to <u>profane Who He is</u> and <u>the blood He shed</u> (v.29b)

"Trodden under foot" - We trample on things we view as dirt or rubbish. To turn away from Christ's sacrifice is to view Him and His work as rubble and common dirt.

Is the blood which secured and sealed the New Testament as common (profane) as any other sacrifice?

Perish the thought! His blood is precious, because the One who shed it is precious.

"Wherewith He was sanctified" - The word "he" refers to the "Son of God." It certainly cannot refer to an apostate because it is not possible for a person to be sanctified and then become an apostate. This very epistle affirms the eternal security of those people who are sanctified. *"For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."* (Heb. 10:14).

[Note: While an unbeliever is said to be *"sanctified"* by the believing spouse (I Cor. 7:14), an unbeliever is never described as being sanctified by Christ's blood.]

Just prior to His crucifixion and bloodshed, Jesus in His High Priestly prayer said: *"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself"* (Jn. 17:19).

Jesus would become a sanctified (set apart) sacrifice for the sin of the world. His sacrificial blood was sanctified or set apart from all of the millions of gallons of blood that was shed on Jerusalem's altar.

Just as He Himself was a unique sacrifice, so His blood was unique. By His blood shed, He was set apart or sanctified as a unique (distinct) sacrifice. It is in this sense that Christ was *"sanctified."*

3. To turn from the Son of God is to insult the Holy Spirit (v.29c)

"Despite" **-** to insult

"The Spirit of grace" **-** The Holy Spirit who offers salvation by grace (as a free gift, purchased by Christ).

To reject Christ's sacrifice for sins is to sin against the *"Son of God"* (v. 29b), the *"spirit"* (v. 29c), and God the Father (*"the Lord...the living God"* - v. 30-31).

The entire Trinity is rejected!

4. To turn from the Son of God is to open yourself up to the <u>vengeance of the living God</u> (v.30-31)

V. 30

"Recompense" - pay back

"Pay day some day!"

--To reject Christ is to reject God

--To dishonor the Son is to dishonor the Father

If the Lord will judge "His people," then certainly He will judge those who refused His Son.

V. 31

Upon death, you have absolutely no control over where your soul travels and what happens to you.

A believer's soul is safe (protected) in the hands of a faithful Creator. But the unbeliever's soul is to be apprehended by God's hand (as a policeman would grab a criminal) only to be brought to the holding cell, trial, and then to prison.

II. The marks of an <u>Enduring Saint</u> (v.32-39)

(The marks of one who "believes to the saving of the soul")

V. 32

"But" - introduces a contrast from the condition and fate of the apostate to the perseverance and blessing of the true child of God.

A. *An Enduring Saint keeps on trusting Christ because <u>his eyes have been opened to the truth</u>* (v.32a)

"Illuminated" -

--A past, completed, once-and-for-all-time turn on of the "switch," when our hearts and minds were de-fogged, de-clouded, and brightly lit up to the truth of Christ and His cross.

--Passive voice - God turned on our spiritual lights, not we ourselves.

B. ***An Enduring Saint keeps on trusting Christ*** **<u>despite satanic attacks to bail out</u>** (v.32b-34)

1. He is not afraid to <u>suffer</u> for Christ (v.32b)

"Afflictions" - They had faithfully remained under the pressure of great struggles.

2. He is not afraid to be <u>publicly ridiculed</u> for Christ (v.33a)

"Gazingstock" - *theatrizo* (i.e. theater) - to bring upon the stage, to hold up to derision, to put to shame, to despise publically. The meaning is that they had been held up to public derision, scoffed and sneered at, accused of crime and vice, unjustly suspected, and denounced (Rienecker, p. 705).

"Gazingstock" - to be publically exposed; to be a spectacle whereby the world's evil eyes stared at you looking for ways to insult you and apply pressures (tribulations) on you to see what it would take to make you snap.

3. He is not afraid to <u>associate with God's people</u> (v.33b-34a)

"Compassion of me in my bonds" - sounds like the testimony of the Apostle Paul, who like this writer, was a prisoner of Rome (13:24).

4. He is not afraid to <u>lose his possessions & property</u> for Christ (v.34b)

"Spoiling of your goods" - Seizure of your possessions.

Such seizures will no doubt occur in the near future (Rev. 13). Do you love Christ more than things?

"Better and an enduring" - Both in quality and longevity, what we have stored up in Heaven is superior.

C. ***An Enduring Saint keeps on trusting Christ because of*** **<u>his confident faith in God's promises</u>** (v.35-39)

1. He believes in a future <u>Reward</u> (v.35)

"Cast not away" - to throw away.
"The <u>Aorist</u> subjunctive is used with the negative in a prohibitive sense implying that the action is <u>not</u> yet existent and should not arise" (Rienecker, p. 705).

"Confidence" - bold assurance

2. He believes in a future <u>Reception</u> (v.36)

"Patience" - the ability to remain under pressure and endure

"The will of God" - In this context, the "will of God" involves <u>believing</u> in the sufficiency of Christ and His sacrifice for sins all the way till the end of your life.

"The promise" - John 14:1-3 - *"I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again..."*

3. He believes in a future <u>Return</u> (v.37)

"A little while" - for God 2,000 years is like 2 days. We may be the generation to experience this most glorious of events in human history!

"Will not tarry" - once the trumpet sounds, Christ's return will be like lightning (no more delays); an instant seizure of His people and a startling interruption of the affairs on this earth.

Concl. v.38-39

V. 38

"The just shall live by faith" - A quote of Hab. 2:4.

In Rom. 1:17, the emphasis is on the words "the just." In Gal. 3:11, the emphasis is on the words "shall live." In Heb. 10:38, the emphasis is on the words "by faith."

[Note: The entire eleventh chapter is given to this theme!]

God is <u>not neutral</u> toward apostates. He finds no delight in one who withdraws his confidence away from Christ.

V. 39

Such withdrawal leads to one place: ***"perdition."*** (which means destruction or eternal ruin in hell).

"Saving of the soul" - lit. the preservation of the soul.

Those who *"endure to the end shall be saved."*

Everyone who is a true believer will endure till the end. Why? Because it is God who does the preserving of one's faith (Phil. 1:6).

Section 18: Hebrews 11:1-16
What does Faith accomplish?

I. **Faith <u>UNDERSTANDS</u> God (v.3)**
(The believer <u>understands creation</u> by faith)

II. **Faith <u>SACRIFICES</u> to God (v.4)**
(Abel <u>sacrificed</u> by faith)

III. **Faith <u>PLEASES</u> God (v.5-6)**
(Enoch <u>walked</u> by faith)

IV. **Faith <u>FEARS</u> God (v.7)**
(Noah <u>built</u> by faith)

V. **Faith <u>OBEYS</u> God (v.8-10)**
(Abraham <u>journeyed</u> by faith)

VI. **Faith <u>TRUSTS</u> God (v.11-12)**
(Sarah <u>became pregnant</u> by faith)

VII. **Faith <u>WAITS</u> on God (v.13-16)**
(The Patriarchs <u>anticipated Heaven</u> by faith)

Introduction: v.1-2 v.1- The <u>Definition</u> of Faith
v.2- The <u>Divine Approval</u> of Faith

This treatise on faith comes on the heels of a warning <u>not</u> to apostacize (to abandon one's faith) (10:26-31), but rather to steadfastly believe God's Word regarding Christ and salvation (10:35-39).

V. 1

"Faith is" - Although many unbelieving men may view faith as an unmeasurable, weak-minded jump into the darkness, here is God's definition of faith. The words God uses to define faith are very strong words.

"Substance" - A <u>sure</u> or <u>solid</u> <u>assurance</u>. The word comes from *hupostasis* (*hupo* = "under"; *stasis* = "a standing"). Hence, the quality of confidence which leads one to stand under, endure, or undertake anything (II Cor. 9:4, 11:17; Heb. 3:14) (Vine, p. 120).

"Evidence" - *elenchos* - conviction; to have sufficient proof or evidence so as to form a certain conviction regarding a matter ("The word was used in the papyri of legal proofs of an accusation" - Rienecker, p. 706).

Faith is not a mere intellectual understanding; nor is it a recognition of certain facts (although faith includes a mental comprehension of truth, it is not limited to such "head knowledge").

Faith is more than a mental awareness of someone; faith is a sure confidence on Someone.

"The substance of things hoped for" = the solid assurance of matters anticipated.

"The evidence of things not seen" = the certain conviction of matters not visible to the mortal eye.

Hence, this complex verse can be translated: "Now faith is the solid assurance of matters anticipated, the certain conviction of matters invisible to the eyes."

The words ***"hoped for"*** show that faith involves an assurance of a future reality (the tense of faith is primarily future).

The words ***"not seen"*** show that faith involves a confidence in reality that is invisible to the sight (*"We walk by faith, not by sight"* - II Cor. 5:7).
Someone has said, "Faith is to believe what we cannot see; and the reward of faith is to see what we believe."

"Faith" -To trust, rely on, or depend upon God with full confidence; such firm persuasion results in steadfast conviction (II Tim. 1:12) and motivates one's attitude and action.

The Object of Faith:God
(Mk. 11:22 - *"And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God."*)
The Basis of Faith:God's revelation
(Rom. 10:17 - *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."*; Gal. 3:2, 5)
The Result of Faith:Salvation
(Rom. 5:1 - *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"*)
The Evidence of Faith:A Changed Life (Love and obedience)
(SEE Ja. 2:14-26; I Jn. 5:1)

We are not only saved by faith, but will live by faith (Rom. 1:17 - *"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."*). Such living faith is a product of the Spirit.

V. 2

"For by it the elders obtained a good report" - By faith the Old Testament Patriarchs received recognition. Although their eyes could not see God, God's eyes saw them, He was an eyewitness to their faith, and He gave them His approval.

To gain divine approval is to gain the best approval.

Faith honors God; therefore, God honors faith.

**** What does Faith accomplish?***

I. Faith <u>UNDERSTANDS</u> God (v.3)
(The believer <u>understands creation</u> by faith)

"Through faith we understand" - Faith and reason are not incompatible terms. Believe and knowledge can go together.

Because of our believe in the written revelation of God, we have a higher level of understanding than the evolutionist who has no solid answers as to origins.

Such a trust in Genesis (etc.) provides us with a world view that eludes the grasp of the spontaneous generation crowd.

"The worlds" - the <u>ages</u> of time, space and matter that have been sovereignly planned and designed by God.

"Word of God" - *rhemati* - the spoken word of God. God spoke and matter, time, and space came into existence.

Gen. 1 - *"And God said. . . and it was so."*

The *<u>Logos</u>* of God (Jesus Christ - Jn. 1:1-3) spoke the *<u>Rhema</u>* of God and created the universe with His Word.

[Note the power of Christ's words - with His word He healed the sick, cast out the demons, calmed the storm, raised the dead (Lazarus), and will resurrect the departed dead in the future (Jn. 5:25).]

God created the world by His word; He sustains it by that same word; and He will one day destroy it by His word (II Peter 3:5-7).

The tangible was not made by means of materials that could be touched.

The visible was not made by means of elements that could be seen.

God did not use pre-existing material to build the universe. God created everything *"ex nihilo"* - out of nothing.

Psalm 33:6-9 - *"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spake, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast."*

II. Faith SACRIFICES to God (v.4)

(Abel sacrificed by faith)

"A more excellent sacrifice" - A far better sacrifice.

Although Abel offered a blood sacrifice and Cain a grain sacrifice, it wasn't the type of sacrifice (EX: blood vs. grain) that gave it its worth; rather, it was the quality of the sacrifice that made Abel's "excellent" (*"the fat"* - Gen. 4:4) and Cain's bad (Cain had the opportunity to give his best - Gen. 4:7).

God would accept a grain sacrifice (as He did in the Mosaic Law - Lev. 2:1, 4, 14-15), if it were offered from a loving, generous, and faithful heart.

By faith we can give God not only what He wants, but in the way He wants it. Let's give Him our heart!

(The Old Testament priests of Malachi's day gave God the garbage sacrifices - Mal. 1:6-14)

It takes faith to give to God sacrificially, when bills are screaming from your mailbox. It takes faith to offer God your whole life (time, talent, treasure, location and vocation). Let's give God ourselves as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

"He obtained witness that he was righteous" - His sacrifice testified of his righteousness. Note: Abel's sacrifice did not made him righteous; rather, it revealed him to be righteous.

Works do not produce righteousness; they show it (James 2).

"God testifying of his gifts" - God gave us a written record of the gifts (sacrifices) Abel offered in Genesis 4:4-5.

"Being dead yet speaketh" - Because of Abel's faith, his life and testimony (as brief as it was) still speaks today!

What will your life speak when you are gone? What legacy will you leave?

III. Faith PLEASES God (v.5-6)

(Enoch walked by faith)

V. 5

"He pleased God" - The Old Testament narrative reads *"Enoch walked with God"* (Gen. 5:22, 24).

One who walks with God is one who pleases God. No one pleases God if they don't seek Him and walk in step with Him and His ways.

V. 5b

The phrase which shows how Enoch pleased God, is the phrase "Enoch Walked with God" (Gen. 5:21-24)

A. Enoch walked with God "after" his son was born (v. 22)

Apparently, Enoch lived 65 years (v. 21) before he finally walked with God.
The birth of Methuselah was perhaps an incentive for Enoch to walk with God.
Often, the first child in the home awakens parents to the need to live Godly and set a right example. [SEE poem - "To Any Daddy"]
Enoch's walking with God at the age of 65 teaches us that it is never too late to begin walking with God. You can begin today!

B. Enoch walked with God for 300 years (v. 23-24)

Once Enoch began his walk with God, he never stopped.
Perhaps the reason for his son living so long (the longest life ever recorded - 969 years old) was due to a Godly example on the part of his father, which Methuselah followed.

C. Enoch walked with God in a wicked world (6:5)

SEE Genesis 6:5
"In a deteriorating age, Enoch gave a remarkable demonstration of commendable piety. In thought, work, deed, and attitude, he was in accord with the divine will, and he brought joy to the heart of his Maker" (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 11).

When someone walked with God in the Bible, they always walked alone.
EX: the isolated examples of men and women of God sprinkled throughout the Bible who lived in pagan societies (Noah, Abram, Lot, Joseph, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, etc.).
Those who walk with God are always in the minority.
NOTE: The only other reference to someone walking with God was to Enoch's great grandson, Noah (Gen. 6:9). God rewarded Noah by delivering him from the flood.
Your walk with God is very often alone but it is not lonely.

"Translated" - To transfer (change) from one place to another.

Enoch had a special "Metroline" ticket: one-way to Glory!

1)Enoch's faith caused him to walk pleasing to God

2)His pleasing walk gave him a powerful testimony

3)And to validate his testimony, God rewarded (v. 6) Enoch by receiving him to heaven without going through the experience of dying.

Enoch is an exception to the dismal refrain "and he died" in Genesis 5 (cp. v. 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31).

Enoch walked with God right into the glorious presence of God.

"A beautiful and meaningful miracle was wrought so that the one man who had learned to love God and walk with Him might continue in that fellowship <u>without interruption"</u> (Wycliffe, p. 11).

Only two men ascended to heaven without dying -
1) Enoch (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5)
2) Elijah (II Ki. 2:11)

The only other time this phenomenon will happen is at the Rapture (I Thes. 4:17).

Enoch and Elijah are perhaps the most obvious guess at who the "two witnesses" are in Rev. 11:3-12). (Elijah is sure to return - Malachi 4:5).

V. 6
No one pleases God in any way, shape, or form who does not have faith in Him.

In order for anyone to approach God, they must believe two facts about God:

1.The Fact of His Existence

(You must ***"believe that He is"***)

Both creation (Ps. 19:1ff; Rom. 1:20) and conscience (Rom. 2:14) validate His essence.

2.The Fact of His Graciousness

(You must believe that ***"He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"***)

The fact that God rewards the faith of those who diligently seek Him answers the question: "What about people who never had the chance to hear the Gospel?"

God rewards those who rightly respond to general revelation (EX: creation) with more revelation about Himself and His way of salvation. Bible examples of this:
1)Philip (Acts 8)
2)Cornelius (Acts 10)
3)Lydia (Acts 16)

IV. Faith FEARS God (v.7)
(Noah built by faith)

"Warned of God" - So many of God's warnings go unheeded today (people pay little attention or mock at His teaching regarding sowing and reaping, hell and the lake of fire).

"Of things not seen" - rain and a flood.

"Moved with fear" - motivated by deep respect for God; propelled by a holy reverence for God's warning.

[Many parents give warnings to their children which amount to a "scarecrow" because the parent fails to back it up and fulfill the warning. God, however, never makes empty threats. Noah by faith knew this.]

Noah's labor was propelled by fear
(Noah feared God's word and respected God's power)
EX: of O.T. Passover in Egypt. The people who feared God applied the blood.

Noah's labor saved his family (the animal world, and succeeding generations; you and I would not be here today if it were not for Noah!)

Noah's work was preparing an ark. A 450 foot long, 75 feet broad, and 45 feet high barge (SEE Ryrie's note on Gen. 6:15).

Our faith in God's Word regarding hell, the future judgment, and the lake of fire is one motive that propels us to flee to Christ for salvation and to urge others to trust Him (*"and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh"* - Jude 23)

"Prepared an ark" - A barge which took approximately 100 years to build.

"By the which he condemned the world" - His faith was a rebuke to the world's disbelieve; his righteousness was a rebuke to their unrighteousness, and proved them worthy of judgment.

"Righteousness which is by faith" - Righteousness does not come by works, but by faith; however, it is a faith that produces works, as Noah's faith did.

V. Faith OBEYS God (v.8-10)

(Abraham journeyed by faith)

V. 8

Abraham was the *"friend of God"* (Ja. 2:23) because he by faith obeyed God.

Faith is always the foundation for obedience. The level of your obedience reveals the level of your faith.

"Not knowing whither he went" - It was a road he never had traveled, a location which would forever separate him from his hometown, family, and friends.

By Faith ABRAHAM STEPPED OUT TO WHERE HE HAD NEVER BEEN BEFORE
(The Step of Faith)

God's call of Abraham - SEE Gen. 12:1.

Abraham was to leave the "security" of country, family, and home, to follow the leading of God.

Note: The importance of separation.

1 -The original call came at Ur
(Acts 7:2)
2 -The family moved out of Ur to Haran
(Gen. 11:31)
3 - God then moved Abraham out of Haran into Canaan
(Gen. 12:4-5)

Jesus spoke of leaving country and family for the Gospel's sake and the rewards that would come with such sacrifice (Mk. 10:29-30; cp. Mt. 19:29-30).

To do that which you have never done before requires faith.

7 Steps to Stagnation

1."We're not ready"
2."We never did it that way before"
3."We don't know how"
4."We've tried that once before"
5."It costs too much"
6."That's not our responsibility"
7."It won't work"

--It's a step of faith to go to Bible College or Seminary.

--It's a step of faith to sign up to teach a Sunday school class.

--It's a step of faith to go out on visitation and evangelism.

--It's a step of faith to go to a foreign field as a missionary.

V. 9

"In a strange country" - in a foreign land.

"Dwelling in tabernacles" - living in tents (not permanent structures; not stationary brick houses; not stable buildings). Old Abe was a camper for life.

By Faith ABRAHAM DID NOT PLANT HIS ROOTS TOO DEEP IN THIS WORLD
(The Quest of Faith)

Abraham lived in tents because he was a stranger and pilgrim in the world and had to be ready to move whenever God spoke.

Christians today are also strangers and pilgrims -

I Pet. 1:1 - "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

I Pet. 2:11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

Faith keeps this life in perspective.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I Jn. 5:4).

EX: Hymn - "Faith is the Victory"

V. 10

Abraham had his sight on the eternal not the temporal,
the enduring, not the decaying,
the immortal, not the mortal,
the spiritual, not the physical,
the supernatural, not the natural.

VI. Faith TRUSTS God (v.11-12)

(Sarah became pregnant by faith)

V. 11

Although Sarah initially laughed at the thought that she, an elderly woman, would give birth to a son, she afterward believed, and because of that faith in the God of the impossible, she received the power to conceive.

Faith is simply trusting a God who is faithful. Such a faithful God is worthy of our full faith.

"Great is Thy Faithfulness!"

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES
(He keeps His covenants)

God is bound by His Oaths (Abraham - Rom. 4:19-21; Sarah - Heb. 11:11)
Examples of God's faithfulness to His promises:

1) God's promise as evidenced by the rainbow (Gen.9:16)

2) God's promise of deliverance from Egypt (Ex.6:4-8)

3) God's promise to keep His Word (I Kings 8:56; Matt.5:18)

4) God's promise to give the believer eternal life
(Titus 1:2; cp.II Cor.1:20)

V. 12

The billions of Jews who lived throughout history and the millions on the earth today all stem from the one old man and old woman who lived some four millenia ago.

Do you trust God to do what you cannot do?

What may seem humanly impossible is possible for God.

His ways are not our ways; He will often allow our faith to be tested and tried, and will often delay a promise. But in the end, He will always keep His Word.

VII. Faith WAITS on God (v.13-16)

(The Patriarchs anticipated Heaven by faith)

V. 13

"These all died in faith" - Many times we don't receive all of the rewards of our faith in this life, but god will never fail to reward the faithful. "Pay day some day"

V. 15

"Mindful" - to remember (with a longing to return); to be thinking of something in the past which creates a desire to go back.

V. 13-16

The things of this world never fully satisfy.

Because this world is filled with sin and evil, nothing it has to offer can meet our deepest needs. An emptiness will always follow even the greatest of this world's experiences.

V. 16

Though waiting on the Lord is very hard to do, true faith enables one to wait for the fulfillment of God's promises in God's time (Wiersbe, p. 318).

Though God with an oath promised the land of Canaan to Abraham (Gen. 15:7-18), Abraham, by faith, had his eyes on an eternal, heavenly city.

Dr. George Morrison, a great Scottish preacher, once said, "The important thing is not what we live in, but what we look for." (Wiersbe, p. 319).

"Set your affection on things above . . ." (SEE: Col. 3:1ff)

"Live in the future tense" (Phil. 3:20-21)

Conclusion:

"Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee,
Trust Him when thy strength is small;
Trust Him when to simply trust Him
Seems the hardest thing of all."

"God is greatly honored when, under trial and chastening, we have good thoughts of Him." (Pink, Attributes, p. 56).

Step out by faith (trust and obey whatever God says, even if it looks impossible, and leave the results to Him).

If Israel had understood God's faithfulness, they would not have murmured.
If Thomas had believed Christ, he would not have doubted.

Many times we trust man more than God!
We trust forecasters to predict accurately.
We trust airplanes not to crash.
We trust elevator cables not to snap
We trust social security to provide for retirement.
We trust the U.S. military to protect our country.

"Trust God's wisdom to guide,
Trust His goodness to provide;
Trust His saving love and power,
Trust Him every day and hour;
Trust Him as the only light,
Trust Him in the darkest night;
Trust Him in sickness, trust in health,
Trust in poverty and wealth;
Trust Him living, dying too,
Trust Him all the journey through."

Section 19: Hebrews 11:17-40
"BY FAITH"

**** Realize all that God can do in you, through you, and for you BY FAITH!***

I. **By Faith we <u>pass the test</u> of <u>trials</u> (v.17-19)**
(The faith of Abraham)

II. **By Faith we <u>anticipate God's blessing</u> regarding the <u>future</u> (v.20-22)**
(The faith of Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph)

III. **By Faith we <u>take noble risks</u> without <u>fear</u> (v.23)**
(The faith of Moses' parents)

IV. **By Faith we <u>separate</u> from <u>ungodliness</u> (v.24-27)**
(The faith of Moses)

V. **By Faith we <u>heed</u> God's <u>warnings</u> (v.28)**
(The faith of Moses & Israel)

VI. **By Faith we <u>believe God</u> can do the <u>impossible</u> (v.29-30)**
(The faith of the O.T. Nation of Israel)

VII. **By Faith we <u>care</u> for <u>God's people</u> (v.31)**
(The faith of a former prostitute named Rahab)

VIII. **By faith we <u>triumph</u> over <u>great obstacles</u> (v.32-35a)**
(The faith of the judges, kings & prophets)

IX. **By faith we <u>endure</u> the pressure of <u>persecution & tribulation</u> (v.35b-38)**
(The faith of God's suffering servants)

**** Realize all that God can do in you, through you, and for you BY FAITH!***

I. By Faith we <u>pass the test</u> of <u>trials</u> (v.17-19)*(The faith of Abraham)*

V. 17

"The promises" - God's unconditional promises:

1) That Abraham's descendents would be as numerous as the stars of the heaven (Gen. 15:5).

2) I will *"multiply thee exceedingly"* (Gen. 17:2)

3) Gen. 17:19 - *"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."*

The proof of Abraham's faith was his willingness (even after a century of waiting and wondering) to give back to God the treasure he had, the son of promise (MacArthur, p. 335).

God's intention was to see if Abraham loved Him more than he loved Isaac.

"Only begotten" - (cp. Jn. 3:16) - here is a proof that the term *"monogenes"* refers to <u>uniqueness</u> not origin, because Isaac, in fact, was not Abraham's only son; he also had Ishmael before Isaac was born, and he had other children by Keturah, who Abraham married after Sarah's death (Gen. 25:1-6).

V. 19

Although Isaac did not die on the altar, his rising up off of it serves as a "figure" or type of Christ's rising from the dead.

The offering of Isaac was not only a test of faith, but that event served as a <u>type</u> or <u>foreshadowing</u> of God offering up His only begotten (unique) son.

The mountain of Moriah (Gen. 22:2) was the same location (in Jerusalem) where Solomon's temple was built (II Chron. 3:1) and sacrifices were made, and where the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would eventually be sacrificed.

II. By Faith we <u>anticipate God's blessing</u> regarding the <u>future</u> (v.20-22)*(The faith of Isaac, Jacob, & Joseph)*

V. 20

In Gen. 27:26-40, the old Patriarch Isaac pronounced a future blessings on his sons, particularly on Jacob.

V. 21

Jacob intentionally crossed his hands and laid his right hand on Joseph's younger son Ephraim and his left on the firstborn Manasseh, and pronounced that God would lbess both, but Ephraim would be the predominate tribe (Gen. 48:19).

V. 22

By faith Joseph knew that when the 400 years of Israel's sojourn in Egypt had ended that they would exit and go into the promised land.

He also requested that his bones not be left in Egypt, but that they be carried to the land of promise (Gen. 50:24-25).

III. By Faith we <u>take noble risks</u> without <u>fear</u> (v.23)*(The faith of Moses' parents)*

V. 23

"A proper child" - a beautiful child (Ex. 2:1-15).

By faith Moses' parents Amram and Jochebed took the risk of being killed by disobeying Pharaoh's command of infanticide. They hid their son and when they could no longer conceal him, they by faith build a little ark of bulrushes and placed it among the papyrus reeds in the Nile River.

IV. By Faith we <u>separate</u> from <u>ungodliness</u> **(v.24-27)***(The faith of Moses)*

V. 24

"Come to years" - When Moses was 40 years old, he left Pharaoh's family with all of its abundant wealth and prestige and visited his family.

V. 25

"Affliction" - ill treatment

Sin has pleasure but it is only temporary. The after-effects are grievous.

God's pleasures, however, are everlasting (Ps. 16:11), and they contain no sorrow with them.

"The reproach" (disgrace) ***of Christ greater riches" -*** Christ in the Old Testament? Yes! Jesus led, fed, and protected Israel through the wilderness (cp. I Cor. 10:4).

V. 26

Which riches do you esteem greater? The ones this world offers? Or the ones Christ gives?

For Moses, to even suffer for Christ was greater riches than what Egypt had to offer (cp. Acts 5:41).

V. 27

"He forsook Egypt" - He abandoned and left Egypt.

Are you willing to abandon anything of the world (whether cultural, domestic, political, economical, etc.) so as to follow Christ?

V. By Faith we <u>heed</u> God's <u>warnings</u>
(v.28)*(The faith of Moses & Israel)*

Those who feared God, obeyed God regarding the most horrifying of plagues which would come. By faith they slew the lamb, applied the blood to the door posts and lintel, and were saved from judgment.

VI. By Faith we <u>believe God</u> can do the <u>impossible</u>
(v.29-30)*(The faith of the O.T. Nation of Israel)*

V. 29

If God can dry up a huge body of water instantaneously and provide a paved corridor for 2 million men, women, children, animals, carts, etc., is anything too hard for Him to do?

V. 30

It may have seemed foolish to march around a city wall for 7 days and then to shout on the seventh and believe that God would crumble the city, but they did it by faith, because God said to.

VII. By Faith we <u>care</u> for <u>God's people</u>
(v.31)*(The faith of a former prostitute named Rahab)*

By faith she feared God and provided refuge for God's point men and saved their lives (Josh. 2:1-21; 6:22-25).

VIII. By faith we <u>triumph</u> over <u>great obstacles</u>
(v.32-35a)*(The faith of the judges, kings & prophets)*

V. 32

We could talk about Gideon's little 300-man army (Jud. 7:12), and Barak's conquest over Sisera (Jud. 4:15), and Samson's exploits over the Philistines (Jud. 13-16), and Jephthah's faithfulness to his vow after his victory over the Ammonites (Jud. 11), and David's victory over the giant of Gath (I Sa. 17), and Samuel's submission to God even as a boy (I Sam. 2:18), and the prophets like Jeremiah who by faith suffered, wept, and preached, like Daniel whose life of faith still speaks today, but time would fail to cover them all.

V 33

--They ***"subdued kingdoms"*** by faith, as Joshua.

--They ***"wrought righteousness"*** by faith, as Josiah.

--They ***"obtained promises"*** by faith, as Caleb.

--They ***"stopped the mouths of lions"*** by faith as Daniel.

--They ***"quenched the violence of fire"*** by faith, as Shadrach, Meshec, and Abednego.

--They ***"escaped the edge of the sword"*** by faith, as Micaiah.

V. 34-35a

--They waxed valiant in fight by faith, as Israel during the conquest of Canaan.

--***"Women received the dead raised to life again"*** by faith, as the Widow of Zarephath (I Ki. 17:8-23) and the Shunammite woman (II Ki. 4:18-37).

IX. By faith we <u>endure</u> the pressure of <u>persecution & tribulation</u> (v.35b-38)*(The faith of God's suffering servants)*

V. 35b

Faith in God does not necessarily mean a life of <u>comfort</u> and <u>ease</u>!

V. 35-36

Others were tortured by faith like those who lived during the Maccabean period under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanies (II Macc. 6:18-7:42).

Others endured mockings (causing mental anguish) and scourgings (causing physical pain).

Others were chained up and imprisoned like Joseph in Egypt, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Paul.

V. 37

Others were ***"stoned"*** like Zechariah (II Chron. 24:21), and Stephen (Acts 7).

Others were ***"sawn asunder"*** (cut in halt) like tradition says happened to Isaiah.

Still others were ***"slain with the sword"*** as the two prophets in Elijah's day (I Ki. 19:10), and like James.

Others ***"wandered about in sheepskins"*** like Elijah (I Ki. 19:13).

V. 38

And others were hiding ***"in mountains. . . in dens and caves"*** like the prophets in Obadiah's day, who were persecuted by Jezebel I Ki. 18:4).

EX: <u>Foxes' Book of Martyrs</u>
EX: the persecution of the Anabaptists

God never promised to keep us from trials and tribulation. We are not exempt from suffering, persecution, or death. God did promise to keep us from <u>His</u> wrath, but never did he say we would not endure the wrath of Satan via the Antichrist!

Conclusion: v.39-40

V. 40 - ***"some better thing"*** **-** The best is yet to come!
Faith always looks to the future!

Section 20: Hebrews 12:1-2
"RUN THE RACE !"

"let us <u>run</u> with patience the race that is set before us!"

3 marks of a long-distance champion:

I. His Heart is <u>ENCOURAGED</u> by past veteran runners (v. 1a)

II. His Body is <u>UNHINDERED</u> by <u>EXCESS WEIGHT</u> (v. 1b)

III. His Eyes are <u>FOCUSED</u> on <u>ONE GOAL</u> (v. 2)

INTRODUCTION:

God uses several word pictures to describe the Christian life.

He uses the analogy of <u>warfare</u> (II Tim. 2:3; Eph. 6:11)
He uses the analogy of <u>boxing</u> (I Cor. 9:26)
And now--
He uses the analogy of <u>running</u> (cp. I Cor. 9:24; Gal. 5:7; Phil. 2:16)

V. 1

"Let us run" - A cohortative subjunctive functioning as a rousing, inspiring, encouraging imperative.

"Let <u>us</u> run" - Every one of us must run (including the writer of Hebrews).

"Patience" = Endurance; the ability to remain under pressure without quitting the race, or violating the rules (II Tim. 2:5).

"The Christian race is a marathon, a long-distance race, not a [quick] spring" (MacArthur, p. 373).

Today, we have too many "short-spurt" Christians (who start out fast, but as the race goes on, they slow down, give up, or just collapse), but the Lord wants those who will "make the distance."

"The race" - (*agon* = we derive our English "agony") A race requiring strenuous conflict and "fight to the finish." A race where (as it were) our spiritual muscles contract and stretch, our heart fervently pumps with zeal and enthusiasm, and our running is not hindered by anything that we deliberately allow in our lives that we know would be an obstacle.

"Set before us" - God has a specific race already placed in front of each one of us (Christians) and it is up to us to run it. God has a particular track and race previously marked out for you to run.

He has a "<u>will</u>" for your life. Pursue it! He has a <u>plan</u> for your life. Fulfill it!

Gaining salvation is not a race (self-effort), but the Christian life is! Being saved is a prerequisite to taking part in this race.

In verses 1 and 2, God gives us 3 participles which give us the secret to running and winning the race the Lord has for you. [*"seeing* [having] . . . *laying aside* . . . *looking*" (v. 2)]

****For the rest of our lives, let us <u>run</u> with patience the race that is set before us!"***

3 marks of a long-distance champion:

I. His Heart is <u>ENCOURAGED</u> by past veteran runners (v. 1a)

"We are all creatures of motivation. We need a reason for doing things, and we need encouragement while we are doing them." (MacArthur, p. 374).

God's incentive is this: "Others have done it, so you can too!" (they were of like passions [Ja. 5:17], not "super saints").

"The faithful Christian is <u>not alone</u>. Although he may feel destitute, he is assured of the continuing presence of God Himself. . . he is also a part of an army of faithful servants of God." (Pfeiffer, p. 106).

"Wherefore" - In light of chapter 11, God now draws an emphatic conclusion. Therefore, keeping in mind the faithful servants of God just mentioned. . . ***"Let us run."***

"Compassed about" - Surrounded, spread around, encircled.

The picture is of a stadium and an arena or track. Surrounding the race track are a host of people seated in the stands, who are veteran runners and serve as an encouragement to those who are running the race. "The competitors feel the crowd towering about above them" (Wescott, cited by Reinecker, p. 713).

A ***"witness"*** was one who could testify and give an honest testimony to confirm or attest to the truth of a matter.

Who is this ***"great cloud of witnesses"*** - They are the heroes of the faith mentioned in Hebrews 11 and others who trusted the promises of God and "witnessed" His faithfulness (despite the severe trials they faced).

Do the saints in Heaven know what is going on on earth? (Rev. 6:10 seems to indicate so)

Whether or not the saints in Heaven are watching us is not the point (note: they are called *"witnesses"* not "spectators"). The point is that their faithful examples as mentioned in Scripture (Heb. 11 specifically) should serve as a great incentive for us to run like they did!

The point here is not that they are looking at us, but that we are looking at them!

We see that they did it, and that motivates us.

Rom. 15:4 - *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

"If you are having problems with your family, read about Joseph. If you think your job is too big for you, study the life of Moses. If you are tempted to retaliate, see how David handled this problem" (Wiersbe, p. 135). If your whole life is one big trial, read about the patience of Job.

II. His Body is UNHINDERED by EXCESS WEIGHT (v. 1b)

"The will to win is worth nothing without the will to prepare"

"Lay aside" - to put off and remove away. The picture is of stripping off and throwing away -- Like a man would take off the long, baggy pants and wear short pants to play basketball or run a race.

"Weight" = bulk, mass, or encumbrance. Anything that would weigh you down and thus slow you down.

"An athlete would strip for action both by the removal of superfluous flesh through rigorous training and by the removal of all his clothes" (Hughes, cited by Reinecker, p. 713).

"Every weight" - EX: ankle weights, the heavy bat collar, the bar bells.

A "weight" is not necessarily a "sin" but it is a hindrance to your being all you can be for Christ.

A weight is anything that restricts or comes in the way of your fulfilling God's will for your life.

"Weights" can be those questionable areas that may be okay for people to have, but they are not "expedient" for the child of God.

This weight is often "something perfectly innocent and harmless. But it weighs us down, diverts out attention, saps our energy, dampens our enthusiasm for the things of God" (MacArthur, p. 376).

These weights "might even be 'good things' in the eyes of others. A winning athlete does not choose between the good and the bad; he chooses between the better and the best" (Wiersbe, p. 135).

A weight can be an obsession with:

- Sports
- A job
- TV
- A girlfriend or boyfriend
- Food
- Books
- A hobby
- Laziness
- Any worldly pleasure
- a house
- A yard;
- An area of Christian liberty that does not edify (I Cor. 10:23)

"Every" - not just the ones we don't mind discarding, but any and every thing that ensnares us! Everything that robs us of precious time, energy, and resources that could be used for God's glory and the Gospel ministry.

For the Hebrew Christians, the weights were perhaps some of the excess baggage of religious ways and legalism of Judaism (cp. Heb. 6:1-2). Like a "ball and chain," such religious ritual and regiment hindered them (cp. Gal. 3:1-3; 4:9).

"The sin" - There is a specific or particular sin (usually there is only one major area of weakness that trips you up).

"The sin" - An area of missing God's mark or standard for our lives.

This "sin" is any lack of conformity to the moral law of God either in act or attitude.

"Easily beset" - *euperistatos* (*eu* = good, well; *peri* = around; *statos* = standing).

This word describes a sin which seems to be always hanging around; one we like to give in to; one that seems so easy to give in to because of its proximity and appeal to either the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life (I Jn. 2:16).

What is *"the sin"* which hinders your race (growth, service, devotion)?

Is it unbelief (note context urging *"faith"*)? Lust (a perversion or covetousness)? Pride? Unforgiveness? Some substance abuse (alcohol)? Materialism? Selfishness, etc.?

III. His Eyes are <u>FOCUSED</u> on <u>ONE GOAL</u> (v. 2)

In running. . . "nothing will thrown off your stride or slow you down like looking at your feet or the runner coming up from behind or the crowds in the stands" (MacARthur, p. 377).

"Looking" - To look away from all distractions so as to keep one's eyes focused on the goal.

"Unto Jesus" - Keep your eyes on Him!

Paul's goal was singular as he ran the race. *"For to me to live is Christ"* (Phil. 1:21).

His focus was singular. he said: *"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* (Phil. 3:13-14)

The Author and Finisher
The Architect and Builder
The Originator and Creator
The Beginner and the Ender
The Designer and the Doer
The Pioneer and Perfecter
. . . Christ initiated the work for our salvation and completely finished the work of our salvation.

"It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30).

It is totally presumptuous for man to plan his salvation (Prov. 14:12; 16:25) and think he can do enough to earn it by himself (Ti. 3:5; Eph. 2:8).

"Our faith" - Our faith or beliefs is not our idea; it was Christ's. What Christians believe -- Christ authored it and finished it.

"Our faith" is summarized by Paul in I Cor. 15:3-4.

"For" - for the sake of; because of. One day the "shame" of the cross will be replaced with the "joy" of what it accomplished.

"The joy" - this is what motivated Christ to put up with the humiliating shame of Golgotha. It was the joy of fulfilling His own plan; doing the will of the Father; and making payment to acquire a Bride, that gave Him endurance to the finish line.

That which motivates you ought to be to please your Heavenly Father, to fulfill His plan and hear His *"Well done thou good and faithful servant"* (Mt. 25:21).

As Christ *"ran"* the course His Father had for Him,t he focus that allowed Him to drink the bitter cup of suffering and torment (Mt. 26:39) was the *"joy"* of acquiring a Bride by His bloody death (Eph. 5:25; I Pet. 1:19).

Paul spoke of his converts as his "*joy and crown"* (Phil. 4:1; cp. I Th. 2:19).

"Endured" - the same word translated *"patience"* (v. 1)

"The cross" - He became a curse for us on Calvary's cross (Gal. 3:13).

"Set down" - Christ is pictured as seated because His work of salvation is completed! It is done! It is finished! His mission is accomplished!

"The right hand" -
the place of power (Exod. 15:6, 23; Ps. 89:13, 118:16; Is. 48:13)
the place of pleasures (Ps. 16:11)

Christ serves as the ultimate model so that we don't quit our race due to weariness and opposition (v. 3).

CONCLUSION:

Section 21: Hebrews 12:5-12
"Our Father's Discipline"

I. The Lord disciplines you...
TO SHOW HIS LOVE FOR YOU (v.6a)

II. The Lord disciplines you...
TO AFFIRM HIS RELATIONSHIP TO YOU (v.6b-8)

III. The Lord disciplines you...
TO PROVIDE HIS BENEFITS IN YOU (v.9-11)
- A. Benefit # 1 - Abundant Life (v.9)
- B. Benefit # 2 - Godly holiness (v.10)
- C. Benefit # 3 - Peaceable righteousness (v.11)

Introduction:

Although I hated it at the time, I am today thankful for the discipline I received from my earthly father.

V.5 When God disciplines you...
-Don't treat it lightly
-Don't lose heart

The connective ***"and"*** continues the thought of adversity and contrasts what we suffer with what Christ suffered. Ours is much less and for different reasons.

***"The exhortation"* -** the writer of Hebrews affirms the Old Testament encouragement -- as written by Solomon hundreds of years prior in Proverbs 3:11-12 -- as still valid today. God has always disciplined His erring children.

We are prone to either discredit the discipline as not being from God or we question it ("Why me?" or "Why this way?").

People are prone to two extremes when God strictly deals with their lives:

1) They often either don't take seriously the hardships they face as possible lessons from above;

Or

2) They often grow weary and exasperated (depressed) by His dealings with them (Both extremes are wrong)

***"Despise not"* -** Don't think little of; don't think lightly about; beware of ignoring the lessons God may be trying to teach you.

"Chastening" - child training; the physical instructive discipline a father would give to an immature child.

"Faint" - to give up; rather than learning the lessons God is trying to teach, you become discouraged or depressed by God's rebuke. (EX: a child after being scolded may have an earnest desire to amend his/her ways, or they may go away with a frown and a sullen appearance -- this is wrong).

"Rebuked" - To reprove; as when one is sternly reprimanded for rebellious action and attitudes.

Note the balance in the terms used:

"Chastening" = physical discipline

"Rebuke" = verbal discipline

(EX: *"The rod and reproof give wisdom. . .")*

God disciplines His children ultimately for His glory and specifically for our good.

The word "discipline" is related to the word "disciple" -- a disciple is one who is taught the disciplines of His authority. God wants to teach His children, so He disciplines us.

Psalm 119:67, 71, 75 - *"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."*

In Job 5:17-18, the Bible says: *"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."*

Spurgeon said, "I have never learned anything from God except by the rod."

A.W. Tozer added, "It is doubtful if God can bless a man greatly without hurting him deeply."

Why does God chastise (discipline) His children?

Basically to teach.

--To teach us what sin to avoid (prevention - II Cor. 12:7)

--To teach us humility or dependence (EX: Job)

God allows physical affliction in our lives to prove and improve our dependence upon Him.

--To teach us sympathy toward others

--To teach us the consequences of our sin

--To teach us the character of God

--To teach us which road to take and which to avoid

How does God chastise (discipline) His children?

--Through physical affliction (I Cor. 11:30)

--Through problematic people (even the heathen)

--Through emotional distress

--Through circumstantial troubles
(loss of job; financial hardship; trouble with spouse or kids)

--Through loss of joy

*** God has a good purpose in disciplining you!**
He disciplines for good reasons:

I. ***The Lord disciplines you...***
TO SHOW HIS LOVE FOR YOU (v.6a)

When very adverse times come into our lives, we may be tempted to question God's love. "Maybe He is getting back at me," one might think.

But remember, "*Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ..."* (Rom. 8).

Love may confront, and love may rebuke, but love never ignores.

I'm glad God loves us enough to not allow us to ruin our lives by unrepentant sin. I'm thankful when He in love redirects our wayward steps, closes undesirable doors, grabs our attention, softens our hard hearts, slows our running in the wrong direction down to a stop, etc.

Someone who undeservedly is the beneficiary of time, effort, and attention for his own benefit, is someone who is loved.

In parenting, love disciplines. Hate ignores. (Prov. 13:24)

Rev. 3:19 - *"As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline"*

By faith, we believe that love is God's motive for chastening us.

II. ***The Lord disciplines you...***
TO AFFIRM HIS RELATIONSHIP TO YOU (v.6b-8)

V. 6b

"Scourgeth" - to beat with a whip. God gives each of His wayward sons an old-fashioned "whipping."

The fact that ***"sons"*** of God need such correction proves that no Christian is perfect.

Discipline is not "punishment" (NOTE: poor translation in the NIV v. 6b).

Punishment involves retribution (pay back). Discipline is teaching. God punishes the wicked; He disciplines His children.

Spurgeon said, "The sword of justice no longer threatens us [because Christ was punished for our sins on the cross], but the rod of parental correction is still in use."

"Whom He receiveth" - the fact that God had to "receive" us as sons, proves that no one is a natural-born son of God. Rather, we must be received by Him as an adopted child.

V. 7

"Endure" - to patiently remain under the pressures and discomforts of the disciplinary process without squirming or running away.

"What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" - the writer says, show me a son who never gets chastened by his earthly father. In his day such was unheard of.

In our day, the question could be reversed: Show me a son who does get chastened. This failure to discipline our children is a prime cause for children failing to learn the consequences for their sin and for child rebellion to parents (II Tim. 3:2). God looked down the corridor of time and saw what the results would be of such neglect.

Take note: God's treatment of His children is an example of how we as fathers ought to manage and care for our children.

V. 8

If you are harboring a rebellious attitude or action and find you feel no guilt, if you find you can "get away with murder" and never get caught, etc. This is the worst predicament to be in -- to be able to live a lifestyle of disobedience and never get reprimanded. Such means you are not a child of God. Our Father does not allow us to indefinitely drift to our own destruction.

I know of certain times when God dealt very personally and specifically, yet lovingly, with me.

ILLUS: the time God chastised me for pride and disrespect for parental authority (the bike injury July 4, 1978).

ILLUS: the time I wrecked my boss's van on Highway 90 in Wisconsin.

"Bastards" - illegitimate; to be the child of <u>another father</u> (Jn. 8:44).

You may feel like it, but you do not spank your neighbor's children.

It has been said, "God does not spank the devil's kids."

III. ***The Lord disciplines you...***
TO PROVIDE HIS <u>BENEFITS</u> IN YOU (v.9-11)

A. Benefit # 1 -Abundant <u>Life</u> (v.9)

"Reverence" - respect.

Many children have no respect for their parents because their parents never taught them right from wrong and the consequences for deviant behavior.

Does your word carry weight? Do they know you will never bend on principle or waver on truth? Do they know that your warnings are not mere scarecrows? (follow through, if you say, Don't do that again or you'll get a spanking).

"Subjection" - submission; the reason god spanks us is when we refuse to submit. He, like any good parent, will discipline rebellion.

It does not mean God zaps us for every slip-up or mistake, but He does deal with us when He gives the word and we refuse to yield.

The result of learned discipline from ***"the fathers of our flesh"*** is reverence; but the result of learned discipline from ***"the Father of spirits"*** is life! Real life! Joyful life! Abundant life! Successful life! A prolonged life!

There is a "*sin unto death"* for those who don't yield to our Father's will.

B. Benefit # 2 - Godly <u>holiness</u> (v.10)

***"A few days"* -** most parental spankings are completed by the ages of 5-7 years old.

"Their own pleasure"* -** Often a parent will chastise with inappropriate motives; i.e. to satisfy their own peace of mind and pride, but God does it for our ***"profit" (our advantage).

The goal is <u>not</u> <u>ruin</u>, but <u>restoration</u>; not <u>bombardment</u>, but <u>betterment</u>, not to <u>massacre</u> us but to <u>mature</u> us.

Earthly parents make mistakes; God, however, never makes mistakes. He knows exactly what type and how long to discipline.

God will not discipline us with more than we can handle (just as you don't swat a one-year-old with the same force as with a ten-year-old).

God's goal in chastising us is that we might share in His characteristic of holiness.

"Like Father/like son" is the goal. *"Be ye holy for I am holy."* He is sanctified and set apart from sin and profane things and He wants the same unique purity to shine forth out of his children's lives.

ILLUS: the crucible and the refining of gold (the heat stays on until the goldsmith sees his own reflection in the pure gold).

We are <u>positionally</u> holy; but we need <u>practical</u> sanctification, which is a continual process.

C. Benefit # 3 - Peaceable <u>righteousness</u> (v.11)

Never did a child says: "Dad, that spanking <u>felt good</u>." The disciplinary process is not joyous in itself.

Rather, it is ***"grievous"*** (painful and irritating).

"Discipline is not pleasant in the present."

"Afterward" **-** the outcome or finished product is what matters most.

Patience is needed; faith to anticipate a glorious outcome.

"Yieldeth" **-** pay back

The process is misery, but the product is marvelous.

God does not discipline us to ultimately <u>hurt</u> us but to <u>heal</u> us (an attacker and a surgeon both use knives. The difference is motive (intent) and manner. One to hurt, one to heal).

(ILLUS: Stephen's surgery and stitches)

Righteousness is noted as: ***"Peaceable"*** - in contrast to stubborn rebellion.

"Fruit" **-** in contrast to death.

When you do right, your life will demonstrate a peace the world does not know.

The key to a peaceful life is righteousness.

God wants to produce a life which conforms to His standards. A lifestyle which matches His truth.

God wants His kids to "turn out right."

"Exercised" **-** we derive "gymnasium" from this word; it refers to training through exercise; this is exactly what God's discipline is designed to do.

CONCLUSION:

1. What lessons has God been trying to teach you?
2. Have you learned yet, or do you have to go through the vicious cycle over and over?
3. Is there an area of submission you need to yield to Him today?
4. Is there a rebellious attitude or activity you need to repent of today?

Section 22: Hebrews 12:12-17
"LOOKING TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD"

I.	LOOK UP:	What promises are you trusting? (v.12)
II.	LOOK AHEAD:	What path are you on? (v.13)
III.	LOOK OUT:	What pursuits are you seeking? (v.14)
IV.	LOOK IN:	What problems should you avoid? (v.15-17)

Introduction:
V. 12
"Wherefore" - In light of the fact that our Heavenly Father disciplines His children (12:5-11) [and these Hebrew Christians were perhaps enduring His corrective chastisement], the Lord now gives us some practical exhortations to alter a detrimental course of action our lives have taken.

These verses resume the "race metaphor" used in 12:1-2.

[Note the references to *"knees"* (v. 12); *"paths...feet"* (v. 13); *"follow"* (v. 14); *"looking diligently"* (v. 15).]

Four imperatives provide our four points:
1. ***"Lift up"*** (v. 12)
2. ***"Make straight"*** (v. 13)
3. ***"Follow"*** (v. 14)
4. ***"Looking diligently"*** (v. 15)

**** We need God's direction for life! Let's get on His track and go!***

I. LOOK UP: What promises are you trusting? (v.12)

In running, it is usually the arms, then the knees, that become weary. The arms begin to slump and the knees begin to wobble (MacArthur, p. 402).

"Lift up" - An imperative, meaning to set upright, to lift up from a fallen, drooping, listless, lifeless posture to a revived, energetic, upright posture.

No one can run track with his arms hanging down!

"Feeble knees" - knees that have given up (paralyzed & lame).

The words ***"hand down"*** and ***"feeble"*** (perfect passive participles) imply that at some point in one's past he allowed such a "giving up" spirit to enter his life. The condition still remains, but by God's grace, something can be volitionally done about it!

Don't stay a victim to your discouragement. Get going for God!

The worse state a believer can be in is to be stuck in the "blahs," the slough of despair.

To have both weak arms and knees describes one who doesn't have the strength to do anything ("arms") or go anywhere ("knees").

Have you ever felt that way? Blah, sullen, lethargic, unmotivated?

There is no legitimate excuse for such an attitude in a child of God.

This verse is a quote of Isaiah 35:3. The picture is one of gloom.

In the context of Isaiah 35:1-2, Isaiah was seeking to encourage Israel with the future bliss of the Kingdom.

Move from discouragement to Godly encouragement.

These Jewish believers whom the writer of Hebrews is addressing apparently grew weary and discouraged due to their own unbelief and sin. For which cause, God was disciplining them -- not to keep them down, but to wake them up as to the need for immediate repentance for their rebellion.

Although we all have our "moments" of discouraging circumstances, we have so much to be grateful for. Count your blessings:

1) Life (*"abundantly"*)

2) Salvation (eternally)

3) A Savior (permanently) -- who will never leave us

4) Opportunities (to make a difference in someone's life)

Etc. etc.

Live by faith (Heb. 11).

II. LOOK AHEAD: What path are you on? (v.13)

"Paths" - tracks; the word refers to a running lane which has been made by the feet of runners (Rienecker, p. 715).

"Make straight paths" - There is a sense in which you make your own path (lane) to run on in life.

Your present difficult life may be the result of your past choices you have made. What you sowed, you now reap. Unclutter now, and you will run better later!

"Straight" - Two ideas:
--Not crooked
--Level (not bumpy)

Both sharp turns and an uneven surface do damage to the knees.

Don't get off track:

When we veer off of God's straight and narrow path (will) for our life, we transgress into dangerous territory (deep sudden holes, traps, quicksand, obstructive weeds and sticks and stones wait for our feet).

Clear out your lane! Don't clutter your running lane:

So many allow obstacles into their paths by disobeying God's Word. Such obstacles (stumbling blocks) will hurt us (we will twist our spiritual ankles and strain or dislocate our spiritual knees. You can't run fast or well on a slippery, rocky, uneven road).

"Lame...turned out of the way" - A lame (weak) joint (whether ankle or knee) is susceptible to sudden twists -- the result being dislocation or being out of joint.

"Let it rather be healed" - Rather than cluttering our path in life with obstacles that will lead to further injury, God says to clean up and smooth out and straighten up your lane so that your weak limbs can be healed.

God through natural or supernatural means can heal the weakened life, if we set the right course to run on.

III. LOOK OUT: What pursuits are you seeking? (v.14)

"Follow" - A strong word used of hunters pursuing their prey. It means to go diligently after something with focus and determination.

A. Diligently pursue peace (v.14a)

"Peace" - Having *"peace with God"* (Rom. 5:1), we should have the *"peace of God"* (Phil. 4:7); and by extension, we should have peaceful relationships toward others.

Rom. 14:19 - *"let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."*

Our objective in life is not to do things that would tear apart relationships with other Christians, rather our goal is to do everything in our power to:

1. maintain peaceful relationships (Jms. 3:18)

2. build strong relationships ("edify" = to build up)

Rom. 12:18 - *"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*

"If it be possible" - if you are able, do what is in your power to maintain peaceful relations with others.

"As much as lieth in you" = from your standpoint, seek to be peaceful.

We cannot control whether or not someone else will be peaceful but we can control the peace from our end, from our side of the problem.

Too often you worry about the other side of the problem; you are concerned about their attitude and action toward you, and fail to remember you will not answer to God for them, but for you. Pay attention to how well you are doing to promote a peaceful relationship.

"Live peaceably with all men" -

Do your best to be what you should be to promote harmony and tranquility with:

1) your spouse
2) your employer
3) your neighbors
4) your in-laws and relatives
5) those who "hate your guts"

Some might say: "I can be nice to some enemies, some of the time; but certainly God does not expect me to be nice to all enemies, all of the time, does He?"

ANSWER: There are no exceptions.

Note - "no man" (v. 17a); "all men" (v. 17b); "all men" (v. 18). This includes saved and lost (cp. I Th. 5:15)

V. 18
You cannot influence anyone for righteousness unless they can feel at rest (at ease) in your presence.

James 3:18 - *"And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."*

Mark 9:50 - *"Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another."*

B. Diligently pursue holiness (v.14b)

Not only are we to zealously pursue peace, but holiness as well!

This is not positional holiness (which we have freely in Christ), but practical holiness (which is daily sanctification) -- being set apart from that which would hinder our walk with God and our usefulness to God.

To pursue holiness would involve a daily determination to rid our lives of that which is impure, unclean, and unfitting for a saint. Needed:

--A holy thought life
(from worldly lusts and obsessions to a focus on God and truth)

--A holy attitude
(from pride, selfishness, and anger to humility, love, and forgiveness)

--A holy language
(from vanity, vulgarity, gossip and slander to speech which edifies the hearers)

--A holy lifestyle
(from immorality and worldliness to purity of actions and love for God)

"Without which no man shall see the Lord" - Without positional and practical holiness, no one will go to Heaven.

Note: Practical holiness is not what saves us, it is what distinguishes us who are saved. Those who are positionally holy will bear evidence by their practical holiness that such a saintly relationship with God does indeed exist.

I Cor. 6:9-11 - *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye ar washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

(Cp. Gal. 5:20-21)

"Blessed are the <u>pure</u> in heart, for they shall <u>see</u> <u>God</u>" (Mt. 5:8).

IV. LOOK <u>IN</u>: What <u>problems</u> should you avoid? (v.15-17)

V. 15

"Looking diligently" - To watch out for, to oversee our own lives and be on guard for some dangerous, yea deadly, tendencies.

(Note: This admonition is especially application to the job of the bishop [overseer]: to be watchful regarding these areas of spiritual danger among his flock.)

Note: Four negative matters to look out for (the negative word ***"lest"*** occurs three times in vv. 15-16, and applies to four potentially bad failures in our lives.

Are you...

A. Missing God's Grace? (v.15a)

"Fail" = *hustereo* - to be without, to be in need of, to lack.

"Fail of the grace of God" - does not refer to losing salvation, but to lacking or missing the grace of God in one of two ways:

View #1 - To miss out on the grace of God to lead a holy life (v. 14 & 28). To forfeit such grace due to personal sin.

View #2 - To miss out on the grace of God which brings salvation (<u>not</u> to lose salvation, but to never really have obtained it to begin with)

(NOTE: This is a key idea in this book - cp. Heb. 2:3, 4:1)

Perhaps the writer keeps the warning general and brief because both admonitions are implied; this admonition applies to the lost and the saved.

[Hence: ***"any man"*** (anyone)]

To the lost, you need to take heed that you don't lose out on God's gracious offer of eternal life; and to the saved, you need to take heed that you don't lose out on God's grace to live a holy life!

Are you...

B. Stewing with Bitterness? (v.15b)

1. The <u>CAUSE</u> of Bitterness

a. <u>Resentment</u>

1). Feeling of unfairness regarding <u>God</u>. (Unbelief)
Examples:
a) Hannah - Reason: childlessness (I Sam. 1:10)
b) Naomi - Reason: death in the family (Ruth 1:20-22)
c) Job - Reason: physical affliction (Job 7:11; 10:1)

2) Hurt feelings toward <u>others</u>. (Holding Grudges)
a) Bitterness against spouse (Col. 3:19)
b) Bitterness against parents (Eph. 6:4)
c) Feelings of <u>jealousy</u> toward others (James 3:14)

2. The <u>COURSE</u> of Bitterness (v. 15b)

a. Bitterness starts off <u>small</u>
(***"root"***)

Cp. Deut. 29:18-19

Hurt feelings; wounded pride (usually not over life-threatening situations; little annoyances etc.

b. Bitterness rapidly <u>grows</u>
*(**"springing up"**)*

Unresolved Bitterness opens the door for Satan; It will grow into external manifestations of coldness, gossip, slander, a complaining spirit (Phil.2:14), judging motives (I Cor.4:5), vengeful spirit (Rom.12:17,19), critical attitude (Mt.7:4-5).

3. The <u>CURSE</u> of Bitterness (v. 15c)

a. Bitterness causes trouble <u>personally</u>
*(**"trouble you"**)*
1) Bitterness is as <u>poison</u> (Acts 8:23)
2) Bitterness affects your behavior
   a) One's speech (Rom. 3:14)
   b) One's actions (Example: Joseph's brothers - Gen. 37) (James 3:14-16)

b. Bitterness spreads to <u>others</u>
*(**"many be defiled"**)*

No bitter person is content to be bitter alone; They love to share "how they feel" to others, so they can join them in their poisonous attitude. "Misery likes company"

"defiled" - stained or polluted. Bitterness is a sin which spreads its infectious bacteria, its loathsome venom to others and influences their perspective of God and others.

Your attitude will influence the perspective of others; Attitudes are catchy. What kind of influence have you been?

4. The CURE for Bitterness

Diligently be on the look-out for bitterness in your life (v. 15a)

Trust God (Trust His love for you and His sovereign desire and ability to work through the situation or circumstance)

Six "Don'ts" regarding bitterness:

1) Don't expect the problem to "heal itself"
2) Don't have the attitude of "Why try?" ("It's not worth it")
3) Don't play the "waiting game" (i.e. "When you give in and apologize, I will")
4) Don't "fight fire with fire" (I Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)
5) Don't practice "character assassination" (don't attack the person rather than the problem)
6) Don't dig up "old bones" (don't bring up the past)

Are you...

C. Lusting with Fornication? (v.16a)

"Fornicator" - Sexually immoral; illicit sex outside of God's boundaries.

Includes: --sexual lust
--pornography
--pre-marital sex Etc.

Sex is an expression of oneness between two people who are one with each other in marriage.

Pre-marital sex is a lie because it is an expression of a oneness that does not exist (SEE: Heb. 13:4).

Fornication should not be named even once among God's people (Eph. 5:3 - *"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints").*

Are you...

D. Living with Irreverence? (v.16b-17)

V. 16

Esau was evidently both a fornicator and a godless man (Gen. 25:27-34; 27:30-45).

He married pagan, unbelieving Hittite women against Isaac and Rebekah's wishes, and no doubt had pre-marital sex.

According to our world's standards, Esau wasn't so bad. He was a good hunter, a man who was congenial to his father, he may have made a fine neighbor -- but he was not interested in the things of God (Wiersbe, p. 142).

"Profane" - irreverent, or godless; to live a secular life.

To be worldly-minded; to be unconcerned about God's will and ways; to be uninterested in spiritual things.

(The amount of time spent in God's Word and prayer is a barometer of how spiritual you are.)

"For one morsel. . . sold his birthright" - For one measly meal (to satisfy his impatient appetite), Esau gave up his entitlement to a whole lifetime of privilege and blessing.

Esau "sacrificed the permanent on the altar of the immediate" (Bob Jones, Sr.)

V. 17

Sin can always be forgiven (as long as there is repentance). However, the after affects, scars, repercussions, results, etc. of that sin may <u>not</u> be removed.

Harvest still comes for wild oats sown.

Ex: Moses was forgiven for striking the rock, but was forbidden to enter the Promised Land, though he begged for a second chance.

EX: David was forgiven for his adultery, but the after-effect haunted him four-fold for the rest of his life.

Some people want God's blessings, but they really don't want God.

Section 23: Hebrews 12:18-24
"Mount SINAI vs Mount ZION"

I. Mount SINAI
A Mountain of Fear & Judgement (v.18-21)
(A reminder of God's Holy Law)

II. Mount ZION
A Mountain of Grace & Salvation (v.22-24)
(A reminder of God's Loving Grace)

Introduction:

The book of Hebrews is a book of contrasts, all designed to prove the superiority of Christ -
--The Old Testament prophets vs. Christ
--Moses' Law vs. Christ's grace
--The Old Testament Levitical priesthood vs. Christ's Melchizedek priesthood
--The Old Covenant vs. the new Covenant
--The animal blood of Old Testament sacrifices vs. Christ's once & for all sacrifice

Now in Hebrews 12, two mountains are contrasted (showing the Jews--to whom Hebrews is addressed--the folly of going back to Judaism).

Mount Sinai (also called Mt. Horeb) was the location where Moses received the Law (the Ten Commandments, etc.).

Mount Zion (also situated near a mountain range known as Moriah) was the location near where Christ died for the sin of the world.

--One mountain exposed sin; the other mountain exterminated sin.

--One place revealed sin; the other removed sin.

--One location sentenced man to doom, if the Law wasn't kept perfectly; the other saved man because no one could keep the Law.

--The Law (Mt. Sinai) was not evil, nor was it contradictory to grace (at Mt. Zion). To the contrary, it pointed to Zion and was a road map to lead us to see our need for grace.

SEE: Exod. 19:1-2, 10-25 -- God's warning not to touch Mt. Sinai
Exod. 20:1=17 -- The Ten Commandments are given
Exod. 20:18-22 -- The people fear the sight of God's presence at Mt. Sinai

V. 18
"For" - "for you see"; having exhorted us to be on the right track (12:12-17), and of the dreadful consequences if we are not (Esau serving as an example of such: Heb. 12:16-17), God now tells us that although we have come to Zion and not Sinai, He is still a God who is to be taken seriously (SEE: 12:25-29).

**** Learn to appreciate the place you have come to as a N.T. believer!***

Be grateful for the contrast of two mountains:

I. Mount SINAI
A Mountain of <u>Fear</u> & <u>Judgement</u> (v.18-21)
(A reminder of God's <u>Holy Law</u>)

The O.T. Israelites came to a place...

A. <u>Tangible</u> on <u>Earth</u> (v.18a)

"That might be touched" - Our mountain (Zion) is not one that is tangible, not one that can be experienced through the five senses. It is in Heaven not on earth; therefore, we *"walk by faith not sight."*

B. <u>Blazing</u> with <u>Fire</u> (v.18b)

"Burned with fire" - When God appeared, He would often be accompanied by fire.
EX: The burning bush
The pillar of fire
At Christ's return (*"In flaming fire"* - II Th. 1:8)
Note: Heb. 13:29

Fire obviously depicts His holy indignation against sin; it speaks of judgment. A reminder of the fires of hell and *gehenna* to come.

The Old Covenant shows man as worthy of God's hot wrath.

C. <u>Fearful</u> with <u>Darkness, Gloom, and Wind</u> (v.18c)

"Blackness, and darkness, and tempest" - The scene of Sinai was one of midnight darkness, gloom, and hurricane winds.

The Old Covenant Law did <u>not</u> bring brightness, joy, and peace.

D. Thundering with Dreadful Sound (v.19)

"The sound of a trumpet" - the trumpet was to announce God's presence (as it will at Christ's second coming - I Cor. 15; I Th. 4).

When the trumpet of Sinai sounded, only Moses could go up (Exod. 19:20); when the trumpet of Christ's return to bring us to Zion sounds, all in Christ shall go up.

"The voice of words" - including a summons to Moses to come up (Exod. 19:19, 20).

The voice of God was so awesome, so powerful, so loud (Ex: *"The sound of many waters"* - Rev. 1:15) that the people begged that Moses mediate the revelation given so that they would not have to hear God directly.

E. Unapproachable by Anyone or Anything (v.20)

Nothing, not even an animal was to touch Mt. Sinai when God appeared there.

The Old Covenant Law did not make provision for man to boldly approach God (human, priestly mediation was necessary; now because of Christ, we have such access - Heb. 4:16, 10:19).

F. Terrifying to the Sight (v.21)

Even Moses' heart was gripped with utter terror at the Lord's presence; even Moses shuddered in fear.

II. Mount ZION
A Mountain of Grace & Salvation (v.22-24)
(A reminder of God's Loving Grace)

V. 22
"But ye" - the New Testament believer, on contrast to the Old Testament Israelite at Sinai.

The N.T. Christian has come to a place...

A. Situated in Heaven (v.22a)

"Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion" (Ps. 9:11).

"The heavenly Jerusalem" - not an earthly mountain, as Sinai, but a mountain from Heaven (Rev. 21:2), which will descend to earth (perhaps hovering over the earth) during the Millennium (Rev. 21:9-22:5).

Rev. 21:2 - *"And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

B. Occupied by Angels (v.22b)

We should not worship angels (Col. 2:18); rather, we worship with angels (Rev. 19:10) (MacArthur, p. 415).

Angels, according to Hebrews, are *"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"* (Heb. 1:14).

C. Inherited by The Church (v.23a)

"The general assembly" - speaking of all the saints collectively who will be part of that grand gathering in Heaven.

"The church" - singular. There is only one; and it is not a denomination, nor a building; it is all true believers who will collectively gather in Heaven.

"Church of the firstborn" - The firstborn speaks of privilege, high rank, honor, preeminence. We have the privileges of sonship, yea, the privileges of the eldest son. The birth right is ours!

The word is plural (lit. "firstborn ones"), speaking of people, not Christ (who is the firstborn [preeminent One] over all creation - Col. 1:15-18).

"Written in heaven" - The fact that our names are written in Heaven is something that:

1) Occurred <u>before</u> the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8)

2) Is <u>never</u> to be <u>removed</u> (Rev. 3:5)

3) Is a truth to cause <u>rejoicing</u> (Lk. 10:20)

The most dreaded situation one could face would be to <u>not</u> have his name written there - Rev. 20:15).

D. <u>Enthroned</u> by <u>God</u> (v.23b)

"To God the Judge of all" - Because of Christ, the Judge has declared us as free of charges against us. If He has declared us righteous, *"who is he that condemeth?"* (SEE: Rom. 8:31-35a).

E. <u>Enjoyed</u> by <u>Justified Souls</u> (v.23c)

"The spirits" - the spirits of the saved go immediately to Heaven at death (cp. II Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; Acts 7:59; Eccl. 12:7; Rev. 6:9).

"Just men" - Righteous ones

"Made perfect" - made completely perfect forever (Heb. 10:14).

The spiritual perfection we have is not through self-effort (works); it is a work of God (NOTE: the passive voice).

F. <u>Mediated</u> by <u>Jesus Christ</u> (v.24a)

"Mediator of the New Covenant" - The Old Covenant had many priests mediating; and one High Priest to mediate.

They would offer a blood sacrifice to depict how Christ would shed His blood.

"<u>The</u> mediator" - There is only <u>one</u> "go between," only one in between God and men (I Tim. 2:5) (saints and other intermediaries are null and void).

G. <u>Sprinkled</u> by the <u>Life-giving Blood</u> (v.24b)

Abel's blood called out from the ground for justice (just as the Law does); however, Christ's blood calls out for mercy and grace. *"Father, forgive them."*

The murder of Abel cried out to God for vengeance, whereas the crucifixion of Christ cries out for mercy and forgiveness.

Conclusion:

***If you are <u>not</u> saved, you must realize that the Law cannot save you.**

1)The Law was given to make sinners aware of their sin
(Rom. 3:20 - *"Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin")*

2)The Law was given to teach us our need for Christ
(Ga. 3:24 - *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith")*

"The Law is God's great mirror. When we look into it, we see ourselves as we really are -- immeasurably short of God's standard of righteousness" (MacArthur, p. 412).

No one will be justified in God's sight by keeping the Law because <u>no one has ever kept the Law</u>!

Ps. 143:2 - "And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Why can't an unsaved person keep God's commandments? He doesn't have the nature to do so. No inner ability.

ILLUS: of a lemon tree only producing sour lemons. You can pull off all the lemons and stick sweet, juicy oranges in their place; you may fool some into thinking you have an orange tree, but in reality all you have is a lemon tree with dead oranges on it. You have not changed the nature of the tree ("...a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" - Mt. 7:17).

Our human nature is sour. Often we don't like it, but nothing we try (such as getting rid of bad habits) can change our nature. Only Christ can (II Cor. 5:17).

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13:23).

The Law was never intended to justify. Rather, God gave man His Law for 2 purposes:

1) To restrain sin - I Tim. 1:9-10

2) To demonstrate depravity

The O.T. Law gives man a "knowledge" (lit. "full knowledge" - direct awareness or deep consciousness) of his sin.

The Law was given to show us our transgressions (Ga. 3:19). The Law wasn't given to show you how good you are, but how bad you are.

It was an instructor or "schoolmaster" to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith" (Ga. 3:24).

The Law taught man his inability to be self-righteous. Therefore, man must throw himself upon the mercy and grace of God.

All works religions are settled at Mt. Sinai. (EX: Seventh Day Adventism and other cults which trust their law-keeping to gain them access into Heaven).

ILLUS: Mt. Sinai Hospital is actually an unfitting name for a place which is to provide healing; for Mt. Sinai did not heal, it killed!

"While the Law was being given on Mt. Sinai, 3,000 people defied it and died (Exod. 32). When God poured out His grace at Pentecost, 3,000 people trusted Christ and received eternal life" (James Dersham, RBP, p. 87).

Sinai is closed to all; Zion's gates are open to all who believe.

Sinai is the mountain of Darkness, but Zion - light (Ps. 50:2). Sinai, the mountain of bondage; Zion, the mountain of freedom (Gal. 4:25-26, 31) (MacArthur, p. 414).

***If you are saved, you should show a life of gratitude for what God did for you.**

We must understand Mt. Sinai, before we will appreciate Mt. Zion.

Note the exhortation of Heb. 12:28 - *"Let us have grace"* - A heart of thanks or gratitude.

People need a balanced perspective of God (all must see His holiness to appreciate His grace; all must fear His wrath before they will flee to His refuge; all must tremble before His word regarding condemnation before the truly trust His Word regarding justification).

Many Americans "have it so good one earth, that they don't think much about Heaven."

Where is your tent pitched? At Sinai or Zion?
SONG: Psalm 48:1-2.

Section 24: Hebrews 12:25-29
"God is Worthy of Respect"

I. <u>LISTEN</u> TO HIM with respect (v.25-27)

II. <u>SERVE</u> HIM with respect (v.28-29)

Prayer and the Condition of America

The Prayer that really got some attention-Paul Harvey Radio Broadcast

When Pastor Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual politically correct generalities. But on Jan. 23, 96, what they heard instead was a stirring prayer, passionately calling our country to repentance and righteousness. The response was immediate with a number of legislators walking out during the prayer. In six short weeks Central Christian Church logged more than 5,000 phone calls, with only 47 of those calls responding negatively.

Commentator Paul Harvey aired Pastor Joe Wright's prayer on the radio and received a larger response to this program than any other program Paul Harvey has ever aired. In addition, Central Christian Church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.

Heavenly Father, we come before You today to ask Your forgiveness and seek Your direction and guidance, We know Your Word says, "Woe on those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it pluralism;
We have worshipped other gods and called it multi-culturalism;
We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle;
We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery;
We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation;
We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare;
We have killed our unborn and called it choice;
We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable;
We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem;

We have abused power and called it political savvy;
We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression;
We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment;

Search us, O God, and know our hearts; try us and see if there be some wicked way in us; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent here by the people of Kansas, and who have been ordained by You, to govern this great state.
Grant them Your wisdom to rule and may their decisions direct us to the center of Your will. I ask it in the name of Your Son, the Living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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Pointing Out Washington

In the early days of the Republic, a stranger once asked at Congress how he could distinguish Washington.

He was told, "You can easily distinguish him when Congress goes to prayer. Washington is the gentleman who kneels."

Ingersoll Gives God Five Minutes

Robert Ingersoll, after delivering one of his addresses, pulled his watch from his pocket and said, "According to the Bible, God has struck men to death for blasphemy. I will blaspheme Him and give Him five minutes to strike me dead and damn my soul."

There was a period of perfect silence while one minute went by; two minutes passed, and people began to get nervous; three minutes, and a woman fainted; four minutes, and Ingersoll curled his lip.

At five minutes, he snapped shut his watch, put it in his pocket, and said: "You see, there is no God, or He would have taken me at my word."

The story was told later to Joseph Parker, who said, "And did the American gentleman think he could exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?"
—H. A. Ironside

One of the biggest problems (even among some Christians today) is a lack of a fear of God.

Verses from Proverbs on *"the fear of the Lord"*:

Proverbs 1:7
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 3:7
Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Proverbs 8:13
The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 9:10
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Proverbs 10:27
The fear of the Lord prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

Proverbs 14:16
A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.

Proverbs 14:26
In the fear of the Lord *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 14:27
The fear of the Lord *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Proverbs 15:16
Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

Proverbs 16:6
By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

Proverbs 19:23
The fear of the Lord *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Proverbs 22:4
By humility *and* the fear of the Lord *are* riches, and honour, and life.

Proverbs 23:17
Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

Eccles. 8:12
Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

**** The God of Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion is <u>WORTHY OF RESPECT</u>!***

I. <u>LISTEN</u> TO HIM with respect (v.25-27)

V. 25

"See that" - Look out! Be alert and on guard! Take heed; pay attention!

A word of <u>caution</u> emphasizing the seriousness of the command.

"Refuse" - (*paraaiteomai - para* = aside; *alteo* = to ask)

In some contexts the word means:

--to have <u>nothing to do with</u> (I Tim. 4:7, 2:23)

--to intentionally <u>neglect</u> something (I Tim. 5:11)

--to intentionally <u>reject</u> (Ti. 3:10)

--to <u>refuse</u> or <u>decline</u> (Acts 25:11)

**To ask to be <u>excused</u> - cp. Lk. 14:18-19; Heb. 12:19

"Speaketh" - (a present tense - speaking) How is God speaking today? Exclusively through His Word, the Bible.

He has spoken from Heaven via His Son who became incarnate, and through the New testament apostles and prophets who wrote about Jesus Christ and the salvation He brought to us (Heb. 1:1-2, 2:1-4).

"Spoke on earth . . . speaketh from Heaven" - A contrast between Mt. Sinai (23:18-21) and Mt. Zion (12:22-24)

The Israelites who didn't want to listen to God speaking at Sinai (12:190 still were not able to escape responsibility and accountability for their disobedience to the words He gave. When they sinned, they faced the consequences.

Don't think for a moment that you will escape the consequences of disobedience!

"The unbelieving Israelites who ignored God at Sinai did not enter the earthly Promised Land, and unbelievers today, Jew or Gentile, who ignore God when He speaks through His Son from Mt. Zion, will not enter the Promised Land. Whether God speaks from Sinai or from Zion, no man who refuses Him will escape judgment" (MacArthur, p. 417).

V. 26
When God spoke from Mt. Sinai, His voice shook the earth (it thundered with power) (12:19; Ex. 19:16; 20:19).

The next time God will shake the earth will be when Christ returns in "*the Day of the Lord."*

Haggai 2:6-7 - *"For thus saith the LORD of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."*

Joel 2:30-31 - *"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."*

Joel 3:15, 16 - *"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from; and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the LORD shall be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."*

"Once more" - one final judgment of this earth is yet to come! God's promise will be fulfilled.

Luke 21:25 - 28 - *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the mood, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring: Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for your redemption draweth nigh."*

When will such a shaking take place? When Jesus comes back at the Sixth Seal of Rev. 6:12-17; after which time--during the Bowl (vial) Judgments--God will destroy all the cities of the world with a violent shaking of the globe (Rev. 16:17-21).

"Not the earth only (as at Sinai) ***but also the heaven*** (sky and space)" ***"when God roars out of Zion"*** (Joel 3:16) - The implied point in this context is this: If God was to be respected because of His awesome power in shaking the earth at Sinai, then certainly He should be respected now in light of the fact that He will in the future violently shake this earth and shake the stars out of the sky!

V. 27

"Things that are made" - All of the tangible things of the earth will crumble and burn! (II Pet. 3:10-13 - *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.")*

The physical will be destroyed; the eternal things will remain.

Are you building your life on things that can shake? (When earthly things crumble in our lives, we will be very upset, if this is where our heart is).

What things *"cannot be shaken"?* The kingdom reserved for us by Jesus Christ! (v. 28a)

The world with its glitter, glamour, gold will one day crumble, but God's Kingdom will last.

In Christ, we stand on an unshakable foundation.

Don't put your trust in that which will be destroyed!

The point is this: The God who shook Sinai and the God who will shake the whole earth and Heavens, is a God worthy of respect. We should not turn a deaf ear to Him when He speaks through His Scripture!

Do you respect God enough to take His Word (with its warnings) seriously? Do you *"tremble at His Word"* or treat it lightly?

Who is the one who refuses to listen to God?

A person who does <u>not</u> reverently listen to God is one who:

1) Views His imperatives (N.T. commands) as options rather than obligations
2) Hears but doesn't heed
3) Knows the truth but doesn't practice the truth
4) Has answers for everyone else, but doesn't apply the truth to his own heart
5) Mentally drifts during a preaching service, or slumbers during private devotions
6) Treats lightly the message His preacher or teacher gives (jokes around; whispers under his breath to his/her friends, etc.)

II. SERVE HIM with respect (v.28-29)

A. The MOTIVE for our service: *Gratefulness for our Kingdom*

That which motivates our service for God is our faith in His promises regarding our future!

Out of gratitude for what we have in Christ, we serve Him!

"Let us have grace" - A grace to say thanks and offer God praise for what He has given us.

Do you have a grateful heart for the Kingdom you will receive?

How does it express itself here and now? God's expectation of our attitude of gratitude is repeated in Heb. 13:14-16.

True faith always results in true appreciation; and such appreciation will manifest itself by our service for God!

FAITH ---------- GRATEFULNESS ---------- SERVICE
"I believe" ---------- "I am thankful" ---------- "I will serve"
"I trust God" ---------- "I appreciate God" -------"I will serve God"

B. The MEANING of our service: *Spiritual Worship to God*

"Serve" - to offer to God a worshipful service.

All service for God is a form of your worship to God.

Whenever you serve Him, you worship Him! Worship is not merely singing praises and prayer; everything we say and do for God is worship to God!

C. The MANNER of our service:

1. ***"Acceptably" (well pleasing to God)***

"Acceptably" - well-pleasing; to offer God the worshipful service that He would accept.

--He accepts only service done for His glory (not for vain proud reasons)

--He accepts only service done through His power (not the flesh)

--He accepts only service done according to His New Testament instructions (not the Mosaic Law)

--He accepts only service done to the best of our ability (not giving God garbage)

2. ***"Reverence and Godly fear" (Respect and Awe)***

"Reverence" - to have a deep respect for God

"Godly fear" - to be in awe of God

EX: Song: "Our God is an Awesome God"

"There is a big difference between the flame of a candle and the roaring blast of a forest fire. We cannot even stand near a consuming, raging fire. Even with sophisticated fire-fighting equipment, a consuming fire is often beyond human control. God is not within our control either. . . He cannot be contained (by man)." (Life Applic. Bible)

His fire will one day try (test) our works (service we rendered for Him)
SEE: I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:10-11a

See Isaiah 6

God's swift judgement of many who profaned His holy standards is a sobering reminder that HE IS HOLY

Examples:
Achan who stole that which was to be set apart for God (Josh. 7:12-14)
Nadab & Abihu who offered strange fire to God (not what He prescribed) (Lev.9:23 - 10:3);
Uzzah who touched the Ark of the Covenant (II Sam. 6:6-7);
Moses who struck the rock (Num.20:11,12);
Belshazzar who mocked God by praising idols and drinking alcohol out of the holy temple vessels (Dan.5)

The great **white** throne judgement reflects a holy judgment (Rev.20:11)

"Be ye holy, for I am holy" (I Pet.1:16)

Don't think for a minute that sin is ever justified before the eyes of a holy God! Don't come to God on your terms but on HIS! Don't make the mistake of thinking that God's ways & standards are like that of the world (Psalm 50:21)

Because God is HOLY:

1) You can't be saved on your own terms (God accepts nothing but the sacrifice of His dear Son (Heb.9:22; Acts 4:12)

2) You can't pray on your own terms

3) You can't worship on your own terms (Lev.10:3; Ps.99:5)
Leviticus 10:3
Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

4) You can't serve on your own terms (Psalm 2:11)
Psalm 2:11
Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

5) You can't please God on your own terms (Heb.11:6; I Sam.15:17,22,23)

6) You can't give yourself to God on your own terms (Rom.12:1,2)

Matthew 10:28
And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

1. Such humility leads to **Salvation** for the lost
"Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear, as grace my fears relieved" (John Newton in Amazing Grace)

2. Such humility leads to **Sanctification** for the saved.

Section 25: Hebrews 13:1-6
"Keeping Our Hearts in the Right Place"

I. CHARITY toward the saints (v.1)
II. HOSPITALITY toward strangers (v.2)
III. SYMPATHY toward sufferers (v.3)
IV. PURITY toward sexuality (v.4)
V. SECURITY in the Savior (v.5-6)

INTRODUCTION:

One description of people living in the last days is that they will be *"without natural affection"* (II Tim. 3:3; cp. Rom. 1:31)

"Guard your heart with all diligence"

--Beware of adopting the world's twisted, perverted affections.

Many love that which they should not love, and don't love that which they should.

Right ethics and morals always flow out of right values and beliefs. What we believe will determine how we behave!

Heb. 1 - 11 were doctrinal.

Heb. 12-13 are practical.

Chapter 13 offers very specific, practical teaching to aid us in our life on earth.

In verses 1-6, a form of the word *"phileo"* (affection) occurs several times.

V. 1 - *"philadelphia"* - affection toward your brother

V. 1 - *"philoxenias"* - affection toward strangers

V. 5 - *"philarguros* - without affection toward money

- ***In a society of misplaced affections, we need our hearts to be in the right direction.***

May God give us right affections in the following areas of our lives:

I. CHARITY toward the saints (v.1)

(What affection do you have toward your spiritual brothers?)

"As Christian believers, these Hebrew people no doubt had been rejected by their friends and family. But the deepest kind of fellowship is not based on race or family relationship; it is based on the spiritual life we have in Christ" (Wiersbe, p. 146).

"Brotherly love" -*philadelphia* - A brotherly affection; to have the same affection for your spiritual brothers as you should have for your natural brothers.

The day you became a believer on Christ, you were "born again" into God's family. He became your Father, and all people who are related to Him became your brothers and sisters. We became part of the family of God. From that moment on, we now:

--share the same family <u>name</u> - Christian
--obtained the same <u>nature</u> - the Holy Spirit
--live by the same <u>house rules</u> - God's commands
--wear the same <u>clothing</u> - dressed in Christ's righteousness
--speak the same <u>language</u> - the law of kindness and truth
--resemble the same "<u>father</u>" - we reflect the character of Christ
--eat the same <u>food</u> - God's Word the Bible
--inherit the same <u>future</u> - joint heirs with Christ in Heaven

Do you have a similar affection for your Heavenly family (Christian brothers) as you do for your earthly family?

*A desire to <u>protect</u>
*A willingness to <u>forgive</u>
*An eagerness to <u>share</u> (generosity)
*A willingness to <u>help</u> (assistance)
*A desire to <u>visit</u> (fellowship)

"Continue" - lit. remain; keep on loving your brothers

The implication is that such affection (if we are not careful) can wane and become cold (Jesus warned that in the last days, *"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold"* - Mt. 24:12).

How do we lose our brotherly affection? In our relationships we allow:
--little <u>offenses</u> to grow (exaggerated and inflated by unforgiveness and anger)
--lack of <u>contact</u> (with each other [produced by preoccupations and sin)
--<u>cliques</u> and <u>schisms</u> (generated by pride)
--ourselves to <u>drift</u> from the <u>Father</u> when our love for God becomes cold, our love for those who belong to Him will also)

Let nothing sever that blessed *"tie that binds our hearts in Christian love!"*

II. HOSPITALITY toward strangers (v.2)

(What affection do you have toward people in need?)

One mark of a true child of God is His willingness to minister to those who belong to Christ (Mt. 25).

Heb. 6:10 and Gal. 6:10 both speak of our ministry to the saints:
Heb. 6:10 - *"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."*

Gal. 6:10 - *"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

Hospitality should <u>not</u> merely consist of having your best friends over; rather, as the word *philoxenias* suggests, hospitality is meeting the needs of *"strangers" (xenos)*.

Many missionaries, evangelists, youth groups on missions trips, and Christians pass through our city every year. Have you ever thought of opening your home to them?

In the future Tribulation, hospitality will be most needed (people like Corrie Ten Boom who housed and protected Jews during the Holocaust will be needed).
"Be not forgetful" - Do not go on being unmindful; don't unconsciously neglect hospitality.

Since there were very few inns (hotels or motels) in Bible days (and many of the ones which did exist were dens of wickedness), showing hospitality was an important part of the Jewish home.

For Christians such a hospitable spirit also provided the visitors an opportunity to see what a Christian family was like and to share the gospel. Your home is the greatest setting for evangelism to take place in.

Hospitality involves caring and sharing; giving of your food and material resources; sacrificing your time and energy; putting up with inconveniences; making adjustments of schedule, etc.

When was the last time you went out of your way to help someone in need?
Would you consider opening your home to disciple a new believer? (perhaps once a week for 8 weeks?)
We must use wisdom in hospitality. Ladies, never invite a man to stay in your home alone with you; men: vice-versa.

"Some have entertained angels unawares" - EX: Abraham (Gen. 18); Lot (Gen. 19)
The point is this: You never know who you may be showing a kindness to in being hospitable. Perhaps he might be the next D.L. Moody or Charles Hadden Spurgeon.

III. SYMPATHY toward sufferers (v.3)
(What affection do you have toward believers in adversity?)

"Remember" -A command to <u>focus</u> your <u>mind and thoughts</u> on those who are imprisoned and ill-treated, and picture yourself as such.

It is so easy for us to blank people out of our minds. Out of sight = out of mind. May God forgive us for such a careless attitude toward others.
What God is saying is this: "Put yourself in their shoes."

Imagine yourself in their circumstances. (only then can we sympathize and feel what they feel and cultivate a spirit of compassion)

Because of our oneness with each other in the Body of Christ, what happens to one person, in a sense effects all others. No believer is a detached island all by himself; truly "we're all connected" (that is not just a slogan for NY telephone!).

Such a call to remembrance implies that appropriate action should be taken on our part toward such suffering saints.

--Sympathy should drive us to our <u>knees</u> for others (in prayer - col. 4:18).

--Sympathy should drive us to <u>action</u> to help others (Gal. 6:1)

IV. PURITY toward sexuality (v.4)
(What affection do you have toward the sanctity of marriage?)

"Marriage is honorable" - (an implied imperative) i.e. "Let marriage be held in honor"; or "Marriage should be honored."

The word "honorable" means to be treated with <u>value</u>, by all believers.

Marriage is dishonored (devalued) by:

--deliberate unequal yokes (knowingly) (II Cor. 6)
--polygamous marriages
--homosexual/lesbian marriages
--those who live together in an unmarried state (without a legally recognized covenant before God and witnesses)
--divorce
--role reversals (husbands not loving; wives not submitting)
** --Sexual infidelity (in context here)

The gay agenda today is to redefine the word "family."

There is a media mockery of traditional family values regarding marriage in our society today.

"The bed undefiled" - Let the marriage bed be undefiled.
"Bed" = *koite* - sexual intercourse.

There is nothing sinful about sex between a husband and wife in a marriage relationship (SEE: I Cor. 7:2-5)

Sex is an expression of unity between a woman and a man who are indeed one in holy matrimony. All other sexual intercourse is wrong because it is a lie. In fornication or adultery, a oneness is being demonstrated in a relationship between two people who are not really one in the eyes of God.

God hates immorality so much because it violates His purpose, plan, and picture of marriage.
Marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship to His Bride (Eph. 5). No one has a relationship with Christ who is not married to Him!

Parents: Teach your teens about the sanctity of marriage (Start instilling such principles into their minds at a young age!)

Keep your bed undefiled - No one should ever sleep with you other than your spouse. Sex outside of marriage stains and pollutes the heart, soul, and body of the people involved.

"Whoremongers" = fornicators (sexual immorality outside of marriage; primarily used of pre-marital sex).

"Adulterers" = One who is unfaithful to his/her marriage vows (extra-marital sex).

"God will judge" -

1) The judgment is divine - "God" will judge (you should not worry about what people will say or do; your real concern ought to be what God will do!)
2) The judgment is future and certain - ***"will"*** It may not come immediately but it will come eventually!
3) The judgment is severe! Loss of joy, guilt, mental and emotional anguish, frustrations resulting in violent behavior, communicable diseases (such as gonorrhea or AIDS), broken homes, and hell fire for those who practice such lifestyles (I Cor. 6:9-10).

(SEE: Eph. 5:3-6 - Sexual sin shouldn't occur one time in the life of a Christian; God's wrath does come on such)

V. SECURITY in the Savior (v.5-6)
(What affection do you have toward money and material things?)

"Conversation" - way of life; character and conduct; lifestyle.

"Coveteousness" = lit. without an affection for money; no love for money (cp. I Tim. 6:6-10, 17)

"Content" - satisfied; view what you have as enough (food and clothing are all you <u>need</u>!) (I Tim. 6:8)

A greed for money reveals <u>insecurity</u> in a person's life; people treasure wealth because it offers them a false sense of comfort and security for their future.

However, our trust ought to be in God; in the Giver rather than the gifts; in the Supplier rather than the supply; in the Provider rather than the provision!

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" - A clause often taken out of context; its specific application is to provide a substantial reason why we can be content and free from a love for money.

The reason we don't need to worry about money is because the Provider is never going to leave us! Our security is in Him! He is not a Savior who is "here today and gone tomorrow"! He will never abandon or desert us!

Dt. 31:6 - *"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."*

Psalm 37:28 - *For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off."*

Psalm 118:6 - *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"*

"The Lord is my <u>helper</u>" - One who comes to the rescue in time of need.

Saying "the Lord is my helper" is to say:

--the Lord is my <u>provider</u>
--the Lord is my <u>guide</u>
--the Lord is my <u>protector</u>
--the Lord is my <u>preserver</u>
--the Lord is my <u>job security</u>
--the Lord is my <u>mortgage payer</u>
--the Lord is my <u>bank account</u>

"I will not fear" - <u>Faith</u> in His abiding presence (v. 5) expels all <u>fear</u> (v. 6)

Section 26: Hebrews 13:7-17
"CHRISTIAN STABILITY"

I. Following the Right EXAMPLES (v. 7-8)
II. Being Anchored in the Right DOCTRINE (v. 9)
III. Being Sanctified by the Right ALTAR (v. 10-12)
IV. Enduring Reproach with the Right PERSPECTIVE (V. 13-14)
V. Offering Continually the Right SACRIFICES (v. 15-16)

INTRODUCTION; Beware of the danger of drifting in your Christian life! Stability is most needed in these last days. Although it is not true of genuine believers, God speaks of an end-time apostasy (II Tim. 2:3) and departure from the faith (I Tim. 4:1) by professors but not possessors of salvation.

Although the devilish winds of this sinful world may seek to blow you off course,

***You can be a stable believer for Jesus Christ!**

A stable Christian life is a result of . . .

I. Following the Right EXAMPLES (v. 7-8)
(Follow the Faith of the Christ-like leadership in your Church)

V. 7
The believer's relationship to his pastor or pastors is enunciated in this chapter by these words:

1) *"Remember them"* (a call to be mindful of their faith and lifestyle) (v. 7)
2) *"Obey them"* (a call to humbly submit to their leadership) (v. 17)
3) *"Salute them"* (a request to greet them) (v. 24)

"Remember" - Call them to mind; to be aware or mindful of them so as to consider their faith and conduct.

"Them" - the plural; indicates a plurality of pastoral leadership (the larger a church grows, the more pastors are needed for the oversight of the various people and ministries)
It seems evident from the New Testament that most (if not all) of the churches had a plurality of elders (cp. *"Them"* Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; *"elders in every church"* Acts 14:23; *elders in every city"* Titus 1:5; cp. Acts 11:30, 15:2; *"elders of the church"* Acts 20:17, 28; *"the elders that rule well"* I Tim. 5:17; *"elders. . . feed the flock"* I Peter 5:1-2; *"ensamples to the flock"* I Peter 5:3).

A plurality of elders provides for:
1) mutual encouragement
2) mutual teamwork
3) mutual accountability

"The rule over you" - lit. The leadership over you not a "lordship over" - I Peter 5;3).

The elders' responsibility of service is to lead the flock. (This involves providing guidance, teaching, safety. . . direction, instruction, and protection).

"Who have spoken unto you the word of God" - This (with prayer) is the primary occupation of the pastor. His #1 job is to preach and teach the *"logon"* [the written words] of Scripture. This is why he must be *"apt to teach."* (I Tim. 3:2)

"Whose faith follow" - Imitate their faith; he does not say: "whose personality follow" or "whose style follow." Rather, God expects the congregation to pursue the same faith that the preachers have.

The exhortation is qualified: ***"Considering the end of their conversation"*** (looking at the outcome (result) of their manner of living; looking at the fruit of their conduct and then follow the beliefs which led to such fruit).

Fruit is always the result of faith. Don't follow a man's faith if he hasn't produced good fruit!

Whom you follow will determine what you will become!

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov.)

"Evil communications corrupt good manners" I Cor. 15:33

V. 8
Verse 8 is an abrupt, interjected truth, which evidently applies to both 7 and 9.
It applies to verse 7 by demonstrating that a person's conduct ought to be consistent like that of Jesus Christ.

It applies to verse 9 by showing that just as He never changes, neither should we. We should follow Christ's eternal stability: He does not change with time; both His nature and moral character remain constant. He has been the same past, present and future (NOTE: This does not mean that the way He operates in people remains the same. He has used *"diverse manners"* to authenticate His spokesmen through history (Heb. 1:1).

Just as there is a stability in the character of Christ, so there should be in our lives.

II. Being Anchored in the Right <u>DOCTRINE</u> (v. 9)

(Be strengthened in your heart by <u>God's message of grace</u>)

"Be not carried about" - Don't allow yourself to be lifted up and swept away by any new teaching.

Doctrinal error has a way of sweeping people off their feet and moving them away from a stable doctrinal foundation. Don't let any *"wind of doctrine"* (Eph. 4:14) move you from the fundamentals of the faith.

"One of Satan's most subtle approaches to the Christian is to move him away from sound doctrine, to get him wrapped up in beliefs that are unfounded, uncertain, and changing. Bad doctrine results in bad living" (MacArthur, p. 435).

[EX.: The Galatians - Gal. 1:6-7]

"Sometimes false teachers are kind, likable, and perhaps even sincere. It is often difficult to believe they would teach anything false or misleading. But we are to judge doctrine by God's Word, not by appearance or personality of the person who holds it (cp. Gal. 18 - neither Paul or an angel from heaven)." (MacArthur, p. 436).

EX: How little children swallow most anything.

What kind of doctrines should we be wary of?

"Diverse" - Doctrines which vary (are different) from those which are clearly enunciated in Scripture.

"Strange" - Alien or foreign doctrines which have not been commonly held to by God's people historically. Beware of doctrines which are supported by only one verse of Scripture (EX: Mormons - *"baptism for the dead"*)

"If it's new, it's not true; and if it's true, it's not new!"

Ways to test a doctrine:

--Can it be supported elsewhere in Scripture?

--Does the teaching suit the context of the passage it is derived from?

--Would it exalt Christ and His finished work at Calvary and His offer of salvation by grace?

--Would it contradict a clear teaching of Scripture?

--Would it promote Godliness (holiness) if believed and acted upon?

--Has anyone else ever discovered that truth? (There is nothing new under the sun)

--Does it glorify God?

--Where will it lead you in the Future?

Established with grace - lit. To make stable or firm.

Our hearts are strengthened (not by legalism, man-made rules, and regulations for attaining spirituality), but by teaching about the grace of God through Jesus Christ!

"Meats . . . have not profited" - Food restrictions do not benefit people spiritually. Old Testament restrictions (Heb. 9:10) were not given as a means of salvation but as a means to distinguish Old Testament Israel from the rest of the pagan world, and perhaps for health reasons. However, such rules never changed the heart of man; this is only accomplished by grace through faith.
(Beware of cults and "isms" which base spirituality on the food you eat or don't eat.)

III. Being Sanctified by the Right ALTAR (v. 10-12)

(Be encouraged by Christ, who suffered outside the city gate on the Cross)

V. 10

"We have an altar" - Our altar is not made of stone but wood; our altar did not have a beast slain upon it, but the precious Son of God.

A new-covenant Christian's altar is the Cross of Jesus Christ, for it is through His death at Calvary that we offer our *"spiritual sacrifices"* to God through Him (Heb. 13:15; I Peter 2:5).

The Old Testament Levitical priests were told by God to eat of the sacrifices they offered (I Cor. 10:18; Lev. 7:6). They would consume a portion of the animals they offered in sacrifice.

So we also in a sense "eat" of the sacrifice of Christ. By faith we internalize the Son of God -- not in communion or the Lord's Supper, but in believing on Him. And we derive our eternal sustenance via our relationship with Him in our hearts (SEE: John 6:53-63).

V. 11

The Levitical required that "sin offerings" be burned *"outside the camp"* on a pile of wood (Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:12, 21, 9:11).

"On the Day of Atonement the sin offering was taken outside the camp and burned completely (Lev. 16:27)" (Wiersbe, p. 153).

V. 12

The purpose for which Jesus suffered was to sanctify (or make holy) sinful people. He died a bloody death on Calvary to cleanse us from all sin, and He accomplished this sacrifice outside of the Temple area, actually outside the city gate. Our altar at which we are sanctified was not in the Temple, but on a hill called Golgotha (Calvary).

"Without the gate" - Outside the city gate. Just as *"sin offerings"* were burned outside the camp, Jesus (our sin offering) was crucified outside the Gates of the Old City of Jerusalem.

[NOTE: It is my belief that the Via Dolorosa path which Jesus traveled did not lead to the RCC site of the present day "Church of the Holy Sepulcher," but rather He walked northeast from the Antonia Fortress, went outside the City Gate (outside of the present "Damascus" gate) and was crucified on a hill called Calvary (near where the garden tomb is located today).

IV. Enduring Reproach with the Right PERSPECTIVE (v. 13-14)

(Don't worry about not fitting in this world's "Camp"; our focus must be on our city to come)

V. 13

"Let us go forth . . . to Him" - Let us not with fear and shame (like Peter) follow Him afar off. Let us not think we have to linger by the big "dignified" religious establishments of the day, but let us be willing to leave behind dead religion and dead ritual and be (as it were) outside the camp of this world's system and be counted as a set-apart disciple of Christ.

Though the world mock us for our separatist stance, though they disallow us in their camp, we gladly suffer reproach (shame) as Jesus did (if God calls us to such).

Are you willing to suffer adversity and tribulation for Christ?

"God now does His work completely outside the camp of Judaism" (MacArthur, p. 441).

Are you willing to carry the weight of whatever shame the world may spew at you? Or are you concerned about what others may think?

The fear of man will ensnare you; you will be unstable if you succumb to it. You will vacillate to the shims and wishes of everyone who puts pressure on you, mocks you, pokes fun at you -- if you cowardly give in!

V. 14

Our perspective cannot be this world or the things you might forget of this world. If this world rejects you, remember, this is not your final home anyway!

This world will pass away; our City (*"the New Jerusalem"*) is coming one day! (Rev. 21-22)

To be stable in this life, you must focus on things above, the eternal.

V. Offering Continually the Right SACRIFICES (v. 15-16)

(Offer praise to God and acts of kindness to others)

v. 15

Because our eyes are fixed on the eternal not the temporal, the spiritual not the material, we can rejoice and thank God despite our earthly circumstances.

"By him" - Through Jesus Christ's enabling power we can offer NOT bullocks and lambs but sacrifices of praise.

"Continually" - Not just once a year on Yom Kippur – all the time, every day!

"The fruit of our lips" - Only fruit should come from our lips!

Not foul garbage (Eph. 4:29), not bitter poison nor cursing or bitterness (Rom. 3:13-14).

Fruit is sweet (what comes from our mouth ought to be sweet). Fruit is beneficial (if our words don't build up, we should shut up!). Fruit is healthy.

The fruit of thanks which flows out of our mouths, comes from a thankful heart (thankful that God saved our souls).

A thankful Christian is a stable Christian! Reason: He is not covetous but contented with what God gave him.

v. 16

"Do good" - helping, being kind (expending energy by our actions)

"Communicate" - sharing, giving (expending resources by our money and material goods)

"With such sacrifices God is well pleased" - It brings pleasure to God's heart when we meet the needs of others. He is always satisfied when His children express care for each other in tangible ways (ILUS: how parents feel when their kids share and get along as opposed to fighting).

A giving, sharing, caring Christian is a stable one. When you help someone else with their problems, you don't find yours to be so bad.

Your preoccupation with serving Christ keeps you from discouragement and idle time which invites unsettling trouble into your life.

God "demands sacrifice [today] not in the form of a ritual or ceremony, but in word and in deed" (MacArthur, p. 443).

VI. Responding to Pastoral Leadership with the Right RESPECT (v. 17)

(Honor your church's authorities with humble obedience and submission)
Now the writer of Hebrews returns to where he began in verse 7, showing the church members responsibility toward their pastors.
Honor them for their work's sake (I Thes. 5:12-13).

"Obey" - (from *peitho*) - obedience as a result of faith or an inward persuasion; not the more common term –*hupakuou*—obedience as a result of listening (Vine, p. 796).

What God is saying here is this: Trust your pastor and then respond in obedience to truth he imparts and the direction he gives.

There exists much skepticism today regarding the clergy (and much distrust is not without warrant). God, however, expects His people to allow pastoral leadership to lead, and the people to respond with trust to such leadership.

"Rule" - lead (as in verses 7 and 24)
Excursus -
The congregation is not to rule (lead) the pastors, but rather the pastors are to rule (lead) the congregation (cp. I Thes. 5:12).
The leadership proposes the direction the church should go, and the church in urn voluntarily agrees to the decision. If they appeal a point made by the leaders, the leaders should review the point and if they agree, they may change their original decision. But the final decision (as in the home) should rest with the leadership.
[NOTE: When appeals are made (as at church business meetings), they should be made according to the order described in I Cor. 14:33-40.]
A dual accountability exists between the leadership and the laity. The laity is responsible to the leadership and the leadership is responsible to the laity (cp. I Tim. 5:19-20).
If the pastor has no accountability to congregation and can lead unchecked, what you have is a cult. However, (the opposite extreme) if the congregation is not accountable to the leadership and everyone does what they want, what you have is chaos (anarchy).
Pastors are not puppets responding to all of the strings pulled by the members. However, any wise and good pastor will seriously consider the validity of suggestions made by the congregation.

"Submit" - *(hueiko* - lit. *upo* = under; *eiko* = to yield) To give in o or yield (the opposite of stubborn rebellion).

This word is not the more common word *"hupotasso"* - to rank under, a positional rank under an authority.

What God is referring to here is a spirit or attitude which gives way to an authority rather than an attitude which contests or challenges or defies the authority.

"Watch" - *agrupneo* - from *agreuo* = to chase; *hupnos* = sleep; hence, to chase after sleep; <u>to be without sleep</u>*;* to be sleepless (Reinecker, p. 720; Vine, p. 1213).

The word metaphorically means to stay spiritual awake and alert so as to keep watch over the spiritual needs of the flock.

Not only does a pastor literally forfeit leisure or sleep so as to stay up late at night for teaching, discipling, visiting and studying; but he also must keep his eyes wide open to the attacks of Satan toward God's sheep.

"Quite frankly, it is much easier to "win souls" than it is to "watch for souls" (see Ezek. 3:16-21)" (Wiersbe, p. 151).

"They. . . must give an account" - All pastors because of their responsibility for tending to God's flock, will one day be held accountable to God for the type of job they did.

It's an awesome matter to be a pastor! We will receive the *"greater condemnation*" - James 3:1.

Note: At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will be held accountable <u>not</u> for how the sheep turned out per se, but rather how we did our job of watching over them. However, it is no joy to a pastor to have rebellious, unteachable, "untendable" sheep. It's a grief, a burdensome, groaning experience.

"That is unprofitable for you" - Not only will the under-shepherd answer to God for how he watches over the sheep, but the sheep will answer for how they responded and respected the undershepherd.

Thee is <u>NO</u> benefit to being a stubborn sheep. There is <u>ZERO</u> advantage to being rebellious toward your pastor. It is harmful to you. Much of the stability of the flock is determined by their submission to the shepherd! If you go astray, I will grieve; but you will face the consequences!

"A person who never brings joy will never have joy" (MacArthur, p. 448).

Section 27: Hebrews 13:18-25
"We Simply Need the Lord"

I. We Need God's Answers to <u>PRAYER</u> (v.18-20)
II. We Need God's <u>PROVISION</u> (v.20-21)
III. We Need God's <u>WORD</u> (v.22)
IV. We Need God's <u>PEOPLE</u> (v.23-24)
V. We Need God's <u>GRACE</u> (v.25)

<u>Last words</u> are very important!

EX: Christ - "I am with you always..."
EX: A friend who says: "I'll be praying for you..."
EX: A mother who says: "Be careful."

*They are usually an <u>expression of your heart</u>.

(EX: When we write a letter, our closing remarks, promises, etc., are usually choice words and sincere words)

When we come to an end of a N.T. epistle, the tendency is to skim through the closing benediction without thinking about it. That should <u>not</u> be the case.

Verses 18-25 are very personal; having written some heavy doctrinal truth (demonstrating the superiority of Jesus Christ [in His person, office, and work], the writer under inspiration now gives some concluding personal requests and admonitions that are all basically centered on God. Such a benediction has tremendous application for us personally.

This conclusion sounds strikingly similar to I Thes. :25-28.

Just as we needed God to save us, we need Him to sustain us. In the same way He had to declare us righteous (through His work of justification), so He now has to enable us to live righteously (through His work of sanctification).

He is the vine, we are the branches, and without Him we can do nothing (Jn. 15).

The hymnwriter penned these words: "I need Thee every hour."

**** God's people need the Lord and His blessing***

I. We Need God's Answers to <u>PRAYER</u> (v.18-20)

v. 18

"Pray for us" - Even the premier "giants" of the faith need prayer.

The "us" includes the writer himself [whose concluding tone is strikingly similar to the Apostle Paul; whoever it is, it is evident that he has been in prison or at least restrained somehow (v. 18-19) as Paul was; that he was in Italy (perhaps Rome) (v. 24) as Paul was; that he was in close ministry relationship with Timothy (v. 23) as Paul was; and that he has a concluding style of writing like Paul (v. 18-25).

"We trust" - lit. we are persuaded, we are sure. The writer of this epistle requests personal intercessory prayer, but reminds the Hebrew readers that up to the present he and his co-laborers have lived the Christian life with a good conscience (can you say that?).

Don't ever violate your conscience. "If it's doubtful, it's dirty." Don't proceed if you do not have peace.

Even those who are walking in a Godly fashion (with clean, undefiled consciences) are in need of prayer.

The writer further requests prayer on the basis of a desire to conduct their lives in a good, honorable manner.

"In all things willing (desiring) to live honestly" - Do we desire to live in a way which honors God "<u>in all things</u>?"

"It is possible that some of his (the writer's) enemies had lied about him, so he affirms his honesty and integrity" (Wiersbe, p. 154).

v. 19

The particular reason the writer requests prayer is so that he might be ***"restored"*** or brought back into contact and fellowship with these Hebrew believers again.

"The sooner" - the quicker. The implication is this: "Prayer changes things!" Prayer does effect a difference; if they didn't pray, Paul (or whoever the speaker is) would <u>not</u> arrive as soon as he would if they prayed.

The only one who never needed to ask anyone to pray for Him was Jesus Christ. In the Garden, He asked Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" (Mt. 26:40). But note: He then said, "Watch and pray that <u>ye</u> enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (v. 41).

Years ago, I never through it was necessary for me to pray for my pastor or Sunday school teacher. After all, I had to pray for those who "really needed it": unsaved or "backslidden" relatives and acquaintances.

My thinking changed, however, when I began to understand the nature of the ministry; the importance of the pastor; the fact that even spiritual leaders at times face unpleasant experiences, internal struggles, discouragement, frustration with people, trials that test the faith, hindrances to studying the Word, etc.

The apostles "knew of no faster way to get the Gospel through enemy lines than by recruiting Christian converts into the secret service of prayer . . . He depended upon it as his basic weapon" (Cooper, cited in Hiebert, p. 256).

They knew the devil as a roaring lion was prowling around seeking someone to devour (I Pet. 5:8).

The need to be sober and vigilant in prayer is therefore a necessity!

Jesus said: "Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation."

II. We Need God's <u>PROVISION</u> (v.20-21)

v. 20

"The God of peace" - the God who is characterized by peace; and the One who can give peace to lives in turmoil (we need both peace <u>with</u> God and the peace <u>of</u> God).

"That brought again" - who raised up Jesus from the dead – implied in context: "If He can do this, He can equip you to do His will" – (v. 21)

"Great shepherd" - *He is the chief Shepherd (I. Pet. 5:4), and the good shepherd (Ps. 23), who gave Himself for His sheep (Jn. 10).*

"Through the blood" - *"The Shepherd shed his blood for the sheep."*

Such blood shed provides us who believe with an "everlasting covenant" - there will never be a covenant to replace the New Covenant (the old Mosaic covenant has been fulfilled; the New Covenant has come and will continue on into the Millennial Kingdom (Jer. 31:31-34) and into the age of ages of eternity.

God will never alter His promises.

This verse seems to tie together some of the great themes of this letter (Christ's blood shed, resurrection, oversight, and covenant).

God provides what we need…

A. So we can be <u>equipped</u> for Him

The flow of thought is this: *"Now [may] the God of peace (v. 20) . . . make you perfect in every good work (v. 21)."*

The phrase ***"make you perfect"*** refers to God's work in us of <u>equipping</u> us for His service. The word "Make perfect" *(katartidzo)* refers both to <u>supplying</u> a need and <u>mending</u> that which is faulty or defective.

"This is an unfamiliar word to us, but it was familiar to the people who received this letter. The doctors knew it because it meant 'to set a broken bone.' To fishermen it meant 'to mend a broken net' (see Mt. 4:21). To sailors it meant 'to outfit a ship for a voyage.' To soldiers it meant 'to equip an army for battle'." (Wiersbe, p. 155).

The word is used of:

--<u>Mending</u> (repairing) broken fishing nets
(Mt. 4:21)

--<u>Restoring</u> an erring brother (Gal. 6:1)

--<u>Building up</u> one's faith (I Thes. 3:10)

--<u>Furnishing</u> God's people with His Word (Eph. 4:12)

We need God to enable us for good works. No man can enable himself.

(A soldier cannot be fighting and at the same time be manufacturing his weapons; such artillery must be given to him. So it is in our spiritual battle. God equips us so that we can win over evil and do good works).

The Hebrew believers had to be equipped in the sense of God mending their ways doctrinally (turning them away from Judaism to the completeness in Jesus Christ) and He would equip them spiritually (with faith and strength to serve Christ despite opposition from the world).

God provides what we need…

B. So we can <u>do His Will</u>

"To do His will" - This is God's immediate purpose for equipping us; that we might fulfill His desires and plan for our lives. He does not equip you so you can do your will, but His will.

C. So we can <u>please Him</u>

"Working in you" - It is <u>not</u> via independent self-effort that we do His will. He must work in us (motivating us, strengthening us, guiding and directing us, etc.) to *"will and to do of His good pleasure"* (Phil. 2:13) (Col. 1:29 - *"Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."*)
Not necessarily that which is "well-pleasing" in the eyes of people, but *"in His sight."* (all that matters is that God approves of our attitudes and actions). As He looks at your life, is He well pleased with what He sees? We must surrender to Him and let Him so enable us that we would bring as it were a smile to His dear face.

D. So we can <u>glorify His Son</u>

"Through Jesus Christ" - God enables us in the person of His Son (an implicit proof of the unity of the Father and Son).

God equips us by means of Christ's Spirit who dwells in us who believe. *"Without me, you can do nothing."*
Because Jesus does the work in us, He will receive the glory! Not just for time, but for eternity! Anything we have done for His good and glory is because Christ did it in us and through us! (Gal. 2:20 - *"I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.";* II Cor. 12:9).

III. We Need God's <u>WORD</u> (v.22)

"Suffer the word of exhortation" - patiently bear with or endure the Word, which encourages and commands (some of the things mentioned in this serious yet profound Epistle were either hard to understand or hard to accept).

It takes a special working of God in your heart for you to patiently listen to His Word preached and to discipline yourself to read it every day!

"A few words" - This brief epistle has only 13 chapters, contains under 10,000 words, can be read in less than one hour; yet it is packed solid with so much theological and practical truth.

In the same way a marriage will not remain stable if communication is blocked, a Christian's fellowship with God will suffer without a daily reading and meditating on the Word.

In the same way, your physical health is maintained by a daily consumption of balanced meals, your spiritual health depends on your daily intake of the Word.

Mt. 4:4 - "But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

I Pet. 2:2 - "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby"

Job. 23:12 - "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food."

IV. We Need God's PEOPLE (v.23-24)

"Timothy is set at liberty" - Released from imprisonment.

The writer apparently needed Timothy to accompany him. If it is Paul and if his thorn was eye trouble, Timothy could help the aged Apostle make the trip to see these Hebrew believers.

The point is: We need fellow believers!

The Hebrews needed this Apostle and this Apostle needed Timothy.

"Salute" - Greet; it is encouraging to receive greetings either in the form of a letter, card, phone call, fax, or visit.

The request is that the believers greet their pastoral leadership as well as every set-apart believer is Christ.

In the N.T. there was an "absence of formality and hypocrisy, a freedom from prejudice arising from social distinctions, from discrimination against the poor, from partiality toward the well-to-do. In the churches, masters and servants would thus salute one another without any attitude of condescension on the one part of disrespect on the other" (Vine, p. 296).

"All the saints" = no one should be excluded from receiving gestures that show you care; to show your unity in Christ with them.

All would include - young, old, rich, poor, black, white, Spanish, English!

All would include even those the writer had to rebuke in this letter .

I Thess 5:26 - "Greet one another with a holy kiss"
--A kiss shows that we are family
--A kiss shows that we are friends.
--A kiss shows that we are not distant, stand-offish, as is so often the case in fundamental churches in our country.

Should we greet each other with an expression of affection? Yes. Does it have to be a kiss on the cheek? No. But nothing is wrong with this so long as it is a "holy" kiss.

V. We Need God's GRACE (v.25)

This Epistle as in like manner as all of Paul's inspired letters did not end with a mere "Farewell" (cp. Acts 15:29) or "See you soon." They focused on God! They focused on the greatest need of man - the grace of God.

In all of Paul's epistles, he begins and ends by referring to the grace of God.

The "grace of Christ" was, you might say, the front and back cover of his books. Grace is, in a sense, the bread that surrounded the meat on the inside of the sandwich.

The grace of Christ is "the alpha and omega of Paul's letters." (Hiebert, p. 260).

NOTE: Every time Paul closes a letter by saying "Grace be with you," it is always the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
(Exceptions: Col. 4:18, I Tim. 6:20; II Tim. 4:22 - where He just says "Grace be with you.")
NOTE: Paul is writing to believers who have already experienced the saving grace of God.
God's grace is not merely needed by the lost but by the saved.
God's grace does not come only to gain salvation, but to live out your salvation (Phil. 2:12-13).

Eternal life is not the only gift Christ gives to us who don't deserve it; but abundant life comes to His children also!

We all need His grace day by day!
As the hymn goes, "I Need Thee Every Hour"

What greater blessing could we wish on anyone than the grace of Jesus?
What greater prayer request could we pray for someone than the grace of Christ?
What greater conversation could you have with anyone, than to share how gracious our Lord Jesus is?

Conclusion:
"Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God" (II Cor. 3:5).
A church can go without bulletins on Sunday, picnics, banquets, and dinners, a library or bookstore, or even a beautiful building to meet in.
But we cannot go without

I. God's Answers to PRAYER (v.18-20)
II. God's PROVISION (v.20-21)
III. God's WORD (v.22)
IV. God's PEOPLE (v.23-24)
V. God's GRACE (v.25)