

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

HEBREWS

BOB WINTON



**GOSPEL
BROADCASTING
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Preface and Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven members of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these are well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn, Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The material was put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over many decades. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we hardly cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad! "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years—and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

Bob Winton

December 23, 2021

bwint38@hotmail.com

(931) 728-7610 * (931) 639-0317

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INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

A. Author.

1. With the evidence at hand that it is part of the inspired revelation of God's will, it is unimportant that we know for certain the identity of the human instrument through whom the epistle was transmitted.
 - a. How important would it be to us to know what brand of typewriter or pen was used in inscribing a welcomed missive from a loved one? Or how important would it be to know the identity of the typist who actually did the typing of the letter? What is important is the fact that the letter originated in the mind of our loved one, and the information given would be treasured.
 - b. The individuals God used in revealing his will to mankind, whether the message given was oral or written, retained their personality traits. The Holy Spirit revealed the message, and selected from that person's vocabulary the specific words by which to express the inspired revelation. While the human instrument in the revelation process was not a mere tool, the message given was provided by inspiration, right down to the very words that were chosen.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - d. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - e. 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
 - f. 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
2. Despite the title of the epistle, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," the general trend of modern scholars is to attribute the authorship to someone other than Paul. The arguments summarized are these:
 - a. Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and **was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him***; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - 1) We are told that this statement appears to have been written by a second generation Christian. But since Paul had seen the Lord not long after Pentecost (1 Cor. 9:1; Acts 9), it is obvious that he was not of the second generation of Christians. The assertion of this argument does not exclude Paul from being the author of Hebrews.
 - 2) However, the pronoun "us" can be used editorially, as it is in Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God." The writer includes

- himself in the statement, which calls on Christians to go on unto perfection. Surely, no inspired writer would be immature. [There is much more to Hebrews 6:1 than which first meets the eye].
- 3) A more important point is the fact that Paul was not among the original twelve, those who were with Jesus night and day through his personal ministry.
 - a) But Paul was a full-fledged apostle of Christ: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong." (2 Cor. 12:11-13).
 - b) 1 Corinthians 9:1-2: "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."
 - c) But he considered himself to be the least of the apostles: "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15:8-9). He was not privileged to walk personally with Christ during his earthly ministry, so the statement could only mean that his apostleship began subsequent to the Lord's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to heaven.
 - 4) "Does not an author often associate himself with his readers for the purpose of more effectually winning their hearts and softening his own admonitions?...the author here uses the first person plural instead of the second, for the purpose of more delicately and impressively contrasting the relations, prospects, and obligations of his Hebrew brethren in Christ, with those of the Israelites under Moses.
 - a) "He refers first to their greater responsibilities, as the recipients of the revelations which God has so graciously given them, through his own dear Son. 'We' [Christians], he says, 'ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which *we* have heard,' etc. And then, still keeping up the same figure of thought for the sake of giving more tenderness and efficacy to his appeal, he asks the question, 'How shall *we* escape if *we* neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto *us* by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness both with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his will?'"
 - b) "Manifestly, then, it was not the intention of the writer in all this to say that he was not an Apostle; that he had not seen and heard Jesus; and that he was now merely retailing to his brethren the second-hand reports of those who had been eye-witnesses of his majesty. Nay verily. This is but one of those masterly strokes of rhetoric in which the Epistle abounds from its alpha to its omega" (Milligan, pp.14f).
 - b. We are told by those who purport to know the Greek language that the beauty and style of the Greek used in Hebrews is superior to that which Paul employed in the books known to have been written by him.
 - 1) However, Paul was guided by the Holy Spirit in writing his inspired epistles. Although the Holy Spirit chose the words from the penman's vocabulary, the message was God's revelation; being such, the phraseology would be God's, not Paul's.
 - 2) Also, the subject matter in the book of Hebrews is different from that of his other epistles. This fact would determine the style and format of the message.
 - c. It is argued that if Paul wrote this epistle, it is the only one that does not include his name. The thirteen books preceding Hebrews (all of which were written by him) bear his name.
 - 1) This does not disprove Paul's authorship. It has been established that Luke was the author of

- Luke* and *Acts*, even though his name is not directly given as the author. The same is true of other New Testament books [Matthew, Mark, John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John].
- 2) The absence of his name in Hebrews makes sense, because of the contents of the book and its recipients. Paul, more than any other one apostle, opposed the Judaizers and wrote extensively to show that the gospel replaced the Law of Moses. Many Jews knew and hated Paul on account of this. Many Jews (in and out of the church) would be prejudiced against the epistle if Paul's name was prominent in the letter.
 3. There is strong evidence that Paul is the inspired writer of Hebrews.
 - a. Ancient scholars attributed it to Paul, including Pentenus, Clement of Alexandria, Origin, Eusebius, those who comprised the Council of Antioch, Dionysius of Alexandria, and the congregations in the eastern part of the Roman Empire generally accepted it as being from Paul's pen.
 - b. Very strong evidence of the Pauline authorship is from the inspired pen of Peter. The apostle Peter wrote especially to Jewish saints scattered through the Roman world, including the provinces of Asia, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia (1 Pet. 1:1; cf. 2 Pet. 3:1). Peter says that Paul had written to these people. "And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you" (2 Pet. 3:15). In verse sixteen, Peter describes Paul's writings as *scripture*.
 - c. Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Paul made many references to his "bonds." Other apostles and prophets of the first century were imprisoned, but more is said about Paul's troubles with the authorities than anyone else. This statement gives credence to the Pauline authorship.
 - d. Hebrews 13:23: "Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." Paul was associated with Timothy more than any other prophet or apostle.
 - 1) Philippians 2:19-20: "But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:1-2: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, *which is* our hope; Unto Timothy, *my* own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, *and* peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - e. Hebrews 13:23: "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." "Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you" (ASV).
 - 1) The only inspired writer or other prominent individual in the New Testament record who is known to us to have such a relationship with Timothy as indicated in this verse, was Paul. It is the most natural understanding of this verse to see Paul as the author, when he speaks so tenderly of his son in the faith.
 - 2) "So Aristarchus was imprisoned with Paul. BIRKS translates, "dismissed," "sent away," namely, on a mission to Greece, as Paul promised (Php 2:19). However, some kind of previous detention is implied before his being let go to Philippi. Paul, though now at large, was still in Italy, whence he sends the salutations of Italian Christians (Heb 13:24), waiting for Timothy to join him, so as to start for Jerusalem: we know from 1 Ti 1:3, he and Timothy were together at Ephesus after his departing from Italy eastward. He probably left Timothy there and went to Philippi as he had promised. Paul implies that if Timothy shall not come shortly, he will start on his journey to the Hebrews at once" [Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997), Logos Research Systems].
 - 3) "He gives the Hebrews an account of Timothy's liberty and his hopes of seeing them with him in a little time, v. 23. It seems, Timothy had been a prisoner, doubtless for the gospel, but now

he was set at liberty. The imprisonment of faithful ministers is an honour to them, and their enlargement is matter of joy to the people. He was pleased with the hopes of not only seeing Timothy, but seeing the Hebrews with him. Opportunities of writing to the churches of Christ are desired by the faithful ministers of Christ, and pleasant to them” (Matthew Henry, Logos).

f. Hebrews 13:25: "Grace *be* with you all. Amen." This final salutation follows Paul’s usual pattern.

4. Other names have been suggested as the author, including the following:

- a. Barnabas.
- b. Apollos.
- c. Silas.
- d. Clement of Rome.
- e. Mark.

5. Origin wrote: "But who wrote the epistle, to be sure, only God knows."

B. Date.

1. Internal evidence indicates the Jewish religious system was still being conducted, which places the date of Hebrews as some time prior to 70 A.D.
 - a. Hebrews 8:4: "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."
 - b. Hebrews 8:13: "In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away."
 - c. Hebrews 10:11: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."
 - d. Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The evidence for the “day approaching” is the day of Jerusalem’s destruction (cf. Matt. 24:3-35). "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. 10:37). This last statement perhaps alludes to the figurative coming of Christ in the destruction of Jerusalem [in 70 A.D.], which would give a date for the writing of the book some time previous to that great event.
2. It is evident that those being addressed had been Christians for some time, but had reached a point in their struggles against sin and error that they were on the verge of apostatizing.
 - a. Hebrews 5:12: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."
 - b. Hebrews 10:32-34: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
3. The time for the writing the book would be in the 62-70 A.D. time-frame. The author was in prison, expecting to be released soon. This fits Paul very well, who wrote the letter during the latter phase of his first imprisonment, at the time he penned epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These three letters were written by Paul in 62 A.D. The evidence points to the fact that he was freed from this imprisonment, but later was arrested again and subsequently executed.
 - a. Philippians 2:23-24: "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."
 - b. Philemon 22: "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you."
 - c. Hebrews 13:23-25: "Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace *be* with you all. Amen."

C. Paul the Apostle.

1. Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and was imprisoned at Caesarea for two years (Acts 24:27) before being sent to Rome (Acts 27). The Book of Acts closes with the apostle having been in prison at Rome for two more years (Acts 28:30-31). What happened at the end of these two years?
 2. The following quotation from Thiessen, pp.260-262, gives one view:
 - a. "Paul was tried and acquitted. The flimsy charges against him (Acts 25:14-27; 26:30-32) did not convince even a Nero of the Apostle's guilt. Certain expressed purposes of Paul in the Prison Epistles (Phil. 23,24; Philemon 22) and certain references to men and places in the Pastorals [?—bw] (to be noted) enable us to determine his movements and activities after his release with some feeling of certainty.
 - b. "From Rome he probably went to Brundisium, crossed the Adriatic, either to Apollonia or to Dyr-rachium, and then took the Egnatian Road to Macedonia and Philippi. He probably did not stay long at Philippi at this time, but hastened on to Ephesus and from this as a center he visited Laodicea, Colossae, and other cities in this neighborhood.
 - 1) "After spending the biggest part of a year in the East, he probably set out for Spain. There was constant intercourse between the East and Massilia (the modern Marseilles), and so he would have no difficulty in reaching the 'limit of the west.' It is thought that he remained about two years in Spain.
 - 2) "During this time, probably, Timothy took up the work at Ephesus. It appears, however, as if somewhere on Paul's way back from Spain to Macedonia Timothy asked Paul to allow him to leave Ephesus and to travel with him once more. But this Paul did not allow (1 Tim. 1:3). Some time after this the Apostle wrote 1 Timothy to his faithful co-worker.
 - c. "Timothy, converted under Paul's ministry (1 Tim. 1:2,18) on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23), became the Apostle's assistant on the second journey (Acts 16:1-3) after his ordination [the sectarian "ordination" is not authorized by the Scriptures—bw] to the ministry (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6). He was with Paul at Troas, Philippi, Berea, and Athens. From the last place he made a trip to Thessalonica and returned to Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:5).
 - 1) "Then we lose sight of him for about five years (Plummer). He reappears at Ephesus, on Paul's third journey, and is sent by the Apostle with Erastus to Macedonia (Acts 19:22). Paul hoped he would get to Corinth also, but it is not certain whether Timothy ever reached that city (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10).
 - 2) "He is with Paul again in Macedonia when Paul writes 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1,19), and must have accompanied him to Corinth, for he sends greetings when Paul writes Romans (Rom. 16:21). He returned with Paul to Macedonia and to Asia, at least as far as Troas (Acts 20:3-6).
 - 3) "Then we again lose sight of him for the two years of Paul's Caesarean imprisonment. We next find him at Rome, joining Paul in sending greetings to Colossae, Philemon, and Philippi. From Rome he, undoubtedly, made the trip to Philippi of which Paul speaks (Phil. 2:19-23), after which he again disappears from the record.
 - 4) "We may, however, assume that he was with Paul in some of his further ministries in various eastern cities; but it is not likely that he accompanied the Apostle to Spain. Some time during Paul's visit to Spain he probably took up the work at Ephesus. While still at this place he received what we call The First Epistle to Timothy."
 3. Quotation from Rex Turner, Sr., MSOP, pp.14-18:
 - a. "Luke closed his Acts of the Apostle in the following words: 'And he (Paul) abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, and none forbidding him' (Acts 28:30,31). In this conclusion to his Acts of the Apostles, Luke did not say that at the end of the two year imprisonment Paul was put to death, nor did he imply it. In fact the necessary implication is that Paul had been set free...."
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- b. "Someone is bound to ask: 'Is there external evidence that bears on the question of Paul's release, or non-release from prison, and if so, what does the evidence show, and how relevant is it?' There is external evidence!
- c. "To illustrate, one source of external evidence is from the writing of **Clement of Rome**. Clement (A.D. 30-100) wrote the Corinthians, and the salutation reads as follows: 'The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied.'
- 1) "In this epistle, written about A.D. 97, Clement admonished: 'Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours; and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned.'
 - 2) "After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.'
 - 3) "Stress should be placed upon the fact that Clement said that Paul came unto 'the extreme limit of the west,' and after his having done so, he suffered martyrdom. Under no circumstances could Rome be counted the extreme west. The clear and unmistakable implication is that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment, and in turn, that he completed his long avowed purpose to preach the gospel in Spain.
- d. "A second source of external evidence is **the Muratorian Fragment**. This fragment or canon was discovered by L.A. Muratori (A.D. 1672-1750) in the Ambrosian Library and published by him in A.D. 1740. It was written in Latin and consists of eighty-five lines. Scholars agree that the original form, of which the Muratorian fragment is a copy, was written about A.D. 180-190. That fragment reads: 'Luke compiled for most excellent Theophilus' what things were done in detail in his presence, as he plainly shows by omitting both the death of Peter and also the departure of Paul from the city, when he departed [for] Spain.' Note should be taken of the fact that his Muratorian fragment explicitly states that Paul left for Spain.
- e. "A third source of external evidence is from **the historian Eusebius**. His life dates about A.D. 260-340. He wrote as follows: 'Festus was sent by Nero to be Felix's successor. Under him, Paul, having made his defense, was sent bound to Rome. Aristarchus was with him, whom he also somewhere in his epistles quite naturally calls his fellow prisoner.'
- 1) "And Luke, who wrote the Acts of the Apostles, brought his history to a close at this point, after stating that Paul spent two years at Rome as a prisoner at large, and preached the word of God without restraint.
 - 2) "Then after he made his defense it is said that the apostle was sent again upon the ministry of preaching, and that upon coming to the same city a second time he suffered martyrdom. In this imprisonment he wrote his second epistle to Timothy, in which he mentions his first defense and his impending death.'
 - 3) "As should be observed, this external evidence is independent. There is no attempt by the author to have it agree with another external evidence, but on the other hand it is in complete agreement with the prior external evidence already submitted.
- f. "A fourth source of external evidence is from **the historian Jerome**. He wrote from Bethlehem in A.D. 492. In his preface he states that he had no predecessor in his work, but he very properly acknowledged his indebtedness to the church history written by Eusebius. Concerning the apostle Paul, he wrote: 'And because a full account of his (Paul's) life is given in the Acts of the Apostles, I only say this, that the twenty-fifth year after our Lord's passion, that is the second of Nero, at the
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time when Festus Procurator of Judea succeeded Felix, he was sent bound to Rome, and remaining for two years in free custody, disputed daily with the Jews concerning the advent of Christ. It ought to be said that at the first defense, the power of Nero having not been confirmed, nor his wickedness broken forth to such a degree as the historians relate concerning him, Paul was dismissed by Nero, that the gospel of Christ might be preached also in the west.

- g. "As he himself writes in the second epistle to Timothy at the time he was about to be put to death dictating his epistle as he did while in chains; 'at my first defense no one took my part, but all forsook me: may it not be laid to their account.' This external evidence is in harmony with the other three sources as quoted. The case is that Paul's writings together with external history make certain the fact that he was released from his imprisonment at Rome, and that 'preached also in the west,' or Spain.
- h. "Thus by both internal and external evidence—Paul's release, his visit to Philippi and Ephesus, his visit to the Island of Crete, and his visit to Spain—all of these are confirmed. Paul's second imprisonment and his ultimate death at the hands of Nero are also confirmed.
- i. "The external evidence as set forth, especially by Eusebius and Jerome, indicates that Paul was put to death just prior to Nero's death. Nero's death occurred on June 8, A.D. 68. Luke closed his Acts of Apostles at the end of Paul's two whole years of Roman imprisonment, or A.D. 62, and certainly not later than A.D. 63. Now, from A.D. 62 to A.D. 67 or 68 would leave a minimum of five to six years for Paul to make his promised visits and to preach the gospel in Crete and in Spain as well."
4. "It is difficult to say how long it was after his release that Paul wrote this Epistle. But since the three Pastorals [?—bw] have an affinity of language, similarity of thought, and likeness of error to combat they must have all been written at about the same time. If Paul was released in 61, and if we allow one year for his travels and work in the East and two years for his work in Spain, we get 64 or 65. This, then, is the date we would suggest for 1 Timothy" (Thiessen, p.263).

D. To Whom Written and Why?

1. It is clear from the contents, that the epistle was addressed to Christians who had been converted from Judaism. The writer shows that Christ and the gospel are superior to Moses and the Law, hence those addressed had close ties to Judaism.
 - a. Hebrews 5:12: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."
 - b. Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God."
 - c. It was written to Jewish Christians whom the author knew personally.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:19: "But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner."
2. The book was written to encourage those faltering Christians who were on the threshold of apostasy.
 - a. Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - b. Hebrews 12:1-4: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners

against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

- 1) Christ is the finisher of **the faith** (Jude 3); before quitting because of opposition, the writer called on them to consider what Christ suffered to give them the plan of redemption.
- 2) Jude 3: "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was **once for all** delivered unto the saints" (ASV).
- c. They needed the encouragement provided by the book of Hebrews. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:13-16).
3. It was written to show the foolishness of forsaking Christianity and turning back to Judaism.
 - a. Some false teachers in the church wanted to get Christians to return to the Law. "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" (Gal. 4:21).
 - b. The gospel is vastly superior to the Law.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:6-13: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:13-14: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
 - 3) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 4) Hebrews 10:11-12: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." The Old Testament priests stand (there was no end to their work); but Christ sat down (his job was completed).
 - c. Hebrews admonishes the readers against returning to the Mosaic System.
 - 1) Hebrews 13:9-10: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them

- that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." Christ is our altar (sacrifice); those who served the tabernacle had no right to partake of the benefits of his sacrifice while they served another system.
- 2) Hebrews 9:22-23: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Their choice was between the pattern (the type) and the real substance (the antitype); between the mere shadow or the genuine item. They must choose the Mosaic System or Christianity. Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
4. Certain words figure prominently in Hebrews to exalt the gospel of Christ over the law of Moses.
 - a. Better.
 - 1) Hebrews 1:4: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:19: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God."
 - 3) Hebrews 7:22: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."
 - 4) Hebrews 8:6: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."
 - 5) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 6) Hebrews 11:35: "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."
 - 7) Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
 - b. Perfect.
 - 1) Hebrews 2:10: "For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - 2) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 3) Hebrews 7:11: "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"
 - 4) Hebrews 7:19: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God."
 - 5) Hebrews 9:11: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."
 - 6) Hebrews 10:14: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."
 - c. Eternal.
 - 1) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - 2) Hebrews 5:6: "As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."
 - 3) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 4) Hebrews 7:17: "For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."
 - 5) Hebrews 9:12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in

once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."

- 6) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
- 7) Hebrews 13:20: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

d. Heavenly.

- 1) Hebrews 3:1: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."
 - 2) Hebrews 6:4: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:16: "But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
 - 5) Hebrews 12:22: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."
5. The following three points and sub-points are supplied by Ted Wheeler in an unpublished sermon outline:
- a. The Epistle to the Hebrews is a unique book in the New Testament...
 - 1) It begins as an "essay." "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - 2) It progresses as a "sermon." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:1-4).
 - 3) It ends as a "letter." "Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace *be* with you all. Amen" (Heb. 13:23-25).
 - b. Its contents are deep and challenging....
 - 1) Many Christians find it difficult.
 - 2) Some equate its difficulty with the book of Revelation.
 - c. But for Christians who are willing to take the time to read and reflect upon it....
 - 1) They are **reminded** of how blessed they are to have trusted in Christ.
 - 2) They are **impressed** with the superiority of Christ and His New Covenant over Moses and the Old Covenant.
 - 3) They are **warned** of the danger of apostasy and the need for steadfastness in their faith.

E. Hebrews is Inspired.

1. Ancient writers in the church referred to it as authoritative scripture: Justin Martyr (140 A.D.) and Clement of Rome (96 A.D.).
2. It is found in the oldest versions: Old Syrian (150 A.D.); Old Latin (150 A.D.); Jerome's (385 A.D.).
3. It is in ancient catalogs of canonical books: Origin (220 A.D.); Eusebius (315 A.D.); Athanasius (348 A.D.); Cyril (363 A.D.); Council of Laodicea (363 A.D.); Jerome (385 A.D.).
4. The doctrines found in it are in harmony with other scriptures.
5. Its authority, dignity, and majesty show it belongs in the Bible.
6. It has the depth of meaning which is characteristic of other inspired books.

F. Outline of the Contents of Hebrews (Condensed from Dixon's Class Notes).

1. Christ's superiority over prophets and angels (1:1—2:4).
 - a. God has spoken to man (1:1-2).
 - b. Divine glory, honor and dignity of the Son (1:3).
 - c. The contrast with angels (1:4-14).
 - d. Conclusion from the above premises (2:1-4).
 2. The humanity of Jesus (2:5-18).
 - a. Man given dominion over all creation below himself (2:5-9; cf. Psalm 8).
 - b. God's mission to bring many sons to glory (2:10-18).
 3. Superior apostleship of Christ (3:1—4:13).
 - a. Christ greater than Moses (3:1-6).
 - b. A warning based on Israel's history (3:7-15).
 - c. Relation of unbelief to disobedience (3:16-19).
 - d. The rest remaining for the people of God (4:1-10).
 - e. Further warnings and exhortations (4:11-13).
 4. The perfection of Christ's priesthood (4:14—5:10).
 - a. His exalted character as high priest (4:14-16).
 - b. Qualifications and functions of the high priest (5:1-4).
 - c. Christ's qualification for the office (5:5-10).
 5. An admonition and a warning (5:11—6:20).
 - a. Admonition due to inattention to study (5:11-14).
 - b. Must go on to perfection (6:1-3).
 - c. Admonition due to dangers and consequences of apostasy (6:4-8).
 - d. Encouragement and exhortations (6:9-20).
 6. Superiority of Christ's priesthood over Aaronic priesthood (7:1—8:5).
 - a. Melchizedek, the type of Christ (7:1-9).
 - b. Argument based on the abrogation of old priesthood (7:10-19).
 - c. Argument based on the establishment of the new priesthood (7:20-28).
 - d. The chief point (8:1-5).
 7. Superior qualities of the new covenant (8:6-13).
 - a. His ministry and covenant are superior (8:6).
 - b. God's covenant with Israel (8:7-9).
 - c. Greater benefits enjoyed under the new covenant (8:10-13).
 8. The superior offerings and services of the new covenant (9:1—10:18).
 - a. Mosaic sanctuary only a figure, hence imperfect (9:1-10).
 - b. Perfect communion through a perfect mediator (9:11-14).
 - c. New covenant made valid by his death (9:15-22).
 - d. Salvation once for all secured through his death (9:23-27).
 - e. Finality of Christ's atonement (10:1-18).
 9. Exhortations, warnings and encouragements (10:19-39).
 - a. Appeals to faithfulness in the gospel (10:19-25).
 - b. God's judgment of apostates (10:26-31).
 - c. Words of encouragement (10:32-39).
 10. The sustaining power of faith (11:1-40).
 - a. What faith is and what it does (11:1).
 - b. The roll call of heroes of faith in Israel (11:2-40).
 11. Exhortations to similar confidence and perseverance (12:1-29).
 - a. Ancient heroes of faith inspire us (12:1).
 - b. Exhortation based on example of Jesus (12:2-4).
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- c. Exhortation based on fact that trials are designed for good (12:5-13).
 - d. Exhortation to fidelity in view of danger of losing all (12:14-17).
 - e. Exhortation based upon nature of Christian dispensation (12:18-29).
12. Practical exhortations (13:1-25).
- a. Brotherly love (13:1).
 - b. Hospitality (13:2).
 - c. Sympathy with those in bonds (13:3).
 - d. Faithfulness in marriage relations (13:4).
 - e. Contentment (13:5-6).
 - f. Submit to teaching of apostles and prophets (13:7).
 - g. Stability in doctrine (13:8-15).
 - h. Offering up continual confession and praise (13:15).
 - i. Practice of benevolence (13:16).
 - j. Relation to elders of the church (13:17).
 - k. Prayer for the writer (13:18-19).
 - l. Benediction and salutation (13:20-25).
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HEBREWS 1

A. Hebrews 1:1-2: God Has Spoken to Man.

1. Verse 1: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets."
 - a. The book of Hebrews begins in a similar way to the book of Genesis: each starts with God. No argument is made for the existence of God; his existence is so certain, only one devoid of sense will deny it.
 - 1) Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - 2) Psalms 19:1-3: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard."
 - 3) Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - b. God spoke in ancient days with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others.
 - 1) Romans 3:1-2: "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."
 - 2) God was not silent, contrary to the assertions of Deists. This religious view maintains that God created the universe and man, but then abandoned the entire creation to its own devices, with no message or help from the Creator. This man-made system leaves mankind without help or hope.
 - c. God spoke at sundry times ("divers portions"—ASV; "many parts"—Vine).
 - 1) His word was revealed at different times, piecemeal. He gave the complete segments as they were needed, with all the parts designed to form one whole unit.
 - 2) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 3) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
 - 4) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - 5) Deuteronomy 18:18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."
 - 6) Isaiah 28:10-14: "For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem."
 - 7) Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

- 8) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
- d. God spoke in various ways.
- 1) He revealed his will through certain dreams, visions, audible voice, and by prophetic utterance. "And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. 28:6).
 - 2) He revealed his will in certain cases by Urim and Thummim.
 - a) Exodus 28:30: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually."
 - b) Numbers 27:21: "And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask *counsel* for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation."
 - c) Ezra 2:63: "And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim."
 - 3) URIM AND THUMMIM: (See HIGH PRIEST and EPHOD). Meaning lights and perfections. The article "the" before each shows their distinctness. In Deut 33:8 the order is reversed "thy Thummim and thy Urim." Urim is alone in Num 27:21; 1 Sam 28:6 Saul is answered neither by dreams nor by Urim. Thummim is never by itself. Inside the high priest's breastplate were placed the Urim and Thummim when he went in before the Lord (Ex 28:15-30; Lev 8:8).
 - a) Mentioned as already familiar to Moses and the people. Joshua, when desiring counsel to guide Israel, was to "stand before Eleazar the priest, who should ask it for him after the judgment of Urim before Jehovah" (Num 27:21).
 - b) Levi's glory was "thy Thummim and thy Urim are with thy Holy One," i.e. with Levi as representing, the whole priestly and Levitical stock sprung from him (Deut 33:8-9). In Ezra 2:63 finally those who could not prove their priestly descent were excluded from the priesthood "till there should stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim."
 - c) The teraphim apparently were in Hos 3:4; Judg 17:5; 18:14,20,30, the unlawful substitute for Urim (compare 1 Sam 15:23 "idolatry," Hebrew teraphim; and 2 Kings 23:24, margin). Speaker's Commentary thinks that lots were the mode of consultation, as in Acts 1:26; Prov 16:33. More probably stones with Jehovah's name and attributes, "lights" and "perfections," engraven on them were folded within the ephod....
 - d) The Urim and Thummim were distinct from the 12 stones, and were placed within the folds of the double choshen....Never after David are the ephod and its Urim and Thummim and breastplate used in consulting Jehovah. Abiathar is the last priest who uses it (1 Sam 23:6-9; 28:6; 2 Sam 21:1). The higher revelation by prophets superseded the Urim and Thummim.... [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database Copyright (c)1998 by Biblesoft].
- e. God gave messages to Israel through his selected prophets (spokesmen).
- 1) Nehemiah 9:20, 30: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst....Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."

- f. God spoke to the fathers—those who went before.
2. Verse 2a: “Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son...”
- a. “These last days” is a reference to the Christian Age, the last dispensation of time. It began with the death of Christ and will end with the return of Christ.
- 1) Isaiah 2:2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Compare: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 2) Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-17).
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 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." "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:1: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."
 - 6) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come."
 - 7) When the Lord returns, the entire universe and time itself will be no more:
 - a) “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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” (2 Pet. 3:8-13).
 - b) “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
- b. God now speaks to our world through his Son. The previous messengers were imperfect, but Christ is the perfect, sinless Son of God.
- 1) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our

- infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
- 2) Hebrews 7:26: "For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."
- c. The previous messengers were many, lived at different times and places, were temporary messengers, and were subject to death. "And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever" (John 8:35).
- 1) Their claim never to have been under bondage to any man is demolished by the facts of history. But our Lord brought up another kind of bondage from which only Christ could make them free. Sin is a harsh slavery. Anyone who practices sin is under bondage to sin.
 - 2) Hebrews 3:3: "For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house." Paying Moses a quiet and fitting tribute of respect, the inspired writer exalts that great man, which he does in order to more highly exalt Christ. Moses, he says, was worthy of honor, but Christ is deserving of even greater honor.
 - 3) Moses was the head of the Old Testament nation for a period of time; Christ is head of God's New Testament spiritual nation for all time. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).
- d. The previous messengers were subject to human frailties
- 1) Hebrews 7:27-28: "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. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
 - 3) Christ was not subject to shortcomings.
 - a) John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
 - b) 1 Peter 1:19: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- e. The previous messengers did not always comprehend the messages they delivered. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you" (1 Pet. 1:10).
- 1) The Old Testament prophets spoke beforehand of the grace which we now have. It was not their lot during this lifetime to enjoy the blessings this grace would offer.
 - a) Matthew 11:11: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."
 - b) Matthew 13:17: "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*."
 - 2) The nature of inspired prophecies was such that the prophet was not always privy to the meaning of the predictions. Daniel was a case in point; in some cases, he was told; in other cases, he was left in the dark:
 - a) "Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river. And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be* to the end of these wonders? And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have

accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:5-9).

- b) According to Peter, the prophets sought diligently to understand the prophecies they delivered. The subject he specifically identifies were their predictions regarding the "grace that should come unto you"—the gospel system. There were some things they were not permitted to know. Think how Isaiah must have pondered concerning the suffering Savior described ahead of time in Isaiah 53. They were given only what they needed, as was the case throughout the ages.
 - c) Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law."
- 3) Even the apostles of Christ were not allowed to know certain things until the time was right: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8)
- f. None of the previous messengers had the complete revelation, just one aspect of the whole. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 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: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:8-11).
3. God now speaks through his Son, with all the significance of that great reality.
- a. Compare:
 - 1) Matthew 7:28: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine."
 - 2) John 7:46: "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."
 - b. The Son and his message are greater than the prophets and their messages.
 - 1) John 6:68-69: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - 2) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 3) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - a) We are children of God by the faith, and we are in Christ. Sonship is located within Christ, not outside of Christ.
 - b) We are children of God by the faith, we are in Christ, and we entered Christ by baptism. Baptism puts us into Christ. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

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- 4) Ephesians 1:11: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."
- a) We have received the inheritance because we were *predestinated according to the purpose* of God. As shown under verse five, the predestination had to do with "types of character" and not with mankind as individuals.
 - b) If God, before the world began, had predetermined the destiny of individuals, he would have compromised his qualities of justice and holiness by showing respect of persons. God repeatedly denies that he is a respecter of persons. God does not show bias in dealing with his offspring, hence predestination does not extend to selecting individuals to be saved or lost.
 - c) God's plan was to bring obedient Jews and Gentiles together in Christ where he would give them the spiritual blessings alluded to in verse three. Only those who are in Christ receive these blessings. The only way to get into Christ is through hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel, and then live in close harmony with the teachings of the gospel (Acts 18:8; 2:36-47; 1 John 1:6-10; Rom. 8:1ff). This is the predestination Paul affirmed in the text.
 - d) The ASV gives a rendition that differs somewhat from the KJV. "In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Eph. 1:11, ASV). Instead of *we have obtained an inheritance*, this version gives *we were made a heritage*. While the words are different, the effect is the same.
- c. Through the work of the Son, the New Covenant was delivered to mankind.
- 1) Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Cf. Hebrews 8:1-13.
 - 2) Galatians 3:19-25: "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one. *Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
- d. The Son speaks to our world through the written word of God (the New Testament).
- 1) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
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- 2) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you." Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - 3) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 4) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:15-16: "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
 - 6) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
- e. Since God speaks now only through his Son, and since hearing or reading the written word is our only way to learn what Christ said, it follows that God's only way of speaking to man now is through the written word.
- 1) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:6-7: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:20: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."
 - 4) James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - a) James makes it plain that we are under law by speaking of the gospel as "the perfect law of liberty."
 - b) Law and liberty are not contradictory as used in the Bible. One who tries to remove all restraint and live without law becomes victim of the cruelest taskmasters—sin. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Pet. 2:19).
 - 5) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - 6) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
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- f. Since the messenger now (Christ) is greater than the Old Testament messengers, the message he gave is more valuable than theirs.
- 1) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 2) John 17:2: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."
 - 3) Acts 10:36: "The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all)."
 - 4) Romans 6:9: "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 15:28: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 6) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 7) Hebrews 7:16: "Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."
 - 8) Revelation 1:18: "I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - 9) 1 Timothy 6:15: "Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

B. Hebrews 1:2-3: The Divine Glory, Honor and Dignity of the Son.

1. Verse 2b: "...whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
 - a. Christ occupies a three-fold office:
 - 1) Prophet: He is God's greatest and final prophet; he is God's only spokesman for this age.
 - 2) Priest: He purged our sins by his death on the cross and serves as the only High Priest.
 - 3) King: He sat down at God's right hand where he reigns as the only King.
 - b. In addition to being God's only spokesman for this age, there are several other things said about Christ in this passage. Nine items are stated in verses two and three, none of which can be attributed to any other being, not even the angels.
2. He is the Son of God.
 - a. John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - b. Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." "Declared" (from *horizo*) means "to mark off by boundaries, signifies to determine, usually of time; in Rom. 1:4, Christ is said to have been marked out as the Son of God, by the fact of his resurrection" (Vine, Vol. 1, p.282).
3. He has been appointed heir of all things.
 - a. "Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession" (Ps. 2:8). "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11).

- b. Great fortunes travel along lines of inheritances. Christ received his inheritance in fact after his resurrection.
- 1) Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
 - 2) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 3) Luke 1:32: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David."
 - 4) John 17:5: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."
 - 5) Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 6) Acts 13:33: "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."
 - 7) Philippians 2:5-11: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 8) Hebrews 12:2-3: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
- c. All of God's purposes and plans are fulfilled through Christ.
- 1) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 2) Luke 24:44: "And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me."
 - 3) Acts 28:23: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening."
 - 4) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
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- d. We inherit our eternal legacy only through Christ.
- 1) Romans 8:16-17: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together."
 - 2) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - 3) Galatians 4:1-7: "Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."
4. He made the worlds.
- a. Christ (the second person of the Godhead) was with the Father in eternity, and was active in the creation of the universe.
 - 1) Genesis 1:26: "And God said, **Let us** make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."
 - 2) Psalms 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."
 - 3) John 1:1-2: "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."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - 5) Colossians 1:15-17: "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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 6) Hebrews 1:10: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands."
 - b. Christ himself was not created; he is as eternal as the Father. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning of the creation** of God" (Rev. 3:14).
 - 1) According to Thayer, the word carries this definition: "1. beginning, origin. a. used absolutely, of the beginning of all things: John 1:1f. b. in a relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of: John 6:64. 2. the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader: Col 1:18. 3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause Rev 3:14. 4. the extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail, Acts 10:11. 5. the first place, principality, rule
 - 2) Materialists who reject the deity of Christ misinterpret this passage. They assert that Christ was the first thing God created. But the word *arche* is defined to mean "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause" (Thayer, pp.76f). The term means "the beginner" (and not that which is begun).

- 3) There has never been a time when Christ did not exist, hence he was not created by the Father.
 - a) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - b) John 3:1-3: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- c. **The beginning of the creation of God.** The Watchtower Witnesses claim this means Christ was the first thing God created; and that Christ is a "lesser god" (Cf. Isa. 44:4; John 1:1-3); they reject the eternity of Christ. However, see Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18. The word (*arche*) translated "beginning" refers to the cause (not to the order) of creation. According to Thayer, the word carries this definition:
 - 1) "Beginning, origin. a. used absolutely, of the beginning of all things: John 1:1-2 . b. in a relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of: John 6:64.
 - 2) "The person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader: Col 1:18.
 - 3) "That by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause Rev 3:14.
 - 4) "The extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail, Acts 10:11.
 - 5) "The first place, principality, rule, magistracy Luke 12:11" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
- d. Significant passages:
 - 1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "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 anything made that was made."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15-18: "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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- e. Their assertion about the eternal nature of Christ violates Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting." There has never been a time when Christ did not exist; he is eternal.
- f. Their assertion that he is not God violates John 20:24-28: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
- g. Their assertion that Christ was created by God (and is not eternal) violates the very passage they claim as proof, for the word *arche* means "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active

cause" (Thayer, p.77); "the beginner, or author" (Vincent, p.695). See Hebrews 12:2 (author, leader). The passage does not say that Christ is the first of God's creations, but that he is the one who did the creating (he was God's agent in bringing the universe into existence, John 1:10 ASV; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-18).

- 1) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him" (ASV).
 - 2) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (ASV).
 - 3) Hebrews 1:5-8: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
- h. If he were created, he would be praising himself here: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).
- i. "(1) Hebrews 2:10 refers to Jesus as the 'author' (Grk. *archegos*) of salvation. Would this kindred form of *arche* indicate that Jesus was the *first person saved*, or does it denote that He was the *originator* of salvation? The latter, of course (cf. Arndt & Gringrich, *Greek Lexicon*, p.112). Similarly, Revelation 3:14 refers to Christ's role as Creator (cf. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2), and not to an alleged origin. (2) God is designated 'the beginning (*arche*) and the end' in Revelation 21:6. Does this mean that Jehovah was created? The Witnesses do not so argue. Further, if 'beginning' denotes the Lord's commencement in time (as per 3:14), would 'end' suggest an ultimate termination for God?" (Wayne Jackson, *Notes From the Margin of My Bible*, p.180).
5. He is the brightness of God's glory.
- a. "Brightness" (effulgence) means "radiance." Christ manifested the glory of the Father. Compare: "And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark 9:2-3).
 - b. Christ manifested the Father in such a way that one who perceives what the Son is like, gets a good perception of the Father.
 - 1) John 1:14,18: "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....No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*."
 - 2) John 14:9: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?"
 - 3) Colossians 2:9:"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - c. Christ magnified and glorified the Father in all he said and did.
 - 1) John 4:34: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - 2) John 6:38: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that

- sent me."
- 3) John 17:4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
6. He is the express image of God's person.
- a. "This, in connection with the last expression, forms a sort of Hebrew parallelism, both the members of which have reference to the Divine nature of Christ. But they serve to describe him, not as the Logos, but as the Son of God incarnate. This view is most in harmony with the object of the Apostle, which is to encourage his brethren to persevere to the end in their fidelity to Christ. And this he does by presenting Christ to us, not as he was in the beginning, but as he is now, 'God manifest in the flesh' (1 Tim. 3:16)" (Milligan, p.54).
 - b. "The word *person* with us denotes an individual being, and is applied to human beings, consisting of body and soul. We do not apply it to anything dead—not using it with reference to the body when the spirit is gone...Here it properly refers to the essential nature of God—that which distinguishes him from all other beings...and the idea is, that the Redeemer is the exact resemblance of *that*" (Barnes, p.27).
 - c. Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - d. Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - e. 1 Timothy 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."
 - f. He was born into this world as a man, but was worshiped by angels.
 - 1) Psalms 97:7: "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all *ye* gods."
 - 2) Luke 2:13-14: "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."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:6: "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."
7. He upholds all things by the word of his power.
- a. Psalms 33:9: "For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast."
 - b. Colossians 1:17: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." The word *consist* (*susistemi*), "*sun*, with, *histemi*, to stand, denotes in its intransitive sense, to stand with or fall together, to be constituted to be compact..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.230). We use the word to describe dough which has such consistency that it holds together and can stand alone.
 - c. 2 Peter 3:5-7: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."
 - d. Compare: "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" (Matt. 8:26-27).
 - e. Psalms 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
8. He purged our sins.
- a. To purge is to purify or cleanse. The point is that Christ provided for the cleansing of our sins by his death on the cross. The statement does not mean that we are all automatically purified from sin because of his death, but that he provided the means by which we can be purified; the purging is conditional. The statement does not say that Christ did everything and we do nothing in the process.

- 1) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*"
 - b. This shows the superiority of Christ's sacrifice over those offered by the Levitical priesthood under the Mosaic Law.
 - 1) John 1:29: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
 - 2) Hebrews 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."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*"
 - 4) 1 John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"
 - c. His sacrifice is the only one authorized, and the only one required. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:24-28).
9. He sat down on the right hand of God.
- a. Following the completion of his earthly mission, which ended with his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back to heaven, Christ sat down at God's right hand.
 - 1) Mark 16:19: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."
 - 2) Acts 2:33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:11-12: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."
 - 4) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
 - b. He will remain in heaven until all his enemies are put under his feet (subdued).
 - 1) Acts 2:29,36: "Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day....Therefore let all the house of
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Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

- 2) Acts 3:19-21: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:25-28: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
- 4) Ephesians 1:10: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him."
- c. Hebrews 10:12-13: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."
- d. 1 Peter 3:21-22: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

C. Hebrews 1:4-14: Christ is Contrasted With the Angels.

1. "The remainder of this chapter, beginning here, extols the supremacy of Christ, as compared with angels. The force of the argument lies in the outlandish burden of importance the Jewish mind placed upon the function of angels in their history, especially in the giving of the Law of Moses.
 - a. "Cargill wrote that by the time of Christ, 'The Jews had developed an elaborate system of angelology....They came to think of angels as intermediaries between God and man (and) also believed that there were millions and millions of them. They had many duties. They delivered messages, presided over the destiny of Israel, controlled the movement of stars, manipulated history. There were angels over the sea, the frost, the dew, the rain, the snow, the hail, the thunder and the lightning. There were angels who were wardens of hell and torturers of the damned. There were destroying angels and angels of punishment' (Robert L. Cargill, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews*, Nashville, Tenn., Broadman Press, 1967, p.10)" (Coffman, p.26).
 - b. With this fact in evidence, we see the need for the writer to demonstrate the superiority of Christ over the angels. The information he presents in the chapter certainly accomplishes that end.
2. Verses 4-5: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?"
 - a. The position or rank Christ occupies is of far greater importance than that of any angel. He is above all others (except the Father).
 - 1) Ephesians 1:21: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:27: "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him."
 - 3) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - b. Christ's superiority to angels is seen in the fact that they serve him. "
 - 1) Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22).
 - 2) In fact, since angels are created beings, and in view of the fact that Christ created all things, it

- follows that he brought the angels into existence.
- c. Christ has inherited a name greater than the angels. Christ is spoken of as God's Son, but the angels are described as servants. He is much closer to the Father than they. God never referred to a mere angel as his son [even though they may be spoken of as "the sons of God"]; no one but Christ ever had this said about him in the present sense of the word.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:14: "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."
 - 2) Psalms 2:7: "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee."
 - 3) Luke 1:35: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."
 - 4) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 5) Acts 13:33: "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."
 - 6) Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
 - 7) Hebrews 5:5: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee."
 - d. Angels worship Christ.
 - 1) Since the greater receives homage of the lesser, then Christ is greater than the angels. "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).
 - 2) Christ, as a member of the Godhead, receives the worship of angels.
 - e. Angels delivered the Mosaic Law, but Christ delivered the gospel. Christ is greater than Moses, and the gospel is superior to the law.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 33:2: "And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them."
 - 2) John 1:17-18: "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*."
 - 3) Acts 7:53: "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
 - 4) Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."
 - f. The apostle cites Psalms 2:7: "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; **this day have I begotten thee.**"
 - 1) During the earthly ministry of Christ, God on at least two notable occasions audibly declared him to be his Son (Matt. 3:15-17; 17:1-5).
 - 2) God begot him when he caused the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus and in the resurrection: "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" (Acts 13:33).
3. Verse 6: "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."
- a. The word "again" has caused some to stumble over the time of the Lord's entrance into the world. Is the passage saying that when Christ comes again, that this is the time when God will instruct the

angels to worship him? Or does the verse merely state that in another place in the Old Testament scriptures God made that statement?

- 1) That this is not another entrance into the world is seen in the fact that the angels worship and serve him even now.
 - 2) "The word '*again*' refers not to the fact that the Son of God is brought *again* into the world, implying that he had been introduced before; but it refers to the course of the apostle's argument, or to the declaration which is made about the Messiah in another place. 'The name *Son* is not only given to him as above, but *also* in another place, or on another occasion, when he brings in the first-begotten into the world'" (Barnes, pp.35f).
 - 3) If the reference is to another entrance into the world, it would be to the Lord's representative coming when his kingdom was established on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2. "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16:28).
- b. Christ is described as "the first-begotten" (firstborn—ASV). This depiction is frequently given of the Lord, and indicates his rank in relation to others. In ancient families, the firstborn son received half of the father's legacy, with the other half being divided among the rest of the siblings.
- 1) Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."
 - 2) Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - 3) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- c. Because he is the Son of God, the Father directed all angels to pay homage to him. This is the point of the verse. Angels worship the Godhead (cf. Luke 2:13-14). Although angels are greater than men (Ps. 8:4), we are not permitted to worship angels.
- 1) Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, *See thou do it not*: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
 - 2) Revelation 22:8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, *See thou do it not*: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
- d. The angels are directed to worship the Son. "...[T]he fact remains indisputable, that by the decree of Jehovah all the angels of glory are required to bow down and worship him who is the First-begotten from the dead, the Firstborn of the whole creation" (Milligan, p.65).
4. Verses 7-8: "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
- a. Verse seven is a quotation from Psalms 104:4: "Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire." "Angels" and "ministers" are synonymous, and "spirits" and "flame of fire" are also equals. The two statements in the verse form a Hebrew parallelism, a feature in Hebrew literature which makes the same point in two different ways.
 - b. Contrasting the great difference between the angels and Christ, the Father describes the angels as *spirits* and *servants*, but refers to the Son as *King* and *God*. The word "angel" means "messenger." The word "minister" means "servant."
 - c. The angels are *spirits*. The word is used as an antithesis with "flesh" (John 3:6; 4:24; 6:63). Spirits are eternal, but flesh is temporal (2 Cor. 4:16-18; 5:1-10). By affirming that the angels are spirit beings, the writer exalts their status; by exalting the angels, Christ is exalted even higher, since the very point of the passage is to emphasize the superiority of Christ to the angels. The word "spirit" is also used as a figurative reference to teachers (2 Thess. 2:2; 1 John 4:1). Angels were

used as messengers in Bible times (Gen. 19; Acts 10:3), but Christ is now God's sole spokesman (vs. 2).

- d. The angels are *a flame of fire*. This expression is used as a parallel to "spirits." In each case, the nature of angels is shown to be non-material. Barnes thought the reference was to lightning. Fire and lightning are beyond the material; neither can be bottled up and preserved in its momentary or present state.
- e. But Christ is far superior even to God's mighty angels; he has his own distinct throne. This implies that he possesses regal powers.
 - 1) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 2) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - 3) Luke 1:30-33: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."
 - 4) Acts 2:33-36: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
- f. The superiority of Christ to the angels is further demonstrated by the fact that he is God (a divine person). All of the features of the Godhead are possessed by Christ (Col. 2:9). Specifically, the Father calls him "God" in the text, which is a quotation of Psalms 45:6-7: "Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Other passages of the Bible teach that Christ is a member of the Godhead.
 - 1) John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 - 2) John 8:58: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."
 - 3) John 10:30: "I and *my* Father are one."
 - 4) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
 - 5) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 6) Romans 9:5: "Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."
 - 7) Titus 2:13: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 8) 1 John 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."
- g. The word *forever* in the Bible is from *olam* (Hebrew) and *aion* (Greek). These words are rendered *forever*, *everlasting*, and *eternal*. It is used in reference to any full age or period of time.
- 1) It was used to denote the period of service of a servant (for as long as the servant lived). "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever" (Ex. 21:6). The period of time was limited to the lifetime of the servant, and was not eternal.
 - 2) It was used to denote the duration of the Levitical priesthood. "And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations" (Ex. 40:15). Again, the period of time indicated was not eternal. The Levitical priesthood would last throughout the time when the Law of Moses was in effect (Heb. 7:120).
 - 3) It was used to denote the duration of the hills. "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (Gen. 49:26). Since the earth will be burned up at the return of Christ, the hills cannot endure throughout literal eternity. They will endure throughout the time when the world remains.
 - 4) Jonah was in the fish, in the sea "forever." "I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars *was* about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God" (Jonah 2:6). He stayed there for the full time God intended (three days and nights (cf. Matt. 12:40).
 - 5) "If these words apply to a man's life, they exhaust it. If to future time, they also *exhaust* it. If to eternity, they exhaust it. 'And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal' (Matt. 25:46). The word as used here has no limitations, because eternity cannot be exhausted. The words are perfectly exhaustive of the period to which they are applied" (F.W. Gould, "The Word of Life," Volume IX, Number 4, April, 1980, Franklin Camp, Editor).
- h. The Second Person of the Godhead (Christ) is spoken of as the "Son of God," but this does not imply that there was a time when Christ did not exist. If that were the case, he could not be deity; a divine person has no beginning or end. In what sense is Christ the "Son" of God?
- 1) In the sense that the Father has greater authority, as is also the case between an earthly father and his son. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16). God sent Christ into the world (John 6:44); Christ sent the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). The only distinction between the members of the Godhead is in the realm of authority.
 - 2) In the sense that he brought him forth into the world as a member of the human family. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, **this day have I begotten thee?** And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Heb. 1:5). God audibly declared him to be his beloved Son on two great occasions: at his baptism (Matt. 3:15-17) and as the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-5). Compare: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (John 12:28-30).
 - 3) In the sense that he raised him up from the dead.
 - a) Psalms 2:7: "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; **this day have I begotten thee.**"
 - b) Acts 13:33: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up
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Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, **this day have I begotten thee.**"

5. Verse 9: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
 - a. Some deny the deity of Christ, and are forced to apply the statement in Psalm 45 (which is quoted in this passage) to Solomon. But the affirmation of the Psalm does not fit Solomon. He did not love righteousness and hate iniquity; in his later years, he acquired hundreds of wives and concubines, and became a gross idolater. That Christ is the person described cannot be successfully denied.
 - 1) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - b. Verse eight described his reign as never ending and his rule as one of absolute righteousness. This verse affirms that Christ loved righteousness (doing God's will) and hated iniquity (lawlessness). He was in fact completely sinless in his earthly life (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet.2:22). If he had committed sin, the reward here ascribed to him would not have been given.
 - 1) Hebrews 12:2-3: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
 - 2) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 - c. Therefore, the inspired writer states, God anointed him with the "oil of gladness." In ancient times, kings and priests were appointed to their offices by the application of oil to their heads (cf. Lev. 8:12; Num. 3:3; 1 Sam. 10:1; 2 Sam. 2:7).
 - d. The *oil of gladness* "...[P]robably means the perfumed oil that was poured on the head, attended with expressions of joy and rejoicing. The inauguration of the Messiah as king would be an occasion of rejoicing and triumph. Thousands would exult at it—as in the coronation of a king; and thousands would be made glad by such a consecration to the office of Messiah" (Barnes, p.41).
 - e. The anointing with the oil of gladness would exalt Christ above his "fellows." These fellows would be his associates. The reference is likely to all others who occupy kingly offices. Elsewhere, Christ is said to be "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). Although there have been many prominent and powerful earthly rulers, none can compare with the King of heaven and earth.
6. Verses 10-12: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 - a. This quotation is from Psalms 102:25-27: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end."
 - b. We have already seen that Christ was directly involved in the creation of the universe (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-17). He continues his existence, unchanged and unchangeable.
 - 1) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - 2) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings

- forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
- c. But the created universe is ever changing and constantly aging and gradually winding down. The universe is described in verse eleven as a garment that grows old. The changes to the earth may not be apparent to man, but with the passing of the years, great alterations are made by time and the elements. Great cities such as Nineveh have disappeared from view, being covered by shifting sands; rivers can alter their courses; islands can appear or disappear; energy sources are consumed.
 - 1) How foolish men are who ignore the Creator and worship the creation! "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom. 1:20-25).
 - 2) The material creation will be destroyed at the Lord's second coming. "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?" (2 Pet. 3:10-12; cf. Matt. 24:35).
 - d. Continuing the figure, the Psalmist describes the universe and the heavens being folded up as one would fold up a garment. They shall be changed. That is, the present heaven and earth (universe) will be replaced by the new heavens and new earth. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pet. 3:13-14). The "new heavens and new earth" is a biblical reference to heaven itself. The material creation will be no more.
7. Verses 13-14: "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"
- a. A rhetorical question is raised in verse thirteen; the answer is so obvious that, to ask it, is to answer it. The Father has never said (and never will say) to any angel, "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." This was only said to the Son. Hence, the Son is vastly superior to any angel. Implied in the statement is the fact that Christ is not an angel.
 - b. The quotation of verse thirteen is from Psalms 110:1: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The point is, Christ is to sit at God's right hand until the time comes when all his enemies have been subdued.
 - 1) "It was the custom with ancient kings and princes to tread on the necks of their vanquished enemies, in token of their complete victory over them....This symbol of conquest is often found in the paintings of the ancient Egyptians" (Milligan, p.73).
 - 2) Compare: "Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon. And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put

- their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight" (Josh. 10:22-25).
- 3) The last enemy to be vanquished completely is death. Christ has already gained victory over death, but will not utterly destroy it until the end of time. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:25-28).
- c. Certain facts regarding angels are set forth in the scriptures.
- 1) They are powerful. "And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses" (2 Kings 19:35).
 - 2) They are very numerous.
 - a) Matthew 26:53: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?"
 - b) Hebrews 12:22: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."
 - 3) They are arranged in "ranks" (i.e., archangel, seraphim, Cherubim). "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee" (Jude 9).
 - 4) They rejoice over good news. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).
 - 5) They will be with Christ at the Second Coming. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels" (2 Thess. 1:7).
 - 6) They bore away the soul of Lazarus when he died. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried" (Luke 16:22).
 - 7) They are not authorized to preach a gospel sermon (cf. Mark 16:15; Acts 8:4).
 - 8) They are not to be worshipped.
 - a) Colossians 2:18: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind."
 - b) Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, *See thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
 - 9) They have no authority to mediate between man and God. "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- d. Angels are wondrous beings, but nevertheless they are "ministering spirits." They were created to be servants of God, and as such they have served. The point is obvious: whereas Christ is the Son of God, angels are servants of God and his Son. Therefore, let not the Jewish Christians turn back to serving the Mosaic Law, which was given by angels (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19), but continue to obey Christ.
- 1) Acts 7:53: "ho have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."
 - 2) Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

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- e. Angels were given the task of ministering to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Salvation is an inheritance, not a reward earned by meritorious effort. Angels labor in service to these heirs. Apart from the Bible we would know nothing about the existence, nature, and duty of angels; and with the Bible, there is little said about their work. Many unfounded theories and much speculation have been given about them, which must be avoided.
 - f. Eight reasons are given in the chapter detailing why Christ is superior to the angels.
 - 1) He is much better than they.
 - 2) He has obtained a more excellent name than they.
 - 3) He is the Son of God; the angels are not.
 - 4) He is worshipped by angels; the angels are worshipped by no one.
 - 5) He is King; the angels are servants.
 - 6) He is called *God*; they are not.
 - 7) He is the unchanging Creator; they are not.
 - 8) He is Lord of all; they are ministering spirits.
 - g. Guy N. Woods, responding to a question regarding what the Bible teaches about “guardian angels,” gave the following reply in his book, *Questions and Answers*, Vol. I, pp.263-265):
 - 1) Most scholars believe that the doctrine is plainly and indisputably taught therein. Jesus said, “See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10.) The writer of Hebrews informs us that angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation,” (Heb. 1:13), and David declared that “the angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” (Psalm 34:7.)
 - a) Acts 12:15 and 27:33, are also often cited in support of the view that each disciple has an angel assigned to him for guidance, protection and encouragement.
 - b) Practically all denominational writers defend the doctrine of “Guardian angels;” and various brethren among us (though by no means all), endorse the view. B.W. Johnson says that “the doctrine of guardian angels is emphatically taught in the scriptures,” and J.W. McGarvey wrote that the phrase, “their angels,” in Matt. 18:10, refers to “the angels especially charged with ministering to them individually.”
 - c) A current writer has asserted that “the New Testament teaching of angels, and particularly the providential care which they exercise over individuals, is too plain to be disputed by informed Bible students.”
 - 2) In spite of these strong affirmations by great and good men, I can only state that, in my view, the premises do not fully support the conclusions they have drawn and that the doctrine is beset by much difficulty.
 - a) Neither in the foregoing passages, nor elsewhere in the scriptures, is it said that *each* person has a guardian angel.
 - b) Neither here, nor elsewhere is it affirmed that there is actually *present* with each disciple an angel; “their angels,” are said to be “in heaven,” where they “always behold the face of” the Father. Inasmuch as angels serve in the administration of God’s plan to save (Heb. 1:13), “their angels” belong to all who inherit salvation.
 - 3) Angels were indeed actually engaged in influencing people in ancient times, but it must be remembered that these were miraculous actions performed in lieu of the inspired written record which we today have.
 - a) An angel appeared to Philip in Samaria, and to Cornelius in Caesarea, but these were instances of a type not today possible. (Acts 8:4,26; 10:3.)
 - b) Undoubtedly, in the operation of God’s marvelous plan to save, angels are participants, but this is far, very far, from saying that they direct, control, and overshadow their earthly wards as the doctrine demands.
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- c) When Peter was miraculously released from prison, and appeared at the gate of the house where the saints were assembled, the report of Rhoda of the apostle's presence there, was assumed by them to be "his angel." (Acts 12:15.) But, all this can possibly mean is that they concluded Peter had been killed by Herod and that it was his spirit which had come. There is nothing here to support the doctrine of Guardian angels; indeed, the implication is quite the reverse, inasmuch as the conclusion which the disciples drew was that Peter had been killed.
- 4) The doctrine, in my view, involves difficulties which cannot be resolved either in scripture or by experience.
- a) It cannot be reconciled with the clear, explicit teaching of the scriptures regarding the free agency of man. Those who subscribe to the doctrine believe that the angel exercises watchful care and divine protection. Protection from what? Illness, injury, violent death? Many of the Lord's finest people today languish on beds of affliction, their every wakeful hour in agony. Where is the "guardian angel" during these interminable days of pain and lonely sleepless nights? Not infrequently, Christian people, perhaps at the moment on a trip motivated by the desire to be engaged in service to God, die violently in automobile accidents. How can the theory be harmonized with these recurring all too common tragedies involving the best of Christians? A theory in conflict with known and demonstrable facts cannot be true.
- b) Matthew 18:10, positions the presence of "their *angels*," before the face of the Father in heaven—not here on earth. Many scholars believe, and I think correctly, that this is a figurative statement alluding to the Oriental view that those who are deserving of high honors and great favors are most often permitted in the king's presence. The plural form (their angels) is suggestive of all angels who serve for all the saints in God's great plan—not, that each has a separate angel. Taught metaphorically then is the fact that faithful saints, even the most obscure of them on earth, are honored and highly regarded before the throne of God.
- 5) The doctrine of "guardian angels," as popularly believed, involves many of the same errors as the current theory of direct, independent operation of the Holy Spirit, apart from the Word—the New Testament. It necessitates the conclusion that there is immediate, personal direction by the angel on his ward.
- a) How is this accomplished? By means of the implantation of thoughts in the heart? How can the recipient of such alleged suggestions determine whether they originate with the angel or are prompted by other influences? By the Bible? If so, why may not the Bible be appealed to always and everywhere for such direction, since it is the monitor by which the "leading" of the angel is determined?
- b) What possible suggestion could the angel make contributory to the well-being of the disciple which is not already set out in the scriptures? Is the angel's direction irresistible or dependent on the will of the disciple? If the former, is the disciple responsible for *his* failure to follow the angel's leading?
- 6) There are many formidable difficulties associated with the doctrine of "guardian angels." We ought to be very cautious about accepting a view which conflicts with both reason and revelation.
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HEBREWS 2

A. Hebrews 2:1-4: The Gospel is God's Confirmed Word.

1. Verse 1: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip." "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (ASV).
 - a. In view of the preceding information, there are some logical conclusions that must be made. Since Christ is vastly superior to the angels, and has given us God's word, we must give earnest heed to things which our Lord has taught us. The book of Hebrews (and many other New Testament verses) give us this admonition.
 - 1) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - 2) 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."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
 - b. If we do not give earnest heed, we will let those things we have been taught slip away from us. The Greek term [*pararheo*] literally means "to flow past, glide by (*para*, by, *rheo*, to flow), is used in Heb. 2:1, where the significance is to find oneself flowing or passing by, without giving due heed to a thing..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.339).
 - 1) The ASV and the NKJ both translate the word as "drift away." The picture presented is of one who is asea, drifting slowly away from the proper location.
 - 2) Usually when a Christian apostatizes, it is done piecemeal, by taking a small initial step, which is followed by more and bolder steps, until finally he has separated himself from salvation. It is easy to be lost; little or no exertion is necessary. If we do not take the right steps, or if we take the wrong steps, the result is sin, which ends in condemnation.
 - 3) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 4) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 5) John 3:18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."
 - 6) John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
 - 7) James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - 8) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - c. To "give the more earnest heed" signifies literally "to give heed more exceedingly" (Vine, Vol. 2, p.12, Note 7). What the phrase requires is the involvement of the whole heart. It is impossible to be pleasing to God without giving our full devotion and interest and effort.
2. Verse 2: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."
 - a. The Mosaic Law was steadfast [*bebaios*], firm and secure. It did not vacillate; it identified sin and specified the punishment. It could not be set aside by man with impunity.
 - b. The Mosaic Law was delivered through the agency of angels. The Jews admitted that angels were

involved in the transmission of their Law. No direct statement is given in the Old Testament about the work angels did in revealing the Law, but New Testament statements make that fact very plain.

- 1) Acts 7:53: "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
 - a) Israel had received the Law through the instrumentality of angels. It was an angel who appeared to Moses in the burning bush; it was an angel who led Israel from Egypt to Canaan. The Law "was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19).
 - b) The mediator was Moses (Exodus 20; John 1:17). But neither they nor their fathers had kept (obeyed) the Law. They had accused Stephen of blaspheming the Law and Moses, but they were guilty of that crime, not Stephen.
- 2) Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."
 - a) The law was added "because of transgressions." It was not the purpose of the law to reveal a plan by which man could be redeemed, but to expose the true nature of sin and impress man with its penalty. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). The law identified sin and showed man that he could not perfectly follow the law so as to save himself.
- 3) The law had a built-in time limitation [note: *till*]. It was never intended to continue as God's operative system forever. Prophecies were given during the time the law was in force to show that it was to be replaced by a new system, the law of the Messiah. When the Seed [Christ] came, the Mosaic Law was to end (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 7:12).
- c. This word (the Mosaic Law), spoken by angels, was steadfast, with every violation including a penalty imposed on the transgressor. The Old Testament record contains many examples of people being punished for disobeying the Law.
 - 1) Nadab and Abihu were burned to death when they used fire from the wrong source in offering incense to God (Lev. 10:1-2; cf. 16:12).
 - 2) The man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath day was put to death (Num. 15:32-36).
 - 3) Moses was not permitted to lead Israel into Canaan because he violated God's word by striking and speaking to the rock. God had prescribed the method by which he would bring water from a rock, but Moses changed the formula (Num. 20).
 - 4) Achan was executed when he violated God's prohibition against taking spoils from Jericho for private use (Josh. 7:25)
 - 5) Saul lost his kingdom when he failed to heed God's instructions regarding the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15).
- d. The apostle has shown Christ's superiority over the angels (Heb. 1:4-14), therefore the Law of the Gospel is superior to the Law of Moses; the gospel is also steadfast, and violations of its truth will result in definite penalties.
 - 1) Luke 16:31: "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more

sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

3. Verses 3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - a. Where much is given, much is required.
 - 1) Matthew 11:20-24: "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."
 - 2) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - b. The inspired writer asks, "How shall we escape" God's wrath if we violate the gospel, which gives us such wondrous blessings? The rhetorical question answers itself: we cannot escape punishment if we disregard the gospel!
 - 1) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - a) The false teachers described here by the Lord are those who openly and plainly identify themselves with Christ. They are very religious folks. Their problem is not one of idleness but of zealous activity of the wrong sort.
 - 3) "The Pharisees were exceedingly devoted to prayer, and they led the people to believe that every prayerful man would be saved. The Mohammedans and the Romanists are subject to the same delusion, as may be seen in their punctilious observance of the forms of prayer while habitually neglecting many of the common rules of morality. It is here taught that prayer, unattended by *doing the will* of the Father in heaven, can not save us" (McGarvey, Commentary on Matthew, p.73).
 - 4) "The double use of 'Lord' probably suggests surprise, as if they shall exclaim, 'What, Lord: How is this? Are we to be disowned? Surely you know that we have prophesied (preached), etc., by thy name?' The three-fold repetition of the question, each time in the same form,

- expresses in the liveliest manner the astonishment of the speakers at the attitude of the Lord now assumes toward them" (ALC, 1959, p.111).
- 5) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
- c. Punishment is promised to those who neglect the "great salvation" (the blessings of the gospel). The statement is addressed to Christians, thus plainly implying the possibility of falling from God's grace and being lost. Other passages state this premise equally clear:
- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 2) Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - 3) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
- d. It is not necessary for one to take up arms and make open war against God to be lost; all that we need to do is neglect the gospel! This is true of both Christians and non-Christians. Compare:
- 1) John 3:18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."
 - 2) John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."
 - 3) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - 6) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."
 - 7) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And

- again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- e. The salvation obtained through the gospel is great for various reasons:
- 1) The salvation provided by the gospel is great when it is contrasted with the Mosaic Law. The Old Law was primarily concerned with the physical and material; it offered Canaan as one of its greatest blessings. The New Law is primarily concerned with the spiritual; it offers forgiveness of sin and the hope of eternal life in heaven as its greatest blessings.
 - 2) The salvation provided by the gospel is great because of what it saves: the soul from Hell.
 - a) Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - b) Revelation 21:8: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”
 - 3) The salvation provided by the gospel is great because it pardons sin.
 - a) Ezekiel 18:20: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”
 - b) Matthew 26:28: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
 - c) Acts 13:38-39: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”
 - d) Hebrews 8:12: “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”
 - e) Hebrews 10:17-18: “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”
 - 4) The salvation provided by the gospel is great because it is universal, offered to every accountable person.
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - b) Galatians 3:26-29: “For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise” (ASV).
 - c) Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”
 - d) 1 Timothy 2:4-5: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
- f. The great salvation (the gospel of Christ) was first spoken to the human family by the Lord himself. This does not say that Old Testament people knew nothing about the Messiah and his system, for there were certain pieces of information given to them; but, what they knew, was sketchy at best.
- 1) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 2) Genesis 12:3: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in
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- thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
- 3) John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad."
 - 4) Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:10-12: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."
- g. With the ministry of Christ, the full message of the gospel system began to be unfolded, first to the Jews, and subsequently to the Gentiles. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord revealed the nature of his kingdom by showing the kind of lives its citizens would be required to lead (Matt. 5-7).
- 1) He selected certain men to serve as his apostles, and gave them the miraculous guidance of the Holy Spirit, who revealed God's word to them and to the prophets upon whom the apostles laid hands. The plan of the ages, which God formulated in eternity before time began, and which was kept secret throughout the Old Testament ages, was now revealed by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, who inspired the hand-picked men to receive and communicate it to mankind.
 - a) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - b) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - d) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
 - e) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men*
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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: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- f) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
- 2) We remember that Judas fell away and was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1), and a few years later, Saul of Tarsus, was especially selected by Christ and appointed to the apostleship (Acts 9).
- h. The word which Christ began to reveal during his public ministry, he fully unfolded through the apostles. Twelve of these apostles were with the Lord during his earthly mission; they heard his great messages and saw his wondrous miracles. They themselves were empowered to perform great miraculous feats. These supernatural works were designed primarily to confirm the messages they preached to be God's eternal truth. The same purpose was served by the miracles Christ worked.
 - 1) Mark 2:5-12: "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But **that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins**, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, **Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house**. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."
 - 2) When the apostles carried the gospel around the Roman world, they performed miraculous acts which likewise confirmed to their auditors that what they spake was truly God's word. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and **confirming the word with signs** following. Amen" (Mark 16:20).
 - 3) John 20:30-31 "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
 - 4) Luke 24:47-49: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 5) Acts 1:5,8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Cf. Acts 2:1ff.
 - 6) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So

- then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
- 7) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: "Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity."
 - 8) Ephesians 4:8-13: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)
 - 9) Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
- i. The miracles which the apostles and prophets did, originated with Almighty God; when men saw these supernatural signs, they were seeing the power of God in action. God bore witness by means of the miracles he empowered them to do. The Father gave to the apostles and selected persons in the church, abilities as he saw fit, not as they ordered.
 - 1) "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:8-10).
 - 2) Acts 8:14-17: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (cf. Rom. 1:11).
 - j. These miraculous manifestations are divided into four groups in verse four of the text (cf. Acts 2:22; 2 Corinthians 12:12).
 - 1) Some are called *signs*.
 - a) Christ worked with the early saints, "confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).
 - b) The Jews asked for a sign from the Lord to verify his message to them (John 2:18).
 - c) As a sign, a miracle was a token of the near presence and working of God.
 - d) They validated the message spoken (Ex. 4:1-9; 2 Cor. 12:12).
 - 2) Some are called *wonders*.
 - a) This term accentuates the astonishment felt by the witnesses on seeing a supernatural event. "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they

were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion" (Mark 2:11-12).

- b) The purpose of a "wonder" was to startle men out of their indifference and cause them to open their eyes to a spiritual appeal that was being directed to them. "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them" (Acts 14:8-18).
- 3) Some were called *mighty works*, or simply *miracles*.
 - a) Matthew 11:20; Acts 2:22; 2 Corinthians 12:12: the same Greek word is translated as "mighty works" and "miracles" and "mighty deeds" in these three passages. This Greek term is used in our text.
 - b) The emphasis of this term is on the power of him who is the source of these works.
 - c) Supernatural works are such demonstrations of heaven's power that the term *miracle* has come to be the common term by which we describe them.
- 4) Another common term by which all these supernatural works are described in the scriptures is *spiritual gifts* (Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 12:1). God **gave** these powers.
 - a) Romans 1:11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."
 - b) All the miraculous powers possessed by members of the church in the first century are classified under this heading. The apostles had at least one ability beyond any other saint: the power to lay hands on another and thus confer a spiritual gift.
 - c) The nine spiritual gifts are identified in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues."
- k. Each of the three Biblical Ages [Patriarchal, Mosiac, Christian] began with miraculous demonstrations. When God concluded the six days of creation, the miracles ceased. When Israel entered Canaan, the manna ceased and the pillar of fire and cloud no longer led them (Josh. 5:12). When the gospel was fully revealed, recorded and confirmed, miracles ceased.
 - 1) When an ocean liner leaves the dock, tugboats guide it out to the open sea, at which time it takes over its own guidance and propulsion; the tug boats turn loose and return to port.
 - 2) When a great building is under construction, scaffolding is used, but when the building is completed, the scaffolding is removed, and the building fulfills its functions.
 - 3) Just so with the miraculous works of the first century; when the church had received the full gospel, it was able to fulfill its functions and perform its duties, without the need for miracles.

B. Hebrews 2:5-9: The Humanity of Jesus.

1. Verse 5: "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."
 - a. It is clear, states our inspired author, that God did not put the angels in charge of the world, in the Old Testament days or in the New Testament age.
 - b. "In this verse the apostle returns to the subject which he had been discussing in chapt. 1—the superiority of the Messiah to the angels. From that subject he had been diverted (chapt. 2:1-4), by showing them what must be the consequences of defection from Christianity, and the danger of neglecting it. Having shown that, he now proceeds with the discussion, and shows that an honour had been conferred on the Lord Jesus which had never been bestowed on the angels—to wit, *the supremacy over this world*.
 - 1) "This he does by proving from the Old Testament that such a dominion was given to *man* (vers. 6-8), and then that this dominion was *in fact* exercised by the Lord Jesus, ver. 9.
 - 2) "At the same time, he meets an objection which a Jew would be likely to make. It is, that Jesus appeared to be far inferior to the angels. He was a man of a humble condition. He was poor, and despised. He had none of the external honour which was shown to Moses—the founder of the Jewish economy; none of the apparent honour which belongs to angelic beings. This implied objection the apostle removes by showing the reason why he became so. It was proper, since he came to redeem man, that he should be a man, and not take on himself the nature of angels; and for the same reason it was proper that he should be subjected to sufferings, and be made a man of sorrows, ver. 10-17.
 - 3) "The remark of the apostle in the verse before us is, that God had never put the world in subjection to the angels as he had to the Lord Jesus. They had no jurisdiction over it; they were mere ministering spirits; but the world had been put under the dominion of the Lord Jesus" (Barnes, p.57).
 - c. Christ is the one in charge of this world, and possesses all authority.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 3) He reigns through the gospel, but only a small percentage of each generation will accept his power. They do so to their own hurt.
 - a)
 - d. The "world to come" is the Christian Age. While Christ was in his earthly ministry, the Mosaic Age was about to come to an end, and the reign of the Messiah was about to begin. When this letter was penned, he was sitting on his regal throne.
 - 1) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - 3) Colossians 2:12-15: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,

- which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."
- 4) Hebrews 8:13: "In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away." The external features of Judaism were on the verge of disappearing completely, which occurred when the Romans destroyed the temple and scattered the Jews shortly after this epistle was written.
2. Verses 6-8: "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."
- a. This is quoted from Psalm 8, which Paul uses in reference to Christ. Did the psalmist have Christ in mind when he penned those words, or does it also apply to mankind in general? This question has been subjected to debate by the scholars through the centuries, so our words here may have little to add to the discussion.
- b. When God created man in the beginning, he gave him dominion over the lower creation. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 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" (Gen. 1:26-28).
- 1) Man is superior to the animal creatures, even though he is bitten by snakes, endangered by wild beasts, gored by bulls, and abused by insects. We are in charge of affairs, we use the lower creatures to our own advantage, and we are usually able to protect ourselves from dangerous animals.
- 2) Man is also inferior to the angels. One angel was able to slay 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in the short space of one night, perhaps instantly (2 Kings 19:35).
- 3) To this point, certainly the psalmist's statement fits mankind in general, and our text shows that it described Christ.
- c. Our text states in verse eight that not all things were under the feet of man; man does not exercise complete control over his world. What man lost by Adam's fall into sin, was regained by Christ's perfect obedience to the will of God. Sin and death reign in our world. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).
- 1) We lost eternal life by Adam's sin, but we gain resurrection from the dead by the obedience of Christ. "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:21-23).
- 2) The Father is concerned with our plight. But what is there about fallen man that would invite the attention of Almighty God? This question is raised by the psalmist. Why is God concerned over the welfare of man? This very truth shows that mankind in general is in the view of the psalmist. Christ was made a little lower than the angels (verse 9); this was necessary if he was to die in behalf of fallen man (Isa. 53; Matt. 26:28; Acts 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:17-21).
- 3) Christ now exercises the reins of power, serving as king over the eternal kingdom, head of the spiritual body, and founder of the church, all of which are different depictions of the same organization of saved people. "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when
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- he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:19-23; cf. Matt. 16:13-19; Col. 1:13-18).
- d. The original word for "little" in both Hebrew and Greek is said to mean either a brief period of time or a lesser rank. In the case of man in general, each of us is a little lower than the angels. In the case of Christ, it was only for a little time that he was lower than the angels—because he dwelt in a physical body. When an angel was sent on an earthly mission, it was necessary for them to take on a mortal body for a short time. They are described as men, often as young men.
 - e. "The writer's object is to show that the *salvation*, the new order of things inaugurated by Christ, is in pursuance of the original purpose of creation, to wit, that universal dominion was to pertain to man, and not to angels" (Vincent, p.1099).
3. Verse 9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - a. Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, but for only a limited period of time: the years he spent living in a human body on earth, as a member of the human family. And even then, angels were his ministering servants (Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13; Matt. 26:53). It was because it was necessary for him to taste death for every man that he was made a little lower than the angels.
 - b. He was made a little lower than the angels to make it possible for him to suffer death. Death for a member of the Godhead is an absolute impossibility. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:5-11).
 - c. Following his ordeal on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension back to heaven, our Lord was exalted to the right hand of the Father, crowned with glory and honor, and now exercises all the regal powers of his eternal, spiritual kingdom. In that capacity, his glory, authority, honor and status make him to be vastly superior to all the angels. Again, the point in the context is, if we give up Christ, we give up all that matters.
 - 1) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 2) Isaiah 53:12: "Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:2-3: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
 - 4) Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 5) 1 Peter 3:22: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

- d. Our Lord tasted death for every man, but not every man will avail himself of the benefits provided by his death. Matthew 26:28 states that he would shed his blood “for many.” It was shed for all, but he knew that not all would desire the blessings enough to accept the terms.
- 1) 1 John 2:1-2: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"
 - 2) Romans 10:16: "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
 - 3) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

C. Hebrews 2:10-18: God's Purpose is to Bring Many Sons to Glory.

1. Verse 10: “For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”
 - a. The death of Christ complements and enhances God's work. As dark and terrible as the cross seems to us, it is clothed with beauty, glorious wisdom, and power. The sacrifice of Christ is the perfect and only possible remedy for sin. The cross has a powerful attraction to any man who will think about its significance.
 - 1) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." If this sacrificial act does not touch us, then God does not want us around him (cf. Ps. 15). An unfeeling heart is hard, and not willing to obey God. “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved” (Ps. 15).
 - 2) What other means could have been used to make sinful men **want** to serve God? There must be some compelling power to cause man to devote himself to him. The sacrificial death of Christ is the means which the infinite wisdom of God chose to serve that end.
 - 3) It was fitting that Christ should die on the cross in order that many sons might be brought to glory (go to heaven). When God “resolved to bring many sons unto glory, there was then imposed on him (if I may say it with reverence) a moral necessity, deep and profound as his own nature, to qualify Jesus for the great work that was before him: and this, it seems, could be done only by means of his incarnation, sufferings, and death” (Milligan, p.91).
 - 4) The one who initiated this process was God the Father, who is the originator of all things and for whom all things were created. As we have before noted, Christ was the agent of the Father in the creation of the universe (Col. 1:15-17).
 - b. “The apostle aims here to meet and refute a Jewish objection founded on the humiliation and suffering of Christ. ‘We have heard out of the law,’ said the Jews on one occasion, ‘that Christ abideth forever’ (John 12:34)...To many of the Jews, these passages of Scripture seemed wholly inconsistent with the humble life and the ignominious death of the Lord Jesus. And it was therefore eminently proper to remove this objection as far as possible, by showing just at this point of the argument that the humiliation, sufferings, and death of Christ are, in fact, an essential part of the scheme of redemption” (Milligan, p.91).
 - c. Christ is called the “captain” of those who are God's children. The same Greek term is translated “author” in Hebrews 12:2 and “prince” in Acts 3:15. The word “primarily signifies one who takes a lead in, or provides the first occasion of, anything....in Heb. 2:10, the word suggests a

combination of the meaning of leader with that of the source from whence a thing proceeds” (Vine, Vol. 1, p.88).

- 1) Acts 3:15: "And killed the **Prince** of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:2: "Looking unto Jesus the **author** and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 - 3) "The word here rendered *captain (archeegos)* means properly *a leader*; one who at the head of an army or other company leads them onward to the goal or place of their destination. The word is applied by Philo to Adam, who, as Paul says, 'was a type of him that was to come.' Rom. 5:14.) These are both captains or leaders of the entire race. But they lead to different goals, and in opposite directions. The first Adam led all to death; whereas the second Adam leads all to life. 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' (1 Cor. 15:22.) 'For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall the many, be made righteous.' (Rom. 5:19)" [Milligan, Gospel Advocate Commentaries].
- d. Christ was made perfect through sufferings. The Jewish leaders perceived that if they could only manipulate the Roman governor to crucify Jesus, the Lord's influence among the Jews would be nullified, in view of the fact that the Mosaic Law pronounced a curse on anyone hanged on a tree.
- 1) Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance."
 - 2) However, God was able to use this very means to accomplish his ends. The beauty and power of Christ's sacrificial crucifixion overwhelms the inherent shame of being nailed to a cross. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13).
- e. Our Lord was made perfect; this was accomplished by means of the suffering he underwent. The statement is plainly stated in Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- 1) "The 'perfecting' of Jesus corresponds to his being '*crowned with glory and honour*,' although it is not a mere synonym for that phrase; for the writer conceives the perfecting not as an act but as a process. '*To make perfect*' does not imply moral imperfections in Jesus, but only the consummation of that human experience of sorrow and pain through which he must pass in order to become the leader of his people's salvation" (Vincent, p.1102).
 - 2) Through his sufferings, Christ was made full, complete, and lacking nothing. The Father fully qualified him to be the perfect Savior. In every real sense, our Lord has ever been perfect, but only after he experienced death on the cross, could he become our *perfect Savior*. He has always been sinlessly perfect, but it was not until his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension that he could fill the role as *perfect Redeemer*—fully qualified and equipped to do the job.
2. Verse 11: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."
- a. God is the Supreme One; Christ is his Son; we are the children of God; Christ is our elder brother. Our Lord is not ashamed to be known as our brother.
 - b. God the Father initiated the process by which we are sanctified; Christ executed the plan by which sanctification is possible. We are sanctified and are united with both the Father and the Son.
 - 1) To be sanctified is to be "made clean, to be purified, to be made holy; to be consecrated; to be set apart from a common to a holy use.
 - 2) Compare: "And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate

- and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy” (Ex. 29:33-37).
- c. Christ took on our form willingly, and without shame, to sanctify us. The sanctification of the Mosaic Law illustrates our own sanctification (Ex. 29:33-37).
 - 1) Ephesians 5:26: "That he might **sanctify** and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:12: "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might **sanctify** the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."
 - 3) Romans 5:6-8: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
 - d. Christ was not ashamed to take on the form of a man, or to die on the cross, or to be associated with mere humans.
 - 1) Philippians 2:5-11: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 2) John 17:19-23: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."
3. Verse 12: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."
- a. As proof that he is not ashamed of us, and that Jesus fits the predicted word-pictures of the Messiah, the author gives three quotations (in verses 12-13) from the Old Testament:
 - 1) Psalms 22:22: "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee."
 - 2) Psalms 18:2: "The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower."
 - 3) Isaiah 12:2: "Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation."
 - 4) Isaiah 8:18: "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion."
 - b. "This is a quotation from the twenty-second Psalm, in the course of which, David, as a type of Christ, pleads for help....
 - 1) "After this he changes his tone from the deepest despondency, and breaks out into

- exclamations of gratitude and praise to God for his signal deliverance and the many mercies bestowed on him (vv. 11-21). In all this, David refers primarily to his own personal experience, under the severe trials and persecutions which he endured from Saul....
- 2) "But, trusting in God, he was delivered from all his foes; and afterward, he declared the name of Jehovah to his brethren; and in the midst of the Church, or congregation of Israel, he often celebrated the praise of his Deliverer. And just so it was with Christ, the great antitype of David, to whom also the words of this Psalm have special reference, and to whom they are, in fact, several times applied in the New Testament....
 - 3) "But why does our author refer to it?...His object, as we have seen, in this part of his argument, is to show the very intimate relation that exists between Christ and his people; it is to remind his Hebrew brethren in Christ and to convince others, that the Messiah was to be *a man*; a man of sorrows; one in nature and sympathy with the 'many sons' whom he is bringing home to glory....
 - 4) "He was writing for the Hebrews, all of whom had the most implicit confidence in the Divine origin and plenary inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures. And by appealing to these sacred Oracles, he not only establishes the fact of Christ's oneness with the sons of God, but he furthermore shows that this was all in harmony with God's ancient purpose" (Milligan, pp.94f).
- c. In David's case, the "church" (congregation) was the assembled people of Israel. In Christ's case, "church" is used in reference to his people, Christians, who have been called out of the world by his gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14). By definition, *church* means "the called out ones."
 - d. David sang praises unto God in the assemblies of Israel; Christ sang praises unto God amid his church. Prior to leaving the upper room on the eve of his crucifixion, our Lord and his apostles joined in the singing of a hymn, praising God. "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26:30). Although the church was not then in actual existence, it was present in its preparatory state. Whether Christ joins with his people today as we sing praise to God, is perhaps beyond our present full comprehension. He is certainly united with us as we offer our worship to God. Also, each avenue of our worship is directed to the Father through the Lord, so at least in that sense his adoration of the Almighty is involved.
 - e. Notice that the kind of music offered in this avenue of worship is singing. The church on earth today has no authority to offer unto God any other kind of musical praise.
 - 1) Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." It is highly significant that in the immediate context of a prime statement about having the Lord's authority for all we teach and practice in religion (verse 17), is found one of the primary statements concerning singing.
 - 2) The Greek term (in our text) translated *sing* is from *hymneo*, and literally means "hymn thee" (Vincent, p. 1102). The same word is used in Acts 16:25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and **sang praises** unto God: and the prisoners heard them."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - f. In New Testament worship, *singing* (not playing a mechanical instrument of music) is specified in every case where the subject is addressed:
 - 1) Romans 15:9: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and **sing** unto thy name."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will **sing** with the spirit, and I will **sing** with the understanding also."
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- 3) Hebrews 2:12: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I **sing** praise unto thee."
 - 4) James 5:13: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him **sing** psalms."
 - 5) Acts 16:25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and **sang** praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."
 - 6) Ephesians 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - 7) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
4. Verse 13: "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me."
- a. Continuing his quotation from Old Testament Scriptures, our inspired writer brings two passages to our attention, by which he seeks to convince his auditors that Jesus is not disqualified as Messiah because he suffered hardships and death; in fact, these experiences coincide with Old Testament descriptions of him. The suffering Savior of Isaiah 53 is also the all-powerful Monarch of Daniel 7:13-14.
 - b. In the first reference, we are not told precisely which Old Testament passage is intended. The point of the citation is to show that the Messiah was to be a man, "endowed with all the attributes and sympathies of our nature. And this he does here by showing that, as a man, Christ, like David, felt his dependence on God and trusted in him" (Milligan, p.96). Several Old Testament statements fit the citation, including these:
 - 1) 2 Samuel 22:3: "The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence."
 - 2) Psalms 18:2: "The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower."
 - 3) Isaiah 12:2: "Behold, God *is* my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH *is* my strength and *my* song; he also is become my salvation."
 - c. In the second reference, a prophetic utterance by Isaiah is the one meant. "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion" (Isa. 8:18).
 - 1) "How can words which in their first intention have a clear reference to Isaiah and his children be applied to Christ and his disciples? The proper answer to this question is to be found in the typical relations which Isaiah and his children sustained to Christ and the children of God....And whatever, therefore, was said of Isaiah and his sons, *as types*, has reference also to Christ and the children which God has given him, *as antitypes*" (Milligan, p.96).
 - 2) "This is only a part of the passage in Isaiah, and seems to have been partially quoted because the point of the quotation consisted in the fact that he sustained to them somewhat of the relation of a parent toward his children—as having the same nature, and as being identified with them in interest and feeling....He became one of them, and he had in them all the interest which a father has in his sons....The point is, that he was a man; that since those who were to be redeemed partook of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same (vers. 14), and thus identified himself with them" (Barnes, p.70).
 - d. It seems strange somehow to think of Christ in the role of *father*. However, having disciples who have obeyed his gospel and become his devoted followers, places him in the position of authority, a supremacy that is motivated by loving concern.
 - 1) His children are described in verse eleven as his brethren, so the relationship is spiritual. Elsewhere, we are portrayed as his *joint*-heirs. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together"

- (Rom. 8:17). Of course, this does not make us equal to him; in this case, he is the elder brother. In ancient cultures, the elder brother (the firstborn) received the primary inheritance from the father, with the other sons obtaining lesser awards. In heaven, obviously Christ will still be part of the Godhead, and we will be subservient to him, even as we are under his authority now.
- 2) Our Lord is depicted in prophecy as “Everlasting Father.” “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, **The everlasting Father**, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:6-7).
5. Verse 14: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”
 - a. It was necessary for Christ to have a flesh and blood physical body in order to die; deity cannot die.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:5: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but **a body** hast thou prepared me.” This physical body was sacrificed on the cross, perhaps the most painful death devised by man.
 - 2) 1 Timothy 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.”
 - 3) 1 John 4:3: “And every spirit that confesseth not that **Jesus Christ is come in the flesh** is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”
 - b. His death was intended to destroy the hold the devil has maintained over humanity since Adam and Eve first fell into sin. The names given to this evil being is illustrative of his nature and work.
 - 1) *Devil* means “accuser” or “slanderer.” If we perceive him as slandering us before God, we will be less inclined to heed his enticements. He slandered Job:
 - a) “Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face” (Job 1:9-11).
 - b) “And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face” (Job 2:4-5).
 - 2) *Satan* means “adversary” or “one who hates.” He is our most deadly foe. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).
 - 3) Prior to the coming of Christ, Satan had the power to send his demons into certain individuals to torment them in various ways. Christ and his apostles exercised miraculous power to cast out these demons. With the cessation of the miracles of the first century, this power has been taken away from the devil. This was made possible by the successful mission of Christ, including his death and resurrection from the dead.
 - a) Matthew 17:14-17: “And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer

- you? bring him hither to me.”
- b) Mark 9:20-27: “And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.”
 - c) Luke 9:37-42: “And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.”
- 4) However, Satan only has power over us today to the extent we allow him to have it.
 - a) "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7).
 - b) "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:9).
 - c. Not only did Christ destroy the power Satan had in afflicting humanity by the use of his demons, but by his resurrection from the dead, he gave assurance that we also will be raised up from the grave. The “gates of Hades” (cf. Matt. 16:18) could not retain the spirit of our Lord, who burst asunder its bars, and was resurrected to life just as he had promised.
 - 1) Matthew 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
 - d. “Satan’s weapon, death, was therefore wrested from him and used as the instrument of Satan’s own destruction; and just as David took Goliath’s own sword and cut off the giant’s own head with it, David’s greater Son took Satan’s weapon of death and destroyed him with it....How can it be said that Christ has brought the devil to naught? Satan was brought to naught in that his sole purpose regarding mankind was absolutely frustrated and eternally defeated....Christ became a man, paid the penalty due Adam’s transgression, and opened up the way of renewal for the lost fellowship with God....Satan’s failure was total and complete. He was not able to destroy mankind, but on the other hand found himself used as a means of testing and developing men...” (Coffman, pp.55f).
 - e. Doubtless the devil thought that if he could bring about the death of Christ, the plans of God would go awry, especially since to die on a cross, to the Jewish people, carried with it an inherent curse. But in his infinite wisdom, God was able to use the devil’s own tool (death) against him.
6. Verse 15: “And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”
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- a. The subject of this verse is Christ. Consider the flow of information beginning in the immediate context (2:9-18):
 - 1) The leading subject in verse nine is Jesus, but at the end of the verse, God becomes the focal point; verse ten speaks of it being fitting that God should make the captain of our salvation (Christ) perfect through sufferings.
 - 2) Verse eleven says that he who sanctifies (Christ) and they who are sanctified (Christians) are one with God (the Father); therefore, Christ is not ashamed to call those who follow him (faithful Christians) his brethren.
 - 3) Verses twelve and thirteen are quotations of Old Testament Scriptures which are statements attributed to Christ: he declared (announced) the Father's name and sang praise to him in the midst of the church; he put his trust in the Father; and spoke of the children God had given him.
 - 4) Verse fourteen clearly speaks of Christ taking on a fleshly body so that he could destroy the devil, who held mankind in the grasp of death. Verse fifteen continues this thought, retaining Christ as the subject. It is Christ who remains the subject on through the rest of the chapter.
 - b. The fear of death is natural and universal. Often pain, misery, and hatred attend death. The decay of the grave and the uncertainty of what lies beyond death heighten our fear and dread of death. This was especially true of those who lived before Christ, and is still true of those out of Christ.
 - 1) Job 18:14: "His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors." The *king of terrors* Bildad speaks of is death.
 - 2) Weak Christians are still subject to these terrors, but mature saints have reached a state of spiritual growth where they happily anticipate death, even though there is always the sorrow of parting from loved ones.
 - c. Isaiah 25:7-8: "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*."
 - 1) The mountain spoken of is Mt. Zion, where Jerusalem is situated. It was on this same mountain (according to Bible scholars) that Abraham intended to offer Isaac (Gen. 22).
 - 2) "Isaiah's mention of the 'veil' or 'face of the covering' suggests that when the victory is achieved, a 'veil' will be destroyed. That occurred when the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, an event conspicuously connected with the death of Christ on the cross" (Coffman, p.57). "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent" (Matt. 27:51).
 - d. "Since the sting of death is sin (1 Cor. 15:55), Christ's providing the remedy for sin has removed the most dreadful part of the fear of death, which is the fear of punishment afterward....It is the sure and certain hope of the resurrection that robs death of so much of its terror..." (Coffman, p.57).
 - 1) John 11:25: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 1:10: "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
 - e. What a marvelous blessing faithful Christians have in the hope of the glorious resurrection and eternal life in heaven! Death loses its terror in the presence of hope!
 - 1) Psalms 23:4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:54-57: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?"
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The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

- 3) Philippians 1:21,23: "For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain....For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."
7. Verse 16: "For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham."
- a. The verse could be translated two different ways.
 - 1) The margin says, "He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold."
 - 2) "For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham" (NKJ).
 - 3) "For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham" (ASV).
 - 4) "For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham" (ESV).
 - 5) "For surely it is not angels he is concerned with, but the descendants of Abraham" (English Study Bible).
 - b. One view: "The Greek word (*eplambanetai*) means (1) to take hold of any thing as one's own; and (2) to take hold of any person with the view of helping him. In this latter sense the word is used here by our author. His object is, not as was generally supposed by the ancient commentators to reassert the fact that Christ took on himself our nature, but rather to assign a reason for his having done so. Christ's mission, he says, was not to take hold of angels and deliver them from slavery; but it was to take hold of man, and to free him from the bondage of sin and death" (Milligan, p.101).
 - c. Another view: "The meaning of this verse is that Christ took upon himself the flesh of the seed of Abraham; and the expression 'he took hold of' is very illuminating, for it shows that Christ had an existence before he decided to partake of flesh and blood, and that it was by his own volition that he did so" (Coffman, p.58).
 - d. Some additional thoughts:
 - 1) Christ took no action to save fallen angels (see 2 Pet. 2:4). We have no need to know why, else that information would have been given. No where in all the universe is forgiveness offered to fallen angels or to the devil.
 - 2) No forgiveness is offered in the laws of nature; those who violate those laws, must suffer the consequences. No poisonous snake offers forgiveness to its victim for stepping on it.
 - 3) The law of Moses offered no actual forgiveness. "But in those *sacrifices there is a remembrance again made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:3-4).
 - 4) Any soul that despises God's efforts to save it is worthy of death.
 - a) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."
 - b) Matthew 22:12: "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."
 - c) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

- 5) Why did God choose Abraham to be the father of the chosen race that brought Christ into the world? Not by any whim or partiality, but by sound logic. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19).
8. Verses 17-18: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."
- a. The word *behooved* "expresses an obligation which arises out of any work or enterprise already undertaken. The Apostle means to say, therefore that since Christ had voluntarily undertaken the work of redeeming the seed of Abraham from the bondage of sin and Satan, he thereby incurred the further obligation of being made like them" (Milligan, p.102). "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15).
 - b. Christ is a merciful high priest. He knows from first-hand experience what it is like to live in a human body, with its frailties; he is fully aware of the strong pull of temptation, as well as the difficulties associated with obeying God. Having personal knowledge of our struggles and being filled with love for mankind, Christ is equipped to show compassion to us. The Jewish Christians would be familiar with the cold indifference of the Sadducees, and could appreciate the compassion shown by Christ.
 - c. Christ is a faithful high priest. He was entirely faithful to God and he is faithful in discharging his duties as high priest. The destiny of all mankind hung in the balance when Christ underwent the temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). If he had fallen victim to either of these temptations, or to any of those he subsequently encountered, no one who sinned would have any hope of heaven.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
 - d. This is the first occurrence of the term "high priest" in Hebrews, and is the first application of that term to Christ. "In fulfillment of the office of high priest, Christ is the reality of that which was typically performed by the Jewish high priest who, on the day of atonement, entered into the holiest place and offered blood for the sins of the people; Christ entered heaven and offered his own blood for the sins of all men; and, just as the priest slew the victim prior to offering its blood, Christ offered himself upon the cross, thus combining in himself the functions of both the victim and the one offering the blood" (Coffman, p.62).
 - e. In his unique role, Christ is both the sacrifice and the high priest. He made reconciliation (propitiation, ASV) for the sins of the people. "The word here rendered 'to make reconciliation for' (*ilascomai*), means, in classic Greek, to appease or to propitiate; as, for instance, when Homer, Hesiod, and others, speak of appeasing the wrath of the gods by means of sacrifices. But it is a significant fact, that neither this nor the corresponding Hebrew word...is ever so used in the sacred writings. God is never made the direct object of this or any other word of like import in either the Old or the New Testament. In no part of the inspired word do we find such an expression as, to appease God's wrath or to reconcile him to man by means of sacrifice. The whole tenor of the inspired word goes to show that God had compassion on the world, and sent his Son to redeem it (1 John 4:9,10)" (Milligan, p.103).
 - f. In the relationship between God and man, it was man who broke the fellowship by violating God's will. It is not God who needs to be reconciled to man, but rather man needs to be brought back to God. The sacrifice of Christ was made in order to make it possible for man to return to Jehovah.
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- 1) 2 Corinthians 5:19: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."
 - 2) Romans 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."
 - 3) 1 John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."
 - 4) 1 John 4:10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."
 - 5) "...God's righteousness and justice could be vindicated only by the invocation of the penalty of death. The great love and mercy of God are seen in that he paid it himself, in the person of his Son upon the cross..." (Coffman, p.63).
- g. Christ suffered intense temptations, not only in the wilderness (Matt. 4), but at other times. "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, **he departed from him for a season**" (Luke 4:13). Having overcome temptations, and having endured all manner of hardship and trouble, and having offered himself in our behalf, he is now able to fill the role as merciful high priest, and is able to offer succor to us. No one can offer comfort to a widow better than a woman who has lost her husband; none can comfort a bereft mother as well as a mother who has lost her child. The afflictions and troubles suffered by the Lord insure his compassionate concern and interest in our problems.
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HEBREWS 3

A. Hebrews 3:1-6: Christ is Superior to Moses.

1. Verse 1: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."
 - a. Wherefore: "That is, since Christ sustains such a character as has been stated in the previous chapter; since he is so able to succour those who need assistance; since he assumed our nature that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest, his character ought to be attentively considered, and we ought to endeavour fully to understand it" (Barnes, p.77).
 - b. Holy brethren:
 - 1) Christians are holy because they have been separated from the love, conduct, and influences of this present evil world, and are consecrated unto God. *Holy* [*hagios*] describes those who are *sanctified* [*hagiasmos*].
 - 2) Christians are brethren because they are all members of God's spiritual family, and therefore are spiritual brothers and sisters.
 - c. Partakers of the heavenly calling:
 - 1) The source of our calling is heaven. The call we received to become children of God was issued through the gospel, which was brought to us by faithful saints [*hagios*]. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14).
 - 2) The calling indicated is the vocation into which we have been called—the Christian life. Our role in life is focused on heaven, it is eternal in scope, it is dedicated to the service of Christ, it entails keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, and its emphasis is upon others (not self).
 - a) Colossians 3:1-4: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
 - b) 1 Peter 2:9,11: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light....Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."
 - c) 2 Peter 1:10-12: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth."
 - d) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - d. We are urged to consider the Apostle and High Priest, Christ Jesus. This requires us to ponder most carefully and deeply the nature and status of Christ. Our English word "consider" is from the Latin *con* (with) and *sideris* (stars). "One who takes the time to behold the beauty and majesty of the night sky is literally *with the stars* in his thoughts and emotions and cannot fail to receive deep impressions of awe, wonder, and appreciation. It is with this attitude that men are invited to consider Christ" (Coffman, p.66).
 - e. Christ is called an *Apostle*. An apostle by definition identifies one who has been sent on a mission. Our Lord selected and dispatched certain men to carry on his work after his ascension; these men

are called his “apostles.” In this case, Christ himself is called an Apostle; he had been sent from heaven to earth on a mission planned from eternity.

- 1) Malachi 3:1: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."
 - 2) John 12:49: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."
 - 3) 1 John 4:14: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world."
 - 4) John 3:17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." The Pulpit Commentary offers this comment on this verse: "Observe that the word 'sent' replaces the word 'gave' of the previous statement....The word carries with it 'the sending on a special mission' (see notes on John 20:21), and arrests attention by denoting the immediate function of the Son of God's mission into the world" [Biblesoft].
- f. Christ is also called *High Priest* of our profession (confession, ASV).
- 1) "Christ's representation here as High Priest is a part of the argument for his superiority over Moses, who was not a high priest. Moses was prophet, mediator, and king (in a sense); but the office of high priest pertained only to Aaron. Christ was all that Moses was, and more; he was also High Priest" (Coffman, p.66).
 - 2) "This was important, because the office of high-priest was that which eminently distinguished the Jewish religion, and because the Christian religion proposed to abolish that. It became necessary, therefore, to show that all that was sacred and valuable in that office was to be found in the Christian system. This was done by showing that in the Lord Jesus all the characteristics of a high-priest were combined; that all the functions which had been performed in the Jewish ritual were performed by him; and that all which had been prefigured by the Jewish high-priest was fulfilled in him. The apostle here merely alludes to him, or names him as the high-priest, and then postpones the consideration of his character in that respect till after he had compared him with Moses" (Barnes, p.78).
 - 3) Christ's priesthood is superior to that of Aaron and the Levitical priesthood, as the writer will show in subsequent passages in the epistle.
 - 4) Hebrews 6:17-20: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."
 - 5) Hebrews 9:12-17: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
- g. Christ is the High Priest of *our profession*. This reference is to Christianity, the gospel system. When individuals obey the gospel, they acknowledge Christ as the one sent by the Father, one who

- is our great and only High Priest.
2. Verse 2: "Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house."
 - a. We are told elsewhere of the faithfulness of Christ in the discharge of his God-given work. He completed his earthly mission without any dereliction or omission of duty.
 - 1) John 17:4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
 - 2) John 19:30: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:17: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - b. "Note how delicately the inspired writer defers to the deserved honor of Moses, whom he did not belittle or diminish in any way. Both Moses and Jesus were faithful to deliver God's true message to men, each in his own way, and each in his own capacity" (Coffman, p.67).
 - 1) Hebrews 11:24-26: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."
 - 2) Exodus 25:40: "And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount."
 - 3) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
 - c. Moses' house was God's house. "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses *is* not so, who *is* faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num. 12:6-8).
 3. Verse 3: "For this *man* was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house."
 - a. Paying Moses a quiet and fitting tribute of respect, the inspired writer exalts that great man, which he does in order to more highly exalt Christ. Moses, he says, was worthy of honor, but Christ is deserving of even greater honor.
 - b. Moses was the head of the Old Testament nation for a period of time; Christ is head of God's New Testament spiritual nation for all time.
 - c. Moses was a servant in God's house, but Christ is over his own house. "And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (Heb. 3:5).
 - d. The author further points out that the builder of a house has greater honor than the house, since the Creator is greater than the creation. Barnes observed that "it is *always* true that the architect is worthy of more respect than the house which he makes. He exhibits intellect and skill. The house, however splendid, has neither. The plan of the house was drawn by him; its beauty, its proportions, its ornaments, are what he had made them, and but for him they would not have existed....Galileo is worthy of more praise than the telescope, and Fulton more than the steam-engine....[Christ] was the originator of the Jewish dispensation over which Moses presided. Whatever beauty or excellence there might have been, therefore, in that system, was to be traced to him; and whatever
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ability even Moses displayed was imparted by him” (p.80).

4. Verse 4: “For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.”
 - a. Coffman records the words of Whittaker Chambers, an avowed atheist and Communist, who had an enlightening experience which changed his way of thinking:
 - 1) “My daughter was in her high chair. I was watching her eat. She was the most miraculous thing that had ever happened in my life. I liked to watch her even when she smeared porridge on her face or dropped it meditatively on the floor. My eye came to rest on the delicate convolutions of her ear—those intricate, perfect ears. The thought passed through my mind: ‘No, these ears were not created by any chance coming together of atoms in nature (the Communist view). They could have been created only by immense design.’ The thought was involuntary and unwanted. I crowded it out of mind. But I never wholly forgot it or the occasion. I had to crowd it out of my mind. If I had completed it, I should have had to say: Design presupposes God” (Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, Random House, New York, 1952, p.16; Coffman, p.71).
 - 2) The universe was designed, just as every house has a designer and builder. There is wonderful design clearly indicated in the universe and the earth.
 - b. Intelligence and observance, uncorrupted by unbelief, naturally acknowledges the Maker. A little child is able to perceive that someone made the animals and trees. An old, wise man can discern the same truth. Anyone with common intelligence admits the same. It is only when one accepts the foolishness of unbelief that he will deny the obvious.
 - 1) Psalms 14:1: “The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good.”
 - 2) Psalms 19:1-3: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard."
 - 3) The chances of tossing the twenty-six letters of our alphabet into the air, and having them come down perfectly lined up in their proper order, is impossible (in practical terms). It is infinitely more impossible for the universe and the earth, with its life and orderliness, to have come into being by happenstance! Only someone blinded by unbelief can believe such nonsense.
 - c. There are many clear indications of design in our world, including the following:
 - 1) The delicate balance of nature.
 - 2) The earth tilted to the exact degree to prevent extremes of heat and cold.
 - 3) The earth being the right distance from the sun, and rotating at the proper rate.
 - 4) The moon being the right distance from the earth to stir the oceans by causing tides, without allowing the tides to cover the earth.
 - 5) Unlike other things, water expands when it freezes; it becomes lighter and forms on the surface of the body of water, otherwise it would sink, killing marine life. Forming at the top, it produces a layer of insulation to keep the water below from freezing, thus preserving aquatic life.
 - 6) There are many cases in nature where reproduction of certain species of life requires cooperation between individuals of different species.
 - a) The yucca plant and yucca moth: The plant blooms only at night and the moth flies only at night. The flower of the yucca plant hangs downward, with the female part higher than the male part, hence, the pollen from the male part cannot fall so as to pollinate the female part. In order for pollination, the moth is essential. The moth lights on an open flower, and with her odd-shaped feelers scrapes pollen from the male part of the blossom, flies to another plant and pierces the ovary of the plant and deposits her eggs in the place that will develop more seeds. She rubs the pollen on the female part of the flower. The offspring of the moth feed on some of the seeds produced by the plant and leave the rest to perpetuate the plant. The young moths make their way to the ground, bury themselves, and wait until it is time for the yucca plant to bloom a year later. This is strong evidence of design in our

- world; since there is design, there must be a Grand Designer—God!
- b) A certain type of wasp will catch a grasshopper, sting it in just the right place to cause it to be paralyzed, but not dead, so it can live on as a form of food. Then the wasp will put the grasshopper in the proper place, lay her eggs beside it, so that her offspring will hatch and feast on the hopper without killing the insect upon which they feed. The mother never sees her offspring. The first wasp must have done it right the first time or else there would be none of them around today! Only through God's design could this wasp have lived.
 - d. “The words of this verse are plain, and the sentiment in it clear. The only difficulty is in seeing the connection, and in understanding how it is intended to bear on what precedes, or on what follows....If the verse was entirely omitted, and the fifth verse read in connection with the third, there would be apparently nothing wanting to complete the sense of the writer, or to finish the comparison which he had commenced....The meaning of the whole may be thus expressed: ‘The Lord Jesus is worthy of more honour than Moses. He is so, as the maker of a house deserves more honour than the house. He is divine. In the beginning he laid the foundation of the earth, and was the agent in the creation of all things, chap. 1:2,10. He rules, therefore, over all things, and, as supreme, must preside alike over the Jewish and the Christian dispensations—for there must have been some one over them, or the author of them, as really as it must be true that every house has been built by some person. Being, therefore, over all things, and at the head of all dispensation, he **must** be more exalted than Moses” (Barnes, pp.80f).
5. Verses 5-6: “And Moses verily *was* faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”
- a. Moses was a great lawgiver and national leader, but he is inferior to Christ. As noted above, the Lord was active in the time of Moses, constructing the Mosaic Age and serving as the guiding power by which Moses operated. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:1-4).
 - b. It is true, says our author, that Moses offered faithful service in his house; but it is also true that he was a servant in that house. On the other hand, Christ serves as a son over his own house. A son in a great house occupies a far greater position than the greatest servant of that house. A servant does not inherit from the master of the family; the son inherits. It is the son who possess the authority and issues the orders. Despite the greatness of Moses, the disparity between that respected man and Christ is great indeed.
 - c. Moses was one of the greatest men of the entire Old Testament era. He obtained the abiding respect of the Almighty.
 - 1) Exodus 33:11: "And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle."
 - 2) Numbers 12:6-8: "And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses *is* not so, who *is* faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"
 - d. Faithful Christians comprise the house of Christ, which is the church of Christ.
 - 1) Isaiah predicted the establishment of this house. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say,
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- Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:2-3).
- 2) Paul identified this house as the church. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 3) The church is depicted as a spiritual temple, with Christians being part of that great edifice, along with Christ and the apostles. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).
- e. The house in which Moses served is inferior to the house over which Christ rules.
- 1) Colossians 2:17: "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
- f. Paul states in verse six that we are part of that spiritual house **if** we hold fast unto the end. Only the faithful are in the house of Christ. This places an impressive responsibility on each Christian: our eternal destiny depends on our willingness to faithfully follow the word of Christ as fully as is humanly possible!
- 1) God has done his part in furnishing the gospel plan of salvation; Christ has done his part in executing the gospel plan of salvation; the Holy Spirit has done his part in revealing and preserving the gospel plan of salvation. The Godhead has inculcated in the gospel the power to save, has given the motivations necessary to get us to obey, and has directed that the saved are to spread the gospel to the lost. And providentially, we may receive help as we live the Christian life.
 - 2) But it is our obligation individually to develop the Christian character, fulfill our various duties and worship in spirit and truth; we must be willing to persevere despite obstacles and opposition that arise to deter us.
 - 3) The object of this passage is in keeping with the overall purpose of the epistle: to furnish Jewish Christians the information and motivation necessary to remain faithful to Christ, and not fall away from the Savior by returning to the Mosaic Law. Similarly, this passage (and the epistle itself) motivates us to remain faithful today.
- g. Barnes (a Calvinist), was unable to live up to the demands of the text at this place, but allowed his sectarian theology to dictate his comments on this part of the verse: "A leading object of this epistle is to guard those to whom it was addressed against the danger of apostasy. Hence this is introduced on all suitable occasions, and the apostle here says, that the only evidence which they could have that they belonged to the family of Christ, would be that they held fast the confidence which they had unto the end. If they did not do that, it would demonstrate that they never belonged to his family; for evidence of having belonged to his household was to be furnished only by perseverance to the end" (Barnes, p.82). This is a foolish and unscriptural view! Calvinism teaches that once a person becomes a Christian [is saved], he can never so-sin as to lost his salvation; thus, if such a person goes back to the old life, he was never saved at all. This argument begs the question and ignores the plain teaching of the Bible:
- 1) Adam was the son of God (Luke 3:38), but he nevertheless fell into sin. Any Christian can fall into sin: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).
 - 2) A Christian who has fallen into sin can be reclaimed, but if he is not, his souls is lost!
"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he

which converteth the **sinner** from the error of his way **shall save a soul from death**, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20). The sinner of this passage is an erring saint; if this sinner is converted, his soul shall have been saved from death.

- 3) One cannot fall from a location or condition which he has never occupied. Since a Christian can fall (1 Cor. 10:12), he can lose the salvation and other spiritual blessings he had prior to falling.
 - 4) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 5) Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - 6) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - 7) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 8) The **possibility** that we can fall from God's grace and lose our souls, does **not mean that we will fall**; it only shows that there is a danger and that we must be diligent lest we fall. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:12-13).
- h. That which the inspired penman says we must hold fast to the end are our **confidence** and **rejoicing of the hope**.
- 1) Our faith rests on the soundest of foundations—the truth of Almighty God. His word is utterly dependable. Therefore, having obeyed his word, and daily serving him to the best of our human ability, we have the utmost confidence that all is well with our souls, our future is secure, and our present needs will be supplied.
 - 2) Our faith is based on the truthfulness of God's word, thus we may face the future with the joy that only hope can provide.
 - 3) The only responsible person who can live in confidence and joyful anticipation of the future is a faithful Christian. Millions may live with confidence and joy, who are not genuine Christians, but their boldness is only bravado and their joy is as dust; they are living in a fool's paradise. We can deceive ourselves and we can deceive others.
 - 4) A faithful, mature Christian lives with confidence and rejoices in the hope before him. But he can have these characteristics only as long as he remains faithful.

B. Hebrews 3:7-15: A Warning Based on Israel's History.

1. Verses 7-8: "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness."
 - a. The quotation which begins in these verses, and is enclosed with parentheses, is from Psalm 95; it continues through verse eleven. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not

enter into my rest" (Psa. 95:6-11).

- b. The quotation is affirmed to be words which were spoken by the Holy Spirit. What the Holy Spirit says is the written word; today he does not speak to any man orally or intuitively; he operates in the conviction and conversion of sinners, and in guiding saints, by the written word.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And *which* entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed *them* through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual *words* (ASV).
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - 3) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 4) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 - 5) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
 - 6) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
 - 7) The Holy Spirit spoke through the mouth of David.
 - a) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - b) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - c) What he said through David was recorded for the admonition of others of later ages.
- c. In view of what was stated in the preceding passage, our author admonishes his readers to take heed to what the Holy Spirit said in the passage cited. They were told to give ear **today** to what the Spirit said. We are never promised another day on earth; today—the present moment—is all that we have in which to take action. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Eccl. 9:10).
 - 1) Procrastination endangers our souls, and deprives us of present blessings, and trifles with God's word.
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:2: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation."
- d. The Spirit warned the auditors to hear his voice, and harden not their hearts. The negative example of the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness days is given. The apostle cautions the readers against hardening their hearts as the Israelites did in the *provocation* and *temptation* in the wilderness.

- 1) The reference is probably to Exodus 17:1-7: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and *there was* no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore *is this that* thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?" *Massah* means "temptation" and *Meribah* means "strife" or "chiding" (equivalent to "provocation").
- 2) Unnecessary delay in obeying the gospel has a hardening effect on the heart. Hesitation to serve Christ also has a hardening effect. One excuse leads naturally to another excuse; one refusal will produce another refusal; one act of disobedience promotes another act of disobedience; one act of omission of duty results in another omission. The effect of such is to harden the heart so that the gospel has no effect on the individual who acts so foolishly.
- e. The very point of the text rests on the premise that the individual is responsible for the condition of his own heart. If a heart grows hard, it is because the person allowed it to happen. If this is not so, then the point of the passage is meaningless. We are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but the statement also shows that the responsibility for that condition was the king's. God hardened Pharaoh's heart only in making demands of him that he was unwilling to accept.
 - 1) Exodus 7:13-14: "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh's heart *is* hardened, **he refuseth** to let the people go."
 - 2) Exodus 8:15: "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, **he hardened his heart**, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."
 - 3) 1 Samuel 6:6: "Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?"
 - 4) 2 Kings 17:14: "Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God."
 - 5) Mark 3:1-6: "And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him."
 - 6) Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 7) Acts 19:9: "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before

- the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."
- f. God's word is unpalatable to some people, who have cultivated a particular disposition of heart through the years that makes it virtually impossible to examine the Bible honestly so as to believe and do what it says.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 2:16: "To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?" When the inspired preachers went forth teaching the gospel, there were some who accepted and some who rejected the truth. This grieved these proclaimers, and it grieves us today, but the responsibility belongs to the individual. God respects our right to choose; he will not force us to obey his will; he has never forced anyone to disobey his will. He offers incentives to get us to obey, and he issues warnings of consequences we must face if we disobey.
 - 2) God's word is extremely powerful, having a very profound effect on people in accordance with their own disposition of heart. "*Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29).
 - 3) The same message has opposite effects on individuals in the same audience. Some shed tears when they hear the truth; others are indifferent or resentful when they hear the truth. What makes the difference? The condition of the individual's heart.
 - 4) The sun's rays have the ability to melt butter and wax; but the same rays will harden concrete and clay. Why the difference? The nature of the material dictates the result. If our hearts close against the truths of the gospel, we have only ourselves to blame. It is important to the extreme that we keep our hearts pliable and teachable. Our eternal destiny depends on it!
 - g. The Israelites had provoked the Lord to anger. He had blessed them with freedom from slavery, had fed and watered them in the wilderness, and had aided them in defeating powerful enemies. But many of them were indifferent to God's will. "And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But *as* truly *as* I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it" (Num. 14:20-23).
2. Verse 9: "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years."
- a. James 1:13: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." With this strong and clear affirmation in mind, we must not conclude from our text that God was on the verge of succumbing to the enticement of Israel. He cannot be tempted to do evil. But they sorely tried his patience, to the point that punishment was demanded. There is a limit beyond which God's longsufferance will not go. The next verse makes this amply clear.
 - b. During the entire sojourn of forty years in the wilderness, the Israelites tested God's patience, even though they were daily observers of his mighty works.
 - 1) He preserved their clothing throughout the long ordeal. "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years" (Deut. 8:4).
 - 2) He fed them daily with manna from heaven: "And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had
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- nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating” (Ex. 16:14-18).
- 3) He provided them with water, in certain cases, through miraculous means: “And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel” (Ex. 17:1-6; cf. Num. 30:1-13).
3. Verse 10: “Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.”
- God stated that he was grieved with that generation of the Israelites, the one which he had guided out of Egypt and into the wilderness. After giving them the law at Sinai, the way into Canaan was open for them to quickly enter (Num. 13). When the spies returned from their survey of the land, ten of them discouraged the heart of the nation, with their reports of the giants and other war-like people who then inhabited Canaan. Because they did not believe God was able to successfully lead them in the conquest of these Canaanites, the Israelites rebelled. Their punishment was to live the next thirty-eight years in the wilderness (Deut. 2:14), and never enter the land of promise. That whole generation of adults died in the wilderness, and it was their offspring who inherited the land promise. It is not safe to bring grief to God.
 - “I was grieved” is from the Greek term *prosochthizo*: from *pros* (toward or with) and *ochtheo* (to be sorely vexed). The term means “to be wroth or displeased with” (Vine, Vol. 1, pp.321f). We are warned against grieving the Holy Spirit. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).
 - God states in the quotation that that generation of Israelites had not known his ways. They had been taught his will, but they had not conformed their lives to God’s law. Notice that this statement was made of Israel after they had been delivered from the bondage of Egypt. Their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt is a type of our being delivered from the bondage of sin. Since they incurred the wrath of God after their deliverance (because of their sins), so we can incur the wrath of God subsequent to our salvation from sin. In other words, this is another clear indication that a child of God can fall away and be lost.
4. Verse 11: “So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest).”
- With this verse, Paul’s quotation from Psalm 95 concludes. The citation began in verse seven and continued to this point.
 - The grief they caused God led him to swear in his wrath, that they would not enter into the rest which he had intended for them to enjoy.
 - The Bible speaks of God swearing on various occasions:
 - Luke 1:73: “The oath which he swore to our father Abraham.”
 - Acts 2:30: “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”
 - Acts 7:17: “But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to

- Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.”
- d) Hebrews 3:18: “And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?”
 - e) Hebrews 4:3: “For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.”
 - f) Hebrews 6:13: “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself.”
 - g) Hebrews 6:16: “For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.”
 - h) Hebrews 7:21: “(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec).”
- 2) His swearing is to be taken as accommodative language, used to emphasize the absolute, unchangeable nature of his pronouncement or judgment. However, his oath is not stronger than his word. Anything God says may safely be trusted. Each is immutable.
- c. Israel’s weaknesses are detailed in many passages.
- 1) Numbers 14:1-4: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."
 - 2) Acts 7:39: "To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt."
 - 3) Numbers 14:31-34: "But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. But *as for* you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise."
- d. For cases of their rebellion against God, see Exodus 14:10-12; 15:22-26; 16:1-3; 17:1-7; 32:1-29; Numbers 11:1-3, 22-30.
5. Verse 12: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”
- a. The point the apostle is making in the example used above is brought to a head in this verse. It was necessary for those Jewish Christians to take heed lest they imitate the example of their forebears and depart from the living God, with all the evils attendant to that departure.
 - b. Neither the example of Israel nor the pointed admonition here would have made any sense if it is impossible for a child of God to fall away and lose his soul. Why was the warning given, if not to motivate those Christians to remain faithful?
 - c. Of course, the same warning is needed by every Christian of every generation. Since those saints in the first century could fall away and be lost, it is possible for us to fall away and be lost! We must take heed so that will not happen.
 - d. Five facts which are suggested by this passage (see Coffman, pp.78f):
 - 1) It is possible for Christians to fall away from God.
 - 2) Such a loss is due to an unbelieving heart.
 - 3) An unbelieving heart is an evil heart.
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- 4) God is not a mere influence but is a living person.
 - 5) A Christian can avoid falling. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).
 - e. A heart that does not believe is called an evil heart.
 - 1) John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
 - 2) Romans 1:18-20: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - f. Evil men with unbelieving hearts look at our surroundings and fail to see evidence of the Living God, even though such evidence is plentiful, so obviously visible that God declares that one who says there is no God, is a fool (Ps. 14:1; cf. Rom. 1:20).
 - g. The Bible makes many profound, stirring affirmations about the living God:
 - 1) Those who reject obvious proof of God's existence do not live in the world of reality.
 - a) Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."
 - b) Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - 2) Exodus 3:14: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."
 - 3) Matthew 16:16: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - 4) Matthew 26:63: "But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."
 - 5) Romans 9:26: "And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 3:3: "*Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."
 - 7) 2 Corinthians 6:16: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
 - 8) 1 Thessalonians 1:9: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."
 - 9) 1 Timothy 3:5: "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"
 6. Verse 13: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - a. "The Greek pronoun rendered here 'one another' is variously translated in the NT, as in 'Be at peace *among yourselves*' (1 Thess. 5:14); 'Fervent in your love *one to another*' (1 Pet. 4:8); 'And be kind *one to another*' (Eph. 4:32); and 'Forbearing *one another* and forgiving *each other*' (Col. 3:13). Thus the persons so strongly commanded in this place to 'exhort' and the persons to be exhorted can be none other than the Christian membership itself..." (Coffman, p.80).
 - b. This command is directed to each member of the Lord's church. The usual case is that there are
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many more who need to be exhorted than there are who are willing to exhort. If each member lived up to this requirement, there would be far fewer weak and erring members! Why do we not exhort one another as we ought? Because new or weak Christians are not exhorted and encouraged by their brethren, too many hearts become hardened and souls are lost. The absence of exhortations in our generation can be traced to such causes as the following:

- 1) Lack of faith.
 - 2) Lack of love.
 - 3) Ignorance of the Bible.
 - 4) Afraid of controversy.
 - 5) Fearful of losing friends.
- c. Coffman gives the following reasons why exhortations are often absent (p.81):
- 1) Some have a natural timidity.
 - 2) Some are ashamed of Christ.
 - 3) Some think it is impolite to speak of Christ, or faith, or religion.
 - 4) Religiously broken or mixed families.
- d. We are commanded to exhort each other daily, when the opportunity exists for exhortations, lest we be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. If we do not exhort one another, the one who needs to be exhorted and the one who could issue the exhortation, may both become hardened and lose their souls. It is a most serious matter!
- e. Sin is deceitful. It is very easy to be deceived by others and by ourselves. Many hearts want to be deceived.
- 1) Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
 - 2) Ephesians 4:22: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."
- f. Sin can deceive us in many ways, including the following:
- 1) It promises happiness, but gives sorrow.
 - 2) It promises liberty, but binds the sinner to sinful practices.
 - a) John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
 - b) 2 Peter 2:19: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."
 - 3) It promises knowledge (cf. Gen. 3:1-6), but it gives shame.
 - 4) It promises to be nothing serious, but gives death. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23; cf. Acts 27:13ff).
7. Verses 14-15: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."
- a. "The Apostle assigns here as another reason for constant perseverance and watchfulness, that our being finally partakers of Christ and his benefits, will depend on our holding fast to the end of life the beginning of our confidence in him" (Milligan, p.125).
 - b. "What else can be said so honourable of man as that he is 'a partaker of Christ;' that he shares his feelings here, and that he is to share his honours in a brighter world? Compared with this, what is it to participate with the rich and the gay in their pleasures; what would it be to share in the honours of conquerors and kings?" (Barnes, p.88).
 - c. To partake of Christ is to be united with Christ.
 - 1) Romans 6:3-6: "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk

in newness of life. For if we have become united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin" (ASV).

- 2) Psalms 34:8: "O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him."
 - 3) Hebrews 6:5: "And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come."
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:1-3: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious."
- d. Our being finally with Christ in eternity depends on our holding fast the beginning of our confidence in him, until the end of life. When we obeyed the gospel, there was a heavy burden lifted from our hearts, and a joy that could not be expressed in words.
- 1) The man from Ethiopia rejoiced: "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).
 - 2) The Philippian jailer rejoiced: "And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (Acts 16:34).
 - 3) David lost his joy of salvation when he committed flagrant acts of sin: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit" (Ps. 51:10-12).
- e. The condition is that we must hold fast the confidence indicated, which means that we remain faithful to the Lord until the end. The word translated "confidence" was used by the Greeks to describe firmness under torture, and generally for courageous firmness of character.
- 1) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 2) Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
- f. Once again, the writer affirms the need to hear God's word today, and avoid hardening our heart, thus not following the evil example of Israel in the wilderness.

C. Hebrews 3:16-19: Relation of Unbelief and Disobedience.

1. Verse 16: "For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." "For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses?" (ASV).
 - a. Greek scholars say that this verse should be understood as a question, as given in the American Standard rendering. Vincent paraphrases the verse in these words: "My warning against apostasy is not superfluous or irrelevant: *for* consider: *who* were they that provoked God? They were those who had fairly begun their journey to Canaan, as you have begun your Christian course. *They* provoked God, so may *you*" (p.1110).
 - b. "Here is a solemn warning against trusting in a majority, or what is popular. The author pointedly warns his readers that the wilderness failure of Israel was on a national scale, supported by the overwhelming majority, and popularly led and advocated by the great princes of Israel (Num. 13:3-16" (Coffman, pp.83f).
 - c. Of those men who were of an age to serve as soldiers when Israel left Egypt, only two were still alive and permitted to enter Canaan at the end of the forty years in the wilderness. Those two men were Caleb and Joshua. "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, *concerning* which I swear to make you

dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun....But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of the men that went to search the land, lived *still*" (Num. 14:28-30,38).

- d. It is not safe to follow the majority in religious affairs, for the majority usually chooses the wrong position.
 - 1) Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest *judgment*."
 - 2) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 3) Numbers 13:3-16: "And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel. And these were their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi. Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua." [Ten of the twelve spies brought back an evil report].
- e. The rebellion by Israel against God was led by the mighty men of the nation (Num. 13:3-16). They had seen the Lord's mighty miracles and had received the benefit of his great blessings. Why then did they fall? Coffman gives the following points (pp.84f):
 - 1) They feared hunger and other dangers.
 - 2) They exaggerated the dangers posed by the enemies in Canaan and placed too little trust in God. "And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature" (Num. 13:32).
 - 3) They had too low an esteem of themselves. "And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Num. 13:33).
 - 4) They accepted the majority report of the ten weak spies instead of the minority report brought back by Caleb and Joshua. Consider the view of the majority regarding the being and nature of God, Christ, the Bible, the church, the plan of salvation, New Testament worship, Christian living, the Bible doctrine of final things, heaven, and hell. In each of these, the majority in the religious world as a whole will be found to hold the wrong position.
 - 5) The most important and all-encompassing reason for their failure was their unbelief.
 - a) Hebrews 3:19: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."
 - b) Hebrews 4:6: "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief."
2. Verse 17: "But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?"
 - a. God was grieved (wroth) with those who were regularly in rebellion against him through the forty years in the wilderness.
 - b. The penalty, as we have already seen, was that the entire generation (except Caleb and Joshua) died in the wilderness. Despite the many miracles God wrought in keeping them alive after they left Egypt, they did not have sufficient faith that he could deliver them from the enemies in

- Canaan. They were doomed to die outside the land of promise; the next generation survived to occupy it.
- c. We see in their case an illustration of the awfulness of sin—any sin. The grievous nature of sin may be seen in the sacrifice required for the remission of sin—the death of God’s Son on the cross. We may perceive the dreadfulness of sin by considering the eventual punishment of sinners.
 - 1) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 2) Mark 9:43-48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - 3) Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 3. Verse 18: “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?”
 - a. God swore to those who refused to believe (obey) his word that they would not be permitted to enter into the rest he intended (the blessings of Canaan).
 - b. Exodus 14:30-31: "Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. 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." These same people who believed (obeyed) the Lord on this occasion, later became guilty of unbelief (were disobedient).
 - c. Obedience is especially emphasized in the book of Hebrews. This is seen in the bold affirmation of Hebrews 5:8-9; it is illustrated in the lives of great men and women of the Old Testament, as listed in Hebrews 11. In the present verse, a word is used which is properly translated *obedience* by the ASV and NKJ:
 - 1) Hebrews 5:8-9: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
 - 2) Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?" (ASV).
 - 3) Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" (NKJ).
 - 4) The same is true with John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (ASV).
 - d. That rebellious generation of Israelites in the wilderness was not permitted to enter into the rest which God had provided for them in Canaan. If they had remained faithful, they could have taken their inheritance in the land, enjoyed the fruits of their labors in that bountiful place, and would no longer have to endure the rigors of living in the wilderness. Their disobedience deprived them of all the bounties of that fruitful land. "And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from

- thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they brought* of the pomegranates, and of the figs" (Num. 13:23).
- e. "The history of Israel's provocations and of God's dealings with them, was so fully recorded in the Old Testament and so generally believed by the Hebrew Christians, that any formal presentation of evidence in the case was wholly unnecessary; and our author therefore again, with great rhetorical effect, employs the interrogative style of address. By means of a series of questions addressed to their understanding, he brings home with great power to their hearts and consciences what they were all forced to concede, that the six hundred thousand fullgrown men who came out of Egypt under Moses, perished in the wilderness through their unbelief....They had seen God's judgments on Pharaoh and on his hosts in Egypt and in the Red Sea; they had seen the manna rained down from heaven, and they had beheld the waters flowing from the rock at the command of God; they had heard his voice from the top of Sinai....But after all this, through an evil heart of unbelief, they there rebelled against him, and so provoked him on the very borders of Canaan, that he was constrained to swear in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest" (Milligan, pp.128f).
4. Verse 19: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."
- a. This is the apostle's inspired conclusion from the preceding information in the chapter. "That lost generation of the Israelites suffered incredible hardships in the wilderness....And yet it all could have been different. God gave them the right to enter Canaan immediately upon their coming out of Egypt, but through unbelief and disobedience they failed to enter" (Coffman, pp.86f).
 - b. Our spiritual conduct has a great impact on our outward circumstances. While it is true that faithful saints are opposed and even persecuted by an unbelieving world, it is also true that God blesses us materially in more ways that we comprehend.
 - 1) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 2) Luke 6:38: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."
 - 3) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - 4) Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
 - c. Their unbelief was doubly costly to them, for they lost Canaan and heaven itself.
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HEBREWS 4

A. Hebrews 4:1-10: The Rest Remaining for God's People.

1. Verse 1: "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."
 - a. The saints are here urged to fear, lest they should fail to enter into the rest the Lord intends for them to possess. The kind of fear enjoined on them is not terror, but godly reverence and awe. When men lose their fear of God, their rebellion and degradation have virtually no limit. It is essential that we teach and maintain a high level of reverence for God.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - 2) Romans 3:18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
 - 3) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - 4) Hebrews 12:28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - b. Although a promise has been tendered to those who obey the gospel, that they are to inherit eternal rest, that promise is conditional. As long as we remain in this world, living in our fleshly body, there is a danger of our losing that rest. The warning that we must continue to fear is necessary if we are to enter into rest.
 - c. The word *rest* is a reference to all the eternal rewards of the faithful in heaven. The Greek word [*katapausis*] is from the root *katapauw*. Rest is important and needed by all. At the end of a hard day of labor, rest is sweet. Rest is for those who are tired. At the end of a faithful saint's earthly life, rest is the promised reward; this is a blessing to those who are weary, but rest is wearisome to those who are not tired. The word "rest" appears many times in the English Bible, although not the same word is used in the Greek.
 - 1) Matthew 11:29: "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."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 3) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - d. The rest has been *left*; it remains open and accessible (as long as we are in this world). Caleb and Joshua were permitted to enter the rest God intended for the Israelites in Canaan; the other ten spies and those who believed their evil report (Num. 13-14), were prohibited from entering. When death comes to the unfaithful saint and alien sinner, the door into heaven's rest is forever closed to them.
 - 1) "Five hundred years, almost, after Israel entered Canaan, David in Psalm 95:7-11 spoke of there being a rest for God's people, indicating that their final entry into Canaan was not the full attainment of that rest, and that something much more than that was involved" (Coffman,

- pp.88f).
- 2) Psalms 95:7-11: "For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."
 - e. The warning was issued lest "any of you should **seem** to come short" of heavenly rest. The word seem is from *dokeo*, "to seem, to be reputed, e.g., Acts 17:18; 1 Cor. 11:16; 12:22; 2 Cor 10:9; Heb. 4:1; 12:11..." (Vine, Vol. 3, p.340). The word "mitigates the expression, though not lessening the reality" (JFB, p.536).
 - 1) Acts 17:18: "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He **seemeth** to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present **seemeth** to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
 - 3) The word carries the idea of inadvertence (Coffman, p.89). "Alas, it must be supposed that the far greater part of Christians falling away from faith in Christ do so unintentionally. Few indeed ever decide boldly against the Lord and move decisively against him; but, on the contrary, they allow inattention to spiritual things, carelessness in attending worship, neglect of daily prayer and study of the Word, and encroachments upon their time due to worldly and pleasure-loving friends to divert their attention first, and later their whole life and conduct from the path of honor and duty. It is hard to imagine a more urgent and persistent warning than the one given here" (Coffman, p.89).
 - 4) Hebrews 4:1: "Let us fear therefore, lest **haply**, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it" (ASV).
 - 5) Those who know the Scriptures well, and can discern the weakness and indifference of certain brethren, can perceive where those faltering Christians are headed. It is apparent to knowledgeable saints that these weak members are on the way to losing their rest, i.e., missing Heaven. This verse expresses a warning; we are to fear [have reverential awe] lest haply we should come short of our Heavenly goal.
 - 6) The *fact* of an individual being saved in Heaven or lost in Gehenna will not be formally established until the Judgment. As long as we are alive on the earth and still possess our normal faculties, there is the possibility for the individual either to obtain or to lose salvation. But to affirm the possibility of a Christian falling away and being lost, does not say that he will do so. There is a difference between the possibility of apostasy and the probability of apostasy. We can fall, but we do not have to fall.
 - f. The possibility of our falling into sin and losing our heavenly reward is an ever-present danger; it is incumbent upon us to do all within our power to avoid this ultimate disaster. "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest *there be* any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby the many be defiled" (Heb. 12:14-15).
 2. Verse 2: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*."
 - a. The gospel was preached to *us* and to *them*. The Israelites under Moses had the opportunity to enter into the rest of Canaan, and ultimately into eternal rest. For this purpose the *gospel* was preached both to them and to us (people living in the Christian Age).
 - b. In what sense was the gospel preached to the ancient Israelites? It could not have been preached in

fact, for the basic tenets (1 Cor. 15:1-4) had not yet been accomplished. It could only have been proclaimed in promise.

- 1) John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad."
 - 2) Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 18:15-18: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well *spoken that* which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."
- c. The Israelites in the wilderness had opportunity to hear, believe, and obey God's word, and enter into rest; they chose not to believe and obey, hence lost the benefits of Canaan. On the other hand, Paul says that he and those to whom he wrote had heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel, and therefore the rest in heaven was in the offing (provided they continued in the faith).
- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:1-6: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:38-39: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."
- d. The word of God that was preached to the ancient Israelites did not profit them, because it was not met with faith on their part. Hearing only is of no benefit; hearing is essential, but is profitable only if it produces a faith that obeys.
- 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 2) James 1:22,25: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves...But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
3. Verse 3: "For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."
- a. Hebrews 4:3: "For we who have believed do enter into that rest; even as he hath said, As I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" (ASV).
 - b. Followers of Christ enter into rest (Matt. 11:29). On our entry into Christ at the point of baptism, we obtain all the spiritual blessings included therein (Eph. 1:3). Those blessings can be summed up under the word *rest*. Having obtained this rest, the eternal rest of heaven awaits us, provided we remain faithful.
 - c. The ASV gives a clearer rendition of the original. While the KJV has, *if they shall enter into my rest*, the ASV has, *they shall not enter into my rest*. The reference is to the disobedient Israelites. "The form of the expression is elliptical...and is equivalent to a strong negative. Thus in 2 Sam. 3:35, David says, 'So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread or aught else, till the sun be down.' This is but a solemn and emphatic way of expressing his purpose not to eat any thing till after sunset. And so also in this connection. God is here represented as declaring with the

- solemnity of an oath, that the disobedient Israelites who rebelled against him at Kadesh barnea, should never enter into his rest” (Milligan, p.132).
- d. God’s oath would preclude their entry into Canaan, even though it was his intention for Abraham’s descendants to occupy that land. That adult generation did not enter Canaan, but their offspring did. God was true to his promises to Abraham, and he lived up to his oath that those rebellious people of Israel would not survive their wilderness experience.
 - e. Before the foundation of the world, God had prepared for the righteous to receive rest. Before the creation of the physical universe, he had made provision for the eternal rest for the righteous. He did not select specific individuals, for that would have violated his impartiality; instead, he chose the type of person who would be given entrance into that eternal rest.
 - 1) Psalms 15:1-5: “LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.”
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) Romans 2:11: "For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 4) Ephesians 1:4: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love."
 - 5) Ephesians 3:8-11: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 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: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - f. “What is meant by ‘the foundation of the world’? The words are used in Heb. 9:26; Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; John 17:24; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; 17:8 and the message these references carry is that God's plans and purposes for people predate the formation of the world itself. ‘He chose us in him before the foundation of the world’ (Ephesians 1:4). And this coincides with Paul's word that ‘We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory’ (1 Corinthians 2:7). All efforts to construe ‘the foundation of the world’ as a reference to its reconstruction following the disaster in Eden must be viewed as incorrect, since, by definition, God's ‘eternal purpose’ (Ephesians 8:11) has existed always, and the world has not. Regarding the efforts of some scholars to lessen the force of this, Bruce said, ‘The attempt to render it ‘downfall of the world’ and link it with the catastrophic interpretation of Gen. 1:2 cannot be sustained.” Dummelow's perception of this is also helpful: ‘The promise of rest applies to us who are Christians, seeing that those to whom the promise was made failed to attain it. And their failure was not due to the fact that the rest had not been prepared, because it existed since the day that God finished his work of creation. This is proved by the words, "And God rested" in one place, and the words "my rest" in another. God's rest is therefore a fact, and it is clearly his purpose that some shall enter into it” [Coffman, via Bible Deluxe].
4. Verses 4-5: “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this *place* again, If they shall enter into my rest.”
 - a. Genesis 2:2-3: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on

the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it **he had rested** from all his work which God created and made." This does not identify the time when the Sabbath was blessed and sanctified. Notice that the occasion when God set aside the seventh day was at a time subsequent to that day; he had already begun his rest when he sanctified the seventh day.

- 1) Men did not know about the sabbath until the time of Exodus 16; they had to be told about it. "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them" (Ezek. 20:10-12).
 - 2) He revealed the fullness of his Sabbath law on Sinai. "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant" (Neh. 9:13-14). To try to separate Exodus 16 from Exodus 20 is like trying to separate the sermon on the mount from the great commission.
 - 3) God gave the weekly Sabbath to commemorate Israel's deliverance from their slavery in Egypt. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).
 - 4) The Sabbath was given to Israel, not to any Gentile individual or society. "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day" (Deut. 5:3).
- b. The word *Sabbath* means "rest" (it does not mean "seventh"). He chose the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath because it was on the seventh day of the first week that he rested (ceased to create). To rest (to observe the Sabbath) was to cease, to desist; complete cessation; the idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment but cessation from activity (Vine).
 - c. As God rested, so he intends for his people to have rest. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his" (Heb. 4:10).
 - d. Hebrews 4:5: "And in this *place* again, They shall not enter into my rest" (ASV). The quotation here is from Psalms 95:11: "Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest." The reference is to the statement God made in Numbers 14:23: "Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it."
 - e. Notice that a reference is made back to the day God ceased from the supernatural creation (Gen. 2:2-3). The days of Genesis 1 are literal, twenty-four days. To deny Genesis 1-2 is to deny the New Testament, for the New Testament cites the creation account of Genesis as authoritative.
5. Verses 6-7: "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."
 - a. This passage is a summation of the argument. The ancient Israelites did not enter the rest God had in mind; their descendants did enter and enjoy the fruits of that land for many generations; they kept the Sabbath in the land. But they did not obtain the heavenly rest, which is the rest the passage is emphasizing. This eternal, heavenly rest remains.
 - b. The rest was still future from the time David wrote Psalm 95:6-11: "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my

wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

- c. "The thesis turns on the fact that it was 'long afterward' (about 500 years) that David urged the people *at that time*, 'today,' to hear God's voice, to refrain from hardening their hearts, and to enter the rest of God. He thus proved that the rest had not been entered by Israel, that it was open 500 years after Canaan was entered, and that it was still available when the author of Hebrews wrote" (Coffman, pp.92f).
6. Verses 8-9: "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."
 - a. "For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God" (ASV).
 - b. Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land, but it was Joshua who led them into it. Under his leadership, God aided the people in conquering the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan, and directed the partitioning of the territory among the Israelite tribes and families. The *Jesus* of verse eight is not Christ, but Joshua. "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name "Joshua." Both names mean *Savior*. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).
 - c. The inspired author states that if Joshua had given Israel the rest of which David spoke (Ps. 95), there would have been no need for David to have spoken of another rest. But since he spoke of another rest, there remains another rest for the people of God.
 - d. Canaan was intended to be a land in which Israel could rest from their bondage in Egypt and their years of wandering in the wilderness. On entering the land, they could begin to enjoy the fruits of that very productive place; there God would protect them from any enemy; there they could serve and worship in the ways he ordained; and there they could live out their lives in happiness and peace. But that is not the ultimate rest which the Almighty had in store for his faithful people. God has another rest in store for his own. That rest is in heaven (Rev. 14:13).
 - e. There is no support in this chapter (or anywhere else in the Bible) for the Sabbatarian assertions. Under the Mosaic system, there were various special days observed, including the sabbath days, the new moon observances, and set feasts. "And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even; And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD" (1 Chron. 23:30-31). Each week had a seventh day, which was given to the Israelites as a day of rest; the word *Sabbath* means "rest." But when the Mosaic Law ended, all of its features were removed.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - 2) Colossians 2:14-17: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an 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."
 - 3) That the entire Law of Moses was removed, and not merely the ceremonial law, is clearly seen by a careful reading of Romans 7:1-7. Paul points out that we are dead to the law by the body of Christ (verse 4); that is, in keeping with Ephesians 2:14-15 and Colossians 2:14-17, the Law was taken away by the death of Christ. We are delivered from the law (Rom. 7:6); the law that was taken away is the law that forbade (among other things) coveting (Rom. 7:7). The law that forbade coveting was the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were part of Mosaic Law; that entire law was replaced by the Law of Christ (the gospel). Nine of the ten

Commandments are strengthened and made part of the New Testament; the fourth, which bound Israel to keep the Sabbath, was not incorporated into the gospel system. Thus, we are not to be disturbed if someone accuses us of ignoring the Sabbath.

7. Verse 10: "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his."
 - a. The "he" in the verse is any departed saint. One who has entered into the ultimate rest God has in store for his faithful people, will have ceased from his own works, just as God ceased his work of creation when that great work was finished.
 - 1) Genesis 2:1-3: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."
 - 2) Job 3:17: "There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest."
 - 3) Psalms 55:6: "And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest."
 - 4) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - b. In the Paradise of Hades, Lazarus entered into a comforting environment, while the wicked rich man was being punished in the other part of Hades.
 - 1) Luke 16:25: "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell [*tartarus*], and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

B. Hebrews 4:11-16: Additional Information and Admonitions.

1. Verse 11: "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."
 - a. To labor is to put forth diligent effort. The apostle calls on Christians to labor so as to enter the rest of which he speaks. Although we cannot earn salvation from past sins or salvation in heaven, yet there are obligations we must fulfill in order to obtain either.
 - b. Diligent effort on the part of Christians is taught in many passages, including the following:
 - 1) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." The word translated "strive" is from the Greek word that gives us our English word "agonize." Great and diligent effort is required if we are to enter heaven.
 - 2) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Saints living in those times faced severe persecution; all who will live godly at any period of history will face opposition (2 Tim. 3:12).
 - 3) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Our duties are not soft or insignificant. Our eternal salvation demands diligent effort.
 - 4) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - 5) To cultivate the kind of character heaven requires, demands persistent, detailed attention and effort. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you,

- and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 15-11). This passage shows that we must put our heart into getting to heaven, but that we can have good confidence about arriving safely; and Peter states further that heaven's gates will be swung wide to receive us.
- 6) As demanding as our obligations are (if we are to be faithful), those things God requires of us are not impossible to bear. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:2-3).
- c. We are admonished to put forth our strongest effort to enter the rest heaven holds in store, so that we will not fail to reach that worthy goal. That generation of Israelites who escaped Egypt failed to enter the rest Canaan offered to them; they failed because of unbelief. The writer shows that we can miss our heavenly rest if we allow our faith to wane. The faith spoken of in the passage is real only if it obeys; the word translated "unbelief" could more specifically be rendered "disobedience."
 - 1) John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (ASV).
 - 2) Hebrews 3:18: "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient?" (ASV).
 - d. Not all labor is acceptable; our labor must be done lawfully.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:25: "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:5: "And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."
 - 4) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
2. Verse 12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - a. *Word of God* here is not Christ (as it is in John 1:1), but the message itself, which God has spoken through Christ.
 - 1) Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
 - 2) The word of God is the objective standard by which God measures his offspring.
 - a) 2 Timothy 3:14-17: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

- b) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
- c) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
- 3) God's word is objective, not subjective. Subjectivity is based on intuition or emotions, and is quite nebulous and ambiguous. Faith based on subjectivity is meaningless; faith that grows out of God's revealed word is sound and powerful.
- 4) Objective mathematical truth says that $10 + 10 = 20$. Objective spiritual truth says that belief + baptism = salvation (Mark 16:16). Objective spiritual truth concerning acceptable worship says that our devotion is to be offered to God, with sincerity of heart, and according to God's truth (John 4:24).
- b. The word of God is **quick** (living—ASV). The Living God provided his Living Word, not a dead letter. The Bible is God's timeless, eternal, universal, and ever-applicable standard. It is all-sufficient, inerrant, and fully-inspired.
- 1) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
- 2) Isaiah 55:10-11: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it." Compare: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:29).
- 3) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
- a) Philippians 2:16: "Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
- b) Acts 5:20: "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."
- 4) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Compare: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:22-25).
- 5) John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life." Compare: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 7:17).
- 6) Acts 7:38: "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us."
- 7) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
- 8) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
- 9) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

- c. God's word is **powerful** (active—ASV). The Greek term is *energes*, from which comes our English word "energy."
- 1) Its great force is seen in Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) It can give direction to human life.
 - a) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - b) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 3) It is able to prevent sin.
 - a) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - b) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
 - 4) It is able to make corrections to our lives to bring them into harmony with God's ideal.
 - a) 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
 - b) 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
 - 5) It is able to bring about the cleansing of our souls and set us apart for God's purposes.
 - a) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - c) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - 6) It is able to bring us to spiritual maturity.
 - a) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - b) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
 - 7) It is able to defeat the enemies of God.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 10:3-4: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.)"
 - b) Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - c) Titus 1:9-11: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly
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and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

- d. The word of God is **sharper than any twoedged sword**.
- 1) Ephesians 6:17: "And take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 2) Christ is pictured in Revelation 1:16 as having a sharp two-edged sword proceeding from his mouth, a representation of his word. A sword is designed to be a powerful offensive weapon; it is to be used against the enemies of God; but it is the very tool with which sinful men may be brought back to God.
 - 3) As a sword, God's word is sharp. It has two edges, enabling it to cut regardless of which edge is placed forward.
 - 4) As a sword, it is able to pierce to the heart of man.
 - a) In the case of a sincere, teachable person, it arouses godly sorrow that results in repentance. "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost....Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:37-41).
 - b) In the case of those who are hard-hearted, it arouses hatred. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth" (Acts 7:54).
 - 5) As a sword, it is able to divide. "As a literal sword partitions the living flesh of its victim as it penetrates, so the Word of God is so powerfully effective and sharp as to penetrate and divide matters within the depths of man's spiritual nature. 'Joints and marrow' are obviously not to be taken literally for two reasons: (1) they are not in contact with one another—the marrow is inside the bones which are connected at the joints; (2) The spiritual sword does not have any effect upon the physical structure of man's body. 'Joints and marrow' is a figurative reference to the innermost recesses of man's spiritual nature" (McClish, ADL, pp.118f).
 - a) "The word of God is, first, living; then it is full of power and energy; then it divides and lays bare the soul and the spirit even to the extent of their joints and their marrows; and then rising above the essence of man's nature, it enters inquisitively and judicially into the realms of his ideas, affections, and desires, and passes judgment on the thoughts and purposes of his heart" (Milligan, p.140).
 - b) Although the fullness of the meaning may not always be clear to us, the Bible sometimes makes a distinction between the soul and spirit (as in 1 Thess. 5:23). Often the terms are used interchangeably. When they are used distinctively, the spirit is our eternal nature and the soul is our life.
 - 6) It is able to penetrate the intricate internal nature of a man, convict him of sin and expose his real motives. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23).
- e. It is able to discern. The Greek term *kritikos* "signifies that which relates to judging (*krino*, to judge), fit for, or skilled in judging..." (Vine, Vol. 1, p.315). "...The usual New Testament meaning being 'to sift out and analyze evidence.' In the word *kritikos*, the ideas of discrimination and judgment are blended. Thus, the Word of God is able to penetrate into the furthestmost recesses of a person's spiritual being, sifting out and analyzing the thoughts and intents of the heart" (A.T. Robertson, quoted by McClish, p.119).
- 1) "Is it not true that men are made to see their real character under this exhibition of the truth of God? That in the light of the law they see their past lives to be sinful? That the exhibition of

- truth calls to their recollection many long-forgotten sins? And that their real feelings are disclosed when the truth of God is proclaimed? Men then are made to look upon their motives as they had never done before, and to see in their hearts feelings whose existence they would not have suspected if it had not been for the exhibition of the truth. The exhibition of the truth is like pouring down the beams of the sun at midnight on a dark world; and the truth lays open the real feelings of the sinner as that sun would disclose the deeds of wickedness that are now performed under cover of the night” (Barnes, p.105).
- 2) God’s word is able to discern blemishes and taints of sin on our innermost being. All such problems are laid open and exposed. If we learn God’s word, and then examine ourselves in the light of its truth, we will come to see ourselves as God sees us. We can make the corrections indicated, and we can be encouraged by seeing the progress we have made.
 - 3) Quick to discern *kritikos* (NT:2924). Verbal adjective in [-ikos], from *krinoo* (NT:2919), skilled in judging, as the surgeon has to be and able to decide on the instant what to do. So God's word like his eye sees the secret lurking doubt and unbelief "of the thoughts and intents of the heart" *enthumeeseoon* (NT:1761) *kai* (NT:2532) *ennoioon* (NT:1771) *kardias* (NT:2588). The surgeon carries a bright and powerful light for every dark crevice and a sharp knife for the removal of all the pus revealed by the light. It is a powerful picture here drawn. (from Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright © 1985 by Broadman Press).
 - 4) On a similar note, we are told to use the word of God as a mirror, to reflect our true condition in God’s sight. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:21-25).
 - f. “The separation takes place within the region of the soul and the region of the spirit; not between them. The living word cleaves and lays bare all parts of the soul and all parts of the spirit, even to the extent of their joints and their marrows; so that all the perfections and imperfections of man’s spiritual nature are made perfectly manifest. And not only so, but even the thoughts and purposes of his heart are, by this infallible Judge, fully analyzed and perfectly classified” (Milligan, p.140).
 - g. The need of the Hebrew Christians for the great truth of this verse is obvious. They needed the gospel to understand their real situation before God; if they gave it up, they would fall under the curse of disobedience. The next verse will remind them that God sees and knows all.
3. Verse 13: “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”
 - a. Having given a revealing depiction of the power of God’s word, our inspired author now turns to God himself, to affirm his omniscience. The very nature and being of the Almighty enables him to be aware of everything that he desires to see and know.
 - b. Every creature is uncovered and open to his eye. His knowledge penetrates even to our thoughts and motives, as well as our words and deeds. Our omissions are equally known to him. This is both encouraging and frightening, depending on the nature of our thoughts, motives, words, and deeds. "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance" (Ps. 90:8).
 - c. He is fully aware of our needs. "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. 6:8).
 - d. He knows our conflicts and troubles and faithfulness. "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your

- work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:10).
- e. The omniscience of God is taught in many places in his word.
 - 1) Psalms 139:1-10: "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways. For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*. If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."
 - 2) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 3) Psalms 11:4: "The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men."
 - 4) Jeremiah 23:24: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."
 - f. The purpose of this comment is to remind the Hebrew Christians of the fact that their apostasy from Christ would be duly noted by the Father. As he is aware of everything, he is able to know and punish disobedience, as well as to bless faithfulness.
4. Verse 14: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession."
- a. The Levitical high priest passed from the holy place into the most holy place of the tabernacle, on one special day each year, the day of atonement (Lev. 16). But Christ, our High Priest, passed into heaven.
 - 1) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - 2) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - b. Our High Priest is Jesus the Son of God. The Old Testament high priest was a mere man. Jesus could not be a high priest on earth, since he was of the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14). The high priest under the Mosaic system was required to be a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest, and who was of the tribe of Levi. A change of the priesthood necessitated a change of the law. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12).
 - c. Since we have a great high priest, Paul commanded Christians to hold fast the profession (or confession) of their faith. This is another call for faithfulness on our part. God is able to aid us in overcoming temptations (1 Cor. 10:12-13), but we must take the initiative to be faithful. No one can obey the gospel for us; no one can discharge our spiritual duties for us. If the individual does not take personal action, he will be lost. Faithfulness to Christ is in our own best interest.
5. Verse 15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
- a. Our High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. He is concerned about us. He faced all the temptations and problems attendant to living in the flesh. His exalted status at the Father's
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- right hand does not place him so far beyond us that he has lost personal concern for us. Indeed, the opposite is true! He is now in a position to aid us in the best ways. It would have been wonderful to have walked and talked with Jesus during his earthly mission, but how much greater the relationship we can now have with the King of Heaven and earth!
- b. He was tempted in all points like as we are. There are some specific problems he never had to face; he had no children to rear; he did not endure the struggles of running a business. However, all the basic elements of temptation he met: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
 - 1) 1 John 2:16: "For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
 - 2) He faced each of these features of temptation when Satan tried to get him to do things that were forbidden (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).
 - c. He did not suffer a single lapse! He never committed a single act of sin; he did not leave a single obligation unfulfilled. "No inclination to evil ever defiled his pure spirit. The lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, had no place in his affections. And hence, though tempted by the Devil through all the avenues and natural desires of the human heart, he was still 'without sin'" (Milligan, p.148).
 - 1) John 14:30: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:26: "For such a high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:"
 - d. There could have been no temptation if it were impossible for him to commit sin. He was subject to the same passions and desires as we are; the devil tried to get him to violate even one precept of God's will; he *could* have done so, but would have defiled his nature by doing it. Our hearts ought to be filled with gratitude for his willingness to maintain his sinless purity!
6. Verse 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."
- a. We are here exhorted to come boldly before the throne of his grace, with the full assurance that only strong faith can give, having full confidence that his help is available. This we are to do without terror, but with cheerful courage. We can have boldness and reverence at the same time, but arrogance and reverence do not mix. We are to have confidence, but not pride; we are to remain reverent, but not terror-stricken.
 - b. We need the mercy that can be found at the throne of heaven. Since we have such a great high priest who has passed into the heavens, and though he is highly exalted, he is nevertheless easily touched with our infirmities, let us come before his throne with boldness. If we do not ask, we cannot expect to receive his help. "...Ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2).
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HEBREWS 5

A. Hebrews 5:1-4: Israel's High Priests Met Certain Qualifications.

1. Verse 1: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."
 - a. High priests under the Mosaic system were selected from the tribe of Levi, specifically from the descendants of Aaron.
 - 1) Exodus 28:1: "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons."
 - 2) Exodus 29:9: "And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons."
 - 3) Numbers 4:1-4: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This *shall be* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, *about* the most holy things."
 - b. Levitical high priests were mortals, thus were subject to sin themselves. We will learn later in the epistle that Christ does not share this infirmity: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (Heb. 7:25-28).
 - c. The duty of the high priest was to offer sacrifices and other gifts from man unto God. The offerings were for the purpose of obtaining God's favor and pardon. The work of prophets and the work of priests were opposites: a prophet spoke from God to man; a priest spoke from man to God.
 - 1) The High priest was to offer certain gifts and sacrifices unto God in behalf of man. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) was especially significant under the Law, for it was then that the annual sacrifice was offered by which the sins of the people were "rolled forward" for another year. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1).
 - 2) Christ is our High Priest, and he has services to offer. "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer" (Heb. 8:3).
 - d. Mosaic high priests were charged with spiritual duties. They were to offer sacrifices and services in behalf of man unto God. They were not called to be farmers, factory workers, etc., but to serve spiritual functions.
 - e. "The object of the Apostle in this paragraph...is to further encourage his Hebrew brethren to draw near at all times to the Throne of grace...." (Milligan, p.149). The Jewish Christians were about to turn back to Judaism, partly because of the outward ceremonies and impressive garments of the high priest and his subordinates. The inspired writer advances the novel idea that Christ is our great High Priest, vastly more glorious and powerful than any Levitical high priest. They gained far more in Christ than they lost by leaving the Mosaic system.

2. Verse 2: "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity."
 - a. Levitical high priests were duty-bound to be compassionate toward the ignorant and others who go astray. "The word rendered *compassion* "denotes a state of feeling toward the ignorant and erring which is neither too severe nor too tolerant. The high priest must not be betrayed into irritation at sin and ignorance, neither must he be weakly indulgent" (Vincent, p.1116). Milligan reports that Philo used this Greek term to describe Abraham's sober grief on the loss of Sarah and Jacob's imperturbable patience under afflictions (Milligan, p.150).
 - b. Those high priests were to be compassionate toward others in view of the fact that they themselves were characterized by the weaknesses of the flesh common to all men.
 - c. Jewish high priests, such as Annas and Caiaphas, were not noted for their compassion. Neither of these two showed any compassion for Christ when he was brought before them.
 - 1) John 18:13-27: "And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me? Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew."
 - 2) Matthew 26:62-68: "And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?"
 - d. One with a clear perception of his own weaknesses and sinful condition is more apt to show compassion toward others.
 - 1) Romans 9:2-3: "That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:13-15: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and

- worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
3. Verse 3: "And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins."
 - a. Being human, the Old Testament high priests were subject to human passions, therefore became guilty of sin just as all other accountable humans do (Rom. 3:9-23; cf. Ex. 32:1-6). Consequently, those high priests had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of all those they represented.
 - 1) Leviticus 4:3-12,15: "If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering. And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD. And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away, As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering. And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt....And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD."
 - 2) Leviticus 9:7: "And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded."
 - b. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered into the Most Holy Place to offer the blood of the prescribed sacrifice for his own sins and for the sins of the people. On that day, he placed his hands on the scape goat, confessing the sins of the people (including his own sins), and released the goat to go into the wilderness, symbolizing their release from guilt (Lev. 16).
 - c. In this particular lies one of the great distinctions between Christ and of the Mosaic high priests. Whereas they were all men and became guilty of sin, Christ was totally sinless in every way. This great truth ought to be greatly appreciated by his disciples.
 - 1) John 8:34: "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
 4. Verse 4: "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron."
 - a. High priests under the Mosaic Law were not self-appointed men. There were certain qualifications they must meet before they could be set in that exalted office. God selected the high priest, as he did when he chose Aaron, the first high priest in the Mosaic system.
 - b. The Old Testament high priests met the qualifications of the text; Christ likewise met these various conditions:

Levitical High Priests	Christ
Taken From Among Men	Son of Man: Gal. 4:4
Appointed of God	Lord & Christ: Acts 2:36
Compassionate	Matt. 9:36; Heb. 4:15; Rev. 1:5
Offers Proper Sacrifices: Yearly	Once: Heb. 9:27
Not Self-Appointed	Appointed of God

- c. This calling and appointment of high priests has nothing to do with “calling preachers” today. If so, we would not need the New Testament, for the preachers would be inspired and infallible in their teaching. If preachers are thus called (as the sectarians assert), why do they contradict each other on virtually every significant subject? And why do they contradict the Bible? The passage has to do with the Old Testament practice of selecting priests; it has no bearing on selecting preachers. If we still needed inspired preachers (prophets), it would be like our sending a letter to someone, and then having to go to the recipient personally to explain the letter. God has given us the Bible; he does not need to send inspired men to tell us what he said in this inspired revelation.

B. Hebrews 5:5-10: Christ is High Priest After the Order of Melchisedec.

- 1. Verses 5-6: “So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”
 - a. Aaron did not select and appoint himself to the high priesthood; neither did Christ. The adverb **so** applies the point to Christ. This honor was bestowed upon our Lord by the Father in raising him from the dead and setting him at his own right hand. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:20-23).
 - b. The two quotations in the passage are taken from the book of Psalms:
 - 1) Psalms 2:7: "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee."
 - 2) Psalms 110:4: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."
 - c. “This is one of the most significant declarations about Christ to be found in all the Bible....
 - 1) “One of the great mysteries of the prophecies of Jesus had always been the apparent contradictions in the Messianic prophecies, some hailing him as ‘Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,’ and others, often by the same writer, extolling him as ‘a man of sorrows,’ ‘despised and rejected of men,’ ‘a root out of dry ground,’ and ‘acquainted with grief,’ etc. It was precisely this apparent contradiction that the Pharisees could not and never did understand. Jesus confronted them with it (Matt. 22:41-46) and pressed them for an answer as to how Christ could be both David’s Lord and David’s son at the same time....
 - 2) “The author of Hebrews then did a dramatic thing. Having already argued from Psalm 110:1,2 for the universal kingship of Christ the Messiah (1:5), at this point in the epistle he returned to that same Psalm 110 to bring in the fourth verse from which he also proclaimed the universal

- priesthood of Christ, showing him to be not of Aaron's line, but an independent high priest of universal dominion 'after the order of Melchizedek.'
- 3) "Thus was revealed, at last, the mystery of how the suffering high priestly Messiah and kingly Messiah were one and the same person....And the only verse in the Bible that clears that up is Psalm 110:4" (Coffman, pp.107f).
- d. Christ could not be a priest on earth, since the only authorized earthly priests were of the Levitical lineage.
- 1) Hebrews 8:4: "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." Jesus was of the kingly tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14).
 - 2) Prophecies of Christ foretold that he would be both a king and a priest when he ascended his throne. "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:12-13).
 - 3) This sounds the death knell to the premillennial error that Christ will reign on earth. He could not be a priest on earth (Heb. 8:4); he will serve as priest and king at the same time (Zech. 6:12-13); since he could not be a priest on earth, he could not be a king on earth.
 - 4) Further, God stated that no descendant of Coniah (also known as Jechoniah and Jehoiachin) would rule in Israel. "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). Jesus is of the lineage of Coniah (Matt. 1:11-16).
- e. We are first introduced to Melchizedek in Genesis: "And **Melchizedek** king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14:18). He was the priest of the Almighty, and at the same time served as king of Salem (Jerusalem). The high priesthood of Christ is likened to that of Melchizedek.
- 1) The Jews recognized the legitimacy of Melchizedek's high priesthood (and acknowledged that he was also a king), despite the fact that he had no connection with the Levitical priesthood. Paul shows here that Christ's high priesthood was on the order of that exercised by Melchizedek. More about Melchizedek will be said by our author in Hebrews 7.
 - 2) Melchizedek had neither predecessor nor successor in his priestly office. Christ had neither predecessor nor successor in his priestly office. Throughout the remainder of time, Christ will serve as the only High Priest.
2. Verse 7: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."
- a. The subject of this verse continues to be Christ. At the end of his earthly life, Christ offered prayers and supplications, accompanied with much emotional appeal, unto the Father. It was within the power of the Father to deliver the Son from death, but such was not his will. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Matt. 26:53-54).
 - b. Our Lord's ordeal is reported in various New Testament passages, including these:
 - 1) Matthew 26:39,42: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*....He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." The cup was not the ordeal he went through in Gethsemane, for after that experience, he spoke of the "cup" as still being in the future. "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).
 - 2) Luke 22:40-44: "And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into

- temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."
- 3) Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The light of God's countenance was withheld from the Lord during his ordeal on the cross, as he bore the sins of the world.
 - c. Our Lord knew full well that if he did not die for man, the whole race would itself perish forever. He passed through a spiritual ordeal that no one else had ever or ever could experience successfully.
 - d. The tearful prayers of Christ were heard, although it was not the will of the Father to deliver him from the death of the cross. Prayers are heard and answered, but not always in keeping with our wishes. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:8-9).
 - 1) God might want us to wait a while before getting the object of our prayers.
 - 2) He might give us something different or better than our petition had requested.
 - e. Christ's prayers were heard "in that he feared."
 - 1) The American Standard Version renders the verse in this fashion: "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear" (Heb. 5:7, ASV).
 - 2) "...Christ's prayer was truly heard; and, although the specific petition to remove the cup was not granted, it is declared that angels came and strengthened him; and here is seen God's method of answering prayers in some instances, in which he sends not a lighter burden but a stronger heart to bear it" (Coffman, p.109).
 - 3) After addressing the different interpretations of this thought, Barnes observed: "The most natural and obvious interpretation, however, is, that it means that he was heard on account of his reverence for God; his profound veneration; his submission. Such was his piety that the prayer was heard, though it was not literally answered" (p.117).
3. Verses 8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
- a. Christ came to earth with the full intention of doing the will of God.
 - 1) Luke 2:49: "And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
 - 2) John 4:34: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - 3) John 6:38: "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."
 - 4) Hebrews 10:7: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."
 - b. We may all learn to obey by experiencing hardship and agony. It is plainly affirmed here that Jesus learned obedience by the things which he suffered. "From the first he set forth on a course of the most absolute and perfect obedience; and the sufferings which he endured were the consequence of that obedience, as witness his sufferings on the cross. To learn obedience, as here, implies the tasting of every consequence of obedience. The savage antagonisms of a sinful and rebellious world against all truth and honor were pointed squarely against him who knew no sin" (Coffman,

p.110).

- 1) John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
- 2) 1 John 3:12: "Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."
- 3) Galatians 4:16: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"
- c. When a godly man is opposed and oppressed because he practices and preaches the truth, he comes to appreciate the sacredness of his work; the sufferings that are brought to bear upon him, instead of hindering his obedience, rather strengthen his commitment to serve even more faithfully. He will either increase in his resolve to obey, or he will cease to obey.
- d. The fact that he obtained perfection does not imply that he was imperfect in any moral sense prior to that time. He has always been perfectly sinless. But before his sacrificial death, he was not yet completely qualified as Savior.
 - 1) "By means of these sufferings, he was made a *perfect Savior*; that is, he was thereby fully qualified in every respect to become the Redeemer of mankind" (Milligan, p.160).
 - 2) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
- e. Having qualified as the complete Savior, he became the author of eternal salvation. He is the source of salvation (John 8:24; 14:6); his is the only name by which salvation is possible (Acts 4:12); to reject Christ is to reject God (Luke 10:16).
 - 1) Christ is the source of salvation from the guilt of past sins.
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Luke 24:46-47: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 2) Christ is the source of eternal salvation in heaven.
 - a) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - b) 1 Peter 1:3-5,9: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time....Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 - c) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- f. Salvation is provided to those who obey Christ.

- 1) Obedience is necessary to be saved from the guilt of past sins.
 - a) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- 2) Obedience is necessary to be saved eternally in heaven.
 - a) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - b) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - c) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - d) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - e) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- g. The apostle has shown that Christ is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him, in order to demonstrate to the Jewish Christians that if they turned away from Christ, they were turning from God's only authorized High Priest and forfeiting salvation in heaven.
- h. Since obedience to Christ is essential in order to obtain salvation from the guilt of past sins and for eternal salvation in heaven, then the human theories of predestination, universalism, salvation by faith only and salvation by direct operation of the Holy Spirit are false doctrines.
4. Verse 10: "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec."
 - a. God has willed to call him a priest after the order of Melchisedec [Melchizedek is an alternate spelling]. This is the appellation God gave him. "Named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (ASV).
 - b. Paul affirms that this is God's doing; it is not an invention of any man. It is God's appointment. No man can shun what God has pronounced without incurring the wrath of the Almighty.
 - c. Here is another strong reason for the Jewish Christians to maintain their faith in Christ.

C. Hebrews 5:11-14: Spiritual Maturity Enjoined.

1. Verse 11: "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing." "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation, seeing ye are become dull of hearing" (ASV).
 - a. "Of whom" has reference to whom? The various commentators have suggested different subjects, including Christ, Melchisedec, and Christ's priesthood after the order of Melchisedec. The connection between Melchisedec and Christ had not been broached in the New Testament to this point. It would not be a subject which these Christians were likely to have grasped or even learned. "Of whom *peri* (NT:4012) *hou* (NT:3739). Or 'concerning which,' for *hou* (NT:3739) can be either masculine or neuter (genitive)" [Robertson's Word Pictures, Biblesoft].
 - b. The apostle states that there are many things that need to be said to the brethren on this matter, but since they have become "dull of hearing," it is difficult to put it in such language that they could comprehend. Before he pursues the subject at hand any further, the author digresses to reprove the problem of their dullness of hearing. "The importance of the communication, however, is so great

- and the need of the people to understand it is so urgent that, after a rebuke to them, he goes ahead with the argument anyway” (Coffman, p.113).
- c. The Jewish people were frequently rebuked for their unwillingness to accept the truth.
 - 1) Matthew 13:14-15: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 2) Acts 28:23-28: "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it."
 2. Verse 12: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”
 - a. In verses twelve through fourteen, the apostle brings out four contrasts:
 - 1) Between those who need to be taught and those who can teach.
 - 2) Between milk and solid spiritual food.
 - 3) Between babies and full-grown Christians.
 - 4) Between the unskilled and those who have their senses developed.
 - b. Sufficient time had elapsed since they obeyed the gospel to the present for them to have acquired the knowledge and developed the skills necessary to be teachers of the word. But in reality, they stood in need of being re-instructed in the basics of Christianity. That being the case, they could not teach others. The fundamentals of the New Testament from the perspective of Hebrews is the Old Testament.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:1-3: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:11: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
 - c. There are certain basics which every saint is expected to know, but some forget them, or do not build on them. Every Christian is expected to be able to teach non-Christians at least *some* things. The earlier saints were able and willing to spread the gospel.
 - 1) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - d. *The first principles of the oracles of God* is rendered *the rudiments of the first principles of the*
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oracles of God in the American Standard Version. God had spoken to the ancients by the prophets, such as Moses. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1). The "oracles of God" are the revelations God has made known to man.

- 1) Oracle: "a diminutive of *logos*, a word, narrative, statement, denotes a Divine response or utterance, an oracle; it is used of [a] the contents of the Mosaic Law, Acts 7:38; [b] all the written utterances of God through O.T. writers, Rom. 3:2; [c] all the substance of Christian doctrine, Heb. 5:12; [d] the utterances of God through Christian teachers, 1 Pet. 4:11" (Vine, Vol. 3, pp.143f).
- 2) Acts 7:38: "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us."
- 3) Romans 3:2: "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."
- 4) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
- e. New or weak Christians are compared to babies; as babies can consume only milk, so spiritual babies are able to partake only of the simplest matters of the gospel. Physical grownups and mature Christians are able to partake of solid food.
3. Verses 13-14: "For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - a. Undeveloped Christians are not able to take the meat of the word, but only the milk. There is a time when Christians need the milk of the word, but they must grow and cultivate the ability to partake of the strong meat of God's word.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:1-3: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 3:1-3: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"
 - 3) Ephesians 4:13-15: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ."
 - b. Time is an important element in achieving spiritual maturity, for growth requires the acquisition of knowledge and experience, which produce wisdom and strength. But more than time is needed. One who has been a Christian for sixty years may be a spiritual child, while one who obeyed the gospel only five or ten years back may be a spiritual adult.
 - 1) Basic to the accumulation of knowledge is a sound intellect and adequate memory. We need to study regularly, meditate, pray, remain faithful, worship, seek to overcome weaknesses, look for escape routes from temptations, and use what we learn.
 - 2) Each person is equipped with certain natural abilities which can be honed for use in the kingdom of Christ; with a desire to learn, to grow, and to serve, every Christian can develop into a useful and mature child of God.
 - c. Those saints who have applied their energies and abilities, and have taken advantage of their

- opportunities, will have grown into spiritual adults. Spiritually mature individuals have exercised their senses to the point that they can discern the difference between good and evil. Not every evil is discerned as such by a babe in Christ, but one who has grown is able to recognize it as evil.
- d. “The word rendered *senses*... means properly the physical organs of sensation, such as the eyes, the ears, and the fingers, through which we perceive the qualities and properties of things that are material. But metaphorically, it signifies, as in this connection, the faculties of the soul, by means of which we discriminate between those things which differ in their moral qualities” (Milligan, p.168).
- 1) Why do some Christians seem unable to see the dangers in immodest dress, certain types of dancing, modernistic translations of the Bible, fellowship with denominationalism, irregular attendance, etc.? They have not exercised their spiritual senses!
 - 2) If we want to have strong, healthy physical bodies, we must eat properly and exercise. We need spiritual food and exercise in order for our souls to be developed into strong, healthy, and useful tools for the Lord’s use in his kingdom.
- e. In discerning the rightness or wrongness of some activity or belief, there are certain questions that are most helpful and necessary:
- 1) Does it violate 2 John 9? "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11).
 - 2) Will it have a bad influence on others?
 - a) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 8:9,11-13: "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak....And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."
 - 3) Does it have evil consequences?
 - 4) Is it legal?
 - 5) Does it have the appearance of evil? “Abstain from all appearance of evil” (1 Thess. 5:22).
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HEBREWS 6

A. Hebrews 6:1-8: Going On Unto Perfection.

1. Verses 1-2: "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."
 - a. The common interpretation of this passage is to say that we are to leave the basic principles of the gospel and, building on these fundamentals, to go on unto perfection. This common view asserts that the first principles are faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. Having acknowledged and obeyed the first principles, we are to go on toward the development of perfection.
 - 1) The real meaning must take into account the general context of the book of Hebrews, as well as the local, immediate setting. Just prior to this statement, the author admonished his readers to proceed beyond the first principles of God's word, and develop spiritual maturity that enables one to be a teacher of the word, one who is capable of partaking of strong meat, and not be limited to milk. In view of this point, we are urged to go on unto perfection.
 - 2) The immediate context may appear to favor the common view, but Paul was writing to Jewish Christians who were turning back to Judaism. This is the larger context; this is his overall point. It is entirely in accord with the general context to see this passage as a reference to leaving the Mosaic Law behind, and to proceed deeper into the gospel system.
 - 3) We will see whether the details of the passage support the common interpretation, or whether it teaches a different view. This point is important because liberal brethren are asserting that we must place emphasis in our teaching on the higher principles of the gospel, and say little of the basic principles. This is their way of trying to justify their ignoring teaching the fundamentals, while claiming to address the more important higher spiritual values of the gospel. The result of following that practice has been to produce a generation of young people in the church who are ignorant of the fundamental truths of the New Testament and has fostered the current apostasy.
 - 4) Vincent gives this comment:
 - a) Some difficulty attaches to the first three verses, because the writer combines two thoughts: his own intention to proceed from elementary to more advanced teachings, and his readers' advance to that higher grade of spiritual receptiveness on which the effectiveness of his teaching must depend. The mistake in interpretation has been in insisting that the three verses treat only the one or the other thought.
 - b) Observe that *dio* (NT:1352) "wherefore" is connected with the rebuke in Heb 5:11-12; and that that rebuke is directly connected with the announcement of the doctrine of the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ. The course of thought is as follows: Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:10). There is much to be said on this subject, and it is hard to explain, because you have become dull, and need elementary teaching, whereas, by reason of your long Christian standing, you ought to be teachers yourselves (Heb 5:11-12). For you all recognize the principle that baby food is for babes, and solid food only for men, whose powers have been trained by habitual exercise (Heb 5:13-14).
 - c) Wherefore, in order that you may be aroused from your sluggishness and have your perceptions brought up to the matured condition which befits men in Christ, and in order that I may, at the same time, complete the development of my theme, I propose that we together move forward to completion: I to the full exposition of the subject of Christ's high priesthood, and you to that maturity of discernment which becomes you. This will require us both to leave the rudimentary stage of teaching concerning Christ. [Vincent's Word

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b. **Leaving** the principles of the doctrine of Christ.

- 1) The word translated “leaving” (*aphentes*: nominative, plural, masculine participle aorist 1; from *aphiemi*). *Aphiemi*: “*apo*, from, and *hiemi*, to send, has three chief meanings, [a] to send forth, let go, forgive; [b] to let, suffer, permit; [3] to leave, leave alone, forsake, neglect” (Vine, Vol. 2, p.325). “Hence, it indicates separation—to send away. Occurring 142 times in the New Testament, it means to *let go, remit, send away, cancel, leave, divorce or forsake* (Workman, ADL, p.367).
- 2) The word is used in the following passages, which help us to grasp its meaning:
 - a) Matthew 13:36: "Then Jesus **sent** the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."
 - b) Matthew 23:23: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not **to leave** the other undone."
 - c) Mark 1:18: "And straightway they **forsook** their nets, and followed him."
 - d) Mark 7:8: "For **laying aside** the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do."
 - e) Romans 1:27: "And likewise also the men, **leaving** the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."
 - f) 1 Corinthians 7:11-13: "But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband **put away** *his* wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him **not put her away**. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not **leave** him."
 - g) Revelation 2:4: "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast **left** thy first love."
- 3) Arndt and Gingrich define the word *leave* in Hebrews 6:1 as “leave behind” (p.125). “It is clear that the word does not mean to *build upon*, as many have supposed. In our passage, the word ‘leaving’ is an aorist participle, which serves as an imperative preceding the action of the main verb. One must leave one thing before he can go on to another. The Hebrew Christians needed to abandon or leave behind ‘the doctrine of the first principles of Christ’ in order to ‘go on to perfection’ (He. 6:1)” (Workman, ADL, p.367).
- 4) Wherefore *dio* (NT:1352). Because of the argument already made about the difficulty of the subject and the dullness of the readers. Let us cease to speak *afentes* (NT:863) *ton* (NT:3588) *logon* (NT:3056). Second aorist active participle of *afieemi* (NT:863), to leave off or behind. Of the first principles of Christ *tees* (NT:3588) *archees* (NT:746) *tou* (NT:3588) *Christou* (NT:5547). Objective genitive *Christou* (NT:5547) (about Christ). "Leaving behind the discussion of the beginning about Christ," another way of saying again *ta* (NT:3588) *stoicheia* (NT:4747) *tees* (NT:3588) *archees* (NT:746) *toon* (NT:3588) *logioon* (NT:3051) *tou* (NT:3588) *Theou* (NT:2316) of Heb 5:12. [Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright ©) 1985 by Broadman Press].

c. **The first principles of the doctrine of Christ.**

- 1) The contrast is between *the first principles of the doctrine of Christ* and *let us go on unto perfection*. As shown above, we must leave behind (abandon; forsake) the one in order to go on unto the other. We are not to abandon the basic principles of the gospel; we are to leave the Old Testament. We cannot go on to become mature Christians while holding on to the Old Law. This was especially true of the Jewish saints.

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- 2) The contrast therefore is between Judaism and the gospel of Christ. The "doctrine of Christ" was found in Judaism in its ceremonies, types and shadows. Christ is the heart of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. In the Old Testament he is found in promise, prophecy, and type; in the New Testament he is found in reality. In Acts 8, Philip preached Christ to the Ethiopian from Isaiah 53.
 - 3) Judaism contained the primary principles of the gospel, not in reality, but in type and principle. The point of the passage is a call for the Hebrew Christians to leave (turn loose of) the Old Law, and cleave to the New Covenant.
 - 4) There are many principles and examples in the Old Testament which are greatly beneficial to Christians. But this Old Covenant has been replaced by the New Covenant. We are not to hold to the Old Testament as God's current law; the New Testament is his operative law during the Christian Age.
 - a) Romans 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."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 10:7: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
 - d) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."
 - e) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
- d. **Go on unto perfection.**
- 1) Judaism is considered as a period of childhood or servanthood. "Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Gal. 4:1-7).
 - a) The marginal reading for *elements* is rudiments. The rudiments of music is a reference to the elementary principles of music. Judaism contained the elementary or background precepts of Christianity.
 - b) Galatians 3:22-29: "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - The law was a schoolmaster [tutor—ASV] to the Jews, to bring them to Christ. "Schoolmaster" is from the Greek word *paidagogos*, which was used to identify the person whose job it was to conduct the young scholars to the place of instruction, who guided and protected them.
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- McGarvey notes that "...the pedagogue or tutor was usually a slave, whose duty it was to take charge of a boy from his childhood to his majority, shield him from physical and moral evil, accompany him in all his amusement, and, as it were, keep him as a prisoner at large, lest he should in any way injure himself. Now, the law was such a tutor to bring those under his care to a state of development fit for the society and fellowship of Christ, the spiritual father" (Commentary on Epistles, p.270).
 - Paul's illustration of the law is one that fit the Jews who lived prior to the giving of the gospel. The law does not bear this same relationship with those who live on this side of Calvary.
 - Instead of showing that the law was useless, Paul gives it the honorable place it deserved. It guided and protected the Israelites, keeping them as close to God as possible. It prepared them for the entry of the Messiah into the world.
 - In Acts 2, the apostles spoke before a tremendous audience of Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the religious activities ordained by the Mosaic Law. These people had been trained and guided by that law, a preparation that enabled three thousand of them to comprehend and accept the gospel. A Jew today, who will examine the evidence of the Old Testament, and compare that information with the New Testament, can learn that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, and that the gospel is God's will for all.
 - Now that the faith has come, we are no longer in need of the schoolmaster [tutor]. It served its useful purposes until the coming of Christ. Under the gospel, we are justified by faith. The faith is able to bring us into a justified state. Justification is that spiritual condition the redeemed have obtained in which God considers us to be free from contamination, as if we had never been guilty.
- 2) To "go on unto perfection" was a call for the Jewish Christians to leave behind the first principles of the doctrine of Christ (Judaism) and to go on to manhood. *Manhood* is from the same Greek term as "full age" in Hebrews 5:14. The salvation provided in the gospel is the period of perfection or spiritual maturity; he does not mean sinless perfection, since that status is beyond us while we live on earth.
- a) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - b) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
- 3) When Christ and the gospel came, it was possible to reach spiritual manhood through the gospel. When the Jews gave up Christ and the church, they were going back to the period of childhood. Having left Judaism for Christianity, it was foolish for the Jewish Christians now to want to go back to the period of infancy instead of holding to the maturity of the gospel.
- e. **Not laying again the foundation.**
- 1) Robertson offers these comments:
 - a) Not laying again the foundation *mee* (NT:3361) *palin* (NT:3825) *themelion* (NT:2310) *kataballomenoi* (NT:2598). The regular idiom for laying down the foundation of a building *themelion* (NT:2310), Luke 6:48 f]. The metaphor is common (1 Cor 3:11) and the foundation is important, but one cannot be laying the foundation always if he is to build the house.
 - b) There are six items mentioned here as part of the "foundation," though the accusative

didacheen (NT:1322) in apposition with *themelion* (NT:2310) may mean that there are only four included in the *themelion* (NT:2310). Two are qualitative genitives after *themelion* (NT:2310) *metanoias* (NT:3341) and *pisteoos* (NT:4102). [Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright ©) 1985 by Broadman Press].

- 2) "Not laying down—as one does a foundation for an edifice. The idea is, that they were not to begin and build all this over again. They were not to make it necessary to lay down again the very cornerstones, and the foundations of the edifice, but since these were laid already, they were to go on and build the superstructure and complete the edifice" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by BibleSoft].
- f. **Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works.**
- 1) "Repentance from dead works" is usually explained to mean repenting from past sins. Notice that Paul does not say repentance from sin, but repentance from dead works. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from **dead works** to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13-14).
 - 2) The "dead works" is a reference to the ceremonial cleansing under Judaism, which could not remove the guilt of sin. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away guilt; the blood of Christ can do so.
 - 3) The Old Law emphasized the cleansing of the flesh, while the New Covenant speaks of cleansing the conscience and soul.
 - a) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - b) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - 4) The works of Judaism could not save. The works of Judaism were designed to produce faith in the coming Messiah. No person could perfectly keep the Mosaic Law; the Mosaic Law could not remove the guilt of sin once guilt was incurred; therefore salvation could not be obtained under Judaism apart from the sacrifice of Christ: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:15-17).
 - 5) Colossians 2:14-17: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an 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." The Old Law has now been fulfilled and abrogated; it has been replaced by the law of Christ. The works required by the Old Law are now dead and gone.
- g. **Not laying again the foundation of faith toward God.**

- 1) “Whereas Gentiles were for the most part ignorant of the one true God (Acts 17:23; Rom. 1:25,28), the first-century Jews believed in God (John 14:1). They were instructed about God from early childhood (He. 8:11a; II Ti. 3:15). The Old Testament saints listed in the honor roll of chapter 11 all had faith toward God (cf. 11;6). But what Jewish hearers needed to heed was Christ’s plea to ‘believe also in me’ (John 14:1) in order to become Christians” (Workman, pp.369f).
 - 2) Mark 1:15: "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." The proper order of instructions to Jews in the first century prior to the Pentecost Day of Acts 2 was to “repent” and “believe the gospel.” Notice that the statement did not contain a requirement for them to believe in God; they already believed in God, but they did not yet believe in Christ and his gospel. Though they believed in God, they were guilty of transgressing his law, thus they were told to repent.
 - 3) The Mosaic Law was taught to the Israelites from their earliest years, so they grew up knowing and believing in God. Faith toward God was a foundational element of Judaism.
- h. Not laying again the foundation **of baptisms**.
- 1) This is usually interpreted to mean the various baptisms of the New Testament.
 - a) Baptism of John.
 - b) Holy Spirit Baptism.
 - c) Baptism of suffering.
 - d) Baptism of the great commission.
 - e) Two other “baptisms” are mentioned:
 - The baptism Israel had unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:1ff).
 - The baptism of fire—the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 3:11; Rev. 21:8).
 - 2) The marginal reading of the American Standard Version is *washings*. The translators recognized the possibility of this referring to Judaism rather than baptism. The same word is used in Hebrews 9:10: "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation." This refers to Judaism. “Meats and drinks, divers washings, and carnal ordinances” are placed in contrast with the phrase “the time of reformation.” “The time of reformation” refers to the gospel age.
 - 3) Since the word can be translated "*washings*" in Hebrews 9:10 and placed in contrast with *the time of reformation* (the gospel), it can be understood to have the same meaning here (Heb. 6:2).
 - 4) Brother Workman offers these excellent comments:
 - a) “The English noun ‘baptism’ is found 22 times in the KJV New Testament. John’s baptism is mentioned 13 times; Jesus’ suffering is figuratively referred to as a baptism five times; and Christian baptism is mentioned four times. In all of these instances the Greek word is *baptisma*, a neuter singular noun.
 - b) “But in Hebrews 6:2 the English word ‘baptisms’ is not from that same Greek word. Instead it is *baptismos*, a masculine word occurring here in the genitive plural—*baptismon* instead of *baptismaton*. It is elsewhere found only three times in the New Testament (four in the *Textus Receptus*). In every case (except a doubtful manuscript variant in Col. 2:12) it is translated ‘washings’ and refers to Jewish cleansing rites.
 - c) “It thus had to do with the ‘washing of cups and pots and brasen vessels’ (Mark 7:4; cf. v.8, KJV), and such like. The word is found again in Hebrews 9:10 where it is likewise used in reference to ‘divers washings,’ defined as ‘carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.’
 - d) “Since *none* of the occurrences of *baptisma* refer to Jewish washings, and since *all* of the occurrences of *baptismos* do refer to those washings, this makes a strong case for the word in Hebrews 6:2 to also refer to those same washings of the Levitical rituals....

- e) “Besides, the whole context of the book of Hebrews is to convince these Jewish Christians not to go back to the Levitical system but rather to proceed fully into Christianity. The reader should take note that if our understanding of ‘washings’ here is correct, this point alone is decisive for the ‘first principles’ being Jewish rather than Christian” (Workman, pp.370f).
- i. Not laying again the foundation of **laying on of hands**.
- 1) Laying on of hands was practiced in the early church, especially when an apostle was imparting spiritual gifts to certain Christians. Also, this was sometimes practiced when men were being installed as elders (1 Tim. 5:17-22).
 - 2) Laying on of hands was also a part of Judaism. "And the Lord called unto Moses and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the heard, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement" (Lev. 1:1-4; cf Lev. 3:2; 16:21).
 - 3) Brother Workman offers these comments:
 - a) “It was repeatedly prescribed in the Levitical ritual for the offerers to lay hands on their animal sacrifices. Such was true of priests (Le. 4:4), elders as representatives of the whole nation (v.15), rulers (v.24) and every common person (Le. 1:4; 3:2,8,13; 4:29,33). The laying on of hands was extremely important in the consecration of priests (Ex. 29:10,15,19; Le. 8:14,18,22,27-28). And in the case of every individual’s burnt offerings, ‘his own hands’ had to be involved (Lev. 7:30).
 - b) “Not only this, but the prescribed ritual concerning the high priest on the annual Day of Atonement was for him to ‘lay both his hands upon the head of a live goat,’ the scapegoat which representatively bore ‘all the iniquities of the children of Israel’ (Le. 16:21)....
 - c) “It is important also to observe that our passage in Hebrews 6 where the laying on of hands is mentioned occurs in the section of Hebrews where Jesus, our ‘great high priest,’ is set in contrast to the high priest of the Levitical system (He. 4:14—10:18). The offerings of the Day of Atonement were alluded to already in Hebrews 5:3. However, Jesus needed to offer only one sacrifice—himself (7:27). It was thus demonstrated in the argument of the book that there was no ‘perfection through the Levitical priesthood’ (7:11).
 - d) “The Day of Atonement offerings of the Jewish high priest (9:7), those ‘goats and calves’ (9:12), were only ‘carnal ordinances’ (9:10). Since it was ‘impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins’ (10:4), or that a scapegoat could really carry sins away, the ‘blood of Christ’ was offered (9:14), and Jesus ‘put away sin by the sacrifice of himself’ (9:26).
 - e) “The ‘laying on of hands’ was a foundational element, therefore, which must not be laid again. It had to do with the Old Covenant which the writer urges his readers to *abandon* in order to really *press on* into the ‘perfection’ of the New Covenant. These two middle items in the foundation list—washings and laying on of hands—make it conclusive to this writer that the interpretation here advocated is correct” (Workman, pp.372f).
- j. Not laying again the foundation of the **resurrection of the dead**.
- 1) The resurrection was taught in the Old Testament.
 - a) Abraham believed in the resurrection: "Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (Heb. 11:19).
 - b) Job refers to the resurrection: "For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in

- my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:25-27).
- c) David taught the resurrection in Psalm 17:15: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."
 - d) Isaiah 53:10-12 refers to the resurrection: "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."
 - e) Daniel speaks of the resurrection and the judgment: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).
 - f) Christ established the fact of the resurrection:
 - Exodus 3:6: "Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." [Notice the present tense of the verb *I am*].
 - Luke 20:34-38: "And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him."
 - g) Martha believed in the resurrection: "Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).
- 2) If Jewish Christians left the church and returned to Judaism, there would be nothing left for them but eternal judgment. The only atonement that will avail at the judgment is the blood of Christ. In turning back to Judaism they were returning from the atoning blood of Christ to the blood of animals. This could only mean eternal condemnation.
 - 3) Hebrews 6:4-6 sets forth the blessings these Jewish Christians had enjoyed in Christ.
 - a) The phrase, "partakers of the Holy Ghost," is a direct reference to spiritual gifts. These gifts came through the laying on of the apostles hands and were never given to any except those in the church. Acts 8:14-17.
 - b) The church is comprised of the saved (Acts 2:47). Paul was writing to actual Christians, not to pretenders; some were on the verge of falling away; some had already done so (vs. 4).
 - 4) "The preliminary resurrection of the Messiah had been hinted at by implication in the Old Testament (Is. 53:10,12; Ps. 24). But it took the personal teaching of Jesus to make known that his rising 'out of the dead' (Mark 9:9-10; Ma. 17:9; 1 Co. 15:20) was primary. Jesus' resurrection as the 'firstfruits' (1 Co. 15:20,23; Col. 1:18; Re. 1:5) is the specific contribution of New Testament teaching, as well as elaboration on the nature of our resurrection bodies (1 Co. 15:35-54; Ph. 3:21; 1 John 3:2). No, knowledge of the resurrection of the dead was not new to these Christian converts from Judaism. This foundation stone had been laid long ago" (Workman, ADL, pp.373f).
 - 5) It was not necessary for the Lord to go back and re-establish the foundational background for the resurrection of the dead; he had done so already in the Old Testament scriptures.
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- k. Not laying again the foundation of the **eternal judgment**.
- 1) The doctrine of the final judgment was known from the early days of man's history. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches* which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15).
 - 2) Other Old Testament passages speak of the Judgment.
 - a) Psalms 1:5: "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."
 - b) Psalms 96:13: "Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."
 - c) Psalms 98:9: "Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity."
 - d) Ecclesiastes 11:9: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."
 - e) Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - f) Malachi 3:16: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."
 - g) Daniel 7:9-11: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."
 - h) Daniel 7:22: "Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."
 - i) Daniel 12:1-2: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."
 - j) Deuteronomy 32:22: "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains."
 - k) Deuteronomy 32:36: "For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left."
 - l) Isaiah 26:21: "For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."
 - 3) The Lord did not need to go back and re-establish the background truth of the eternal judgment; he had already accomplished that in what was revealed on the subject in the Old Testament.
- l. The apostle is not demanding that the Hebrew Christians repudiate the truth of these six items. Each of these points was part of the Old Testament scriptures. The resurrection of the dead and the
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final judgment are major doctrines of the New Testament, since they are essential elements in God’s eternal plan. No one can ever out-grow these two great doctrines. But the Hebrew Christians had to give up the Mosaic Law, with its various washings and other exclusive features.

- 1) The view of this passage we have taken is the minority view; most commentators have taken the position that it has reference to basic *Christian* doctrines, and that we are to progress beyond these in order to go on unto perfection.
 - 2) We are not to abandon the gospel plan of salvation (faith, repentance, confession and baptism); we are not to forsake the subjects of the resurrection and final judgment. But the Jewish saints could leave the Mosaic Law, and progress into the depths of Christianity; and we must leave the Mosaic Law (as a law) in the Old Testament. We may learn principles and encouragement from it, which will enable us to live the Christian life better, but we must recognize that it is not God’s operable law for men today.
- m. The following table shows the comparison of the six items discussed in the passage, in the Old and New Testaments; each of the Old Testament points has its counterpart in the New Testament:

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
Repentance From Dead Works: Rom. 7:1-8; Gal. 2:16; Heb. 9:14	Repentance From Sin: Luke 13:1-5; 24:47; Acts 17:30
Faith Toward God: Heb. 11:6	Faith In God: Heb. 11:6; Mark 1:15; John 14:1; Acts 20:21
Doctrine of Washings [Baptisms]: Ex. 29:4; Lev. 16:4,24	Doctrine of Baptisms: Mt. 3:1-6; 20:22; Mk. 16:16; Acts 1:5
Laying On Of Hands: Lev. 24:14; Num. 8:10-12; Lev. 16	Laying On Of Hands: Acts 5:12; 6:6; 28:8; 8:17-19; Rom. 1:11
Resurrection Of The Dead: Dan. 12:2; Job 14:13-14; Heb. 11:9-10	Resurrection Of The Dead: John 5:28-29; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Th. 4:13-18
Eternal Judgment: Jude 14-15; Eccl. 12:13-14	Eternal Judgment: Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10

2. Verse 3: “And this will we do, if God permit.”
 - a. The apostle states his inspired commitment to accomplish the end he has just discussed, that he and his Hebrew brethren will leave behind the Old Covenant and proceed fully into the great realities of the New Covenant.
 - b. John 15:5: "I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing.**" “The apostle well knew that without God’s help, they could accomplish nothing (John 15:5). And hence while urging his brethren, by all the high motives of the Gospel, to greater diligence in making their calling and election sure, he is careful to remind them of the necessity of submitting to the will of God, and looking to him for help in all things” (Milligan, p.174).
 - c. We are dependent upon God.
 - 1) "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For

- what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15).
- 2) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1:17).
3. Verses 4-5: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come."
- a. The key word in this passage is the word translated "impossible" (*adunatos*): "from *a*, negative, and *dunatos*, able, strong..." (Vine, Vol. 2, p.250).
- 1) This Greek term is used in the following passages, which give a good view of its meaning:
- Matthew 19:26: "But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is **impossible**; but with God all things are possible."
 - Mark 10:27: "And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."
 - Luke 18:27: "And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."
 - Acts 14:8: "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, **impotent** in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked."
 - Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was **weak** through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
 - Romans 15:1: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the **weak**, and not to please ourselves."
 - Hebrews 6:18: "That by two immutable things, in which *it was impossible* for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."
 - Hebrews 10:4: "For *it is not possible* that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is impossible* to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
- 2) The Greek word in Luke 17:1 is *anendektos*, which means "inadmissible" or "not allowed" (Vine, *ibid.*). "Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!" (Luke 17:1).
- b. The text states plainly that certain ones can get themselves into such a spiritual condition that it is impossible for them to repent. This can happen to alien sinners and to Christians who fall away. Those being discussed in the text are people who have obeyed the gospel ("once enlightened") and have since fallen away. The following passages address this condition, on the part of both alien sinner and erring saint:
- 1) Matthew 12:31-32: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come." Mark 3:28-30: "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." Acts 13:44-46: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it

- from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
- 2) Matthew 13:13-15: "Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:17-19: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 6) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - 7) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 - 8) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - 9) 1 John 5:16: "If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

c. **They were once enlightened.**

- 1) One who obeys the gospel has entered into the light of the gospel of Christ.
 - a) John 8:12: "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - c) Ephesians 1:18: "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."
 - d) Ephesians 5:8: "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
 - e) Hebrews 10:32: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."
 - f) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 2) Having been in the light shows that they knew the will of God; they were aware also of their former condemned condition; they have fallen back into sin despite their knowledge of the truth. If they have simply been deceived by temptation or error, there is hope for them; but if they have willfully turned back into sin or error, they have repudiated the only means of salvation—the gospel of Christ.
 - 3) The apostle here warns the Jewish Christians of the danger of returning to their former religious situation; if they forsook the gospel for the law, they were exchanging Christ for Moses. If they renounced the gospel, there was nothing else that could bring them to repentance and nothing that could save them.
- d. **They had tasted of the heavenly gift.**
- 1) The gift is one which had its origin in heaven, and which is given to those who obey the gospel. This gift could be any of the spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), given to Christians, which is not named in the immediate context. The gift could be a reference to the spiritual gifts which certain Christians in the first century received (1 Cor. 12:8-10).
 - 2) The reference is most likely to salvation. The purpose of preaching the gospel is to provide men with salvation from the guilt of past sin (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47) and the joyful anticipation of eternal salvation (1 Pet. 1:3-9). "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10). In a broader category, the writer may be referring to the Christian life.
 - 3) To taste the heavenly gift is to partake of it, to experience it. "If so be ye have **tasted** that the Lord *is* gracious" (1 Pet. 2:3).
- e. **They had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.**
- 1) Undoubtedly, some would assign the meaning of this statement to an indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a Christian. However, no one can give a definitive answer specifying the exact practical blessings and precise help the indwelling Spirit provides. The effects of the Spirit's indwelling being nebulous, how could the apostate saint miss his presence?
 - 2) On the other hand, those Christians who received spiritual gifts would know precisely the power of the Spirit's supernatural demonstrations. They would have participated in delivering inspired messages, speaking in foreign languages they had not learned, healing the sick, and in exercising the rest of the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10). To have lost these capabilities would be noticeable and significant, both to the one exercising the gift and those benefitted by the gift. This is by far the better and more obvious interpretation.
- f. **They had tasted the good word of God.**
- 1) To taste the word of God is a figure of speech which denotes partaking of God's word. Each of

- the items Paul lists is important. To have learned the inspired word, to have been benefitted by its wisdom, to have experienced its power to save and sanctify, and then give it up, would represent a loss to the individual.
- 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:8: "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."
 - 4) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:1-3: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious."
- g. **They had tasted the powers of the world to come.**
- 1) Living the Christian life acquaints us with the environment in Heaven. We learn what God is like by perceiving the nature of Christ (John 14:8-10). To know what the Father is like is to see what kind of people he wants around him. "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved" (Psa. 15).
 - 2) In living the Christian life, we learn how to live in Heaven. We cultivate brotherly love; we have genuine happiness in each other's presence; we learn to enjoy worshipping the Almighty; we maintain reverence and love for God; we delete from our practice every activity and word which would defile us; we guard our minds against evil motives and emotions; we keep ourselves as pure as possible by living as closely to the word of God as we can.
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
4. Verse 6: "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) American Standard Version: "And then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."
 - 2) English Standard Version: "If they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt."
 - 3) English Study Bible: "And then have fallen by the *wayside*, to restore them again to repentance. They have crucified to themselves the Son of God, and put him to open shame."
 - b. One who has had each of these blessings and experiences, but who willfully turns away from them, has placed himself in the awful position of having renounced God's only appointed system. Jews who had obeyed the gospel, but who turned back to the Mosaic System, forfeited their fellowship with God.
 - c. The word "if" is not in the original, but it is implied. The original says, "And [who] fall away..." The condition then described fits only those Christians who apostatize; it does not pertain to those who remain faithful. If they fall away, Paul says it is impossible to renew them again unto
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repentance, in view of the fact that they crucify God's Son once more.

- 1) The word "if" was inserted into the text by Theodore Beza, a Calvinist, in a futile attempt to make the statement a little less destructive to the false doctrine that a child of God cannot fall away and be lost.
 - 2) The effort was futile, for the text still teaches that one can "fall away." One cannot fall from a pinnacle if he has not attained that lofty position. One cannot fall away from the Lord unless he has been with the Lord. One cannot lose what he has never possessed.
- d. What does "impossible to renew them unto repentance" mean? Does it mean that one can become so hardened in sin that he cannot repent?
- 1) Sin hardens and one may sear or kill his conscience.
 - a) Ephesians 4:18-19: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
 - b) 1 Timothy 4:2: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
 - 2) Barnes gave this foolish assessment of the passage: "The passage *proves* that if true Christians should apostatize, it would be impossible to renew and save them. If, then, it should be asked whether I believe that any true Christian ever did, or ever will fall from grace, and wholly lose his religion, I would answer unhesitatingly, *No*....If, then, it be asked what was the *use* of a warning like this, I answer, (1) It would show the great *sin* of apostasy from God if it were to occur....(2) Such a statement might be one of the most effectual means of preserving from apostasy" (p.133).
 - a) He then gave illustrations by which he thought to establish his argument, saying that a warning that a fall from a precipice would cause certain death, that a warning that arsenic would be fatal, that a warning that fire destroys, and that a warning that going over the Falls of Niagara would kill—that these warnings have kept thousands from perishing.
 - b) However, these are not parallel with his position; one can fall, one can take arsenic, one can be burned, and one can go over Niagara Falls; but Barnes states that it is impossible for a Christian to fall away from Christ and be lost! But the fact is undeniable, that the purpose of the warning in the text is to prevent apostasy. No warning would be needed if apostasy was impossible! It is certain that God would put nothing in his word that was unnecessary. What value would there be in a warning against fighting with a nine-foot-tall green Martian, since there is no such creature? Did any mother ever seriously warn her child to watch out for a "one-eyed, one-horned, flying purple people-eater" when the child went outside to play? To warn against something that is non-existent is foolishness.
 - 3) The statement of the text is to be taken at face value. One who has obeyed the gospel, having partaken of the blessings and powers offered by the gospel of Christ, and then falls away from the Lord, despite the knowledge and experiences he has acquired, and having in the process put the Lord to death again, is not one who will be affected by the simple truths of the gospel again.
 - a) He has willfully repudiated Christ; as long as that rejection continues, he will not and can not repent. If that condition continues, his heart will become so hard that the gospel will never again have its intended effect on his heart.
 - b) It is impossible for anyone to repent unless his heart is filled with godly sorrow; and godly sorrow cannot be produced by an unbelieving, hard heart. "I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry unto repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly sort, that ye might suffer loss by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:9-10, ASV).

- 4) Workman gives a different interpretation of the passage: “In keeping with our interpretation of verses 1-3, a much simpler explanation appears to be the correct one. And it is in harmony with the context of the book. The passage was written to Hebrew Christians warning them not to fall away as some had already done. They were in danger of reverting to the Old Testament Levitical system with its priesthood and sacrifices. The purpose of the book was to prevent them from doing this. Therefore, Hebrews was written to demonstrate the superiority of Christ and Christianity over Judaism, to warn them against falling back to the Jewish system, and to exhort them to renew their spiritual diligence.
- a) “A key section of the book emphasizes that Jesus’ high priesthood is better than the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood and that the New Covenant replaced the Old. Since the one great sacrifice has now replaced the many sacrifices of the Levitical ritual, the writer’s point in Hebrews 6:4-8 is that the Jewish sacrificial system cannot spiritually renew his Hebrew-Christian readers if they should happen to go back to it. The warning, both here and in the similar passage of 10:26-31, is not just against falling away in general but specifically against falling back to Judaism! [*However, if they returned to the Mosaic Law, they would have fallen away from Christ and would have thus lost their salvation. Returning to the Levitical system is in the immediate and general context, but so is Hebrews 3:12-13: “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” This last passage certainly includes returning to any sinful condition. BW*].
 - b) “Even when the Old Testament was still in force as God’s religion, there was ‘a remembrance made of sins year by year’ (Heb. 10:3). This was a remembrance of *all* past sins, even those previously atoned for, because it was actually ‘impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins’ (v. 4). It was a faulty or limited covenant (He. 8:7) under which God had to continually find fault with his people (v. 8). But under the New Covenant no such ‘remembrance’ kept coming up. When God forgave he forgot. With Jesus as the sin offering, God promised that all forgiven sins he would ‘remember no more’ (Je. 31:34; He. 8:12; 10:17).
 - c) “Now that the New Covenant has replaced the Old, the Levitical system cannot even do what it once did with its limited accomplishments. The Old can now do nothing at all for it has been taken away (He. 10:9). Therefore, with the Old Covenant it is now ‘impossible to renew them again unto repentance’ (6:6) because under that system ‘there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins’ (10:26). For now ‘in none other is there salvation’ except in Jesus (Acts 4:12). It is not that it is ‘impossible’ for such apostates to return to *Christianity*, but rather it is ‘impossible’ for them to be saved under *Judaism*. [*If a Jewish Christian returned to Judaism, he would be repudiating the only system that could save him—Christianity. If any Christian today returns to a sinful life or to another religious system, he has also repudiated the only means of salvation. As long as such a one willfully remains in this sinful state, it is impossible to renew him again unto repentance—and salvation. BW*].
 - d) “Such people as those mentioned ‘crucify to themselves the Son of God’ (He. 6:6) either by reverting to sacrifices which called for the death of Christ (10:5-10) or by associating themselves with an apostate nation and rejecting ‘the blood of the covenant’ (10:29). Ultimately, such fallen ones can only have ‘a certain fearful expectation of judgment’ (10:27). When they finally ‘fall into the hands of the living God’ (10:31), their ‘end is to be burned’ (6:8) in the ‘fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries’ (10:27)” (ADL, pp.377f).
 - e. They “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.” As far as any benefit to them was concerned, Christ was dead; they had slain him again. Also, the attitude they manifested made it clear, that if

they had been present when Pilate asked what should be done to Jesus, they would have joined the loud chorus of voices saying, "Crucify him, crucify him!," or at least would not have acted in his behalf. With that condition of heart characterizing them, it is easy to see why Paul spoke of the impossibility of their repenting again.

f. One of the factors about the crucifixion of Jesus that figured to utterly destroy his influence among the Jews, was the shame that accrued to one who was crucified.

- 1) Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance."
- 2) Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree."
- 3) The Jewish leaders would naturally think that the Lord would be forever rejected by the Jewish people for this reason. But God used the curse of the cross to the enhancement of Christ's death.
 - a) John 12:31-33: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."
 - b) Galatians 6:14: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

5. Verses 7-8: "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned."

- a. Giving a subtle warning, the apostle calls attention to the fact that the earth receives the rain and produces its fruit for those who tend the crops, which represents blessings from God; but the thorns and briers are rejected, being burned.
- b. The implication intended is that those people who live in rebellion to God, not bringing forth proper fruit, will likewise be destroyed. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 The. 1:6-10).

B. Hebrews 6:9-20: Words of Encouragement and Admonition.

1. Verse 9: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."
 - a. In contrast to the ground which brought forth briers and thorns, which were destined to be burned, the apostle expresses by inspiration his heart-felt belief that his brethren would not allow themselves to be lost; that is, their past and present faithfulness was such that they were yet in the realm of the redeemed (see verse 10). He does not classify them as apostates, but as his beloved brethren.
 - b. Barnes said Paul's statement, that he was persuaded better things of the brethren, was evidence that a child of God could not fall away and be lost. But the proof is in the opposite direction! The local and remote context of the book of Hebrews, and of the Bible in general, expresses the distinct possibility that one can fall away and be lost. There would be no sense to the warnings in Hebrews and elsewhere if apostasy was not possible. The apostle was simply expressing his confidence that they would remain as faithful in the future as they had been in the past.
 - c. There are certain things which accompany salvation. He has previously mentioned enlightenment, acquaintance with the heavenly gift, partaking of the Holy Spirit, tasting the good word of God and

- of the world to come, and living in a state of penitence. The things that accompany salvation include the blessings, privileges, attainments, activities, and acquired traits of character that the Lord has designated. The fact that they had made great advancement in cultivating the Christian character and in discharging their God-given duties indicated their favorable standing before the Lord; their past and present obedience furnished a strong presumption of future faithfulness.
2. Verse 10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - a. If God were to forget or ignore their past and present obedience, he would be unrighteous. They had been neglectful in studying God's word (Heb. 5:12-14), but they had been active in benevolent work. These brethren had been active in various labors of love, shown toward the name of the Lord, in that they ministered to those in need; indeed, the apostle affirms that they continued doing so.
 - 1) Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 3) Matthew 25:40: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me."
 - b. As important and wonderful as works of benevolence are, they are not a substitute for obedience. Of course, when we aid those in need, that is an act of obedience to a general command; but that obedient act cannot override an act of disobedience to God's direct commands. One who is quick to feed and clothe the poor, cannot by those acts set aside God's command to be baptized, worship in spirit and truth, teach the lost, etc.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 15:22: "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - c. A sobering truth is thus taught: our first priority is to obey the truth. To put helping the poor above obeying the will of God is to make a colossal mistake, an error so grievous that it will have eternal consequences.
 - 1) Acts 6:2: "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables."
 - 2) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 3) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 3. Verses 11-12: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."
 - a. Speaking by inspiration, Paul states the will of God in saying that each of them should continue to show the same diligence until the end of their days. He is specifically emphasizing their diligence in supplying the needs of the poor among them. When persecution fell upon the saints, many were uprooted from their homes, jobs, families and businesses, forced to take refuge in strange cities
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- and countries. It could be the case that the breadwinner in a family was either imprisoned or slain; his family would still have the same needs, but the husband and father would not be there to provide. The Christians who had the ability, were to aid them.
- b. “*Hope* is a complex emotion of the human mind consisting of a desire for some known object, and an expectation of receiving and enjoying it. The object of the Christian’s hope is, of course, eternal life. And the full assurance (*plarofhoria*) of this hope is simply the hope itself so increased and intensified, as to leave in our minds no doubt whatever that by the grace of God we will finally attain to the enjoyment of the object. This is to be reached only through the diligent use of all the means which God has himself ordained for our perfection in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness” (Milligan, p.182).
 - c. In order to exhibit full assurance of hope to the end, it was necessary for them to avoid slothfulness, and imitate those who through faith and patience were privileged to inherit the promises. To be slothful is to be sluggish and lethargic. Someone has estimated the speed of a sloth at three feet per hour! That sluggish creature is a fitting picture of those who are spiritually indolent.
 - d. Faith and patience (longsuffering) are natural partners. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (Jas. 5:10). Compare: “In your patience possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19). [The word translated “patience” in Luke 21:19 is *hupomone* (endurance; steadfastness)].
 - e. The author urges them to follow the example of faithful men and women of the past, who endured the challenges and problems of life, and died in hope of receiving the promises. He has Abraham in mind, along with others of a similar standing with God. Cf. Hebrews 11.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:1: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 1:6: "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 2:14: "For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews."
4. Verse 13-15: “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”
- a. God had called Abraham to leave behind his homeland, his father’s family, and his background, and go into a land that he would be shown (Gen. 12:1-3). That great man, though childless at the time, was given the promise that he would become the father of nations. "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:15-18).
 - b. God vowed by an oath that he would fulfill the promises he gave to Abraham. God’s oath is not more powerful or surer than his word. He accommodated himself to human practices in order to make the promise appear more certain to Abraham. Men base their oaths on someone or some item more important or greater than themselves. But since there was no one and nothing greater than God, he based his oath on himself.
 - c. As the Hebrew Christians were themselves descendants of Abraham, their very existence was proof that God fulfilled his promise! Abraham lived to see Isaac born into his family by his beloved wife Sarah; Ishmael had been born earlier to Hagar; following the death of Sarah,
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Abraham married Keturah, to whom sons were born (Gen. 25). His descendants in the first century were abundant, and are even more so today. The descendants of Abraham through Ishmael number in the hundreds of millions.

- d. The ultimate fulfillment of all the promises God gave to Abraham cannot be accomplished until the end of time, when all of those who obeyed the will of God will be rewarded in heaven.
5. Verse 16: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all strife."
 - a. Men perform their oaths for the benefit of other men; they base these promises on someone or some thing greater than themselves. This practice has been accepted through the ages as verification that the statements made are true and reliable. "It is a remarkable fact that in all ages and in all nations, men have commonly reposed great confidence in a declaration made under the solemnities of an oath, and hence it is generally an end of all strife" (Milligan, p.185).
 - b. "The custom of swearing on solemn and important occasions is of very ancient date. The first recorded instance of it is found in Gen. 14:22,23, where Abraham is represented as saying to the King of Sodom, 'I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from thee a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say I have made Abram rich'" (Milligan, p.185).
 - c. "The probable reason why the author of Hebrews stressed God's oath to Abraham at this place was that he had the purpose of comparing it, a little later, with another oath God took regarding the 'priest forever after the order of Melchizedek'" (Coffman, p.132).
6. Verses 17-18: "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."
 - a. The two immutable things which furnish solid ground for us to confidently trust God, and which make it impossible for God to lie, are (1) his word of promise and (2) his oath. His word does not need to be strengthened; his oath is not stronger than his word. When God states his word on a matter, he can be safely trusted to live up to the statement. This was done to emphasize the solid ground upon which his promise rested. He went beyond what was necessary.
 - b. God wanted man to know that his promise was sound and reliable. God, "in condescension to human weakness and human custom, being anxious to show to the heirs of the promise...that it was his fixed and unchangeable purpose to bestow on them all that he had promised to their father Abraham, became, as it were, a third party between them and himself, and so interposed as a covenanter with an oath" (Milligan, pp.185f).
 - c. It is impossible for God to lie. He cannot do anything that is inconsistent with his nature and his word. On the other hand, he can do anything that is consistent with his nature and his will.
 - 1) Matthew 5:18: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:13: "If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."
 - 5) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - d. The apostle describes Christians as those "who fled for refuge" to God through the gospel.
 - 1) Under the Mosaic Law, Israelites who committed certain acts could flee to one of the cities of refuge, set aside for that purpose, and find safety for as long as they abode there. "And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which *is* Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side Jordan by

- Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation" (Josh. 20:7-9). These cities were typical of the church.
- 2) In other cases, certain Israelites laid hold of the horns of the altar, seeking deliverance from those who intended them harm. "Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar" (1 Kings 2:28).
 - e. We who have obeyed the gospel have fled to the Lord for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us. The ultimate consequence of our fleeing to the Lord is the realization of the hope of eternal life. We have eternal life now—in the form of hope (Tit. 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 2:25). It has been promised to us by one who tells only the truth; the promise is conditional; if we meet the conditions, the promise is fulfilled. In the meantime, we live in daily assurance that the hope will be realized. There is great comfort and encouragement in hope.
7. Verses 19-20: "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."
- a. Hope is pictured by our author as an anchor, the implement that gives stability and safety to a ship in the midst of a storm. Hope is to our soul what the anchor is to the ship. In the figure, a Christian is the ship, the anchor represents hope; the anchor is fixed in heaven; faith is the chain that ties the saint to his hope.
 - b. The anchor is no good as long as it is on board the ship, or visible. Hope that is visible is not hope. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*" (Rom. 8:24-25).
 - c. Our hope is focused on Christ; without him there could be no hope.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - 2) Colossians 1:27: "To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."
 - d. The object of our hope is depicted under various figures.
 - 1) **Treasure:** "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21)
 - 2) **Citizenship:** "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20, ASV).
 - 3) **Having our name written in heaven:** "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life" (Phil. 4:3).
 - 4) **Inheritance:** "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ
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- from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:3-5).
- e. Our forerunner has entered into heaven, paving the way for our entry into that home of the soul. He has shown us the way, and has opened the way for us. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:1-6).
 - f. Christ has entered into that place beyond the veil. The Levitical high priest passed beyond the veil in the tabernacle, and entered the Most Holy Place. Christ passed through the veil of death, and has entered into that place pictured by the Most Holy Place; he entered Heaven. The Israelites could not follow their high priest into the Most Holy Place; but we can follow our High Priest into the Most Holy Place (Heaven).
 - g. "In these words we have a beautiful and natural transition from the previous digression to the main theme of the Epistle. The Apostle having sufficiently admonished his readers, and prepared their minds and hearts for the consideration of his subject, now gracefully returns to the point from which he suddenly broke off in ch. 5:11; and proceeds at once to show the superiority of Christ's priesthood over that of Aaron and his successors" (Milligan, p.188).
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HEBREWS 7

A. Hebrews 7:1-10: Melchizedek and Christ.

1. Verse 1: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him."
 - a. Various suppositions have been put forth regarding the identity of Melchisedec, including the notion that he was an incarnation of a divine being or an angel. Some have denied his historicity, but according to Genesis 14, he was as real as Abraham.
 - b. Melchisedec was a priest of the most high God, showing monotheism was not a development of the Jews, but antedated their religious system. It also shows that God had a genuine interest in the affairs of all men, not only of Abraham and his descendants. Being a priest, Melchisedec served as an intercessor between those amenable to his office and God.
 - c. Genesis 14 gives the story of the invasion of Palestine by four kings, who captured Sodom and other nearby cities, carrying off a good number of captives, including Lot. Abraham took his three hundred and eighteen trained men and, with the help of God, defeated the invading armies and liberated those who had been captivated. When he returned to his home territory, Melchisedec came out and blessed Abraham. The patriarch gave tithes of the recovered material to him.
2. Verses 2-3: "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."
 - a. Paul reports here that Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils that had been recovered to Melchisedec, the king of Salem, who was also priest of the most high God. What the Old Testament account calls *tithes* the New Testament writer calls a *tenth*.
 - b. Our author tells us that Melchisedec was *King of righteousness* and also *King of Salem*. He then gives us the meaning of "Salem," which he says is "peace." Melchisedec is therefore identified as being "King of peace."
 - c. Melchisedec is described as being "without father, without mother, without descent," and that he had neither beginning of days nor end of life. If this refers to his fleshly life, then he is equal with Christ in some respects, and superior to our Lord in others.
 - 1) If he had no beginning and no end of life, he is still living. He would be equal to Christ in length of life; he would be superior to Christ in beginning of his earthly life, for Melchisedec had no beginning of earthly life, but Christ did; and Christ had an ending of his fleshly life; Melchisedec did not.
 - 2) If he had no beginning of life, then he is a divine being. But if that is the case, where is he today? What is he doing? Is he still alive on earth? If so, who is he and where is he? But verse four calls him a **man**; since he is a man, he is not deity; and since he was a man, he had a beginning of life and an end of life, as all men do.
 - d. Obviously, Paul does not speak of Melchisedec's earthly life, but of his priesthood. That is the very point of the reference to him, to show that Christ's priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec's. He had no one who preceded him in that priestly office; he had no one who followed him in that office. He did not obtain his priestly office by birth; neither his father nor his mother provided him with that position. Christ did not obtain his priesthood from any predecessor, for there was no one who occupied that office before him, and none will replace him in that office.
 - e. The Bible gives no report of either the birth or the death of Melchisedec. He appeared suddenly on the Biblical record, and disappeared just as quickly. He had a natural father and mother; he had a natural birth; and he died just as all men die. He served as priest to the most high God throughout his life, from the time he received it, until he "went the way of all the earth."

- 1) Christ continues, throughout the entire period of time allotted for him to be High Priest, to serve in his priestly office. He became High Priest at the same time that he became King; he received his kingdom after his ascension to heaven (Acts 1:9-11; Dan. 7:13-14; cf. Zech. 6:12-13).
- 2) Christ did not obtain his priesthood from the Levitical order, since he was of the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi. "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:14).
- f. The inspired writer is setting the background to establish the great truth that God has changed the Law; the Mosaic system has been replaced by the gospel system. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7:12).
3. Verses 4-5: "Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham."
 - a. Paul here states an implication that grows out of the preceding facts. The patriarch Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec, and Melchisedec blessed Abraham. Since Abraham was great, this man was even greater. As he will state in verses six and seven, Melchisedec received the tithes from Abraham and he pronounced the blessing upon Abraham; the lesser individual pays the tithes to the greater, and the greater individual blesses the lesser individual.
 - b. In the Jewish system, there was none greater than Abraham. Abraham is manifestly greater than his off-spring; since the great patriarch paid tithes to one who was not of the Levitical order, then the Levitical order of priests has at least one priesthood (Melchisedec's) that is superior to it. Jews were willing to admit this. Since the priesthood of Christ is after the order of Melchisedec, then Christ's priesthood is superior also to that of the Levitical order.
 - c. The Jewish people were obligated to pay tithes to the Levitical priests, even though they all descended from Abraham; and Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec. Since the progenitor of the nation of Israel was surpassed by Melchisedec, then his descendants were likewise surpassed by Melchisedec. Jesus' priesthood is likened to that of Melchisedec, hence his priesthood is greater than that of the Levites.
4. Verses 6-8: "But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he *receiveth them*, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth."
 - a. Melchisedec was not of the genealogy of the Levites; their lineage is traced back to Levi, a son of Jacob, who descended from Abraham through Isaac. All the Jewish priests were from the tribe of Levi, but Melchisedec had no kinship to the Levites.
 - b. Since blessings are pronounced by superior individuals upon inferior individuals, and Abraham received blessing from Melchisedec, it follows that Melchisedec was superior to Abraham, the father of Israel. This was true even though Abraham was the one to whom the great promises of God were given.
 - 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
 - 2) Genesis 22:15-18: "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the

nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

- 3) Acts 2:39: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”
 - c. In the Jewish system, the Levite priests, who were mortal men, received tithes from other mortal men; these Levites operated under a priestly arrangement that had a definite beginning and ended when Jesus died on the cross (cf. Col. 2:14). But Melchisedec is one whose priesthood had no identifiable beginning or ending. The inspired record does not announce his death, so in that sense, Melchisedec lives on. Melchisedec’s ideal priesthood was typical of Christ’s, and the Lord’s priesthood will not end until time is no more.
 - d. Since Melchizedec was a man, a mortal being, and since all accountable men commit sin, then Melchisedec was in need of the spiritual benefits which Christ provides. It is obvious that Christ’s priesthood is vastly greater than Melchisedec’s. Melchisedec’s priesthood was a special priesthood for his time, and as such, he could intercede between man and God, and perhaps receive information from God for man. But since he was a man, his priesthood could not remove the guilt of sin from anyone, including his own. The benefits of our Lord’s sacrifice extend backward in time to cover the sins of the faithful ones of the ancient past, and it radiates forward in time to benefit those who obey the gospel during the Christian Age.
 - 1) Romans 3:23-26: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”
 - 2) Hebrews 9:15-17: “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”
 5. Verses 9-10: “And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.”
 - a. Paul states that in a representative manner, the Levitical priests paid tithes to Melchisedec. Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec; Abraham was the father of the Levites; in view of the fact that their great ancestor paid these tithes, then in his person, they did so also. Moreover, if they had been present and lived up to the high standards of Abraham, they too would have paid the tithes.
 - b. “When Edward VII of England renounced his throne, the abdication not only bound him but any posterity that he might have had afterward. The fact, therefore, of Abraham’s taking a tithe of the chief spoils and paying them to Melchizedek, priest of God Most High, clearly made any priesthood developed through the descendants of Abraham to be subordinate to that of Melchizedek” (Coffman, p.148).
 - c. This indicates their inferiority to the priesthood of Melchisedec; and since Christ’s priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec, the Levitical priesthood is also inferior to that of the Lord.
- B. Hebrews 7:11-19: The Levitical Priesthood Has Been Superseded.**
1. Verse 11: “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need *was there* that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?”
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) “Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it hath the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron?” (ASV).
 - 2) “Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received

- the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?" (NKJV).
- 3) "Now if perfection were being reached through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be appointed after the order of Aaron?" (English Study Bible).
- b. If it had been the case that spiritual perfection could have been provided through the Levitical priesthood, there would have been no need for that priestly system to be replaced by another. The apostle's implication is obvious: the Levitical priesthood could not provide spiritual perfection and was superseded by one that could supply that condition.
 - c. The Levitical priests administered the Mosaic Law. The priests themselves were imperfect and the law they administered was unable to provide the ultimate spiritual needs of sinful men: the complete and real forgiveness of sins (cf. Acts 13:38-39).
 - 1) Hebrews 8:6-8: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 3) Romans 3:9-11: "What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."
 - 4) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - d. The required priesthood was after the order of Melchisedec, and not after the order of Aaron. "The introduction of Aaron's name at this point, connecting it with the Levitical priesthood, is for the purpose of showing that, as far as this argument is concerned, there is no difference between them. It cannot be argued, therefore, that Aaron's priesthood was essentially any different from that of the Levitical priesthood. Still in the mind of the author was that astounding declaration of God in Psalm 110:4, in which the Messiah was revealed as coming not through the Levitical and Aaronic order, but through that of Melchizedek! This divine revelation, centuries after the system of Levi and Aaron had been operative, shows that God never did intend or plan that perfection could come through that system. If he had so planned or intended, what was the use of a Messiah arising after the order of a totally different priesthood?" (Coffman, p.149).
2. Verse 12: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."
 - a. The Levite priests taught the Law of Moses to the people, and offered the sacrifices and other acts of worship under that system. Now the priesthood has been changed, and the law taught under this new system is a different law from that given by Moses.
 - b. The Mosaic Law had its divinely-given purposes which it was able to fulfill properly; but it was never intended to be able to fulfill the ultimate purposes of God. Neither the Levitical priesthood nor the law that authorized that priesthood could provide the spiritual perfection the apostle has in mind. But the new system, brought into being through the work of Christ, could give everything which the soul of man needs.
 - 1) Romans 8:1-4: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,

- who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
- 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - c. "Take away the foundation, and the superstructure must fall to the ground. Remove from any system that which is central and fundamental, and then all that depends on it falls at once for want of the necessary support. The abrogation of the Levitical priesthood was therefore not a matter of small moment. God would never have effected a change involving such consequences, for light and unimportant reasons. But this very change he has effected as our author now proceeds to show" (Milligan, pp.204f).
 - d. Remove the Levitical priesthood from the Mosaic system and there would be little that remained. The gospel replaced the Mosaic Law; the high priesthood of Christ replaced the Levitical high priest-hood. The New Testament is an entirely new and different system.
3. Verses 13-14: "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - a. The apostle has been speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, that he is God's appointed High Priest now. But this one is not of the proper tribe among the Israelites to qualify as priest. "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law" (Heb. 8:4).
 - b. Jesus was a descendant of Abraham through David; he was of the kingly tribe of Judah; he was not of the priestly tribe of Levi. No man from Judah was ever given the right to serve at the altar. As the previous verse affirmed, the priesthood was changed, which meant that the law was also changed.
 - 1) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - 2) Revelation 5:5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
 - c. In verse fourteen is found a clear statement relating to the matter of Biblical silence. Two views of how the Bible is to be interpreted are involved. Martin Luther thought that we were authorized to do anything the Bible did not condemn; Zwingli taught that we were allowed to do only those things which the Bible allowed.
 - 1) These two viewpoints are very much in evidence today, with the former having by far the greater number of adherents; but the latter view is the correct one. The following passages are from the American Standard Version:
 - a) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
 - b) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other."

- 2) Paul states here that the law said nothing about anyone from the tribe of Judah being authorized to serve as priest under the Old Testament system. Without that authority, no one could serve as priest.
 - 3) Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." The Law did not specifically forbid obtaining the fire used in the tabernacle service from sources other than the altar; but when these two sons of Aaron procured their fire from some unauthorized source, God slew them. Why? They acted without his authority! He recorded it for the benefit of subsequent generations (cf. Rom. 15:4).
 - a) Leviticus 9:24: "And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."
 - b) Leviticus 16:12: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail."
 - 4) When Uzziah's pride led him to assume the role of priest, God punished him by making him to become a leper. The king was of the tribe of Judah, and had no authority to assume the role of a priest. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land" (2 Chron. 26:16-21).
4. Verses 15-17: "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."
- a. Other renderings of this passage:
 - 1) "And *what we say* is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: for it is witnessed *of him*, Thou art a priest for ever After the order of Melchizedek" (ASV).
 - 2) "And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: 'You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek'" (NKJ).
 - 3) "And it is clearer still that if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, That he is not a priest according to *the* Law's fleshly requirements; but according to the power of a life *that* cannot be destroyed. For he bears witness, You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek" (English Study Bible).
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- b. What is “far more evident?”
- 1) Milligan [pp.205f] lists the views of several prominent commentators of the past:
 - a) The distinction between the Levitical and the New Testament priesthoods (Chrysostom).
 - b) The fact that our Lord sprang out of Judah (Ebrard).
 - c) The law of Moses is abrogated (Alford).
 - d) Perfection was not attainable through the Levitical priesthood (Delitzsch).
 - e) A change of the priesthood involves of necessity a change of the law (Tholuck).
 - 2) Coffman paraphrased the writer’s argument in this section as follows:
 - a) “(1) It is evident that with the rising of a new and greater priest, not out of Levi but out of Judah, the law was abrogated; (2) but it is ‘far more evident’ that the law was abrogated, when it is considered that the great new high priest is, in addition to being from an unlawful tribe (Judah) as far as the priesthood was concerned, also from an utterly new and different order, that of Melchizedek.
 - b) “Thus the words ‘far more evident’ stand as the author’s evaluation of the two supporting premises for his conclusion that the law was changed, making the latter of the two the stronger.
 - c) “The author then reverts to the comparison between Melchizedek and Christ for the further purpose of stressing Christ’s superiority and the temporary nature of the law” (p.154).
 - 3) The Law has changed (verse 12); a different tribe is now involved in the Priesthood; a different order of priesthood is mandated (after the order of Melchizedek); therefore, the Law has been replaced.
 - 4) The most prominent point in the immediate context appears to be the statement in verse twelve, which says that God’s change in the priesthood necessitated a change also of the law. It is impossible for Christ to be a Levitical priest, since he came from the wrong tribe. The Levitical priesthood was unable to bring anyone to a level of spiritual perfection. But Christ is able to bring us to spiritual perfection. In order for him to serve as High Priest, it was necessary for God to replace the Law of Moses with the Gospel of Christ.
- c. Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. Our Lord’s priesthood did not arise from the law of Moses, but from the power of an endless life. Melchisedec did not derive his priestly office from any predecessor in that office, and he did not pass that office on to any successor. The Levitical priests obtained their priestly office from their ancestry; the law of Moses prescribed the conditions. The law which provided for the Levitical priesthood was an earthly system, emphasizing material concerns.
- 1) The priests had to be descendants of Levi; the high priest had to be from the lineage of Aaron. No matter how much a member of another tribe might want to be a priest, he was disqualified by his ancestry. The primary qualification of a Levitical priest was his ancestry.
 - 2) The Levitical priests were appointed to that office by outward ceremonies; they wore special items of clothing to indicate their office; they offered physical sacrifices (animals; incense).
 - 3) The law of Moses contained carnal (fleshly, materialistic) commandments. It was concerned with outward matters: ceremonies, physical lineage of priests, a material altar, animal sacrifices, etc. The law is depicted as consisting of carnal commandments because it emphasized earthly regulations, seemingly being more interested in external formalities than with inner purity; at least, the Israelites often used it that way.
- d. Psalms 110:4: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." The apostle, in verse seventeen of the text, highlights the word “forever” in the Old Testament reference he cites. Melchisedec’s priesthood was *forever*, in the sense that there is no record of its beginning or end; Christ’s high priesthood will have no ending in time.
- 1) We are not told the exact time [year, month, week, day, hour, minute] when Christ entered the sacerdotal office. However, we may confidently assume that he became High Priest at the

- precise moment he became King.
- a) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - b) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - c) Zechariah 6:13: "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - d) Acts 2:32-33: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."
- 2) That Christ is eternal in being is a scriptural fact, and is beyond doubt (Mic. 5:2; John 1:1-3). That his priesthood will never end as long as the earth remains, is also true. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing **he ever liveth** to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Since he will never die, no one will ever replace him in his priestly office. And one might as well think Christ could be ousted as King, as to think he could be supplanted by another high priest.
5. Verses 18-19: "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God." "For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God" (NKJ).
- a. In order for him to occupy the office of High Priest, there was the necessity of the first covenant being annulled. Neither God nor man can have two contradicting laws in effect at the same time. God set aside the Mosaic Law so that he could inaugurate the Gospel of Christ.
 - b. It was replaced because it was unable to provide what our souls needed. It identified sin, and urged men to live apart from sin; but once guilt was acquired, that law had no means of removing the guilt (Acts 13:38-39; Heb. 10:1-4). The gospel is able to remit sin (Acts 2:37-38; Heb. 9:11-17).
 - 1) Hebrews 8:6-7: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second."
 - 2) Galatians 2:16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."
 - c. God never intended for the Mosaic Law to remain forever. "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, **till** the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19; cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 7:1-7).
 - 1) Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - 2) Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."
 - 3) Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant
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- with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
- 4) Romans 7:1-7: “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”
- d. No man has the right to annul, set aside, disregard, or make changes to God’s order.
- 1) "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto" (Gal. 3:15; cf. 2 John 9).
 - 2) “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).
- e. The bringing in of a better hope did provide the way for bringing us to perfection (maturity, completeness). “The idea which the apostle wishes to convey to his readers is simply this: that on the one hand, there is a setting aside of the Old Economy on account of its weakness and insufficiency; and on the other hand, there is the bringing in of the New Economy, by which we may all now, as priests, draw nigh to God and worship him in spirit and in truth” (Milligan, p.209).
- f. We are commanded (Jas. 4:8) to draw near to God. According to our text, it is a great honor to draw near to him. When we draw near to God, he draws near to us. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded" (Jas. 4:8).
- 1) Ephesians 2:11-13: "Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:19-22: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

C. Hebrews 7:20-28: A New Priesthood Established.

1. Verses 20-22: “And inasmuch as not without an oath *he was made priest*: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”
 - a. Other translations of the passage shed some light on the statement:
 - 1) Hebrews 7:20-22: “And inasmuch as *He was not made priest* without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: ‘The LORD has sworn And will not relent, ‘You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek’), by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant” (NKJ).
 - 2) Hebrews 7:20-22: "And inasmuch as *it is* not without the taking of an oath (for they indeed have been made priests without an oath; but he with an oath by him that saith of him, The Lord sware and will not repent himself, Thou art a priest for ever); by so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant" (ASV).
 - b. Christ is the surety (guarantor) of a better covenant. No oath was required of the Levitical priests when they were appointed to their work. No oath was vocalized by the Lord to confirm them eternally in their office. The high priest left the office at death; the other priests left when they were no longer able to perform their rigorous tasks.
 - 1) Exodus 28:1: "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons."
 - 2) “There was nothing extraordinary in the mode of their appointment. They were consecrated merely in the way of ordinary legislation, with becoming rites and ceremonies. See Ex. 34 and Lev. 8 and 9. But the manner of Christ’s appointment was altogether extraordinary. God himself made oath on the occasion, as David testifies in Psa. 110:4: ‘Jehovah has sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.’ It is therefore clearly indicated that God will never set aside the priesthood of Christ, as he did that of Levi, in order to make way for another of a different order” (Milligan, p.210).
 - 3) By virtue of his oath, God affirmed the unending nature of Christ’s high priesthood. The gospel is immutable; no man can change it and God will not change it. Thus is Christ the surety of the new covenant, which is vastly superior to the covenant he made with Israel. This passage shows that the gospel is God’s last revelation to man. "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, ASV).
 - 4) “How is Jesus the surety of a better covenant? The entire gospel of his glorious life, together with all that he did and is doing, constitutes that surety. By his enduring the cross, rising from the dead, ascending on high, sitting down upon the very throne of God, and interceding for the redeemed —by these and many other things, Christ is the surety of the absolute truth and dependability of all that Christians have received concerning the new covenant and its inherent blessings” (Coffman, p.159).
 - c. “The word *surety*—*egguos*—occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, nor is it found in the Septuagint. It properly means a bondsman; one who pledges his name, his property, or his influence, that a certain thing shall be done. When a contract is made, a debt contracted, or a note given, a friend often becomes the *security* in the case, and is himself responsible if the terms of the contract are not complied with. In the case of the new covenant between God and man, Jesus is the ‘security’ or the bondsman. But of what, and to whom, is he the surety? It cannot be that he is a bondsman *for God* that he will maintain the covenant, and be true to the promise which he makes...for we need no such ‘security’ of the divine faithfulness and veracity. It cannot be that he

- becomes responsible for the divine conduct in any way, for no such responsibility is needed or possible” (Barnes, p.163).
- d. “The argument of the apostle requires us to understand this security as given on the part of God for the greater encouragement and consolation of his children; just as he gave the oath to Abraham and to his seed after him (ch. 6:17,18)” (Milligan, p.212).
 - e. Paul tells us that God has sworn that Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec, and that he will not repent. “When God is said to repent, the meaning is that he simply wills a change; and when it is said that he will not repent, it means that he will never will a change. And consequently there is nothing beyond the priesthood of Christ, to which it will ever give place, as a means of accomplishing God’s benevolent purposes in the redemption of mankind. Christ himself will continue to officiate as a priest upon his throne, until the work of man’s redemption shall have been fully consummated” (Milligan, p.210).
2. Verses 23-24: “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this *man*, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”
- a. The statement, despite its simplicity, is a most profound utterance! It is axiomatic that the Levitical high priests did not permanently occupy their office; they were mortal men, and thus they died. However, since Christ is eternal in being, he will never leave his office because of death.
 - b. The Levitical priests were continually being replaced due to death. Christ will not be replaced, for he ever lives (7:25). Therefore his priesthood is everlasting. Since his priesthood does not end, his law will never be changed (7:12). This passage is devastating to the Mormons and others who claim God gives additional revelations beyond the Bible.
 - c. The qualifications of the Levitical priests (from *Scheme of Redemption*, Milligan, pp.150-152):
 - 1) That they should be at least thirty years of age (Num. 4:1-3).
 - a) In Numbers 8:23-26, twenty-five is given as the age when all the Levites, including of course the priests, should go in to wait on the service of the Tabernacle. And from 1 Chronicles 23:24-32, we learn that David fixed the period of their services at from twenty years of age and upward. But this preliminary service is to be understood as a sort of apprenticeship in the less important matters of the service; and the age of thirty was the time when they entered on the full discharge of all the prescribed duties of the sacerdotal office.
 - b) After the age of fifty their services became in a great measure voluntary. They were still allowed and expected to “minister with their brethren in the Tabernacle of the congregation” (Num. 8:26; 1 Chron. 23:27), but they were relieved from all the more burdensome duties.
 - 2) It was also required that the priests should be free from all physical impurities, infirmities, and imperfections. A priest was not permitted to defile himself by touching a dead body, except in the case of a very near relative (Lev. 21:1-6), and the high priest was not allowed to defile himself for any one, not even for a mother or father (Lev. 21:10-12).
 - 3) It was required of every priest that he should not marry any person of ill repute, or anyone who had been divorced (Lev. 21:7-8); the high priest was allowed to marry no one but a virgin of good character and of his own people (Lev. 21:13-15).
3. Verse 25: “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
- a. Christ is able to save the lost to the uttermost (completely).
 - 1) No sin is too dark for him to cleanse. "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 are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and
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- by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- 2) He is able to save us from the guilt of sin in this world, and deliver us from the penalty of sin in eternity. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).
- b. He ever lives, so his priestly work is always being done.
 - 1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; **whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.**"
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "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."
 - c. The work of a prophet was to deliver God's message to man, standing between God and man. The work of a priest was to take the worship and requests of man and present them to God, standing between man and God. Christ ever lives and continually intercedes in behalf of his followers.
 - d. "The word *intercede* (*entugchanw*) is used here in a very comprehensive sense, to denote all that Christ is now doing for the justification, sanctification, and redemption of his people. Seated as he is, on the right hand of the Father, and clothed with omnipotent power and authority, he is ever ready to plead for those who have been cleansed by his blood, ever ready to defend them against all the assaults of their enemies, and, in a word, ever ready to make all things work together for their good" (Milligan, p.213).
4. Verses 26-28: "For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, *maketh* the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."
 - a. Other translations may be of help:
 - 1) Hebrews 7:26-28: "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, *appointeth* a Son, perfected for evermore" (ASV).
 - 2) Hebrews 7:26-28: "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected forever" (NKJ).
 - 3) Hebrews 7:26-28: "It was suitable that we have such a high priest; holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens; Who does not need to offer sacrifices daily as those high priests; to offer sacrifices first for his own sins and then for those of the people; because he did this once for all when he offered himself. For the Law appoints imperfect men as high priests, but the word of the oath which came after the Law *appoints the* Son who is perfected forever" (English Study Bible).
 - b. Christ was fitting to our need. We needed exactly what he was able to be and provide. He was entirely suitable and appropriate.
 - 1) Christ is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. He is infinitely pure (holy); he will do no harm to the righteous and has no malice toward anyone; he is not defiled by any sin

- or error; and has no fellowship with sinners.
- 2) Christ is higher than the heavens.
 - a) Ephesians 4:10: "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things." He ascended from the earth into the heavens, and has returned to heaven, the abode of the Almighty.
 - b) Colossians 1:15-17: "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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." He is also vastly superior to the material creation, since he was the creator of all.
 - c. Christ does not need to offer any sacrifice for himself; in this he is entirely different from all the priests of the Levitical system. Every one of them was mortal, and thus subject to sin; but he is the sinless Son of God, who kept himself completely free from sin of every kind.
 - d. Christ is different from the Levitical priests in that he only had to make one sacrifice; this was sufficient for all people, for all time. The Old Testament high priests had to offer the atonement sacrifice every year, and even that did not have the power to take away sin. They had to offer sacrifices for their own sins, as well as the sins of the people; but Christ made one offering, and that was for others, since he was sinless.
 - e. The word translated "once" [*ephapax*] literally means "once for all time." This word is a strengthened form of *hapax* [*epi* + *hapax*], and appears in these verses:
 - 1) Romans 6:10: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:10: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*."
 - 4) Jude 3: "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (ASV). The word here is *hapax*.
 - f. The Levitical priests were all finite, mortal men; they were subject to sin and death. But the "word of the oath" by which Christ was made High Priest is infinitely higher than the Mosaic Law, and was used only in appointing Christ to the High Priesthood.
 - 1) This oath was employed subsequent to the Mosaic Law, and had no connection to that law. Given to God's Son, it gave him an infallible and infinite office, and consecrated [perfected] him forever to that office.
 - 2) "It is still paramount in the author's mind that the oath by which God swore to bring in a Messiah Priest after the order of Melchizedek came such a long, long time after the law had been in operation; thus he reiterates here, 'which was after the law.' It is the vast implications of this which he has just been discussing at such length. The verse [28] is a recapitulation of what has already been said—that the Levitical priests were weak, mortal, sinful men; but that the Son of God, the glorious high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek is perfected for evermore" (Coffman, pp.195f).
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HEBREWS 8

A. Hebrews 8:1-5: The Chief Point.

1. Verse 1: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."
 - a. The heart of the material that is being discussed in the context is the fact that we have a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the Almighty. That High Priest is, of course, Christ. This is the chief or main point of the context; it focuses on the heart of what has been said. In that sense, it is the *sum*. The Archaic definition of "sum" is "the highest degree; height; summit."
 - b. Christ's high priesthood is described in chapter seven in the following ways:
 - 1) After the order of Melchisedec (7:15-17).
 - 2) Able to save them who come to God through him (7:25).
 - 3) Ever lives to make intercession (7:25).
 - 4) Is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners (7:26).
 - 5) Higher than the heavens (7:26).
 - 6) Offered himself one time for all (7:27).
 - 7) Consecrated forevermore (7:28).
 - c. Our High Priest is stationed on the right hand of God's throne in heaven. He is described as *set* (he has sat down), and is serving (he is a minister or servant—vs. 2). The Jewish high priest could enter the most holy place only on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16); he had no chair in the tabernacle; he could remain in the most holy place for only a short time. But Christ has a throne in heaven, the real Most Holy Place.
 - d. "Majesty" refers to the great glory that pertains to God. Since Christ is seated at the Father's right hand, the place of honor and power, his greatness is also indicated by the verse. This position implies the success of his earthly mission, for it was on account of that accomplishment that he was exalted.
 - 1) Philippians 2:5-11: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
2. Verse 2: "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."
 - a. Christ is minister of the sanctuary; he serves in the genuine tabernacle. Aaron and his successors in the Levitical high priesthood served in the physical tabernacle. Christ serves in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle; the sanctuary is heaven; the tabernacle is the church. The word "tabernacle" is used with reference to the holy place (the first room), which in turn represents the church.
 - b. The word *sanctuary* is from the Greek *hagion* ("holy, set apart for God"). This sanctuary is

heaven; it compares to the most holy place in the literal tabernacle (or temple). Verse one located the sanctuary "in the heavens." This does not mean that heaven is somewhere in outer space, among the stars; it is the home of the soul, not of the body (1 Cor. 15:50).

- 1) The universe is a material entity; it is neither in heaven nor a part of heaven. From the human perspective, the place of God's abode is depicted as being "in the heavens."
 - 2) Four heavens are identifiable in the scriptures: (1) where the birds fly; (2) where the stars are; (3) the hadean realm (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:1ff); and (4) heaven itself.
 - 3) Nothing that is contaminated with sin, or which is able to contaminate anyone or any place, will be permitted to enter heaven: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
- c. Christ is a minister (he serves) in the sanctuary. He serves at God's right hand as High Priest. But he is here said to serve also in the true tabernacle; that is, he is Head of the church, the true tabernacle. In Biblical terminology, the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle is a type of heaven, the Holy Place is a type of the church; the table of showbread corresponds to the Lord's Supper; the candlestick represents the word of God; the altar of incense depicts the prayers of the saints; the laver at the entrance typifies the rite of baptism; the altar of burnt sacrifices represents the sacrifice of Christ.
- d. Various New Testament passages allude to the Old Testament tabernacle, drawing parallels between it and the new Testament order.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 3:11-16: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:16: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 5) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - 6) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
- e. The church of Christ was not invented or established by human hands or according to a human plan; God gave the plans for the church, and Christ, working through the Holy Spirit (who guided the apostles), set up the church. Moses was warned to make "all things according to the pattern" revealed to him on Sinai, when he constructed the tabernacle. Great caution and power were exerted in establishing Christ's church. The Lord set up the true tabernacle (the church).
- 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build

- my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
- 2) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 3) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
- f. "At this point, the author of Hebrews had overwhelmingly proved that any of the Jewish Christians, tempted to revert to Judaism, had received in such a high priest as Jesus far more than they had given up through renunciation of Judaism. He does not stop here, however, but goes ahead with an analysis of certain other contrasts between Jesus and the Levitical high priest" (Coffman, p.169).
3. Verse 3: "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer."
 - a. The Levitical high priests were appointed to that office for the purpose of serving in a capacity which filled certain needs of the people. He offered the gifts and sacrifices prescribed by the Mosaic Law.
 - b. Since Christ is the antitype of the Aaronic priesthood, it is demanded by the type that Christ also have something to offer in serving as High Priest.
 - 1) Hebrews 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."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*."
 - c. In distinction from the Levitical high priest, Christ had to make his offering for sin only one time; it was of such quality and kind to be sufficient for all men of all time, who will appropriate it in the prescribed manner.
 4. Verse 4: "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law."
 - a. The priestly system God established on earth required that a man from the tribe of Levi be selected to fill the position of priest. This was true of all the regular priests and the one high priest. As noted in the preceding chapter, Jesus could not qualify as priest under that order, since he was from the tribe of Judah.
 - 1) Numbers 18:1-7: "And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee *shall minister* before the tabernacle of witness. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you *they are given as* a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office *unto you* as a service of
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- gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."
- 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - b. Since Christ could not be a priest on earth, it is manifest that he could not be a king on earth. "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:13). God planned for his Son to be a Priest and King on the throne at the same time; but he could not be a priest on earth; therefore he could not be a King on earth. This destroys the foundation of the millennial views that assert Christ will reign on earth.
 - 1) When the Jewish people tried to force him to take the throne, he refused the offer. Why? Because it was never part of God's plan for Christ to be a King on earth, ruling over a material kingdom! "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).
 - 2) He cannot be a king on earth since he is a descendant of Coniah [also known as Jechoniah].
 - a) Matthew 1:11: "And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon."
 - b) Jeremiah 22:30: "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."
 - 3) He is presently reigning over his spiritual kingdom, even as he serves as High Priest.
 - a) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - b) Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 - c. It was never the purpose of Christ to establish an earthly kingdom, but to save individuals from the guilt of their sins. "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:25-28). [The phrase, *the end of the world*, has reference to either the end of the Jewish Age or to the Christian Age; his ministry covered the last three years in which the Mosaic Law was in effect; but the Law of the Gospel has effect during the last period of time before the actual end of the material world].
 - d. The verse states that there were, at the time the epistle was written, priests who offered gifts according to the Mosaic Law. This statement shows that the letter was penned prior to 70 A.D., when the temple was destroyed by the Roman army. The Jewish arrangement continued unchanged until the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple and scattered the surviving Jews. The literal end of the Jewish economy occurred at that time; the Judaism that is practiced today is only an empty shell of what it was during the Old Testament days.
5. Verse 5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
 - a. The priesthood and the other features of the Mosaic system were a shadow of the spiritual realities of the gospel system. This verse is a plain statement of the fact. Other passages state the same premise:
 - 1) Colossians 2:16-17: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an 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.”
- 2) Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
- b. The verse addresses the Biblical subject of type and antitype.
- 1) Type: “A person, thing, or event that represents or symbolizes another, especially that is to come; a symbol; an emblem; a token; a sign” (*Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*).
 - 2) “In printing there is the metallic type, and the letter or character made by it, answering to it, or standing against it, hence comes our English word antitype. A Scripture *type*, then, is something in one age or dispensation exhibiting, at least in general outline, some person or thing appearing in some future period; and when it or they so appear, as typified, they or it may fitly be called the *antitype*” (*Gospel Sermons*, T.W. Brents, p.76).
 - 3) A *type* is a faint, general image of the real item. The *antitype* is the genuine item. A shadow of a hand on the wall is a *type*; the hand that cast the shadow is the *antitype*.
 - 4) The following chart (taken from *Basics of Bible Interpretation*, Bob Smith, p.142) illustrates the subject of type and antitype:

FIGURE	MEANING	EXAMPLE
TYPE Gr. <i>tupos</i>	A planned correspondence between two biblical accounts designed by God to teach and illustrate truth.	1 Cor. 10:6 & 11
ANTITYPE Gr. <i>Antitupon</i>	A thing resembling another, its counterpart.	Heb. 9:24 High priest in tabernacle the figure; Christ appearing before God on our behalf, the reality.
PATTERN Gr. <i>Hupotuposis</i>	A pattern placed before one to be held fast and copied.	1 Tim. 1:16 Paul, a pattern, as the object of God’s grace and mercy.
EXAMPLE Gr. <i>Hupodeigma</i>	A representation or copy. From verb: <i>to show by placing under</i> , as a template to be followed and copied.	John 13:15 Christ—the example of a truly “servant” heart.
SHADOW Gr. <i>Skia</i>	An image cast by an object and representing the form of that object—but not its substance or reality.	Heb. 8:5 The tabernacle, an earthly shadow of the heavenly realities.
SIGN Gr. <i>Semeon</i>	A distinctive mark or feature which is used to identify and/or reveal the character of a person or thing.	2 Cor. 12:12 That which marks out a true apostle.

- c. “The English word ‘type’ derives from the Greek word, ‘tupos,’ from ‘tuptein,’ meaning ‘to

strike.' First, 'type' is used to mean 'a blow,' then 'the imprint' resulting from said blow, next any 'kind of mark,' further 'a figure' or 'image,' and, finally 'a mold' or 'model.' It is employed to refer to the original from whence something took its form, or to indicate the form that the non-existent will possess when it comes into existence" (David P. Brown, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, Volume II*, p.60). The Greek word for *type* appears in the following New Testament verses:

- 1) John 20:25: "The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the **print** of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."
- 2) Acts 7:43: "Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, **figures** which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon."
- 3) Acts 23:25: "And he wrote a letter **after this manner**."
- 4) Romans 5:14: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the **figure** of him that was to come."
- 5) Romans 6:17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that **form** of doctrine which was delivered you."
- 6) 1 Corinthians 10:6,11: "Now these things were our **examples**, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted....Now all these things happened unto them for **ensamples**: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
- 7) Philippians 3:17: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an **ensample**."
- 8) 1 Thessalonians 1:7: "So that ye were **ensamples** to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia."
- 9) Other verses:
 - a) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an **example** of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
 - b) Titus 2:7: "In all things showing thyself a **pattern** of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity."
 - c) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the **pattern** showed to thee in the mount."
 - d) 1 Peter 5:3: "Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being **ensamples** to the flock."
- d. When Moses was about to construct the tabernacle, God gave him this word of warning.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount" (ASV).
 - 2) Exodus 25:40: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." "And see that thou make them after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount" (ASV).
 - 3) David and his people got into trouble in moving the Ark of the Covenant, because they failed to move it lawfully: "For because ye *did it* not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order" (1 Chron. 15:13).
 - a) 2 Samuel 6:3: "And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart."
 - b) 2 Samuel 6:6-7: "And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God."
- e. Does God have a "pattern" for men to follow today? Would he be strict in the type (the shadow)

and allow those who live under the antitype (the substance) to do as they please?

- 1) Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
- 2) Proverbs 22:28: "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."
- 3) Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."
- 4) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
- 5) Hebrews 10:28-29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
- 6) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- 7) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."

B. Hebrews 8:6-13: The Old Law Has Been Replaced by the New.

1. Verse 6: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." "But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises" (NKJ).
 - a. The high priesthood of Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood. The author has shown several reasons already why this is so. His ministry is one of service to our souls. Christ is the only Mediator between man and God (1 Tim. 2:5). A mediator is one who interposes to reconcile two adverse parties; in this case, God is the offended party and man is the offending party.
 - b. Christ is the mediator of a better covenant. This is God's plain assessment of the New Covenant; it is better than the Old Covenant. Why would anyone want to try to take up the burdensome Mosaic Law when the gospel of Christ is available? "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10).
 - c. The New Covenant is established on better promises. "The promises in the first covenant pertained mainly to the present life. They were promises of length of days; of increase of numbers, of seed-time and harvest; of national privileges; and of extraordinary peace, abundance, and prosperity. That there was also the promise of eternal life, it would be wrong to doubt; but this was not the main thing. In the new covenant, however, the promise of spiritual blessings, and of eternal life, becomes the principal thing. The mind is directed to heaven; the heart is cheered with the hopes of unending happiness; the favour of God and the anticipation of heaven are secured in the most ample and solemn manner" (Barnes, pp.174f).
 - d. See the table at the end of this chapter for a graphic on the contrasts between the Mosaic Law and the Gospel of Christ.
2. Verse 7: "For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the

second.”

- a. Thayer defines the “faultless” as blameless; deserving no censure; free from defect; nothing lacking. The Old Covenant had faults.
 - 1) It did not have the ability to cleanse the guilt of sin.
 - a) Hebrews 2:15: "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
 - b) Hebrews 10:3-4: "But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - c) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 2) It had to be kept perfectly in order for the individual to be kept free from sin.
 - a) Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - b) Galatians 3:10: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."
 - 3) The way into heaven had not been opened as it now is. "Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant...But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb. 9:4,7-8).
 - 4) Under the old system, the high priest, being also a mortal man, was one who also was guilty of sin. "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" (Heb. 7:27).
 - b. The Mosaic Law was perfect for what God intended it to accomplish. But man must have grace since he cannot perfectly serve an absolute standard without deviation. If that Law had been what man needed, there would have been no need to replace it. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21).
3. Verse 8: “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”
- a. The real fault was with man, not with God’s Law. It was man with whom God found fault. It was not the Law’s fault (in the final analysis) that man was unable to observe it perfectly. Nor was it God’s fault.
 - b. Israel had provoked God’s anger by their willful rebellion, that had spanned many generations. They were given every opportunity and motivation to return to God’s way, but chose rebellion. "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that *is* the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them*; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt" (Jer. 25:3-7).
 - c. With chapter 25 as the background, Jeremiah was moved to reveal in chapter 31 the plan God had to replace the Mosaic Law with a new and better law. Verses 8-12 of our text contain a quotation
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- of Jeremiah 31:31-33. When Jeremiah uttered this prophecy, the time when God would fulfill the promise lay six hundred years in the future. The New Covenant, of course, is the gospel system.
- d. This New Covenant would be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The gospel was first presented to the Jewish people, but it was never intended to be limited to them. The statement about Israel and Judah must be understood in a broader, less literal sense than first meets the eye.
 - 1) Acts 2:5: "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."
 - 2) Acts 11:18-20: "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."
 - 3) Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 4) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
 - 5) Romans 9:6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel."
 - 6) Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - 7) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." The *Israel of God* is the church of Christ.
 4. Verse 9: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord."
 - a. The New Covenant was to be different from the Old Covenant. God had established that covenant with Israel when he led them forth out of their Egyptian bondage. They did not have the will to continue faithfully in that agreement, thus God withdrew his favor from them. However, God knowing the future much better than we can know the present, knew that they would apostatize; he had always had the plan to establish the gospel system; the Jewish system was only a temporary arrangement.
 - b. That Old Covenant, which included the Ten Commandments, was never made with anyone living today.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 5:2-3: "The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day." Israel agreed to keep this covenant, but failed.
 - 2) Exodus 20:19: "And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 26:16-19: "This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that *thou* shouldest keep all his commandments; And to make thee high above all nations

- which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken."
5. Verse 10: "For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."
 - a. Under the New Covenant, God would especially emphasize inner purity and dedication, rather than outward matters. To be true, there are many commandments and principles under Christ which require outward performance; but outward obedience is of no benefit without inward sincerity.
 - b. We are given in this statement the way to become subject to the New Covenant: God's law must enter the mind and affect the heart.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 4) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 5) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - c. To reject God's law (the gospel) is to forfeit salvation! Without learning, believing and obeying his will, there can be no salvation and no hope. Under the old covenant, one was born into covenant relationship with God; today, spiritual birth puts us into his family.
 - 1) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:15: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."
 - 3) James 1:18,21: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - d. God becomes our Father and God when we become his children and servants.
 6. Verse 11: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."
 - a. Under the old covenant, individuals were born into God's family (Judaism); as they grew up, they were taught about God and his law.
 - b. Under the new covenant, individuals are first taught about God and his word (enough for them to know how to become children of God); when they obey the gospel, they enter God's family (the church). They continue to be taught, to study, and to learn more and more of God's will. But in the

family of God today, every single member already knows God.

7. Verse 12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - a. Mercy is incorporated into the new covenant.
 - 1) "For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).
 - 2) "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Tit. 3:3-5).
 - b. God's mercy is extended to our unrighteousness; our sins and acts of iniquity are remembered against us no more.
 - 1) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 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 are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - c. Under the old law, remembrance was made of sin year-after-year, on the day of atonement. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4).
8. Verse 13: "In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away."
 - a. God never intended for the Law of Moses to last forever. He planned for its replacement by the law of Christ, and fore-warned Israel of his intention.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 18:15: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."
 - 2) Acts 3:22-23: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."
 - 3) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 4) Jeremiah 31:31-33: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith

- the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."
- b. He replaced the old law with the new at the time Christ died on the cross. It ended officially at that point in time.
- 1) Matthew 5:17-18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."
 - 2) Galatians 3:16,19: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ...Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - 4) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
- c. At the cross, the Law of Moses ceased to be God's active law, but it was still followed by the majority of the Jews although it was now only an empty shell. At the time Hebrews was written, the temple, with its complex system, was still in operation, but would very soon be destroyed, and utterly discarded. There have been no sacrifices by the Jews since the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed in 70 A.D. The entire system as God ordained it truly vanished away! Since those ancient days, when the temple records were destroyed, the Jews have lost their tribal identity. No one today can know from what tribe he descended. That knowledge is of no importance to our relationship with God.
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CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL

OLD COVENANT	NEW COVENANT
First: Heb. 10:9	Second: Heb. 10:9
One Nation: Deut. 5:2-3	All Nations: Matt. 28:19
Dedicated by Animal Blood: Heb. 9:19	Dedicated by Christ's Blood: Heb. 9:15-16
Moses the Mediator: Ex. 20:19	Christ the Mediator: Heb. 12:24
Faulty: Heb. 8:7	Better; Perfect: Heb. 8:6; Jas. 1:25
Shadow: Heb. 9:24; 10:1	Reality: Heb. 10:1; 8:1-2
Blood of Animals: Heb. 9:19-20; 10:4	Blood of Christ: Heb. 9:12
Carnal Ordinances: Heb. 9:10	Spiritual Sacrifices: 1 Pet. 2:5
Purify Flesh: Heb. 9:13	Purify Soul: 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:21; Heb. 10:22
Natural Birth: Gen. 17:1ff	Spiritual Birth: John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:22-23
Infants Included: Gen. 17:1ff	Responsible Persons: Mark 16:15-16
Temporal Rewards: Ps. 105:10-11	Eternal Rewards: 1 Pet. 1:4
Glorious: 2 Cor. 3:9-10	Exceeding in Glory: 2 Cor. 3:10-11
Yearly Atoning Sacrifice: Heb. 10:1ff	One Sacrifice: Heb. 9:26-28
Bondwoman: Gal. 4:30-31	Free Woman: Heb. 4:30-31
High Priests Had Sins: Heb. 7:28	High Priest Perfect: Heb. 7:27
Ministration of Death: 2 Cor. 3:9	Ministration of Righteousness: 2 Cor. 3:9
Priests Without Oath: Heb. 7:21	With Oath: Heb. 7:21
Priests by Carnal Commandment: Heb. 7:16	Priest by Endless Life: Heb. 7:16
Priests from Tribe of Levi: Heb. 7:11	High Priest from Judah: Heb. 7:14
Priests Died: Heb. 7:23	High Priest Eternal: Heb. 7:24
Sins Remembered: Heb. 10:1-4	Sins Removed: Heb. 10:1-4; 8:12
Written in Stone: 2 Cor. 3	Written in Heart: Heb. 8:10
Servitude: Rom. 8:15	Sonship: Rom. 8:15
Letter: 2 Cor. 3:6	Spirit: 2 Cor. 3:6
Not remove Sins: Heb. 10:11; Acts 13:38-39	Saved to Uttermost: Heb. 7:25; 8:12
Passed Away: 2 Cor. 3:11	Remains: 2 Cor. 3:11; Jude 3

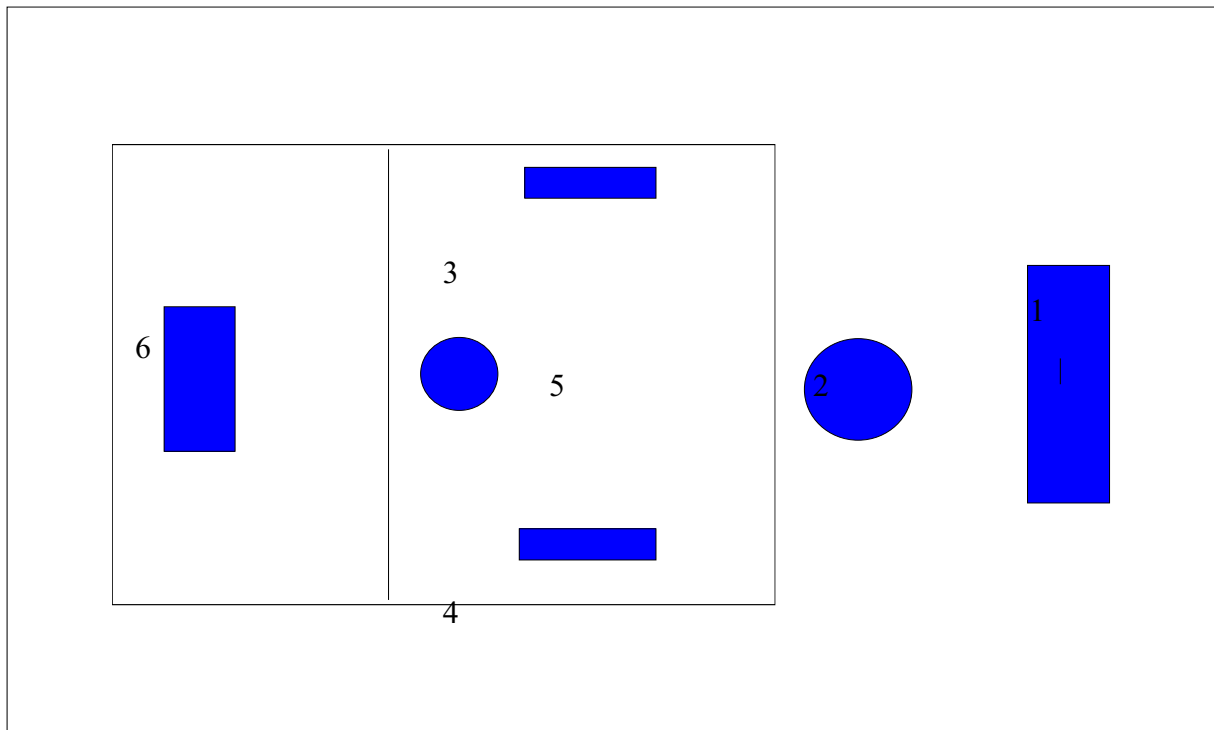
HEBREWS 9

A. Hebrews 9:1-10: The Old Testament Sanctuary was a Type of the True Sanctuary.

1. Verses 1-2: "Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary."
 - a. Other translations of the passage:
 - 1) "Now even a first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, *a sanctuary* of this world. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein *were* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place" (ASV).
 - 2) Hebrews 9:1-2: "Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part*, in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary" (NKJ).
 - 3) "The first had its regulations for worship and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared. The first part, which was called the Holy Place, contained a lamp, and the table of show-bread" (English Study Bible).
 - b. The first covenant had a material sanctuary—the tabernacle itself. The services conducted in connection with that sanctuary were primarily outward. The sacrifice was of a material nature; it was offered on a literal altar; the priests were mortals; the garb worn by the priests was designed to please the physical senses. Still, the services were divine in their origin.
 - c. The material sanctuary is placed in contrast with the spiritual sanctuary of the New Covenant. The Lord's church is a sanctuary, for therein have we found rest and safety. In Christ we find refuge and hope (Heb. 6:18). The ultimate sanctuary is heaven, where our hope is anchored and where our Savior resides (Heb. 6:19). The Holy Place was a *type* of the Lord's church; the Most Holy Place was a *type* of heaven.
 - d. In the Holy Place (the first room of the tabernacle), there were the candlestick (lampstand) and the table of showbread. "And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil" (Ex. 40:22-26).
 - e. The candlestick was placed on the south side of the Holy Place, on the left as the priest entered. The Arch of Titus in Rome depicts the candlestick and table of showbread to commemorate his victory over the Jews (70 A.D.). The candlestick (more accurately, *lampstand*) furnished the only light in the Holy Place; it represents the word of God. The lampstand required constant attention on the part of the priests; the word of God occupies our mind and time today.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - f. The table of showbread was placed on the north side of the room, on the right of the priest as he entered. It is symbolic of the Lord's Supper.
 - 1) Leviticus 24:5-9: "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth

deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it *is* most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute."

- 2) Luke 22:29-30: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:5,9: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
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- 1—ALTAR
- 2—LAVER
- 3—SHOWBREAD
- 4—CANDLESTICK
- 5—INCENSE
- 6—ARK

2. Verses 3-4: "And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant."
 - a. A beautiful veil served as the western wall of the Holy Place, beyond which the Most Holy Place was situated. The veil was made of twined linen, and had three colors: "And thou shalt make a veil *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim *wood* overlaid with gold: their hooks *shall be of* gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy *place* and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy *place*. And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars *of* shittim *wood*, and overlay them with gold, *and* their hooks *shall be of* gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them" (Ex. 26:31-37).
 - b. Within the Most Holy Place was the golden censer. Literally, it was located in the Holy Place.
 - 1) Exodus 40:22-26: "And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil. And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil."
 - 2) Luke 1:9-10: "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." Under the Old Covenant arrangement, the priests would burn the incense within the tabernacle (later, the temple), and the people would be outside the edifice praying. The censer had to be located in the Holy Place in order for the regular priests to perform their work of burning incense, since they were not allowed to enter the Most Holy Place.
 - 3) The incense burned on the golden censer is representative of our prayers today. "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints" (Rev. 5:8).
 - 4) "Some difficulty has been felt respecting the statement of Paul here that the 'golden censer' was in the most holy place, from the fact that no such utensil is mentioned by Moses as pertaining to the tabernacle, nor in the description of Solomon's temple, which was modeled after the tabernacle, is there any account of it given....Aaron and his successors were expressly commanded to burn incense in a 'censer' in the most holy place before the mercy-seat. This was to be done on the great day of atonement, and but once in a year, Lev. 16:12,13....There is every probability that the censer that was used on such an occasion was made of gold" (Milligan, p.188).
 - 5) The censer pertained to the Most Holy Place (although it was within the Holy Place), for it was in that room that God's presence was depicted. The incense burned upon the golden censer is symbolic of the prayers of God's people, thus the smoke was directed toward God. A sign set up adjacent to a street, and advertising a business at that locality, pertains to the business, and not to the street.
 - c. Within the Most Holy Place was the ark of the covenant, a rectangular-shaped box, overlaid with gold, and covered by the Mercy Seat, upon which were the figures of two cherubims, facing each

other from opposite ends, with their wings outspread. The ark was about 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches deep. [The cubit is generally figured to be 18 inches].

- 1) Exodus 25:10-11: "And they shall make an ark *of* shittim wood: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about."
 - 2) The ark originally held the tables of the law (Deut. 10:5; 5:3; 1 Kings 8:9,21), a pot of manna (Ex. 16:33), and Aaron's rod that budded (Num. 17:10).
 - 3) "None of the articles described here was ever found in the Herodian temple; and it was perhaps for this very reason that the author of Hebrews elected to draw his illustrations from the tabernacle, rather than from the temple....The temple of Solomon was said to have all the articles mentioned here, except the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded. Long before NT times, the Chaldeans had sacked Jerusalem and carried away the ark of the covenant which they never returned; and, in the times of Josephus, a contemporary of Christ and the apostles, that Jewish historian related that there was nothing whatever behind the veil within the holy of holies" (Coffman, pp.188f).
3. Verses 5-6: "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*."
- a. There was no need for Paul to speak in detail regarding the mercy seat; the Jewish Christians were well-acquainted with the Old Testament's descriptions of it and its significance.
 - 1) Exodus 25:17-22: "And thou shalt make a mercy seat *of* pure gold: two cubits and a half *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims *of* gold, *of* beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: *even* of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces *shall look* one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."
 - 2) Leviticus 16:2: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the veil before the mercy seat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat."
 - b. The priests served daily in the Holy Place (the first room). No one but the priests were permitted to enter the tabernacle. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place. The regular priests performed the following services in the Holy Place:
 - 1) They tended to the lamps on the seven-armed stand.
 - a) Exodus 27:21: "In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel."
 - b) Exodus 30:8: "And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations."
 - 2) They also renewed the show-bread each Sabbath; they were given the privilege of eating the bread that was being replaced. "And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Every

- sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it *is* most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute" (Lev. 24:5-9).
- 3) The priests were charged with burning incense twice daily.
 - a) Exodus 30:7-8: "And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations."
 - b) Luke 1:9-10: "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."
 - c) Acts 3:1: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*."
 4. Verses 7-8: "But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."
 - a. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place. He brought with him the prescribed blood to be offered for himself and for the people; he was just as prone to commit sin as were each of the people. He made several trips on that day into this sacred room.
 - 1) Exodus 30:10: "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it *is* most holy unto the LORD."
 - 2) Leviticus 16:11-15: "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* for himself: And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat."
 - 3) Before making the offering of the blood, the high priest was to take the censer into the Most Holy Place; the smoke from the incense would cloud the room, suggesting that the holy items would be somewhat obscured.
 - b. This indicated, says Paul, that while the Jewish high priests followed this directive, the way into heaven was not yet open. Only after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ was the way into heaven made available to mankind. The rending of the veil, which concealed the Most Holy Place even from the eyes of the priests, signified that the way into heaven was now open.
 - 1) Matthew 27:50-51: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:19-20: "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."
 - c. It appears clear that when the veil was torn at the death of Christ, the priests were in the Holy Place conducting their regular activities.

- 1) Matthew 27:45-54: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."
 - 2) Acts 3:1: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."
 - 3) Luke 1:8-10: "And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."
 - 4) Compare: "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice" (Ps. 55:17).
5. Verses 9-10: "Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation."
- a. The references to meats, drinks, and washings are to various ordinances prescribed by the Mosaic Law. "The great weakness of the old covenant was its carnality. To be sure, the worshiper who offered the proper sacrifices, washed himself ceremonially upon required occasions, observed the regulations as to meats and drinks, etc., could have been, and was, admitted into the commonwealth of God during that period; but none of those fleshly, carnal ordinances did anything at all to cleanse the consciences of sinners....none of those things made the slightest change in men's hearts" (Coffman, pp.194f).
 - b. These ordinances were bound "until the time of reformation."
 - 1) Reformation is from *diorthosis*, "properly, a making straight (*dia*, through, *orthos*, straight) ...denotes a 'reformation' or reforming, Heb. 9:10; the word has the meaning either (*a*) of a right arrangement, right ordering, or, more usually, (*b*) of restoration, amendment, bringing right again; what is here indicated is a time when the imperfect, the inadequate, would be superseded by a better order of things, and hence the meaning (*a*) seems to be the right one; it is thus to be distinguished from that of Acts 24:2..." (Vine, Vol. 3, pp.264f).
 - 2) "Reformation, from *diorthosis*, a complete rectification; reformation. The fleshly regulations were completed by the cross of Christ; by his death in our behalf (Eph. 2:24,25; Col. 2:14). The new covenant; and the law of Christ took the place of the old covenant and Law" (*English Study Bible*, footnote, p.360).
 - c. The following passages shed light on the subject of this reformation:
 - 1) Matthew 5:17-18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so*
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- making peace."
- 3) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
- d. Although a different Greek word is used, the same time frame (the Christian Age) is indicated by the expression, "in the regeneration" (i.e., during the period when the new birth is in effect):
- 1) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The apostles, ruling figuratively through the word they were inspired to receive and record, were to occupy thrones of authority during the time of the regeneration (the gospel, Christian age).
 - 2) John 3:3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The "water" of the passage is an undeniable reference to baptism.
 - 3) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." The "washing" that pertains to the regeneration is baptism.
- e. This passage is a clear statement which declares that the Mosaic Law has now been replaced by the Gospel of Christ. In Christ, we are made perfect (complete), a condition which the former covenant could not provide. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:1-4).

B. Hebrews 9:11-14: Our Mediator is Perfect.

1. Verse 11: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (KJV). "But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation" (ASV).
 - a. The contrast that completes the thought of the preceding passage begins here. **But** Christ having come as a high priest has provided eternal salvation for us (vs. 12). The type has been fulfilled in the antitype; the shadow has been replaced by the substance.
 - b. The greater and more perfect tabernacle is the church of Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - 4) Hebrews 3:6: "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."
 - c. Christ's tabernacle is not a material or worldly institution. The Lord's church is in the world, but it is not of the world. It cannot be advanced by worldly methods; its strength is not determined by great numbers, but by its commitment to the truth. The church is perfect on the divine side; the

human side often shows imperfection.

- 1) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:1-2: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."
- d. "But what is this greater and more perfect Tabernacle?...The Apostle says here but little concerning it; he merely tells us that it is 'a greater and more perfect Tabernacle' than was that of Moses; and furthermore that it is 'not made with hands; that is, not of this creation' (*tautes tes ktiseos*). The Old Covenant had a worldly sanctuary (9:1); but the Sanctuary of the New Covenant is not of this world (John 18:36); it is heavenly. Its most Holy Place is heaven itself (9:23, 24); and its Holy Place is the house which God has established on earth for his people, and in which he himself condescends to dwell with them through his Spirit (Eph. 2:20-22)" [Gospel Advocate Commentaries, Milligan].
- 1) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - 2) Matthew 16:16-18: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
- e. When Christ ascended to heaven, following the successful completion of his earthly mission, it was by (through, with) this glorious spiritual entity that he entered heaven (the Most Holy Place). "As the high priest passed through the Holy Place of this symbolic edifice on his way into the Most Holy; so also Christ passed through a greater and more perfect Tabernacle than the Holy Place of the ancient Tabernacle on his way into heaven" (Milligan, pp.252f).
- f. *Not of this building*. "The meaning is, that the place where he officiates is not made by human power and art, but is the work of God. The object is to show that his ministry is altogether more perfect than what could be rendered by a Jewish priest, and performed in a temple which could not have been reared by human skill and power" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, BibleSoft].
2. Verse 12: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.
- a. He entered the Most Holy Place (heaven), not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11). The shedding of his blood is equivalent to the giving of his life. The blood of animals did not have the efficacy to purify the soul of man; nor could it purify the conscience (9:9,14). But the blood of Christ was able to do so.
 - b. Our Lord offered his blood in the Most Holy Place (Heaven), while the Mosaic high priest offered the blood of animals in the Most Holy Place (of the earthly tabernacle).
 - c. As the Mosaic high priest entered the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle only on one day a year to offer the blood offering, Christ entered into Heaven only once to offer his blood offering.
 - d. The Mosaic high priest, fulfilling his duties on the Day of Atonement, was able to cause the guilt of the Israelites to be "rolled forward" until the next year; he did not obtain full pardon for their sins. Christ was able, by his one-time offering, to obtain eternal redemption for the elect. Redemption is not automatic or unconditional; it is limited to the obedient.
- 1) Verses 15-17 will show that the redemption of his blood affected the obedient of the past, from Adam to the end of the Mosaic Law.

- 2) Those who obey the gospel, receive this redemption when they obey the will of Christ. "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17-18).
 - 3) "The verb *entered*...and the participle *obtaining*...are both aorists, and express contemporaneous acts; so that it was not merely by means of his death, but by the offering of his blood in connection with his death, that he paid the ransom price of our redemption. The high priest under the Law first slew the victim and then carried its blood into the most Holy Place, where he offered it for the sins of the people, thereby procuring for them a sort of typical and relative pardon. But Christ, by means of his own blood offered in heaven itself, has procured for his people absolute and eternal redemption" (Milligan, pp.253f).
3. Verse 13: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh."
- a. Purification of the flesh was accomplished by the blood of animals and the ashes of a heifer. This was a symbolic cleansing. It was designed to cultivate in the Israelite mind the concept of purity and impurity. These religious rites of the old law were typical of the actual cleansing of the human spirit from the guilt of sin under Christ.
 - b. Numbers 19 gives the formula for making the water of purification. There is no reference in the Old Testament where plain water was applied (sprinkled) on anyone for any purpose. The pure water referred to was not plain water.
 - 1) Numbers 19:2-9: "This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein *is* no blemish, *and* upon which never came yoke: And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and *one* shall slay her before his face: And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times: And *one* shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast *it* into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. And a man *that is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay *them* up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: *it is* a purification for sin."
 - 2) The pure water (the mixture of these ashes and water) was to be sprinkled on those people and items which were ceremonially unclean. "And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even" (Num. 19:17-19).
 - c. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. 36:25). This passage has been used by advocates of sprinkling for baptism, but this is a misuse of the passage:
 - 1) They do not believe baptism is essential to salvation; but the passage affirms that the sprinkling indicated was necessary in order for those involved to be made clean.
 - 2) The passage [Ezek. 36:25] was not spoken to anyone on this side of Calvary, but only to Israel

- in Babylonian captivity; they needed the water of purification to cleanse them ceremonially (Num. 19).
- 3) Baptism is by immersion (Col. 2:12) and is for the purpose of obtaining remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). It is not designed to remove dirt from the physical body, but guilt from the soul. "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).
 4. Verse 14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
 - a. The rites of the Mosaic Law could provide ceremonial cleansing for the flesh; the blood of Christ is able to do much more—it can cleanse the conscience and enable one to serve the Living God.
 - b. Christ willingly offered himself as the sacrifice for sin; the animals under the old covenant did not consent to be an offering. Christ offered himself; the animals were offered by men. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).
 - c. Christ offered his blood through the eternal Spirit. Scholars have set forth several different views of this statement, suggesting the difficulty of the passage.
 - 1) Barnes noted that the expression naturally indicates to the mind the notion that the Holy Spirit is meant (pp.196f). The expression is used in reference to the Holy Spirit elsewhere. Christ was endowed with the Spirit in his earthly ministry (John 3:34). The Holy Spirit was involved in the work Christ did. It seems quite natural and proper that this reference is to the fact that the Holy Spirit was active in the Lord's sacrifice.
 - 2) But it is possible that the reference is to Christ's eternal spirit [note: *the* precedes *eternal* in Greek text]. If this is the point, the passage shows that his own divine personality, his Godhead, was directly involved in his sacrifice. "It is manifestly the design of the Apostle, in using this expression, to heighten and intensify the value of Christ's offering. And this he could do in no more effectual way than by telling us that the offering was made and rendered perfect by means of his own Divine nature. It was the sacrifice of his perfect humanity, sustained and supported by his own Divinity, that gave to his offering its infinite value....[It was] 'through eternal spirit,' that Christ offered himself without spot to God. The eternal Spirit that is here spoken of, as Alford justly observes, 'is Spirit absolute; Divine Spirit; and thus it is self-conscious, laying down its own course, purely of itself, unbounded by conditions.—The animals which were offered had no will, no spirit (*pneuma*) of their own which could concur with the act of sacrifice. Theirs was a transitory life, of no potency or value. They were offered through law (*dia nomon*) rather than through any consent or agency or counteragency of their own. But Christ offered himself, with his own consent assisting and empowering the sacrifice. And what was that consent? The consent of what? Of the spirit of a man, such as yours or mine, given in and through our finite spirit, whose acts are bounded by its own allotted space and time, and its own responsibilities? *No*: but the consenting act of his Divine personality—his eternal Spirit (*pneuma aivion*), his Godhead, which from before time acquiesced in, and wrought with the purposes of the Father'" (Milligan, pp.255f).
 - d. Christ offered himself without spot (fault) unto God. He was never guilty of any violation of God's will. There was nothing in the sacrifice he offered that was imperfect in any way. His sacrifice is vastly superior to those offered by finite men who served in the Levitical high priesthood.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

- 2) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
 - 3) Compare: "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats" (Ex. 12:5).
- e. Christ's sacrifice is able to cleanse our conscience from dead works. The conscience is that part of our makeup that gives us pain when we do what we consider to be wrong, and commends us when we do what we consider to be good. "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:15).
- f. "The offerings of the Jews related in the main to external purification, and were not adapted to give peace to a troubled conscience. They could render the worshipper externally pure, so that he might draw near to God and not be excluded by any ceremonial pollution or defilement; but the mind, the heart, the conscience, they could not make pure. They could not remove that which troubles a man when he recollects that he has violated a holy law and has offended God, and when he looks forward to an awful judgment bar...
- 1) "The whole expression refers to a mind alarmed by the recollection of *guilt*—for it is guilt only that disturbs a man's conscience. Guilt originates in the soul remorse and despair; guilt makes a man troubled when he thinks of death and the judgment; guilt alarms a man when he thinks of a holy God; guilt, and nothing but guilt, makes the entrance into another world terrible and awful. If a man had no guilt he would never dread his Maker, nor would the presence of his God be ever painful to him (comp. Gen. 3:6-10); if a man had no guilt he would not fear to die—for what have the innocent to fear anywhere?
 - 2) "The universe is under the government of a God of goodness and truth, and, under such a government, how *can* those who have done no wrong have anything to dread? The fear of death, the apprehension of the judgment to come, and *the dread of God*, are strong and irrefragable proofs that every man is a sinner. The only thing, therefore, which ever disturbs the conscience, and makes death dreadful, and God an object of aversion, and eternity awful, is **guilt**. If that is removed, man is calm and peaceful; if not, he is the victim of wretchedness and despair" (Barnes, pp.197f).
 - 3) Genesis 3:6-10: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."
- g. The gospel can remove from a man's mind, the awful weight with which the knowledge of his sins has burdened his heart. When he arises from the watery grave of baptism, knowing that the guilt of his sins has been removed, his heart is light and happy; he properly perceives himself as being born anew, with a spotless record! The Mosaic Law was unable to cleanse our conscience like this, for it could not remove guilt. [See the chart at the end of the chapter on the Heart].
- 1) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 3) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name

of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

- 4) Acts 3:19: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.”
 - h. Those Jewish Christians who had formerly served the Law, had been cleansed from the guilt that the Law could not purge; they had followed “dead works,” in that they had been obedient to a system that could not remit sins (Acts 13:38-39). But now as Christians, their guilt had been erased by the blood of Christ; they could now serve the living God in all good conscience.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:9: "Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:2: "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
 - 4) Hebrews 13:18: "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly."
 - i. The conscience is a helpful guide if the standard by which it issues its verdicts is truth. Paul lived with a good conscience as he persecuted the children of God (Acts 23:1; 26:9-11). He felt no pang of conscience as he pursued these sinful practices. Idol worshipers burned their innocent offspring, or threw them to the crocodiles, without sorrow. Those who know the truth (God’s word), would be horribly afflicted by their conscience if they should follow such a practice. A watch can run perfectly, but unless it is correctly set, the time it reports will be inaccurate. The conscience is like a watch: it must be guided by truth, not error.
 - j. How do we contact the blood of Christ? Manifestly, the literal application of his blood would be of no good to our soul. If the Roman soldier who pierced the side of Christ with a spear had been covered by the Lord’s blood, no benefit would have been derived for his spirit. We may visualize the answer by considering the following Biblical information:
 - 1) Christ shed his blood in his death; he was dead when his blood was shed (John 19:31-34). We are baptized into his death, where he shed his blood (Rom. 6:3). It is at the point of baptism that we contact his blood.
 - 2) Christ’s blood is found in his body; it was in his physical body while he was on earth; it is in his spiritual body (the church) following the establishment of the church. We enter his spiritual body by being baptized into it (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3). Therefore, it is at the point of baptism that we enter his body and contact his blood.
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Baptism into Christ is an act through which the individual seeks to manifest a good conscience. One who submits sincerely to baptism is following a good conscience; he indicates thereby that his conscience is sensitive, and that he wants to do the will of God; he desires to do exactly what God has commanded. That the conscience is said to be “good” prior to baptism does not argue against baptism being for the remission of sins, for even one who is out of Christ may have a good conscience (Acts 23:1; 2:36-38).
- C. Hebrews 9:15-22: The New Covenant Validated by Christ’s Death.
1. Verse 15: “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”
 - a. On account of the foregoing, Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant. It was only at the Lord’s death that God could install the new covenant he had promised (Jer. 31:31). By means of his death, God could establish the new covenant which is able to remove the guilt of sin.

- 1) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
- 2) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
- b. The benefits of his shed blood flowed backward in time to cleanse the sins of the obedient ones who lived under the Old Testament system. "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" (Rom. 3:25).
- c. As the Israelites followed the Mosaic Law, participating in the atoning sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), the guilt of their sins was rolled forward to the next year. Such a person who lived out his life under the Law, received forgiveness, not by the Law, but by the death of Christ. The pardon they were granted was "on credit," based on the future sacrifice of the Savior.
- d. Those who lived under the first covenant could receive the promise of eternal inheritance only through the sacrificial death of the Messiah. This is true of all who are called, regardless of the religious age under which they lived on earth. "But before any could rightfully inherit it and claim it as their own, the covenant through which it has been provided had to be sealed and ratified with the blood of Jesus. The necessity of this the Apostle now proceeds to illustrate (1) by the analogous case of a will or testament; and (2) by example of the Old Covenant" (Milligan, p.258).
2. Verses 16-17: "For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - a. There are conditions fundamental to the establishment of a will:
 - 1) There must be a testator, who is of proper age, and of a sound mind. Our Lord met each of these requirements:
 - a) Luke 3:23: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli."
 - b) John 10:17-18: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."
 - c) The soundness of his mind cannot be doubted by anyone who examines the Lord's sermons, questions, answers, and other statements.
 - 2) There must be the death of the testator. That our Lord died cannot be denied by anyone who respects the New Testament; it provides proof that he was dead before his body was removed from the cross. The soldiers declared that he was dead; Pilate was satisfied that he was dead; the Jews did not deny his death.
 - 3) There must be a legacy to bestow. Our Lord offers full pardon for past misdeeds and eternal life in heaven.
 - 4) The will must be free from doubt and understandable to those who are charged with identifying the heirs and dispensing the legacy.
 - a) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - b) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - c) John 7:17: "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself" (ASV).
 - d) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 5) Competent witnesses are needed.
 - a) Luke 24:44-49: "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while

I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

- b) Acts 1:1-8: “The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”
- c) Acts 10:39-42: “And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.”
- 6) The conditions are entirely in the testator’s hands.
 - a) Hebrews 5:8-9: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”
 - b) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - c) Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
 - d) 1 Peter 1:18-25: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower

- thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
- 7) The Will must stand as written, after the death of the testator.
 - a) Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."
 - b) Hebrews 13:20: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."
 - b. Prior to his death, the testator may dispense his possessions as he sees fit, with whatever conditions as he may deem important, or without any conditions having to be met.
 - 1) The Rich Young Ruler (Matt. 19), the Sinful Woman (John 8:1-11), and the Penitent Thief (Luke 23:43) all lived before Christ's Testament took effect.
 - 2) Using the thief as an example of conversion for today is like driving 75 m.p.h. on a highway which is now posted at 55 m.p.h., or like trying to enforce England's Colonial Laws on 21st Century Americans.
 3. Verses 18-20: "Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you."
 - a. The Old Covenant was dedicated with blood. Blood was used in dedicating the old Law, and was prominently used throughout its 1500-year history.
 - 1) Exodus 24:3-8: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood, and put *it* in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words."
 - 2) Exodus 40:9-16: "And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that *is* therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats: And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he."
 - 3) Leviticus 8:30: "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which *was* upon the altar, and sprinkled *it* upon Aaron, *and* upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, *and* his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him."
 - b. Water alone was never sprinkled on anyone for any purpose in any age of the Bible as a religious act [*pure* water is not the same as plain water—Num. 19].
 - c. Modernists are offended at the Biblical references to blood. One prominent denomination removed

all songs from their hymnals which mentioned blood. However, their efforts run contrary to God's plans, for he included blood in his Old and New Testament operations.

4. Verses 21-22: "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
 - a. Moses was directed by the Lord to sprinkle blood on the tabernacle and its vessels. Paul declares that almost everything involved in the law was cleansed by blood. "That is, the Law required that almost every thing defiled in any way, should be purified by means of blood. In some cases, indeed, purification was made by means of water (Lev. 16:26,28; Num. 31:24); and in others, by fire and water (Num. 31:22,23); but the exceptions to the rule of purification by blood, were but few" (Milligan, p.261).
 - b. Without the shedding of blood there was no remission. "To this law, there was no exception. Every sin required an atonement; and no atonement could be made without blood. The only apparent exception given in the Law is in the case of one who was too poor to bring 'two turtle-doves or two young pigeons for a sin-offering' (Lev. 5:11-13). In that event, he was required to bring to the Priest the tenth part of an ephah (about seven pints) of fine flour, without oil or frankincense, a handful of which, the Priest was to burn as a memorial upon the altar. But that even in this case, the sin of the poor man was not forgiven without the shedding of blood, seems evident from what follows in the next verse of the same chapter, where it is said, 'And the priest shall make an atonement for him for the sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him.' This atonement, it seems, could not be made without blood; for God says (Lev. 17:11), '...I have given it [the blood] to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.' This law was regarded by the Jews as universal in its application: for in the Talmud it is said, 'There is no atonement except in blood' (Yoma 5¹). It is most likely therefore that in this case, the Priest was required to make an atonement for the sin of the poor man, at the public expense" (Milligan, pp.261f).
 - c. The crucifixion of Christ for our forgiveness was a stumblingblock to the Jews. They had learned that one who was hanged on a tree was cursed (cf. Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23). His enemies figured that if they could get Pilate to crucify Christ, his influence among Jews would be forever destroyed. Thus, his death was a stumblingblock to them (1 Cor. 1:23). But our inspired author shows that blood figured prominently in the Old Testament system, and had its counterpart in the New. Even the crucifixion would be turned to the glory (and not the shame) of Christ.
 - 1) John 12:32-34: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?"
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:6-8: "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:18-22: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure

heart fervently."

- 4) Even in the crucifixion, which ordinarily resulted in little blood being shed, God was able to insure that Christ's blood was produced in a copious amount. "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:31-34).

D. Hebrews 9:23-28: Christ Offered Himself Only Once for All Time.

1. "Verses 23-24: *"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."*
 - a. In order for the types of the Old Testament to be fulfilled, it was necessary that they be realized in the antitypes of the New Testament. The Holy Place in the tabernacle was sanctified by blood; so also the Most Holy Place.
 - b. The Holy Place represents the church; so the church was sanctified by the blood of Christ.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 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."
 - 2) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - c. In what sense was heaven cleansed? *Into heaven itself*: "The heavenly tabernacle or sanctuary into which Christ has entered, and where he performs the functions of his ministry. The use of the word *purified*, here applied to heaven, does not imply that heaven was before *unholy*, but it denotes that it is now made accessible to sinners; or that they may come and worship there in an acceptable manner. The ancient tabernacle was purified or consecrated by the blood of the victims slain, so that men might approach with acceptance and worship; the heavens by purer blood are rendered accessible to the guilty" (Barnes, pp.213f).
 - d. The church is comprised of people who have been purified with the blood of Christ; without this cleansing, there is no entrance into the Lord's spiritual body (the church). Before one can offer worship unto God (in heaven) that is acceptable, he must be purified from his sins. Before entrance may be gained into heaven, the individual must have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, and kept clean by the continual cleansing offered to the faithful.
 - 1) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - e. The sacrifices and purification methods of the Mosaic Law were perfect for their intended

purposes; the cleansing power of Christ's blood, which is applied by the gospel, is far superior. The Holy and Most Holy Places of the tabernacle were excellent types of the greater Holy Place [the church] of the New Testament and the Most Holy Place (Heaven). The Old Testament Holy Places were mere shadows or figures of the true holy places.

- f. The Most Holy Place into which Christ has entered is Heaven itself, the eternal abode of Almighty God. Our Lord resides even there, in the very presence of the Father; his position there is to act in our behalf.
2. Verses 25-26: "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."
 - a. Our High Priest does not have to make continual, regular sacrifices in our behalf, as the Levitical high priests had to do for the Israelites. Those Old Testament high priests entered the Most Holy Place annually, with the blood of the sacrifices (and not with their own blood).
 - b. If this were true of Christ, it would be necessary for him to go to the cross on a regular basis to suffer and die, again and again. But at the end of that age, Christ appeared just one time, and was able to put away sin by sacrificing himself on the cross. His sacrifice was a one-time-only act; it was **once for all time**.
 - c. Why did the Lord come to the earth? This passage gives the reason: to die on the cross for the sins of the world. Therefore, he did not come to establish a material kingdom! His death on the cross was mandated by the Father from the foundation of the world; it was not a last-minute change of plans, but was in full keeping with God's eternal plan.
 - d. What is the meaning of the phrase, "now in the end of the world"? Does it mean that Christ came to earth at the end of the Jewish Age? Or is it a reference to the Christian Age, the last period of time before the end of the material universe? He came during the closing years of the Jewish Age, but he also came to begin the last period of earth's history. We are now living during the last dispensation of time, the "last days." The former thought is true (his ministry covered the last days of the Mosaic Age), but the latter seems to be the point made here, for his gospel took effect at the time of his death and will continue in force until his second coming.
 - e. Concerning the Last Days: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2):
 - 1) "These last days" is a reference to the Christian Age, the last dispensation of time. It began with the death of Christ and will end with the return of Christ.
 - 2) Isaiah 2:2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Compare: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - 3) Joel 2:28: "And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." Peter quotes Joel and specifies that the "last days" were then in progress: "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:16-17).
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 10:11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 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." "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).
- 6) 2 Timothy 3:1: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."
 - 7) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come."
 - 8) When the Lord returns, the entire universe and time itself will be no more: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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" (2 Pet. 3:8-13).
3. Verse 27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
 - a. There is an appointed time for death; but this is not intended to be understood to say that a date has been fixed for every human being to die, and that that date cannot be changed. The point of the text is to declare that we must all die **one time** and face the Judgment **one time**; this fact has been established, and no mortal can change it or avoid its application to himself.
 - 1) Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return."
 - 2) Job 14:1-2: "Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."
 - 3) Psalms 90:10: "The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."
 - 4) Ecclesiastes 9:5: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."
 - 5) Ecclesiastes 12:5: "Also *when* they shall be afraid of *that which is* high, and fears *shall be* in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."
 - b. The statement of verse 27 is an illustration; it was not intended to be a discussion of the fact. It does not mean that God has set an exact time for our demise, but simply declares the accepted truth that, as we are sure to die but once, and then face the Judgment, so Christ was once offered for our sins (verse 28).
 - c. Watchtower Witnesses and other materialists allege that man ceases to exist at death, unless he is one of their number. But:
 - 1) "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23).
 - 2) "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).
 - 3) The historical report of Luke 16:19-31 affirms conscious existence after death.
 - 4) Jesus affirmed the resurrection of all (Matt. 22:23-33; cf. Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29).
 - 5) David's body was still entombed at Jerusalem, while his soul was in hades (Acts 2:22-36).
 - d. The context of Ecclesiastes 9:5 destroys the Watchtower argument on the state of the dead.
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- 1) They say: "Showing that death is a state of total unconsciousness, the Bible says: 'For the living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, *they are conscious of nothing at all.*' (Ecclesiastes 9:5) When a person dies, the Bible explains: 'His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; *in that day his thoughts do perish.*'—Psalm 146:3, 4."
- 2) The text says: "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any *thing that is done under the sun*" (Eccl. 9:5-6). The statement about the dead being unaware of anything is limited by the phrase, *under the sun*. Far from saying the dead are totally unconscious, the text simply affirms that the dead do not know what is going on back on earth.
- 3) Psalms 146:3-4: "Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."
 - a) "Verse 3—Put not your trust in princes (comp. Ps 118:10). Israel was always apt to trust in bureau rather than Divine help. Now it was Egypt (Isa 30:2; 36:6), now Assyria (2 Kings 16:7), now their own kings or nobles. At the time of the return from the Captivity, too much was expected from Zerubbabel and the other 'princes'....Confidence in human aid of whatever kind is forbidden. In whom there is no help; or, 'that hath no saving power'....Verse 4—His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; or, when his breath goes forth' - i.e., when he breathes his last—'he returns to his earth,' i.e. to the earth of which he was made (Gen 2:7,19). In that very day his thoughts perish. All his schemes and projects ('eshthonoth, a word not occurring elsewhere) come to an end—are nipped in the bud—perish. So weak is he, and not to be depended on" (from The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2001 by Biblesoft).
 - b) "The Hebrew for 'thoughts' means—*lit.*, 'shinings,' 'polishings,' implying how *elaborately fabricated* were his *plans*....How can he bring 'help' or *salvation* to others who cannot save himself? Death suddenly snaps asunder his web of projects, and therefore ends all the hope that was placed in him" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, pp.406f).
 - c) The text does not teach that a man is totally unconscious after death; it teaches that a man's plans, schemes, aspirations perish when he dies—he is no longer alive on earth to carry out any of those intentions. This coincides perfectly with all of the other statements in the Bible that teach man has a soul (a spirit) that departs from his physical body at the moment of death.
- e. The text affirms the reality of the Judgment. After death, there will be no time for preparation. Some have tried to develop schemes by which to aid those who died unprepared. The Mormons have invented their baptism for the dead, and the Catholics have invented Purgatory from which one may escape and enter heaven. Both of these doctrines are contrary to the Bible.
 - 1) "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25).
 - 2) "...For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12).
 - 3) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).
4. Verse 28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."
 - a. We are told that Christ bore the sins of man **once**. A second trip to the cross is unnecessary.
 - 1) Isaiah 53:12: "Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil

- with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."
- 2) Our Lord filled the roles of scapegoat and sacrificial lamb (cf. Lev. 16:21-22).
- b. He fulfilled his mission to die for the sins of the world during his first trip to the earth; he will come a second time, but not to be an offering for sin. At the second coming, he will bring eternal salvation to the redeemed, and condemnation to the disobedient:
- 1) "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
 - 2) "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. 1:6-10).

What Is the Spiritual Heart and What Does it Do?

INTELLECT	EMOTIONS	WILL-POWER	CONSCIENCE
Thinks: Prov. 23:7; Mat. 9:4	Loves: Mark 12:30	Intends & Purposes: Heb. 4:12; 2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 11:23	Commends or Condemns: Rom. 2:15
Understands: Matthew 13:15	Despises: 2 Sam. 6:16	Decides & Wills: 1 Cor. 7:37	Smites Us: 1 Sam. 24:5; 2 Sam. 24:10
Reasons: Mark 2:8	Rejoices: Ps. 33:21		
Believes: Rom. 10:10	Suffers Anguish: 2 Cor. 2:4		

HEBREWS 10

A. Hebrews 10:1-18: The Finality of Christ's Atonement.

1. Verse 1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
 - a. Other translations of the verse:
 - 1) *English Study Bible*: "For the Law had a shadow of good *things* to come; not the very image of the things. It could not, with the same sacrifices offered continually year by year, make perfect those who came to *it*."
 - 2) NKJ: "For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect."
 - 3) ASV: "For the law having a shadow of the good *things* to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh."
 - b. Two conflicting laws cannot be in effect at the same time. The gospel of Christ replaced the law of Moses when the Lord died on the cross.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - 2) Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:13-15: "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; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."
 - c. The Mosaic Law contained a *shadow* of the good things inculcated in the gospel. The shadow of a hand is a representation of the hand; it is not the real hand. The shadow of the good things in the Old Testament was only a faint representation of the reality of those things in the gospel.
 - d. The sacrifices required by the law of Moses were typical of the sacrifice of Christ. There were daily (Ex. 29:38ff), weekly (Num. 28:9-10), monthly (Num. 28:11-15), and yearly sacrifices (Num. 28). Perhaps, specifically, Paul has reference here to the annual atonement sacrifice (Lev. 16), which took place on the tenth day of the seventh month.
 - e. Each year on the day of atonement the high priest offered the prescribed animal sacrifice for the sins of the people (including himself). This sacrifice was to be made annually, but it did not have the ability to remove the guilt of their sins; it merely delayed the punishment for their guilt for another year, when the same sacrifice was again made. Verse 3 states that their sins were remembered again the next year.
 - f. The main point in verse 1 is the statement that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not make the worshipers perfect (complete; spiritually mature). Those sacrifices were mere shadows of the reality; the reality came when Christ was sacrificed on the cross.
2. Verses 2-4: "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take

away sins.”

- a. If the Old Covenant sacrifices could have made the worshipers perfect, there would have been no need for them to be offered continually. Once a sacrifice had been offered for men, there would have been no need for it to be offered again. The guilt would have been removed and the worshiper would have had his conscience purified. “If these bloody sacrifices had been really efficacious in taking away the sins of the people, there would of course have been no need of repeating them with reference to the same sins; because, as our author says, the worshipers having been thoroughly cleansed once for all, would have no more consciousness of sins so forgiven. A debt that has been once fairly and fully canceled, is not to be paid a second time. If a disease has been once thoroughly eradicated from the system, there is no further need of medicine. And just so, if a sin is once effectually blotted out, it is remembered no more” (Milligan, p.267).
- b. However, each year under the Mosaic Law the same atonement sacrifice was offered, which shows that sin had not been remitted, but was remembered annually in that great sacrifice. The New Covenant has the ability to remove guilt permanently when the conditions are met:
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 5) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
- c. Each year on the Day of Atonement a scapegoat was released in the wilderness, symbolically to bear away the sins of the people. But the next year, another scapegoat was released, and another sacrifice was offered for sin. "And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Lev. 16:29-30).
- d. Each first day of the week, faithful Christians gather to eat the Lord’s Supper, not to call to mind the sins of the past, but to remember the Lord’s death, the only sacrifice sufficient to remove our guilt. The Israelites were told to remember their sins; Christians are told to remember Christ. The blessings enjoyed in Christ include the real forgiveness of sins.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) Those sins done while we were out of Christ are forgiven when we obey the gospel (Acts 22:16), and are never brought up against us again. As a Christian conducts his life, he will stumble on occasion; those sins he commits are taken away by the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7); he is obligated, of course, to repent, confess wrong, and ask for pardon when he perceives his guilt.
- e. The apostle plainly states the reason why the Old Covenant could not make the worshiper perfect: the weakness lay in the fact that the blood of bullocks and goats could not remove the guilt of sin.
 - 1) The old law had the ability to purify the flesh (ceremonially). "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*" (Heb. 9:12). They received pardon (2 Chron. 7:12-16), but it was given based on the proposition that Christ would make forgiveness possible by his sacrificial death.

- In other words, they were pardoned “on credit.” “And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually” (2 Chron. 7:12-16).
- 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
3. Verses 5-7: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body didst thou prepare for me; In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin thou hadst no pleasure: Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God" (ASV).
 - a. The quotation of this passage is from Psalm 40:6-8: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart." By having his ears opened, one is able to learn and to do the will of God; Christ came to do the will of the Father.
 - b. The quotation is introduced by Paul’s statement, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith...” This is, of course, a reference to the entrance into the world by Christ. This means that Christ is the author of the statement David made in the passage quoted from the Psalms. Although it was David who penned the statement, it was Christ who made the statement, which is directed to the Father.
 - c. The truth that is then uttered shows that the sacrifices under the Old Covenant were insufficient for the needs of mankind; it was not God’s will that his Son should come to offer animal sacrifices, but to offer himself. To that end God prepared a physical body for the Messiah. Without a mortal body, it would have been impossible for Christ (or any Divine Being) to die, and even then it was only the physical body that died—his eternal Being remained unchanged.
 - 1) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." For him to die a sacrificial death it was necessary that he have a mortal body.
 - 2) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." He partook of human nature by having a physical body; but this does not make him a mere man, anymore than eating pork turns a man into a hog.
 - 3) James 2:26: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
 - 4) Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”
 - 5) Micah 5:2: “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”
 - d. Verse six “is but an echo of the preceding verse, making with it a sort of Hebrew parallelism, in which ‘burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin’ are made to correspond with sacrifices and offerings

- in general. Together, the two verses express with great emphasis the utter insufficiency of the Levitical sacrifices to accomplish the will of God in the redemption of mankind” (Milligan, p.270).
- e. “In ancient times the law was written on skins, or parchments, and rolled up on two wooden rollers. One roller was placed at either end of the parchment, and then the two were rolled toward each other; and when any one wanted to read any portion of the ‘book,’ he could find the desired place, by unrolling one end, while rolling up the other. (Cf. Ezek. 2:9)...” (ALC, 1971, p.11). The writer does not specifically identify which part of the Old Testament Scriptures is referred to in the quotation, which said, “Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God” (ASV).
 - f. We are told repeatedly in the New Testament that Jesus did the will of God, and that there was not even a single instance in which he deviated from it. To do God’s will required great commitment on our Lord’s part.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
 - 2) Matthew 26:39: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*."
 - 3) John 4:34: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."
 - 4) John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - 5) Philippians 2:5-9: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
4. Verses 8-9: “Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”
- a. “The writer of Hebrews proceeds...to explain and apply the quotation, which he made from David. ‘Saying above’ refers directly to the quotation in question. It should be observed, however, that the writer does not quote the passage verbatim; and he applies it only to Christ. This was done, in all probability, because that was the ultimate meaning of the passage; and the author of Hebrews worded the application, so as to bring out the meaning of the original statement” (ALC, 1971, p.11).
 - b. The sacrifices under the Mosaic Law were unable to remove the guilt of sin (cf. 10:1-4). These sacrifices had now been removed; they no longer availed, even for ceremonial cleansing. The very law that required these sacrifices had been taken away.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:12: “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”
 - 2) Colossians 2:14: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”
 - c. Verse nine affirms again that Christ came to do the will of God. One of the things he did was to remove the first covenant, in order to establish the second covenant. It was God’s will that the Old Law be removed, and that the New Testament be given in its place.
 - 1) It was not his will that Moses’ Law should continue forever; it is not God’s will that the old law should be re-instated, as the millennialists assert. Contradictory speed limits cannot both be enforced for the same stretch of road; the Old Covenant and the New Covenant cannot both be enforced at the same time.
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- 2) When the Mosaic Law was removed, and the New Testament took effect, polygamy, incense, burnt offerings, divorce for any cause, and a host of other matters were removed.
- d. Colossians 2:12-17: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an 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."
5. Verses 10-12: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."
- a. We are sanctified by the will of God. To be sanctified is to be "set apart" for God's holy purposes. To be sanctified is to be holy; the original Greek word is translated both ways [*i.e.*, sanctification and holiness]. Many passages show that sanctification is accomplished by the word of God:
- 1) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:29: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
 - 3) James 1:18,21: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 5) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
- b. The word of God [the New Covenant] is able to save and sanctify us because Christ died as the one-time offering for sin. His sacrificial offering of himself on the cross is the propitiation from sin. Levitical priests offered many sacrifices, on a daily basis they were offered, but these were never able to take away the guilt of sin. Regardless of how often or how many such sacrifices are offered, they are powerless to remove sin.
- c. But Christ offered a one-time sacrifice of himself, and then sat down, his job done. The Levitical priests stood while they made their offerings; Christ made his and sat down. They had to keep on offering their sacrifices, on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly schedule; and still the removal of sin was impossible by that system.
- d. "The main point of contrast here is, not between the one sacrifice and the many, but between the often repeated offerings of the many sacrifices of the Law, and the one offering of the sacrifice of Christ. For while every Levitical priest standeth daily ministering, as one who has never finished his work; Christ, on the other hand, having offered one sacrifice for sin, sat down perpetually on the right hand of God, as one who has accomplished his work; that is, the particular work to which our author here refers: the work of making an atonement for the sins of the world. This will never have to be repeated" (Milligan, pp.272f).
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6. Verses 13-14: "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."
- a. The apostle refers to Psalm 110:1: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Christ is pictured as seated at God's right hand, patiently and calmly awaiting the end of time, when all of his enemies will be completely and forevermore subjugated to him.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:25-26: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death."
 - 2) His resurrection assures the ultimate victory over death; the final triumph will be completed when he returns to raise the dead and change the living (1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 5:28-29).
 - b. One of the marks of Christ's superiority over the Levitical priests is the fact that he offered only one sacrifice, while their sacrificing was never completed. And his one sacrifice accomplished what all of their sacrificing combined could not do: remove the guilt of sin. He was able to perfect the obedient, fully and forever cleansing them from their past sins.
 - c. What about future sins on the part of those who have been redeemed by the Savior? Can any of them commit sin so as to lose their salvation? Does verse fourteen teach the credal doctrine that no saved person can ever become lost again? Certainly not!
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 3) Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - 4) Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 - 5) Hebrews 10:29: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
 - 6) James 5:19-20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 - 7) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - d. "By [his one sacrifice] he has forever perfected them that are sanctified. But who are they? Evidently the same as the sanctified in ch. 2:11; those who by faith and obedience have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27), and who have risen with him from the baptismal grave to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 3:1). All such have come to perfection *in Christ*, finding as they do in him all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), so that they have only to persevere in well doing to the end of life, by abiding in Christ as the branch abides in the vine, and then with spirits as pure as the angels before the throne of God, they will join the redeemed millions 'who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'" (Milligan, p.273).
7. Verses 15-18: "*Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.
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Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin.”

- a. The Holy Spirit bore witness **to** us by the inspired words he delivered through selected men, such as Jeremiah. The apostle quotes from Jeremiah 31:33: “But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
 - 1) Nehemiah 9:20,30: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst....Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands." [Notice that the Spirit bore witness to Israel by the inspired prophets].
 - 2) Acts 1:5,8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence....But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
- b. There is a great difference between the Holy Spirit witnessing **to** us and bearing witness **with** us. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). He bore witness to ancient people through the word of the inspired prophets and apostles; he bears witness with our spirits by the word which he delivered through the apostles and prophets (Eph. 3:1ff). The Holy Spirit tells us in the gospel that we become children of God when we meet the criteria set forth in the inspired Word; our spirit states that we have met the requirements; the Holy Spirit's testimony agrees with our testimony that we are the children of God.
- c. The quotation cited was recorded by Jeremiah, but the statement is here said to have been given by the Holy Spirit. It is also stated here that the Holy Spirit is witness to us through the message he gave.
 - 1) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life."
 - 3) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 4) John 15:26-27: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."
 - 5) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
 - 6) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received,

- not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- 8) 1 Timothy 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."
 - 9) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
- d. When sin is remitted [dismissed, released] there is no more need for another offering for sin. When we obey the gospel, every stain of sin is forever removed. This was not possible by the Mosaic Law, but is one of the great benefits of the gospel! Under the former covenant, many offerings were made in behalf of those subject to that law, but there was the stated fact that these could not remove sin. Under God's Son, the guilt of every sin is forever removed from our record.
- e. How does God write his laws into our hearts and in our minds? It is done through the process of teaching. It is not done miraculously.
- 1) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 2:36-38,41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost....Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - 4) Acts 13:44-46: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
- f. "The importance of understanding the final and complete nature of the heavenly offering of the blood of Christ for human sins is so great, and any denial of such a sublime truth, even though unintentional, is of such terrible consequence to mankind that we are led to inquire here as to the validity of the commonly held view that Christ's blood is *daily* sacrificed in such a thing as the mass" (Coffman, p.223).
- 1) "'If,' says Dr. Macknight, 'after remission is granted to the sinner, there is no need of any more sacrifice for sin; and if Christ, by offering himself once, has *perfected for ever the sanctified*, ver. 14, the *sacrifice of the mass*, as it is called, about which the Romish clergy employ themselves so incessantly, and to which the *papists* trust for the pardon of their sins, has no foundation in Scripture. Nay, it is an evident impiety, as it proceeds upon the supposition that the offering of the body of Christ *once* is not sufficient to procure the pardon of sin, but must be *frequently* repeated. If they reply that their mass is only the representation and commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, they give up the cause, and renounce an article of their faith, established by the council of Trent, which, in session xxii. can.1 3, declared *the*

sacrifice of the mass to be a true and propitiatory sacrifice for sin, I say, give up the cause; for the representation and commemoration of a sacrifice is not a sacrifice. Farther, it cannot be affirmed that the body of Christ is offered in the mass, unless it can be said that, as often as it is offered, Christ has suffered death; for the apostle says expressly, Heb. 9:25,26, that if Christ offered himself often, he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world” (Adam Clarke, Vol. VI, p.755).

2) The mass is as unscriptural and anti-scriptural as the Romanist church itself.

B. Hebrews 10:19-31: Faithfulness to the Gospel is Required.

1. Verses 19-21: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God.”
 - a. Our great High Priest, enthroned in heaven, can be touched by the feelings of our infirmities (Heb. 4:16). He is sympathetic toward our problems, especially those of a spiritual nature. On the basis of his perfect sacrifice for sin, he opened the way into heaven for himself and for all who will follow him. There is no sacrifice that any mortal can make which would open heaven to sinful man. The import of this passage shows that before Christ died, man did not have access to the throne of God in heaven.
 - b. The apostle speaks of the boldness with which we may draw nigh unto him (cf. verse 22). This confidence is not arrogance; but it rules out timidity. But his sacrifice enables us to believe confidently that our obedience and prayers are heard, and have certain hope for entrance into heaven. What made this possible? The blood of Christ.
 - c. The way into the Holy of Holies (heaven) is a new and living way. This way is the New Testament, the gospel. It was new when Paul wrote; it is new today; it will never grow old. Its author will never die and so his way will never grow old or ineffective. This new way will remain fresh and effective since the High Priest, who established the way, is ever alive, fresh, and powerful.
 - d. Christ made this new and living way (consecrated it) by his flesh; that is, by sacrificing his life. It is through his death that he was exalted to the Father’s right hand to serve as High Priest; it is by means of his death that we find life. We are made to be alive spiritually when we obey the gospel, and after a faithful Christian life, we enter into eternal life.
 - e. The Levitical high priest entered into the most holy place of the tabernacle by going through the veil that separated the two rooms; Christ used his flesh as the veil through which he was able to pass into the Most Holy Place (heaven). If he had not died as he did, he could not have entered, and we could not be saved. Christ has become the High Priest over the house of God. The house of God is the church (1 Tim. 3:15). Salvation is in the house (family) of God, therefore it is in the church, which is equivalent to God’s house (family).
 - f. When Christ died, we are told that the veil in the temple was rent, from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50-51); this revealed the most holy place in the temple to anyone who was in the holy place; it symbolized the opening of the way into the heaven (the true Most Holy Place). “...[I]t was not merely the veil that represented Christ, but the *rent veil!* The sundered veil did not obscure or conceal anything. The perfect support of this understanding of the matter lies in the very verse before us. That typical veil which concealed for such a long time the way into the holy of holies at last parted asunder; and it thereby became in that miraculous event the perfect type of the rending of the flesh of Jesus, through which the way into heaven itself is opened up and revealed to men” (Coffman, p.229).
 - g. The *English Study Bible* gives this rendering of the passage: “Having then, brethren, boldness to enter the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way that he has opened for us through the veil, that is, his flesh; And *by* a great priest over the house of God.”
2. Verse 22: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

- a. In this passage [vv. 19-25], the subject is found in verses 19-21; four items are listed in verses 22-25 which complete the thought of the first three verses of the context.
 - 1) They had obeyed the gospel—verse 22.
 - 2) They were told to remain faithful to the gospel—verse 23.
 - 3) They were told to promote faithfulness in other Christians—verse 24.
 - 4) They were told what they must not do [forsake the assembling of themselves together] and what they must do [exhort one another]—verse 25.
 - b. This verse completes the thought given in verses 19-21. Since we have the liberty to enter into the Most Holy Place by way of the blood of Jesus, which is a new and living way, and having a High Priest who operates in our behalf, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.
 - c. Since the information in the preceding passage is true, we are privileged to draw near to God. The Old Testament system kept the common people at arm’s length from God; they were represented to God by the priests, who were also mortal, sinful men. But we have the sinless Son of God, a divine being in his own right, who represents us before the Almighty.
 - d. God sets the conditions by which men are permitted to draw near to God. Those conditions include faith (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of faith (Rom. 10:10), and baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). We may approach God only through Christ (John 14:6); we are able to come to Christ if we are drawn to him by the Father (John 6:44); God uses the process of teaching to draw us (John 6:45). "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45, ASV).
 - e. To be able to draw near to the Father is a wonderful privilege, much akin to a common man in a great kingdom having the honor to approach the king to plead his case or to ask for a benefit. It is a great privilege to be able to approach the Creator of the universe, the Father of our spirits.
 - f. In order for Christians to draw near to God through Christ, they must have a **true heart**. A true heart is a sincere heart. No insincere person is allowed near God.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 4:29: "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul."
 - 2) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
 - 3) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 4) Luke 8:15: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience."
 - 5) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 6) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - g. In order for one to approach God, he must come in **full assurance of faith**. This entails full faith in God, in Christ, in the gospel, and being fully confident of the Savior’s power and divinity. We are saved by faith, but not by faith alone. Faith alone is a perversion of, an addition to, and a contradiction of, the word of God. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). The Bible speaks of different kinds of faith (little, weak, vain, dead, saving faith). Saving faith is an obedient faith.
 - 1) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Romans 16:26: "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
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- 3) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
- h. In order for one to approach God, he must have his **heart sprinkled** from an evil conscience. This is not a reference to the action of baptism, but is an allusion to the sprinkling of animal blood and pure water on Old Testament Israelites, by which they were made ceremonially clean. Under the New Testament, our hearts (spirits, souls) are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. This is not a literal application of his blood, but a figurative representation of his blood being applied. We are purged (cleansed) from the guilt of sin when we contact his blood; we contact his blood in baptism.
- 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 3) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 4) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- i. In order for one to approach God, he must have his heart sprinkled **from an evil conscience**. The conscience is like a watch in that its accuracy depends on being "set" correctly. The conscience can be evil (Heb. 10:22), seared (1 Tim. 4:2), defiled (Tit. 1:15), ignorant (1 Tim. 1:13), or choked with dead works (Heb. 9:14). The conscience can be cleansed (1 John 3:20; Heb. 10:22; 9:14). Our conscience, when it operates by the standard of truth, can be of great assistance to us by condemning our errors and commending us when we do right (Rom. 2:15). If we act contrary to what we believe to be right, we have no inner peace; we stand condemned by our own heart. The Old Testament Israelites had their sins brought to their attention every year at the day of atonement, thus were continually reminded of their guilt.
- 1) But the sins of Christians were fully removed in obeying the gospel; our conscience was cleared, and gave full approval to our spiritual condition. The result was a wonderful inner peace that passes human comprehension.
 - a) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - b) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - 2) When we commit sin after obeying the gospel, provision is made for the removal of this new guilt and the re-clearing of the conscience: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:7-10).
 - 3) If our faith is pure and strong, and we know and follow the truth, we can face life, trials, death, and the Judgment with calm assurance: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in
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- love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:17-18). But we must both know and believe the truth, and practice it sincerely.
- j. In order for one to approach God, he must have his **body washed with pure water**. This is clearly a reference to baptism. All Bible scholars, who are true to their scholarship, admit that this is a reference to baptism. Baptism is essential to salvation and drawing near to God. When the body is washed in water in baptism, the heart (the soul, spirit) is sprinkled with the blood of Christ.
- 1) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - 3) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
- k. This verse tells how to be enrolled as a Christian: draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and the body washed with pure water. The sprinkling and washing are simultaneous as were the dipping and cleansing in Naaman's case (2 Kings 5). Our soul is cleansed by the blood of Christ as our body is immersed in the water of baptism.
3. Verse 23: "Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised)."
- a. "Hold fast"—this is the purpose of Hebrews, to get the Hebrew saints to hold fast to the truths of the gospel. God is faithful to his promises, and we must be faithful to our commitment.
 - b. "This would be better rendered as follows: Let us hold fast the confession of the hope (*omologian ths elpidos*) without wavering...its full meaning might be expressed thus: 'Let us hold fast the faith which we have confessed and cling to the hope which it ministers'" (Milligan, p.283).
 - 1) The *English Study Bible* renders the verse in this way: "Let us hold, without wavering, the hope we profess, for he is faithful who promised."
 - 2) The ASV gives this rendering: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised."
 - 3) The NKJ gives this rendition: "Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful."
 - c. That God is faithful to his promises is seen by Bible cases and in nature. God promised Abraham a great number of descendants, when there seemed to be no possible way for the promise to be fulfilled; countless other Biblical cases could be cited in evidence. Even in nature, God's faithfulness is demonstrated.
 - 1) Genesis 8:22: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."
 - 2) Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - 3) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 4) Colossians 1:17: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." [*Consist* means "to hold together" as in the case of the ingredients of dough having a consistency that keeps it from coming apart].
 - 5) Hebrews 1:3: "Who...upholding all things by the word of his power..."
 - d. We are still pilgrims on the earth; we possess eternal life here in hope and promise, therefore, we
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must hold fast.

- 1) Titus 1:2: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 2) Titus 3:7: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
 - 3) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."
4. Verse 24: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."
- a. The closeness of the saints is often emphasized in the New Testament. See 1 Corinthians 12:12ff. We are members one of another; we are to have mutual concern about each other. Here we are told to provoke (a stimulation of love) each other unto love and good works.
 - b. It is contrary to the nature of Christianity to be glad when another Christian (or even an alien) falls into sin, error, or trouble; that would be an occasion of grief.
 - c. To the contrary, we are directed to provoke, exhort, promote, and urge others to continue in love and good works; we are not to discourage anyone in these holy practices. If love and good works were not important, indeed essential, they would not have been emphasized so strongly here.
 - d. When a Christian errs from the truth, we are told to exhort and restore the fallen one, or withdraw from him if he persists in his folly.
 - 1) Matthew 18:15-17: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother."
 - e. Every Christian needs to be encouraged when he undergoes special hardship or trouble; comforted when he suffers loss; complimented when he succeeds.
5. Verse 25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."
- a. The Greek term translated "assembling" is *episunagogan*. "The Greek word (the noun) is used nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2 Thess. 2:1, where it is rendered *gathering together*. The *verb* is used in Mat. 23:37; 24:31; Mark 1:33; 13:27; Luke 12:1; 13:34; in all which places it is rendered *gathered together*. It properly means *an act of assembling*, or a *gathering together*, and is nowhere used in the New Testament in the sense of *an assembly*, or *the church*. The command, then, here is, *to meet together* for the worship of God, and it is enjoined on Christians as an important duty to do it. It is *implied*, also, that there is blame or fault where this is 'neglected'" (Barnes, p.237).
 - b. We are commanded not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together; we are commanded to exhort each other; do not forsake assembling; do exhort. The exhorting was to be done in the assemblies. If we do not assemble, we cannot obey this command to exhort one another. Failure to assemble is an act of direct disobedience to God's commands (do not forsake; do exhort).
 - c. There was the practice of some of the Christians to forsake assembling; this was due to two great causes: the persecution being brought to bear against them; and the strong efforts made by the Jews to convince them to return to the Law. Many were in danger of apostatizing.
 - d. The exhortations were to increase as they saw the day approaching.

- 1) Many scholars think that the day of assembly (Sunday) is meant. If that is so, then in order to obey the command to exhort one another, we must increase the exhortations as the weekend nears. But the statement of the verse shows that the exhortations were done in the assemblies; so the “day approaching” was some other day.
 - 2) Some Bible students make a case for the day being the Day of Judgment. However, we have no overt way of “seeing” this day approach. There is to be no sign in nature presaging Christ’s Second Coming (Matt. 24:35-39; Mark 13:32-33). There is no way for us to know when the Judgment Day will occur. We only know that with each passing day, the end of time is one day nearer. If the Judgment is the day, with each passing day, we are to increase our exhorting. But again, the exhortations are done in the assemblies.
 - 3) Some Bible students make a case for the day being the day of our death. Although we all know that we shall die, we do not know when that day will be. We can only know that with each passing day we are one day closer to our departure from the earth, and with the coming of each new day, our earthly sojourn is that much shorter. In the light of this verse, we are to increase our exhortations; there is a limit to the amount of exhorting we can do.
- e. A strong case can be made for the day approaching being the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The Lord had predicted that occasion, even to the point of giving many signs of that day (Matt. 24:3-34; Luke 21:20-22).
- 1) That event would be of great interest to the Hebrew Christians; it would be a time they could identify as it drew near, by the descriptions given by the Lord. Ancient records show that no Christian died in the destruction of the city, because of the warning signs Christ provided. ““When the whole congregation of the Church in Jerusalem, according to an oracle given by revelation to approved persons among them before the war, were commanded to depart from the city and inhabit a city which they call Pella, beyond the Jordan, to which when all those who believed in Christ had removed from Jerusalem, and when the saints had totally abandoned the royal city which is the metropolis of the Jews, then the Divine vengeance seized them who had dealt so wickedly with Christ and his Apostles, and utterly destroyed that wicked and abominable generation”” (Eusebius, Eccl. His. iii, v; Quoted by Milligan, p.194).
 - 2) Hebrews was written during a time of persecution in Jerusalem and Palestine.
 - a) Hebrews 12:4: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."
 - b) Hebrews 10:33-34: "Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 3) Many were discouraged and some had quit assembling with the church. This was wrong because it:
 - a) Set at naught God’s ordinance to assemble (Acts 2:42; 20:7; John 20:20-22).
 - b) Deprives the absent member of many spiritual blessings.
 - c) Sets the wrong example (Matt. 5:12-16; 1 Tim. 4:12).
 - 4) There are several statements in the New Testament which seem to refer to the day of Jerusalem’s overthrow, which lends credence to the “day approaching” of the text being that occasion. These verses may indeed have the fall of Jerusalem in mind.
 - a) Romans 16:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet **shortly**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen."
 - b) Philippians 4:5: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. **The Lord is at hand.**"
 - c) James 5:8: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for **the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.**"
 - d) 1 Peter 4:7: "But **the end of all things is at hand**: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."
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- f. The word used regarding the assembling is *forsake*; the author did not use the word *neglect*. There is a difference between the two words. Information on the word *forsaking*: "To leave behind in some place." The word [*egkataleipto*] is used in a good sense: "let remain over." It is used in a bad sense: "desert, forsake, leave." The word is used in these verses:
- 1) Matthew 27:46: "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou **forsaken** me?"
 - 2) Acts 2:27: "Because thou wilt not **leave** my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
 - 3) Romans 9:29: "And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth **had left** us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 4:9: "Persecuted, but not **forsaken**; cast down, but not destroyed."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:10: "For Demas **hath forsaken** me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia."
 - 6) 2 Timothy 4:16: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all *men* **forsook** me: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge."
 - 7) Hebrews 13:5 "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor **forsake** thee."
- g. Other scholars give the following information on the verse:
- 1) Robertson's Word Pictures on Hebrews 10:25:
 - a) Not forsaking *mee* (NT:3361) *engkataleipontes* (NT:1459). "Not leaving behind, not leaving in the lurch" (2 Tim 4:10).
 - b) The assembling of yourselves together *teen* (NT:3588) *episunagoogeen* (NT:1997) *heautoon* (NT:1438). A late double compound from *episunagoo* (NT:1996), to gather together *sun* (NT:4862) besides *epi* (NT:1909) as in Matt 23:37; Luke 17:27. In the New Testament only here and 2 Thess 2:1. In an inscription 100 B.C. for collection of money (Deissmann, Light, etc., p. 103).
 - c) As the custom of some is *kathoos* (NT:2531) *ethos* (NT:1485) *tisin* (NT:5100). "As is custom to some." For *ethos* (NT:1485) (custom) see Luke 22:39; John 19:40. Already some Christians had formed the habit of not attending public worship, a perilous habit then and now.
 - d) So much the more as *tosoutoo* (NT:5118) *mallon* (NT:3123) *hosoo* (NT:3745). Instrumental case of measure or degree, "by so much the more as," both with *tosoutoo* (NT:5118) and *hosoo* (NT:3745).
 - e) The day drawing nigh *engizousan* (NT:1448) *teen* (NT:3588) *heemeran* (NT:2250). The Second Coming of Christ which draws nearer all the time (Rom 13:12). [Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by Biblesoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright ©) 1985 by Broadman Press].
 - 2) People's New Testament notes: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves. In times of persecution there was a great temptation to stay away from the church assemblies, and some had fallen into dangerous neglect. As ye see the day approaching. There were signs that the Hebrew Christians could see that 'the day' was near at hand. They probably thought that Christ would come in person at that day. He did come in judgment on the Jewish nation. As that awful time of trial seemed near at hand they should be zealous in exhorting each other. Macknight, Stuart, Milligan, Meyer and many others refer 'day' to the destruction of the Jewish nation" [PNT].
 - 3) Matthew Henry on verses 19-25: "The apostle having closed the first part of the epistle, the doctrine is applied to practical purposes. As believers had an open way to the presence of God, it became them to use this privilege. The way and means by which Christians enjoy such privileges, is by the blood of Jesus, by the merit of that blood which he offered up as an

- atonement sacrifice. The agreement of infinite holiness with pardoning mercy, was not clearly understood till the human nature of Christ, the Son of God, was wounded and bruised for our sins. Our way to heaven is by a crucified Saviour; his death is to us the way of life, and to those who believe this, he will be precious. They must draw near to God; it would be contempt of Christ, still to keep at a distance. Their bodies were to be washed with pure water, alluding to the cleansings directed under the law: thus the use of water in baptism, was to remind Christians that their conduct should be pure and holy....Believers are to consider how they can be of service to each other, especially stirring up each other to the more vigorous and abundant exercise of love, and the practice of good works. The communion of saints is a great help and privilege, and a means of steadfastness and perseverance. We should observe the coming of times of trial, and be thereby quickened to greater diligence. There is a trying day coming on all men, the day of our death" (Matthew Henry, Concise Commentary, PC Online Bible].
6. There are other precepts of the gospel which affect attendance. These show that every Christian who sincerely desires to be all he can become, and do all that he can do, and serve Christ with all his being, will be present at every service he is capable of attending; and only the most pressing of reasons will keep him from the assemblies of the saints. These factors include:
- a. A desire to obey every command, adhere to every precept, and respect every warning given in the word of God, will motivate us to attend every service.
 - 1) Matthew 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."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - 3) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - 4) James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 - 5) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - b. Love for God and our precious Savior will provoke us to earnestly desire to be present at every service, for we know the Lord will be present, and wants us to be there.
 - 1) Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
 - 2) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 3) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - c. A desire to have the very best influence on all of those around us, especially members of our own family, will create in us an undeniable aspiration to be present at every service. Others are watching us; our influence can promote or hinder their obedience and faithfulness.
 - 1) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
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- 2) Philippians 2:15-16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
- 3) It is highly unlikely that we can go to either heaven or to hell without influencing others to accompany us.
- d. An abiding desire to pay homage to God by worshiping him in spirit and truth will motivate us to be present at every service.
 - 1) Psalms 42:1-2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"
 - 2) Psalms 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."
 - 3) Matthew 4:10: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."
 - 4) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
- e. A strong commitment to do all in our power to serve and honor him will keep us from the sin of omission. To fail to do God's will is to commit sin.
 - 1) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - 2) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
- f. A dread of developing a hard heart will insure our presence at every possible service. Hearts can be hardened gradually by neglect and omission of duty. The first time a Christian misses a service he could have attended, his conscience bothers him; the second absence produces less pain in the conscience; finally, there is no feeling of guilt at all—the voice of the conscience has been effectively silenced!
 - 1) Romans 2:15: "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:18-19: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:2: "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
- g. It is admitted by everyone who respects the authority and integrity of the Scriptures that to forsake assembling with the saints is sinful. Some think that an occasional absence (for purely personal reasons) from the Sunday morning worship service is permissible; many will maintain that there is no sin if we regularly miss the Bible study hour on Sunday morning, the Sunday evening service, the mid-week Bible study, and gospel meeting services. At what point, from the first willful absence to the time when the individual ceases attending altogether, does sin commence? After missing 25 times? After missing 50 services? After 100? Exactly when does sin begin? If it is sinful to miss 100 services, it is sinful to miss willfully one service! If not, why not?
7. Verses 26-27: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries" (ASV).
 - a. Henry's comments on verses 26-31: "The exhortations against apostasy and to perseverance, are urged by many strong reasons. The sin here mentioned is a total and final falling away, when men, with a full and fixed will and resolution, despise and reject Christ, the only Saviour; despise and

resist the Spirit...and despise and renounce the gospel, the only way of salvation, and the words of eternal life....” (Concise Commentary, PC Online Bible).

- b. The statement of this verse immediately follows the warning of the preceding verse about forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. To forsake the meetings of the saints for worship is to commit an act of willful sin. To forsake is to quit.
- c. Sin is the transgression of God’s word (1 John 3:4). More is involved in committing the willful sin of this passage than a single transgression of some precept of God’s word. To be guilty of the willful sin envisioned by the apostle is to turn from the faith. If a single act of willful sin condemns an individual without hope of redemption, then no one could be saved, for everyone has sinned with the prior knowledge that the act was sinful. Because one misses one assembly of the saints does not make him guilty of **this willful sin**.
 - 1) At what logical point does sin commence when a Christian absents himself from the assemblies? How many times must he miss before his failure to assemble becomes sin? The only rational answer is that sin commences with the first willful absence. Although a few absences do not constitute the willful sin of the passage, they are acts of sin for which repentance is demanded.
 - 2) To persist in failure to assemble will result in the dreadful condition depicted in this passage. The erring member will develop such hardness of heart that the gospel no longer has any appeal to his emotion and has no effect on his mind.
- d. But when Christians reject the church and gospel (as is indicated by their failure to assemble) there is no other hope for them. Christ’s sacrifice is the only sacrifice which is effective for sin. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:11-12).
- e. The one in the condition of heart and life pictured by the passage has nothing pleasant to anticipate; he has no other sacrifice to which he may turn for redemption; therefore he has a fearful prospect of facing the Judgment in an unprepared condition. The apostle is describing a child of God; he teaches, as he does elsewhere in the epistle, that a Christian can sin and be lost.
 - 1) Some argue those described are not Christians, but those who “have received the knowledge of the truth.” But the context shows beyond question that Christians are the subject: Let **us** draw near (vs. 22); let **us** hold fast (vs. 23); let **us** consider one another (vs. 24); not forsaking the assembling of **ourselves** together (vs. 25); if **we** sin willfully (vs. 26). He is speaking to and about the same people here as he did in Hebrews 3:1: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." Any of these “holy brethren” could become guilty of the willful sin of the text, hence the warning.
 - 2) “To ‘sin wilfully’ literally means to be habitually engaged in sin. Here it has reference to a wilful abandonment of Christianity for Judaism. Thus it simply means to keep on sinning. One violates these instructions when he wilfully returns to his old life after obeying the gospel.... Anyone who returns to the sinful lusts he once practiced after obeying the truth is lost—unless he repents” (T.B. Crews, ADL, p.393).
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:13-15: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."
- f. “Fiery indignation” is a reference to the punishment of fire that shall be the fate of Christ’s enemies. This is not a mere figure of speech, but is a real description of the apostate’s destiny. The Lord’s adversaries will be devoured (severely punished) by the penalty to be imposed on them.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that

- know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: he shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- 2) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:29: "For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:10-12: "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?"
8. Verses 28-29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
- a. In some Old Testament situations, fire was used in administering punishment on God's adversaries.
 - 1) Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD."
 - 2) Numbers 16:35: "And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense."
 - b. Under the Mosaic Law, offenders were punished when their guilt was established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Even under that inferior [compared to the Gospel] system, God ordained that punishment was to be applied (cf. Num. 15:31ff; Deut. 17:2-7; 21:18). Men became offenders when they despised Moses' Law.
 - 1) Despite was shown for the law by violating its precepts. To despise God's law was to despise God: "Wherefore hast thou **despised the commandment of the LORD**, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because **thou hast despised me**, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife" (2 Sam. 12:9-10).
 - 2) No mercy was shown to those offenders under that system. No mercy should be expected by those who violate God's law today, unless repentance is forthcoming. "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:47-48).
 - c. Christ's gospel is superior to Moses' law in many ways. If the offender under the Old Testament was punished with great severity and without mercy, how much more so under the New Testament system! The punishment of apostate Christians is deserving of "much sorer punishment" than that meted out to the violators of the old law. "The extremely powerful language used to describe the apostate has led some to suppose that only the most shameful and incorrigibly wicked are included in the author's thoughts" (Coffman, p.240).
 - 1) Who are described here? The apostates who renounced Christianity. What were the sins of those to whom he was writing? Neglected duty, ignoring the study of the Bible, not assembling with the saints, an inclination to revert to the Mosaic law.
 - 2) As Coffman observed, these "were not the sins of reprobates, debauchers, or scoundrels, but

the sins of ‘nice people’!—nice people who did not realize that their indifference and dalliance were not minor but major departures from the path of duty and that they were in deadly danger from such conduct....But may God help Christians to remember that as custodians of the Light of all nations, their utmost endeavor is the least required of them, for their lives are forfeit to this task above all others that the lamp of truth be held aloft in the darkness of human sin and transgressionWhen people who are generally supposed to be Christians live lives that lead others to despise the truth, they stand in the same condemnation as the Pharisees who did not enter the kingdom themselves nor allow others to do so” (p.241).

d. They have **trodden under foot the Son of God.**

- 1) The expression is used in other evil connections in other passages:
 - a) Matthew 5:13: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."
 - b) Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."
- 2) The term expresses an apathetic or hateful disposition toward God’s Son. Christ forfeited his position in heaven, suffered evil at the hands of ungrateful men, willingly endured the cross, was rejected and despised by the majority of his own nation, and has been vilified by millions through the centuries.
- 3) Christians who turn away from him treat him with contempt, depicted as treading him under their feet. When his followers ignore his word, fail to assemble and worship, refuse to eat the Lord’s Supper, they are treading him underfoot. But consider these thoughts: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich....Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. 8:9; 9:15).
- 4) The rich man of Luke 16 was not consigned to torment because he assaulted Lazarus or was immoral; it was due to his unwillingness to obey God. The one-talent man of Matthew 25 was not cast into outer darkness on account of criminality, but because he did not obey. Wayward members of the church will be lost, if they fail to remain obedient.

e. They have **counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.**

- 1) The reference is to the gospel (the New Testament). A failure to appreciate the blood Christ shed in order to establish the New Covenant will cause one to be lost in eternity. One does not have to become a drunkard or a criminal to lose his soul. All a Christian needs to do to be lost is to be indifferent about his responsibilities toward Christ.
- 2) To count the Lord’s blood as unholy, is to make it common, treat it as though it has no spiritual worth. “How does one make the blood of Jesus common? By his indifference to it, by responding to it not at all, or half-heartedly, by neglecting to enter by means of the access provided through it, or, in short, either by non-Christian or anti-Christian conduct” (Coffman, p.242).
- 3) Those addressed had been sanctified by the blood of the New Covenant. They were genuine New Testament Christians, but had turned against the Savior, not necessarily by taking a hostile stance toward him, but by failing to remain faithful. The inspired statement is an impossible barrier to those religionists who deny that a child of God can be lost. Can a sanctified person retain his salvation (holiness) while counting the blood of Christ as unholy? Some have resorted to denying its inspiration in an effort to avoid the plain import of the passage.
- 4) Weak members offer lame excuses for not serving and worshiping as they are commanded; but being too busy, too tired, not having enough time, will not justify disobedience. Departure from Christ is usually a gradual movement; one service is missed; then another; finally the

- individual has quit. His heart has hardened by degrees, until at last he has little or no pang of conscience.
- 5) The condition is not merely a weakness; it is sin; it is trampling Christ underfoot; it leads to eternal condemnation.
- f. They have **done despite unto the Spirit of grace.**
- 1) The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the ministry of Christ.
 - a) Matthew 12:28: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."
 - b) John 3:34: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him.*"
 - 2) The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the work of the apostles, providing them with the very revelation of the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:9-14; John 16:13-14; Acts 2:1-4), and confirmed that revelation by miraculous signs (2 Cor. 12:11-13; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:1-4). One cannot shun the inspired gospel without showing despite to the Holy Spirit.
 - 3) To reject the Spirit-revealed gospel is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.
 - a) Matthew 12:32: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come."
 - b) Acts 13:44-46,50-51: "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles....But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium."
9. Verses 30-31: "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance *belongeth* unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. *It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
- a. This passage is a quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35-36: "To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is* none shut up, or left." Paul gives the meaning, rather than a verbatim quotation. The apostle quotes his own inspired words from Romans 12:19 (cf. Coffman, p.244).
 - b. The character of God is revealed in the Scriptures. By observing the acts, words, and disposition of Christ, we learn what the Father is like (John 14:6-9). We know that God hates sin and religious error; we know that he loves truth and righteousness; we know that he will punish evil and reward good; we know that he is a God of Justice as well as a God of Mercy; we know that he is able to show wrath as well as to show love.
 - c. The final destruction of evil is part of God's eternal purpose (2 Thess. 1:6-9). He will offer justice in the Judgment, not mercy, to those who lived in violation of his will. Some unknown poet penned these true words regarding God's mercy and wrath:

"There is by us a line unseen
That crosses every path,
The Hidden boundary between
God's mercy and God's wrath."

- d. We are told in verse thirty-one that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. In chapter 12:29, Paul tells us that God is a consuming fire. "...[I]f God is infinitely just and infinitely holy, it must indeed be indescribably awful to fall into his hands to be punished forever and ever. True, indeed, David says, 'Let us fall now into the hands of the Lord; for his mercies are great; and let us not fall into the hand of man' (2 Sam. 24:14). But David was not an apostate. It was for correction, and not for everlasting punishment, that he chose to fall into the hand of the Lord, rather than into the hands of his enemies. The cases are, therefore, not at all parallel. For it is not for the purpose of being corrected during the short space of three days, or even three centuries, that the apostate falls into the hands of Jehovah; but it is that he may be 'punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power' (2 Thess. 1:9)" (Milligan, p.288).
- e. "'The living God' is an expression used here and in three other passages of Hebrews, 3:12, 9:14, and 12:22; and in this place seems to be given in answer to a possible question of why it is a fearful thing to fall into God's hands. Because he is a living God!" (Coffman, p.245).
- f. "The idea here is, that to fall into the hands of the Lord, after having despised his mercy and rejected his salvation, would be terrific; and the fear of this should deter from the commission of the dreadful crime. The phrase 'living God' is used in the Scripture in opposition to *idols*. God always lives; his power is capable of being always exerted. He is not like the idols of wood or stone which have no life, and which are not to be dreaded, but he always lives. It is the more fearful to fall into his hands, because he will live *for ever*. A man who inflicts punishment will die, and the punishment will come to an end, but God will never cease to exist, and the punishment which he is capable of inflicting to-day he will be capable of inflicting for ever and ever" (Barnes, pp.243f).

C. Hebrews 10:32-39: Words of Encouragement.

1. Verse 32: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."
 - a. Paul begins to offer words of encouragement (cf. 6:9-10). He reminds them of the time, soon after they obeyed the gospel (and were thus enlightened), of the harsh persecutions that they endured. That occasion would be the persecution that arose against the church when Stephen was slain (Acts 7). "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1).
 - b. The plain implication of his statement teaches that they had been in darkness prior to obeying the gospel (cf. Acts 2:36-47). Some of them were about to return to the spiritual darkness of their former days, while they were serving the Law.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:12-13: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

- 5) 1 John 1:5-10: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- c. This epistle was written shortly before 70 A.D., when the Romans destroyed the temple and scattered the Jews. Think of their spiritual and physical condition if they had returned to Judaism, only to have the very vestiges of the entire system destroyed from the earth!
- d. The gospel reveals many things that are otherwise unknown to humanity.
- 1) The kind of life we are required to live.
 - 2) The penalty for sin.
 - 3) What sin is.
 - 4) How to get rid of the guilt of sin.
 - 5) The Second Coming of Christ.
 - 6) The Judgment in which all humanity will be judged.
 - 7) Eternity.
 - 8) Heaven.
 - 9) Hell.
2. Verse 33: "Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used."
- a. They had bravely and faithfully withstood those earlier persecutions. He reminds them of this. They had gone through too much to give up now.
- b. By **gazing-stock** he refers to their having been exposed to public abuse and ridicule. This was one common feature of persecution.
- 1) Acts 19:29: "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 4:9: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."
 - 3) "Speaking of these barbarous exhibitions, Seneca says in his seventh epistle: 'In the morning men are exposed to lions and bears; at midday, to their spectators. Those that kill are opposed to one another; and the victor is detained for another slaughter. The conclusion of the fight is death'" (Milligan, p.289).
- c. The apostles speaks of **reproaches** they had suffered. Reproaches include scornful words, slurs, insults, lies, and curses (Coffman, p.246).
- d. Even when they were not picked out to endure such things, they befriended those who were made to suffer. "The particular thing the author stressed is that they had not merely endured such things but willingly identified themselves with any of their brethren thus treated, befriending them, accompany-ing them, and sharing their reproaches" (Coffman, p.246).
3. Verse 34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." "For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of you possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one" (ASV).
- a. Notice the difference in the reading of the King James and the American Standard. The evidence for the reading of the King James includes the Sinaiticus and several other valuable manuscripts (Milligan). We have excellent reason to accept this reading.

- b. They had compassion with the writer “in his bonds.” This expression is used in the New Testament only of the apostle Paul. His imprisonment was to the Lord’s glory and to Paul’s credit.
- 1) 2 Timothy 1:8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 1:16: "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain."
- c. They happily accepted the spoiling of their goods. They did not allow themselves to be embittered over the loss of their property; they accepted it without complaint. When a Jew obeyed the gospel, he might be disinherited, become an outcast, lose his property, become destitute. But they gloried in this, for it showed they were pleasing to God. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5:41-42).
- d. They lost their property, but they had a better and more enduring substance in heaven.
- 1) Matthew 5:12: "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
 - 4) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 8:9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 12:9: "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."
 - 7) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
4. Verses 35-36: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”
- a. He had previously mentioned boldness (verse 22); here he calls on them to retain that confidence, which has great recompense of reward. This spiritual quality pays rich dividends in heaven, and makes for a happier, more contented life on earth. The immediate benefit is peace of mind, and eternal life in heaven in eternity.
 - 1) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
 - 2) Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (ASV).
 - b. “There seems to be an allusion here to the conduct of weak and cowardly soldiers, who in the day of battle were wont to throw aside their shields and turn their backs on the enemy. This was regarded by the ancients as extremely dishonorable....In allusion to this very prevalent feeling among the ancients, our author exhorts his Hebrew brethren not to act the part of cowardly soldiers by voluntarily casting away the shield of faith, or rather of that holy and joyful confidence...which faith inspires in the soul; but to quit themselves like men...” (Milligan, p.291).

- c. "One of the hardest things for the fleshly mind to realize is that the victory of faith is not achieved by one brilliant campaign but by a lifetime of patient and faithful service. It is not so much the glory of a promising start that the Lord desires as it is the glory of a faithful finish" (Coffman, p.247). If we could win the crown of life with one swift, early triumph (in one battle), many would go to heaven. But because the struggle usually covers many years of many kinds of trials, a large number grow weary and fail.
- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) Galatians 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
- d. The brethren were told that they needed patience so that they might do the will of God, and thus that they might receive the promise. A faithful life to the finish is imperative; a Christian cannot afford to give up short of the goal.
- 1) Jeremiah 12:5: "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and *if* in the land of peace, *wherein* thou trustedst, *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:1-4: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."
 - 4) Luke 21:19: "In your patience possess ye your souls."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 6) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
5. Verse 37: "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."
- a. To what coming does the apostle refer? Nearly two thousand years have passed since the statement was recorded, so obviously the reference is not to the Second Coming. Two millenniums could not be construed as "a little while!"
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- b. The “day approaching” mentioned in verse twenty-five is the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This statement, which is in the same context, fits admirably with that “coming” of Christ. Our Lord described the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24:3-35; verse 30 speaks of this great event as a coming of the Son of man. When the disciples saw the fulfillment of his predictions, they would know that Christ was behind these events, and that he was present representatively in the events.
 - c. The verse is a partial quotation of Habakkuk 2:3: "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." The vision revealed events that would unfold in the future, at an appointed time of God's choosing. Because the vision would not be immediately fulfilled, it was to be recorded in written form. The events predicted were hastening to be fulfilled, but would not instantly come. Habakkuk is cautioned, that although they would not appear soon, they would surely be done. The amount of time that passes before the fulfillment of a God-given promise or threat does not weaken it (cf. 2 Pet. 3:1-10). The punishment of Paul's reference is almost certainly that in connection with the Roman invasion and overthrow of Judaism in 70 A.D. The point in both passages is that God would certainly execute his purposes at the appointed time.
 - d. No inspired apostle or prophet of the first century ever taught that Christ's Second Coming was to occur in the lifetime of those then living. Paul emphatically showed in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the Lord's return would not be until some time after the great apostasy, which he discussed in the context. Even Christ did not know when the end of time would be (Mark 13:32-33). Men speak of the Lord tarrying (delaying) his second coming; this is not an accurate statement. He is not overdue. He will appear at the appointed time; he will return; he will not delay his coming. Paul's point in the text is to show that Judaism was nearing its end; it had already been replaced as God's system by the gospel; it would be physically removed when the Lord brought the Romans into the land to destroy the main vestiges of the system (i.e., the temple, Jerusalem, and the priesthood).
 - e. When Jerusalem fell to the Romans in 70 A.D., great obstacles were removed from before the church, giving the saints an open field to evangelize the Gentile world. The Gentiles would be able to see the distinctions between Christianity and Judaism. The organized persecution of Christians by the Jews would cease. This great debacle fits the context, which urges them to continue faithfully, and in a little while, relief would be given.
6. Verses 38-39: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”
- a. Those who are righteous (just), live by faith. We live by faith if our life is ordered by the word of God. Faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17); to live by faith is to live in harmony with the word of God.
 - b. If a righteous person, who has been living by faith, draws back, God will have no pleasure in him. That is, if a righteous man ceases to live in obedience to God's word, God ceases to be pleased with him. If God is displeased with a man, that man has invited the wrath of God. The individual denoted is one who has been brought nigh unto God (Eph. 2:12-13; Heb. 10:22), but has pulled back from the Almighty. This passage plainly and forcefully teaches that a Christian can fall from the grace (favor) of God.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:11-13: “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”
 - 2) Hebrews 10:22: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”
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- c. Paul affirms his conviction that we (he and they) were not of those who would draw back (cf. Heb. 6:9-10). He has reason to believe that they would remain faithful. He states that those who draw back, draw back unto perdition. "Perdition" is from *apoleia* ("destruction"); the term means loss of well-being, not loss of being (Vine, Vol. 1, p.303). The word is also used in Matthew 10:28 (cf. Luke 12:4-5).
- 1) 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."
 - 2) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
- d. The apostle expresses his confidence that they were of the number who believe to the saving of the soul. The word "to" is from the Greek term *eis*, which means "unto" or "in order to." Paul is saying that the individual must continue to believe in order to obtain the eternal salvation of his soul. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:3-11).
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HEBREWS 11

A. Hebrews 11:1-7: Faith from Abel to Noah.

1. Verse 1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
 - a. This chapter is the greatest treatise on the subject of faith ever written. The first verse begins the dissertation by giving a statement about the nature of faith. We are told what faith is and what it does. Elsewhere, we are shown that faith is produced by the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Acts 15:7) and are taught to walk, not by sight, but by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).
 - b. In the text, the apostle affirms that faith is the ground (the confidence and substance) of things for which we hope. The word translated "substance" ("assurance"—ASV) "has several shades of meaning, including the thought of *ground* that stands under a proposition; also, it means the *actual substance* as contrasted with the mere vision of a thing, this latter connotation making the passage mean that faith in the believer's soul actually brings reality into his existence, conveying the thought of an earnest, or pledge, of ultimate fulfillment" (Coffman, pp.249f).
 - c. Our English word *substance* is comprised of two words: **sub**, which means *under*, and **stance**, which means *to stand*, thus giving the meaning "to stand under, to support." This same meaning is found in the Greek term. Faith, therefore, stands under and lends support to those things we hope to obtain. These things we hope for include everything that comprises our inheritance.
 - d. Faith is the evidence (conviction) of things not seen. The source of information we have about the future and eternity is God's word. He inhabits eternity, and is able to view the past, present, and future with perfect knowledge. When God speaks regarding the events at the end of time, he speaks with absolute knowledge; because we have learned that his word is entirely correct and trustworthy, we accept what he says as the end of all controversy.
 - 1) Faith "is to the Christian what a demonstration is to the mathematician: it gives confidence with respect to whatever is promised; and it begets conviction with respect to the truth of whatever is affirmed" (Milligan, p.300).
 - 2) God's word states that Christ will return to earth with his mighty angels (1 Th. 4:16; 2 Th. 1:7,8); he will then raise all the dead (John 5:28,29); he will change the living (1 Cor. 15:51, 52); he will bring all humanity into the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-32; Rom. 14:10-12); an eternal destiny will be assigned to each individual (2 Cor. 5:10). In connection with his return, Christ will destroy the earth and the universe (2 Pet. 3:10,11). Our faith in the truthfulness of God's word produces the conviction that these unseen things will be done.
 - e. Johnson gives these comments on the verse: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for. The old meaning of "substance," as well as of "hupostasis," the Greek word here used is "stand under," that is, to be a foundation. Faith is the foundation on which all our hopes for the future are built. The evidence of things not seen. Rather, the conviction or persuasion of things not seen. Without faith we would be limited to the very narrow world comprehended by the senses (PNT).
 - f. Robertson gives this note:
 - 1) Now faith is *estin* (NT:2076) *de* (NT:1161) *pistis* (NT:4102). He has just said that "we are of faith" (Heb 10:39), not of apostasy. Now he proceeds in a chapter of great eloquence and passion to illustrate his point by a recital of the heroes of faith whose example should spur them to like loyalty now.
 - 2) The assurance of things hoped for *elpizomoon* (NT:1679) *hupostasis* (NT:5287). *Hupostasis* (NT:5287) is a very common word from Aristotle on and comes from [*hufisteemi*] *hupo* (NT:5259), under, *histeemi* (NT:2476), intransitive), what stands under anything (a building, a contract, a promise)]. See the philosophical use of it in Heb 1:3, the sense of assurance (*une assurance certaine*, Menegoz) in Heb. 3:14, that steadiness of mind which holds one firm (2 Cor 9:4). It is common in the papyri in business documents as the basis or guarantee of

- transactions. "And as this is the essential meaning in Heb. 11:1 we venture to suggest the translation 'Faith is the title-deed of things hoped for'" (Moulton and Milligan, Vocabulary, etc.).
- 3) The proving of things not seen *pragmatōon* (NT:4229) *elegchos* (NT:1650) *ou* (NT:3756) *blepomēnoon* (NT:991). The only New Testament example of *elegchos* (NT:1650) (except *Textus Receptus* in 2 Tim. 3:16 for *elegmon* (NT:1648). An old and common word from *elegchoo* (NT:1651) (Matt. 18:15) for "proof" and then for "conviction." Both uses occur in the papyri and either makes sense here, perhaps "conviction" suiting better though not in the older Greek. [Electronic Database. Copyright ©) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright ©) 1985 by Broadman Press].
2. Verse 2: "For by it the elders obtained a good report."
- a. Having introduced the subject of faith, the apostle immediately begins to illustrate and establish the significance of faith. Numerous examples of men and women who possessed faith are presented to view, to show what faith is and what it does, and how it may be identified.
 - b. The people of God in ancient days obtained a good report by their faith. It was from God that these great ones gained this approval. It is by faith that anyone may obtain the favor of God; without faith it is impossible to please God (verse 6).
3. Verse 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."
- a. No man was present when the universe and the earth were created. Our only means of knowing how the world came into being is to accept God's explanation. Faith in God's written record assures us that God created the universe at the beginning of time; faith in the writers of American history assures us that George Washington was our first president, that there was a war between the states in 1861-1865, and thousands of other realities. None of us was there to see Washington inaugurated, but we have every reason to believe and know that he occupied that office.
 - b. Paul affirms the fact that God brought the worlds into existence, creating them out of nothing. It has been established by scientific investigation that matter is not eternal, that there was a time when nothing material existed. It has also been verified that the universe is winding down and wearing out; there will come a time when the sun will be burned out (if time continues indefinitely). Matter cannot create itself; it had a beginning; only God could have brought it into existence. He brought it into existence from nothing.
 - c. Milligan shows that Thales taught that God made all things from water or chaos; Plato asserted that God, matter, and ideas are all eternal; Aristotle maintained that matter is eternal and that nothing can come from nothing. But Genesis 1:1 is entirely scientific when it speaks of the universe coming into existence by the supernatural activities of God. The apostle in our text makes a similar affirmation. The only possible way to explain the existence of matter and the universe is to attribute these to God, who created it all from nothing.
 - 1) Psalms 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."
 - 2) Genesis 1:1-4: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15-17: "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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

- d. We would live in a very limited world if all we could know about was perceived by our five senses. Faith opens up an entire other world of knowledge. Thus, we know the origin of the world, where we came from, where we will be in eternity, and the fact of the resurrection and Judgment.
4. Verse 4: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."
 - a. The Old Testament record of Abel and his brother Cain is found in Genesis 4:1-15. Abel's example is elicited by the apostle as a demonstration of what faith is and what it does. Notice the absence here of any reference to Adam and Eve. The most significant event in their lives, in the inspired Record, is their disobedience, a demonstration of the absence of faith. Their sinful actions were much too dreadful to allow them to be used as examples of faith.
 - b. Genesis 4:3-5: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."
 - c. The pattern for the examples Paul used in the chapter is set in this passage: By faith Abel offered. In the cases which follow, faith is specified and the act of obedience is named. Faith produced the action; if the action had not been forthcoming, there would have been no faith. Because Abel had faith, he offered the sacrifice that pleased God (he thus obtained the good report).
 - d. Since faith is produced by God's word, and since Abel offered the sacrifice by faith, it follows that God had told him (and his brother) what kind of sacrifice to offer, giving all the necessary details. His sacrifice was not necessarily of greater monetary value than Cain's, but it was by faith. Cain made a substitution, which caused his sacrifice to be rejected. Abel's was *more excellent* because it was offered by faith, *i.e.*, in accordance with God's will.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 15:22: "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams."
 - 2) Proverbs 15:8: "The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright *is* his delight." The most expensive and elaborate offering by an ungodly man will not be accepted by the Lord, while the most humble offering by a sincere man is delightful to the Almighty.
 - e. By offering a sacrifice that was a demonstration of obedient faith, Abel obtained the testimony that he was righteous. God bore witness to Abel's righteousness through the favorable reports of his faithful worship in the inspired record. There may have been some open acknowledgment on the occasion of the sacrifice.
 - f. By his faithful act of sincere worship, Abel still speaks, even though he has been dead for untold centuries. He speaks by means of the Biblical references to his obedience. "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). The following points were gleaned from Coffman (pp.255-259).
 - 1) God takes notice of injustices done against the innocent, and will settle accounts in his own good time and way. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12:19; cf. John 5:28-29). Abel is now spoken of as an outstanding man of faith, blessed and exalted by the Lord, but Cain is known as a murderer.
 - 2) God has appointed a day in which he will settle all accounts. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Cain's descendants were slain in the Great Flood.
 - 3) The blood of Abel also says that the righteous are hated without cause. "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, *who* was of

- that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:11-14).
- 4) The blood of Abel says that it does make a difference how we worship God. There is no reason for anyone to think that Cain was insincere in his worship; all we can know is that Abel offered his sacrifice by faith, with the distinct implication that Cain did not offer his by faith. We cannot know that Cain was insincere. Acceptable worship must be sincere (in spirit), in truth (in harmony with God's word), and directed to God. Sincerity does not guarantee that an act of worship will be accepted.
 - a) John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - b) Mark 7:7: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."
 - c) Acts 17:24-25: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."
 - d) Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."
 - e) 2 John 1:9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - f) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - g) Matthew 15:6: "And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."
 - 5) Abel's story teaches that faith is the key to acceptable worship (Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). No religious tenet or practice is acceptable to God unless it is authorized (Col. 3:17).
 - a) Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - c) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 6) The only righteousness is found in obeying God.
 - a) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness."
 - b) Matthew 3:15: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him."
 - c) Luke 1:6: "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."
 - d) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - e) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - f) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For
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- therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
- g) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - h) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
- g. Living by faith entails the following negatives:
- 1) It is not by sight: "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).
 - 2) It is not by feelings: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).
 - 3) It is not by physical desires and pleasures.
 - a) Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."
 - b) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 4) Not by human traditions: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:13-15; cf. Mark 7:1-13).
 - 5) Not by popular practices or opinions.
 - a) Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment."
 - b) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 6) Not by ancestral customs: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18).
5. Verse 5: "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."
- a. Other passages speak about Enoch:
 - 1) Genesis 5:24: "And Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him."
 - 2) Jude 14: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."
 - b. The rule is that each human being is to experience physical death once (Heb. 9:27). There were only two exceptions given in the Bible. Enoch was the first. Elijah was the other. "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11).
 - c. Enoch lived by faith, and on that account, was translated into eternity that he should not experience death. The account in Genesis 5:24 only says that God took Enoch, but here we are told that God translated him from earth into eternity. In the Genesis account we are told that Enoch walked with God; here we are told that he lived by faith.
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- d. The translation of Enoch was done privately. His friends and family searched for him, but he could not be found. It may have been the case that they lived through the rest of their lives without knowing what had become of Enoch. But the Bible tells what happened to him. Elijah was carried into eternity (2 Kings 2:11), with Elisha being the only witness. Fifty men searched for Elijah for three days, but found no trace of him (2 Kings 2:17). To walk with God is to live by faith.
 - e. Prior to Enoch's translation, God had testified that he was pleasing to the Almighty. Our text says that he lived by faith. Although we are not told what instructions God had given Enoch, we know that, since he walked by faith, that he lived in obedience to God's will.
 - f. Heaven is not a place prepared for the human physical body; it is the home of the soul. Before we can enter heaven, it is necessary that we be given a spiritual body. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15:50-53).
 - 1) At the return of Christ, all the dead will be raised incorruptible and the living will be changed instantly; each is to have a spiritual body that is not subject to aging or any other physical infirmity.
 - 2) It follows, therefore, that both Enoch and Elijah were changed into spiritual bodies in order to enter eternity. Did they go into heaven or into the hades realm? Elijah was carried into heaven, which may simply mean into the heavens, without any reference to the exact destination. It seems likely, since everyone, including Enoch and Elijah, are to stand before Christ in the final Judgment, that they went into the Paradise of the hades realm: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). It would not be reasonable to have saved individuals go into heaven, to enjoy the eternal reward, only to be resurrected at the last day and brought before the Judgment; in the case of these two men, they would be taken from heaven to stand in the Judgment, and then returned to heaven. However, these are not matters over which we should be divided or unduly concerned.
6. Verse 6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
- a. We are here told of the impossibility of pleasing God without faith. A plain, direct statement is affirmed giving that truth. If anyone wants to enjoy the good pleasure of God, he must have faith. To be pleasing to God is equivalent to having his favor; and having his favor is to have the benefits of his grace.
 - 1) [Note from *The Patriot Post*, June 27, 2008: "A new survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life came up with some interesting figures when asking whether people believe in God. The sad fact is, the number among Christians was not 100 percent, but was anywhere from 99 percent for evangelical and black churches to 97 percent for Catholic and Mainline Protestant churches. The numbers for other monotheistic religions were even lower—83 percent of Jews believe in God compared to 92 percent of Muslims. That left us wondering, isn't the whole *point* of these religions that there is a God? But even that's not what left us completely puzzled. Among self-described atheists, an astounding 21 percent actually believe there *is* a God. Twelve percent believe in heaven and 10 percent pray at least once a week. So, are these folks really atheists? Apparently, the next step is to set up a church for God-believing atheists to gather for fellowship"].
 - 2) The preceding verse (Heb. 11:5) states that Enoch was pleasing to God; he pleased God because he walked with God; he walked with God because he believed and obeyed the will of God. Since he possessed this great standing with the Almighty, Enoch was hugely blessed by God.
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- b. Anyone who will ponder the matter will come to see the importance of being pleasing to God. God exists; he is all-powerful, all-knowing, and is not limited by time and distance. The evidence for the existence of God is so powerful and plentiful, that it is overwhelming! A few of the reasons for believing in God are as follow:
- 1) The universe with its stars, planets and life are manifest. From where did they come? How did they get here? If there is no God, nothing would exist, for matter is manifestly not eternal. Only one possible explanation is available: God. "For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God" (Heb. 3:4). This is known as the *Causal Argument*.
 - 2) The universe and the earth manifest undeniable evidences of design; where there is design, there must be a designer. All around us are myriads of examples of intelligent planning and design. An orderly universe demands a perfect source. Design is seen in the delicate balance of nature; the position of the earth with reference to the sun; the moon's position in reference to the earth.
 - 3) Statements in the Bible, which can be shown to be inspired, form a compelling argument for the existence of God. The Bible shows undeniable evidences of inspiration; the Bible says there is a God in heaven; therefore, God exists.
 - a) Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."
 - b) Psalms 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."
 - c) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - d) Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - 4) The Bible makes statements about scientific, medical, geographical, topographical, and historical subjects that can be explained only on the basis of it being inspired.
- c. To have the favor of God, one must believe in the existence of God. This is manifest. If we believe in God, and desire his favor, it is necessary that we acknowledge his ability to confer blessings. There would be no purpose to believing in God if he is unable to assist us in some way.
- 1) Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - 2) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, ho are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- d. God's blessings are reserved for those who *diligently seek him*. His material blessings are provided generally for all men in nature (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:17; 1 Tim. 4:10). His spiritual blessings are given only to his own people (Eph. 1:3).
- 1) Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - 2) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:10: "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the

- living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”
- 4) James 1:17: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
 - 5) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
- e. He requires that we seek after him; he does not speak to anyone directly from heaven, identifying himself and revealing his will.
- 1) He took the necessary action in the long ago to provide for the salvation of any person who desires it; the Bible is the product of those actions.
 - a) Hebrews 1:1-4: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”
 - b) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
 - c) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
 - 2) He has provided sufficient evidence of his existence in nature and in the Bible to convince any honest seeker. But we must seek! "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:27).
- f. Diligence is required if we are to seek after God successfully.
- 1) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
7. Verse 7: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”
- a. As with all of the cases used in the chapter, Noah operated by faith. God provided a revelation of
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important information to Noah; the patriarch believed him and took the appropriate action. "All human motivation classifies under the three headings of love, hope of reward, and fear; and significantly, *all three* are summoned in the sacred scriptures to urge and persuade men to obey the Lord" (Coffman, p.262).

- 1) Exodus 34:7: "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man."
 - 3) Luke 12:5: "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 4) Psalms 7:11: "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day."
 - 5) Revelation 2:10: "...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 6) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - 7) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
- b. Noah was warned ahead of time about the flood God intended to bring upon the earth. The warning came about 120 years before the flood was sent. This would give Noah and his sons ample time to construct the ark, and issue the warning to the sinful members of human society. It is remarkable that Noah believed the warning, since no such flood had ever come upon the earth before. But he had good reason to believe God, for the Scriptures declare that he found grace in God's sight, and walked with God. God spoke directly to Noah, which offered first-hand proof to him of the reality of the coming flood.
- c. The faith of Noah is seen in the godly fear he experienced on receiving the revelation, and in more concrete terms when he prepared the ark. The absolute emptiness of faith alone is demonstrated in the response of Noah to the warning. If he had claimed to believe, but took no action toward building the ark, he would have been drowned along with the rest of the disobedient. Faith operates on the principle of action; if faith exists, it does what is required.
- 1) Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."
 - 2) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - 3) James 2:24: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."
- d. Noah constructed the ark to the saving of his family. There were blessings involved in obedience. The saving of the lives of his wife and sons and the wives of the sons was the direct result of his obedience.
- 1) He also spent as much as 120 years, while the ark was under construction, trying to get others to obey. "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet. 2:5).
 - 2) Although only the members of his own immediate family believed his message, he was just as faithful as Peter was in Acts two; the fact that there were three thousand who believed the message of Peter, while only seven others believed Noah, was not determined by the preacher, but by the condition of the audience.
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:18-21: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,

- wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The Holy Spirit assisted Noah in the proclamation of his message; representatively, Christ was present with the Holy Spirit as he guided Noah in his preaching; at the time Peter penned these words, those people were in prison (the hadean realm); but they were very much alive on the earth when the preaching was done to them.
- e. By his faithfulness, Noah condemned the world. As he preached the message of righteousness, Noah exposed the sinful condition of those who inhabited the world at that time. His own godly conduct condemned their ungodly lives.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 2:15-16: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?"
 - 2) Philippians 2:15: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:12: "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."
 - f. By his faithfulness, Noah became heir of the righteousness which comes by faith. He received the reward God graciously gives his people, a reward that no man can earn by his own goodness. His faith is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that the impending flood was so far in the future when he was first given warning, that there was no sign of the flood apparent in nature, that the experience of mankind knew nothing of such a flood throughout their history, and the wicked would have heaped great scorn on him when he preached and while he built the ark.
 - g. Noah's salvation is typical of ours: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:20-21).
 - 1) He was delivered from the old into the new world: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).
 - 2) His deliverance depended on an obedient faith.
 - a) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - b) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - 3) It was accomplished through water.
 - a) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - b) Ephesians 5:26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."
 - c) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) The same water that saved Noah destroyed the disobedient. The waters of the Red Sea delivered Israel from Egypt and destroyed the Egyptian army. Baptism is the dividing line between the lost and the saved today (Mark 16:16).
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- 5) Entering the ark separated Noah from the old way of life and the new way of life: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4).
- 6) After the experience of the ark, Noah lived under the Rainbow Promise (Gen. 9:13); we have certain blessings and advantages after our passage through the waters of baptism that were not ours before that act of obedience (Gal. 3:27; Eph. 1:3; 1 Pet. 2:5,9).
 - a) Genesis 9:13-17: “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”
 - b) Galatians 3:27: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
 - c) Ephesians 1:3: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”
 - d) 1 Peter 2:5, 9: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”
- 7) Noah built the first recorded altar after his experience on the ark (Gen. 8:20); after we pass through the waters of baptism, we are privileged to offer spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).
- 8) Noah was still under probation after his ark experience; we are under probation after we pass through the waters of baptism.
 - a) Revelation 2:10: “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”
 - b) 1 Corinthians 9:27: “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”
 - c) 1 Corinthians 10:12-13: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. 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.”
- h. There are certain similarities and analogies between Noah’s ark and the church of Christ.
 - 1) Both were built by God’s specifications.
 - 2) Only one of each was built (Eph. 1:22-23; Matt. 16:18).
 - 3) God closed and opened the door (Rev. 3:7).
 - 4) Safety is found only inside (Eph. 5:23).
 - 5) The faithful within are delivered; all on the outside are lost (Rom. 5:8-9; Eph. 5:26-27,23).
 - 6) Only one source of light in each (on the ark, the one window; in the church, the word of God: Ps. 119:105; 2 Cor. 4:3-4).
 - 7) God’s protection is offered only to those within.

B. Hebrews 11:8-22: Faith Demonstrated, From Abraham to Joseph.

1. Verses 8-10: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob,

the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.”

- a. Abraham’s call is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
- b. Abraham obeyed the call God issued to him, leaving his home in Ur of the Chaldees, traveling by way of the Fertile Crescent toward a destination he did not know at the time. He was willing to trust God to lead him safely to the place he intended for him to occupy. This called for a great deal of faith in God’s promises, for he had to leave a well-established, permanent home, separate from his relatives and friends, and depend on God to guide and protect him.
- c. The city of Ur of the Chaldees was a highly developed and prosperous locality even in those ancient days.
 - 1) UR: Place name meaning, “fire oven.” An ancient city in lower Mesopotamia that is mentioned in the Bible as Abraham’s birthplace. Ur, Kish, and Uruk were three important population centers in Sumerian and Babylonian civilization. Abraham’s family home is alluded to in Genesis 12:1 and Acts 7:2. The site associated with Ur is located in present-day Iraq, in the lower eastern portion of the Fertile Crescent. It is identified with tell el-Muqayyar some 350 km (220 mi) southeast of Baghdad. The site is an oval shape and had harbor facilities on the Euphrates River, until its course shifted twelve miles east from the city’s western limit. With the river’s shift, the city lost both its population and prominence. Other sites have been proposed for the biblical Ur, such as Urartu (Turkey) or Urfa (northwest of Haran). Occupation of tell el-Muqayyar began about 4000 B.C. and was important in Sumerian, Babylonian, and neo-Babylonian cultures. The third dynasty of Ur was its most prosperous and highly developed period. Important remains discovered were a ziggurat (a three stage, stepped pyramid) and royal tombs. This Sumerian site is most probably to be identified as Abraham’s city of origin. Yet, as with most identifications, such can be questioned. [Holman, David M. Fleming].
 - 2) “The royal tombs of Ur, dating to about 2500 B.C., produced a collection of magnificent golden vessels which are still the delight and wonderment of the students of the ancient world. Ur was a town with a complex system of government and a well-developed system of commerce, one with writing in common use for the issue of receipts, the making of contracts, and many other purposes. There were town drains, streets, two-storied houses, a great temple tower (ziggurat), trade routes joining the town with other great towns to the north and the south, and various other evidences of a highly developed civilization” (J.A. Thompson, pp.15f).
 - 3) “It is now evident that Ur was not a primitive city in the days of the patriarchs. As one of the important Sumerian cities it possessed an elaborate system of writing, advanced means of mathematical calculations, religious records, refined specimens of art, a school system, and much else that modern man equates with civilization and refinement” (Pheiffer, p.55).
- d. By faith Abraham left his homeland; by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, not actually possessing it as his own. Instead, he lived in tents, as did his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob. They lived in the land, but abode there as strangers; they were not able to construct permanent houses there.
 - 1) The only real estate Abraham owned in Canaan was the cave of Machpelah and the field that pertained to it, property he bought from Ephron the Hittite to use as a burying place for his beloved Sarah (Gen. 23).
 - 2) He personally had no inheritance in Canaan, except in promise. "And he gave him none

- inheritance in it, no, not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child" (Acts 7:5).
- e. Abraham was truly one of the world's greatest men. The Bible pays several tributes to him, by the descriptions it gives of him.
 - 1) He is called the father of the faithful. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29).
 - 2) He is called the friend of God. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (Jas. 2:23).
 - 3) Three great religions claim a connection with Abraham: Judaism; Islam; Christianity. The number of these in the aggregate amount to about half of the world's population.
 - f. He looked for a permanent city, one with lasting foundations, which was constructed by Jehovah. This statement attests to Abraham's belief in eternal life, in the spiritual city of Heaven. God is the builder and maker of heaven; he is both the architect and builder.
 - 1) "This is given by the Apostle as the reason why Abraham was satisfied to live as a stranger and sojourner in Canaan...From this and other like passages we are constrained to think that God had given to the patriarchs information with regard to the heavenly country far beyond what is now recorded in Genesis or any other part of the Old Testament" (Milligan, p.308).
 - 2) He understood, as do we, that "...here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. 13:14). Obviously, he knew more than is recorded in the book of Genesis.
 - g. Heaven (not the earth) is the home of the soul.
 - 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 3) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - 4) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
 - 5) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - 6) Colossians 3:1-3: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
 - 7) Hebrews 6:19: "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."
 - 8) 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
 2. Verses 11-12: "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as
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the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.”

- a. By faith, Sarah, the aged wife of Abraham, received strength to conceive and bear a son. God had given Abraham the promise that he would have a great number of descendants, but for many years he did not even have a son. The fact that Sarah was barren for most of her life was in itself a test of faith for both Abraham and Sarah. Sarah concocted a plan by which a son might be produced by Abraham through Hagar, her servant. But Ishmael, born to this union, was not the son intended.
 - b. In Genesis 18, Abraham and Sarah were visited by three heavenly beings in human form. They promised Sarah that she would have a son; she laughed within herself at this news. The Lord spoke about her laughter, indicating his supernatural knowledge; this gave Sarah reason to believe. She was about 90 years old at the time (Gen. 17:17).
 - c. From Abraham, therefore, a child was conceived by Sarah, which resulted ultimately in the development of a great number of descendants. When the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael are considered, the progeny of that grand old patriarch is great indeed, as numerous as the sand on the seashore and stars in the sky. This depiction is, of course, a figure of speech. This information would give great encouragement to the Jewish Christians, urging them to remain loyal and be blessed, just as Abraham and Sarah remained faithful and were blessed.
 - d. Abraham was 75 when he came to Canaan (Gen. 12:4); he was 100 when Isaac was born; he died at the age of 175, after sojourning in Canaan for a century (Gen. 25:7).
3. Verses 13-16: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”
- a. All of these [Abraham, Sarah, Isaac] died in faith. None of these received possession of the land. God told Abraham that it would be given to his descendants, after they had been afflicted in some strange land for 400 years. By this time, the Amorites in Canaan would have filled their cup of iniquity. "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full" (Gen. 15:13-16).
 - b. The fact that they did not personally receive possession of Canaan did not deter their faith. They continued to believe and obey God’s will to their death. The great promises offered were not fulfilled in their lifetime, but they saw those promises “afar off.” They believed God would provide everything he had promised, and were satisfied.
 - 1) John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad."
 - 2) Galatians 3:8: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed."
 - c. They acknowledged that they were pilgrims and strangers on earth, and placed their trust in God to receive the eternal inheritance intended for the faithful. Having this disposition of heart, they plainly declared that they anticipated entering a much better country. The Jewish Christians being addressed, as well as Christians today, are to imitate their example.
 - 1) Matthew 20:8: "So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first."
 - 2) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

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- 3) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - d. If their aim had been to possess a place on earth, they could have returned to Ur of the Chaldees, to enjoy the great advantages that advanced civilization could provide. It is likely that they could have found an opportunity to return there. They were all volunteers. God did not force Abraham to leave Ur; he did not force him to remain in Canaan.
 - 1) It was to their advantage, however, to stay in the land of promise, for in Ur, idolatry was rampant. Even Abraham's father was an idolater. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods" (Josh. 24:2).
 - 2) Christians are all volunteers; no one is coerced to obey the gospel or to remain faithful. But it is to our advantage to do so, for heaven awaits those who endure to the end.
 - e. They desired a better land, one that was superior to either Chaldea or Canaan; they sought a land that was spiritual, a heavenly land. Because of this, God was not ashamed of them. The implication is that if they had been more worldly-minded, God would have been ashamed of them! How much more so with us, who have been given the full revelation of God's entire plan of the ages, a plan that was not unveiled until Christ had completed his earthly mission, and returned to heaven. We are not to be ashamed of our Lord or his gospel.
 - 1) Mark 8:38: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."
 - 2) Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 1:8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - 5) 1 Peter 4:16: "Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - 6) 1 John 2:28: "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."
 - f. Paul states that God had prepared for Abraham and his spiritual descendants a city, such a city for which the faithful patriarchs looked.
 - 1) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
 4. Verses 17-19: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."
 - a. "Without question, these verses refer to the most astounding demonstration of true faith in God to be found in the entire history of faith. Abraham's faith had already been cited by the author of Hebrews, but in these verses is an even more overwhelming example of it" (Coffman, pp.275f). "The apostle had stated one strong instance of the faith of Abraham, and he now refers to one still
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more remarkable—the strongest illustration of faith, undoubtedly, which has ever been evinced in our world” (Barnes, p.272).

- b. The original report is given in Genesis 22:1-12. An analysis is given of it in James 2:21-24: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Following this test of faith, which the patriarch passed successfully, his faith, although always strong, was now fully mature.
 - c. On the surface, the command for Abraham to go to one of the mountains of Moriah, and offer his son, the son of promise, on an altar there, was a contradiction. God had worked for many years to prepare Abraham to be the father of a great nation; a miraculous effort was required to enable both Abraham and Sarah to produce a child; but now that the child was here, God orders him to sacrifice his son! God never intended for Abraham to complete the sacrifice; he meant this as a test of the great man's faith. The problem Abraham faced was to follow the directions he was given; it was God's part to replace Isaac or raise him back to life again so that the promised descendants could be fulfilled.
 - d. Romans 4:16-21: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."
 - e. From this passage it appears very clear that Abraham believed that God would resurrect Isaac after the offering was completed. He trusted God to do that. There is no indication of any wavering on his part. The journey from home to the place of the intended sacrifice required three days, during which time, many thoughts and doubts could have presented themselves to Abraham's mind. But he maintained his resolve. An ordinary man could have reasoned that what God was demanding was a violation of other principles, and must not be done. Any number of rationalizations might have been engendered in a mind filled with less faith than Abraham's.
 - f. We are not told how old Isaac was at this point. The usual notion is that he was a boy of perhaps twelve years of age. Josephus opined that he was about twenty-five; Adam Clarke thought he was about thirty-three, the age of Jesus at his death (a supposition based on the fact that Isaac was a type of Christ). Various similarities are observable between Isaac and Christ:
 - 1) Each was born as a result of a miracle.
 - 2) Each was the only begotten son of his father. Isaac was Abraham's "only begotten son." He was the only one promised to him; he came through a supernatural act of God in behalf of Abraham and Sarah; he was unique (one of a kind).
 - 3) Each consented to be offered as a sacrifice: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).
 - 4) Each bore wood (Isaac—firewood; Christ—cross).
 - 5) Each was sacrificed by his father.
 - 6) The place where each was sacrificed was the same (mountain of Moriah).
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- 7) Each was in the prime of life.
 - 8) Each was dead for three days (Isaac—figuratively, on the three-day journey; Christ—literally). In Abraham’s mind, he had already committed himself to sacrificing his son, so that when Isaac was spared, it was as though he had been raised from the dead to Abraham.
 - 9) Each loved his bride (Isaac—Rebekah; Christ—the church).
 - g. Abraham was convinced that God would be able to fulfill his promises to him, even though Isaac was slain as a sacrifice. Our text states that Abraham believed that God could resurrect Isaac, if it was necessary in order to fulfill his commitments; he knew God’s promises could not fail.
 - 1) Genesis 17:2: “And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.”
 - 2) Genesis 21:12: “And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”
 - 3) Hebrews 11:18: “Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.”
 - h. In the Genesis account, Abraham told the servant boys that he and Isaac would go and worship, and return: "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (Gen. 22:5). The patriarch viewed himself as being a stranger and pilgrim in the earth; he looked for a spiritual, eternal city; therefore, he believed in the resurrection, as did other Old Testament worthies.
 - 1) Job 14:14: "If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."
 - 2) Job 19:25-27: "For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me."
 - 3) Psalms 16:10: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
 - 4) Daniel 12:2: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt."
 - i. God never approved of human sacrifices. "And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin" (Jer. 32:35). He never intended for Abraham to follow through with the sacrifice; he made this episode a strong test of Abraham’s faith.
 - 1) It tested his faith, and proved God’s wisdom in selecting Abraham to be the father of the nation of Israel, through which the Messiah would enter the world.
 - 2) It taught the awfulness of human sacrifice.
 - 3) It illustrated the terrible cost of redemption.
5. Verse 20: “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”
- a. Isaac did not obtain the prominence equal to that of his father, but he was still a man of great faith. He conferred the patriarchal blessing upon his two sons, Jacob and Esau. The blessing included the conferral of the great promise given to Abraham upon Jacob, the one selected to be the forebear of the Messiah; also he gave to Jacob the birthright of the eldest son. He bestowed a lesser blessing upon Esau. These blessings were accorded to his sons **by faith**. See Genesis 27.
 - b. “At first, the elder seemed to prosper more than his brother Jacob. There were dukes in Edom before there reigned any kings over the children of Israel (Gen. 36:31); and whilst Israel was in bondage in Egypt, Edom was an independent people. But Saul defeated, and David conquered the Edomites (1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:14)....Judas Maccabaeus defeated them frequently (1 Macc. 5; 2 Macc. 10). At length his nephew, Hyrcanus, completely conquered them, and compelled them to
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be circumcised, and incorporated them into the Jewish nation (Joseph. Ant. 13, 9, 1); though finally under Antipater and Herod, they established an Idumean dynasty, which continued till the destruction of the Jewish polity” (Browne, quoted by Milligan, p.316).

6. Verse 21: “By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff.”
 - a. The sons of Joseph were Manasseh and Ephraim, who became the fathers of the tribes bearing their names. The blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim did not occur at the same time as when Jacob worshiped (Gen. 48:1-22 reports this blessing). Jacob conferred these blessings **by faith**.
 - b. We are told in our text that Jacob worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff. Probably, the reference is to Genesis 47:29-31: "And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."
 - 1) Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, from age 130 to age 147. As he saw his end approaching, he began to make final preparations. Having called Joseph to him, he asked him to "put thy hand under my thigh" and pledge that he would not bury him in Egypt. The meaning of this peculiar expression is much debated. This was not the sentimental ravings of an old, foolish man. Jacob was showing that he was fully persuaded that Canaan would be possessed by his descendants just as God had promised. He was still walking by faith (Heb. 11:21). Joseph agreed.
 - 2) Hebrews 11:21 speaks of Jacob blessing the two sons of Joseph and worshiping, leaning upon his staff. This has evoked much discussion, with some scholars thinking that the Hebrews writer or Moses in this text has been miscopied. The difference between the two words (bed and staff) is only in punctuation excluded in the original. Other suggest that it was customary for the staff to be placed at the head of the chief's bed. If this view is so, then both accounts are accurate. Or Paul may be describing another occasion entirely: Hebrews 11:21 in one statement refers to two different events (the blessing and the worshiping). The worship may be different, therefore, from the case in Genesis 47:31.
7. Verse 22: “By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”
 - a. Joseph knew beforehand that the descendants of Jacob (Israel) would leave Egypt, and accordingly gave instruction that his body be taken with them into the land of promise. Among the reasons he knew, was the statement God made to his great-grandfather, Abraham, in Genesis 15:13-14: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."
 - b. The instructions are recorded in Genesis 50:24-26: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."
 - c. The Israelites followed his instruction. "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you" (Ex. 13:19). He would not have given these directions without having a strong faith in God's promise to bring them again into the land of promise.

C. Hebrews 11:23-29: The Faith of Moses.

1. Verse 23: “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw

he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

- a. By the time of Moses's birth, the pharaoh on the throne did not respect the memory of Joseph; his people feared the rapidly growing Israelite slaves; he ordered that all the infant boys were to be slain at birth. Moses' parents bravely disobeyed Pharaoh's wicked command and preserved the life of their goodly son. "And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he *was a goodly child*, she hid him three months" (Ex. 2:2).
 - b. The faith demonstrated was that of his parents, Amram and Jochebed. They were willing to risk discovery by the Egyptians than to allow their goodly child to be slain. Moses became one of the greatest men of all time, but if his parents had possessed less faith, he might have been murdered soon after birth. We can only wonder how many potentially great men and women are being slain annually in our nation by the abortion clinics!
 - c. The daughter of Pharaoh discovered the basket in which Moses had been hidden; she took him to be her son (Exod. 2). Consequently, he was trained in the wisdom and knowledge of the Egyptians, which aided him in accomplishing the great task of leading Israel out of slavery and to Canaan. "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22). The providential hand of God is marvelous indeed!
2. Verses 24-26: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."
- a. Moses operated by faith. When he came to years, he declined to maintain his status as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He might have stood in line to occupy the throne of Egypt, but by renouncing his relationship to the Egyptian royal family, he insured himself a life of trouble and hardship, but obtained a home in heaven. Without faith he would not have made the choices he made, and would not have obtained the blessings he received; and we would have known nothing about him!
 - b. By choosing to maintain his Hebrew heritage, he shared in the afflictions which befell his people. This choice also cut him off from the pleasures of sin, which his Egyptian status made available. He perceived that these sinful pleasures were limited to time, while the blessings that pertained to faith in God would result in eternal rewards. The ascendancy of the wicked is temporary; the glory of the righteous is unending.
 - 1) Job 20:5: "That the triumphing of the wicked *is* short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment?"
 - 2) Psalms 73:12-19: "Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors."
 - 3) Psalms 112:6: "Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."
 - c. The "reproach of Christ" means the kind of reproaches suffered by Christ. Moses was God's lawgiver in the Old Testament; Christ is God's lawgiver in the New Testament. Both suffered great afflictions because they did the will of God. The book of Hebrews exalts Moses, and then shows that Christ is much greater.
 - d. Moses looked forward to the recompense of the reward. "By faith he looked forward to the great and final recompense: the real and abiding pleasures of the heavenly country, and the rest which remains for the people of God. And with his eye fixed on these, he esteemed the reproach of Christ as of more value than all the treasures of Egypt; knowing that our present light afflictions which

are but for a moment, serve to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (Milligan, p.320).

- 1) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
- 2) 2 Corinthians 4:16-17: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory."
- e. God expects his people to refuse those activities, positions, and advantages which are wrong. Moses refused to maintain a position in Egypt's royal family; Daniel refused to contaminate himself by eating the meat provided by the Babylonian king; Christ refused to allow the Jews to install him on the throne in Israel by force (John 6:15).
3. Verse 27: "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."
 - a. Moses' parents did not fear the wrath of Pharaoh when they hid their baby from those who would have slain him; however, they feared him to the extent that they took precautions to insure the life of their infant.
 - b. In the present case, Moses fled from Egypt in order to escape the wrath of Pharaoh over the incident of the slaying of the Egyptian taskmaster. "And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well" (Ex. 2:13-15). This Old Testament passage states that he fled out of fear, but our text says that he did not fear the wrath of the king.
 - 1) Some scholars have asserted that the time when he forsook Egypt was when he led the Israelites out of that country, but that is a strained interpretation at best. The obvious occasion was after he slew the taskmaster, and fled into the wilderness. But if the occasion was when he led Israel out of Egypt, the meaning is that he had grown to the point that he was no longer in fear of the king; that he had been fearful when he fled in Exodus 2:13-15, but not in Exodus 12.
 - 2) The "difficulty" vanishes when we understand his flight had been done, not out of terror, but from a desire to avoid the wrath of the ungodly king. He feared him in the sense that he knew he was in danger, but he was not terrified of him.
 - 3) "But surely he did not fear him any more than did his parents, Amram and Jochebed, when they concealed their child three months, and then committed him to the care and providence of God by exposing him on the brink of the river, in an ark of bulrushes. And yet our author says of them, that 'they were not afraid of the king's commandment' (v. 23). Manifestly, then, the Apostle used the word *fear* in both these instances in a relative sense. Moses and his parents both feared the tyrant, so far that they thought it necessary to use all lawful means for their personal safety, but they did not fear him so far as to disobey God on his account, nor had they any fear that he would ever be able to nullify or set aside the decrees and purposes of God concerning Israel. In this sense, it may be truly said of both Moses and his parents that they did not fear 'the wrath of the king.' And this being so, it is certainly more natural to understand the Apostle as having reference to the flight of Moses into Midian" (Milligan, pp.320f).
 - 4) "The result of Moses' faith in the invisible God was that the king of Egypt no longer inspired him with fear, thus proving that the more men fear God the less they fear any man, however powerful" (Coffman, p.291).
 - c. Moses took leave of Egypt and remained loyal to God as though he could see the invisible God. Paul has made reference several times to those beings and things that are invisible. God brought

the world into being from nothing (11:3); Noah was warned about the flood which was unseen at the time (11:7); Abraham looked for an invisible city (11:10); and here Moses is said to have acted as though he could see God.

- 1) It is difficult for most men to obey God, who cannot be seen; ungodly men live in sin because they cannot see God, and therefore have no fear of him. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11).
 - 2) Later, Moses was given the privilege of seeing a manifestation of God. "And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Ex. 33:20-23).
4. Verse 28: "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."
- a. The Passover was intended to fulfill three great purposes:
 - 1) To memorialize the deliverance of Israel from the death of their firstborn.
 - 2) To teach them the importance of worshiping God according to his will.
 - 3) To serve as a type of the sacrificial death of Christ. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).
 - b. The Passover Israel observed in Egypt (the first time it was observed) included sprinkling blood from the animal chosen by each family on the doorway into the house, on the top and both sides. This would mark the faithful, and God would *pass over* the house where the blood was applied. The details for observing the Passover are given in Exodus 12:1-17.
 - c. Moses responded to God's instructions out of sincere faith; he led the people to do likewise. His faith is commended by the inspired author.
5. Verse 29: "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry *land*: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned."
- a. He further demonstrated faith when he led Israel through the Red Sea, to safety on the other side. Thus, the New Testament places its inspired stamp of approval on this Old Testament story. This event is scoffed at by unbelievers; even those who purport to believe the Bible try to find ways to explain it so as to remove the supernatural element. It cannot be done without repudiating both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, for if one part is shown to be faulty, there is no way we could logically hold on to the rest.
 - b. The Egyptian army, traveling in chariots, were emboldened to pursue Israel through the sea, but when the Israelites were safe on the other side, while the Egyptians were in the midst of the sea, God caused the waters of the sea to return to their normal place, drowning the Egyptians (Exodus 14). Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.
 - c. The fact that the great multitude of Israelites, along with their flocks and herds, passed over the sea during one night, we may figure that the opening through the water was not narrow; it must have been very wide. They crossed the sea bed on dry ground; God moved the water back and dried up the bottom!

D. Hebrews 11:30-40: Other Examples of Faith.

1. Verse 30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days."
 - a. In one of the clearest statements in the Bible, we are told here when faith was rewarded. Israel was told to march around the city of Jericho once a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day; it was when they had completed the last of these circuits of Jericho that the walls of that pagan city collapsed (Joshua 6).
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- b. In the case of Naaman, when he had plunged beneath the waters of Jordan the seventh time, it was then that his leprosy was cleansed. It is when penitent believers are immersed in the waters of baptism that forgiveness of sins becomes reality. There was no inherent power in the waters of Jordan to cure Naaman's leprosy; there is no inherent power in the waters of baptism to remove the guilt of sin; but in each case, the condition God gave must be met before the blessing is given.
- 1) There was no magical power in the water itself to cleanse Naaman's leprosy and there is no magical power in the water in which a penitent believer is immersed to remove guilt from the sinner's soul.
 - 2) But without obedience to God's command, Naaman would not have been cleansed; and without the obedience to God's command regarding the baptism of penitent believers, there is no forgiveness to the alien sinner.
 - 3) If another leper tried to be cleansed by dipping himself in the Jordan River, he would not obtain cleansing for his leprosy [that was a one-time situation, applying only to Naaman]; and one who is immersed in water in play-acting [or one who merely goes through the outward actions] will not have his guilt removed [baptism for the remission of sins applies only to the sincere penitent believer].
2. Verse 31: "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."
- a. The story of Rahab is related in Joshua 2:1-22 and 6:22-25. The first passage reports the visit of the two spies into Jericho, their being concealed by Rahab, and their promise to rescue her and her family from the city. She had heard enough about the experiences of Israel, to know that God had helped them; this information gave her enough faith to protect the spies.
 - b. Joshua 6:22-25: "But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."
 - c. "This is a remarkable instance of faith on the part of a Gentile: a Gentile once dead in trespasses and sins, but who by her strong practical faith in God was not only saved from the common ruin which befell her unbelieving countrymen, but was also raised to a position of honor and distinction in Israel. For though many of the Jews erroneously interpret the word rendered *harlot*...so as to make it signify 'a seller of food' or 'an innkeeper,' they all concede that she became the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz (Matt. 1:5), both of whom stand in the direct line of our Lord's ancestry" (Milligan, p.323).
3. Verse 32: "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets."
- a. The inspired author states that there was not enough time or space for him to give a proper report of the faith of the other great men and women of God, who lived under the former dispensations. He only mentions a few more by name, and in the following verses, speaks in broad terms of some of the things these and others had accomplished—by faith.
 - b. Gideon (Judges 6-9) was empowered by Jehovah to take a small army of 300 hand-picked men and to utterly put to rout the vast army of the Midianites. The story is familiar to every Bible student. Having selected his men by the shrewd method the Lord gave him, he and his men each took a pitcher in which a lighted lamp was concealed, and in the other hand a trumpet; at the sounding of the trumpets, the pitchers were broken and the lights displayed. They were arranged
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on the hills surrounding the Midianite camp, during the hours of darkness. When the Midianites awoke to see three hundred lamps on the hills and to hear the sound of three hundred trumpets, they assumed that they were encircled by a very great host. They were intended to suppose that each light represented a large company of soldiers. They fled; the victory was complete for Israel. But without faith on the part of Gideon and his men, there would have been no victory.

- c. Barak (Judges 4) was the general of Israel's army when Deborah served the nation as judge. Giving the plan provided by the Lord, Deborah advised Barak to take an army to Mount Tabor. Sisera's army would be drawn to him there, and a decisive battle could be fought. The victory of Israel over Sisera was great. Again, faith on the part of Barak was the key ingredient in the triumph. Deborah, of course, also had great faith.
- d. Samson's story is related in Judges 13-16. Using his massive strength against the Philistines, this great man of God won many victories for God's people. Only when he foolishly revealed the secret of his great strength, was the enemy able to subdue him. When his hair was shorn, he lost his great strength, a strength that was not derived from his physical size or his hair. One of the conditions of the Nazaritic vow was the let the hair grow uncut .
 - 1) Numbers 6:1-5: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD: He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk. All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow."
 - 2) Judges 13:5: "For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."
 - 3) But while he remained loyal to his Nazaritic oath, God provided him with tremendous power. The Philistines put out his eyes and made him put on a show for them. He was positioned between the two main supporting pillars of the temple of their god. Praying unto God for strength, his hair having regrown, he was given enough strength to pull down the pillars, causing the great building to collapse, killing a very large number of the enemy. He was killed in the process.
- e. Jephthah (Judges 11-12) was the judge who is remembered for the rash vow he made. However, the story of his service to God also reports faith on his part. Being threatened by the Ammonites, Jephthah asked the Lord for help in defeating this enemy. The victory was granted. One notable statement he made is most significant: "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back" (Judges 11:35).
- f. David's experiences are known by millions. His fight with Goliath is perhaps the best-known episode of his life; in this event (1 Sam. 17), his faith in God is manifest. God spoke of him as "a man after mine own heart" (cf. Acts 13:22); this compliment was made when David was young. He is the only king of Israel named in the list.
- g. Samuel was born as a result of the tearful prayer of a barren woman.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 1:9-11:"So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

- Hannah fulfilled her promise; Samuel served in God's service from his early years. His activities in behalf of God's people are related in 1 Samuel. He was the last of the judges and was a great prophet.
- 2) 1 Samuel 3:20: "And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD." Samuel was a man of great faith.
 - h. The prophets included such great men as Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. There were many others whose names are not given in the Old Testament Scriptures, but whose names are enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life. These were all men and women of great faith.
4. Verses 33-38: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth."
- a. Verse thirty-three lists four great victories accomplished by the faith of those included in the verses above. The writer is not saying that each of these people did each of the items named; he is telling of the various victories won by faith.
 - 1) Some of them subdued kingdoms. Gideon, Samson and David were among those with this great work of faith to their credit.
 - 2) They worked righteousness. This is a general accomplishment which is won by every faithful child of God; all of those in the list have this to their honor.
 - 3) They obtained promises. This blessing came to those who were faithful to their calling, as it is to every faithful Christian. The blessing obtained was not limited to this world, but especially to the eternal realm. Abraham did not obtain personal title to the land of promise, but he aimed for a much higher goal—Heaven (11:10).
 - 4) Some of them stopped the mouths of lions. Samson and Daniel are examples of this accomplishment.
 - a) Judges 14:5-6: "Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done."
 - b) Daniel 6:22: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."
 - b. Verse thirty-four continues the list of the preceding verse.
 - 1) Some of them quenched the violence of fire. The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego illustrates this triumph. When they were thrown into the fiery furnace, they were unscathed. "Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Dan. 3:24-25).
 - 2) Some of them escaped the edge of the sword. No doubt there were many who figure into this case. Certainly, Elijah (1 Kings 19), Elisha (2 Kings 6), and Jeremiah (Jer. 36) are examples.
 - 3) They were made strong even though they were weak in the eyes of men. Gideon described himself as the least of his father's house, which was insignificant in the big picture; but he

- arose to lead Israel in one of its most significant victories. Jephthah was despised by his brothers, but God used him to serve God's people well.
- 4) Some of them grew valiant in battle, forcing armies of the pagans into flight. This statement fits many of God's ancient people, including Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and David.
- c. Verse thirty-five through thirty-seven give additional items.
- 1) Women received their dead to life again. Two notable cases of this in the Old Testament are the widow of Sarepta (1 Kings 17:17-24) and the Shunamite woman (2 Kings 4:18-37).
 - a) 1 Kings 17:17-24: "And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth."
 - b) 2 Kings 4:18-37: "And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, It shall be well. Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee. So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, yonder is that Shunammite: Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her: and the LORD hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child. And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but there was neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and
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stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.”

- 2) Some were tortured, refusing to accept deliverance.
 - a) “The word rendered *tortured*...means properly to stretch and torture upon the *tympanum* ...an instrument of torture in the shape of a large drum or wheel, on which criminals were stretched in order to be beaten to death with sticks and rods. A case of this kind is recorded in 2 Macc. 6:19-29. During the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes, it was decreed among other things that the Jews should abandon their religion, and conform in all respects to the religious customs of the Syrians. Many apostatized from the faith, and many suffered martyrdom. Among these was one of the Jewish scribes, a man about ninety years of age, called Eliazar. He was put to death on the tympanum for refusing to eat swine’s flesh ...Other instances of severe torture by flaying, roasting, etc., are given, in the next chapter (2 Macc. 7)” (Milligan, p.328). Maccabees (I and II) are uninspired literature, but their historical records may be generally accepted as factual. Paul cites a Cretian poet (Tit. 1:12-13), reporting that the statement quoted was accurate, even though it was uninspired.
 - b) The faithfulness of those who were tortured to death resulted in the “better resurrection.” Everyone will be resurrected at the last day, but the righteous will be raised up to enjoy eternal life, while the rest will be raised up to eternal condemnation (John 5:28-29). Some think that the two contrasting resurrections are between those who were raised up by supernatural power during time and the final resurrection at the last day; others think that the contrast is between the resurrection of those who faithfully endured cruel persecution and the deliverance offered to them in this life if they would give up their faith. It seems more likely that the resurrection to eternal life, as opposed to the resurrection to condemnation, is meant: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).
- 3) Some underwent trials of mockings and scourgings, being placed in bonds and imprisoned. Samson’s experiences in the idol’s temple is one such case. Micaiah (1 Kings 22:27), Hanani (2 Chron. 16:10), and Jeremiah (Jer. 22; 32) are other examples.
- 4) Some were stoned. "And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD" (2 Chron. 24:20-22).
- 5) Some were sawn asunder. Milligan reports from the Talmud that Isaiah was sawn asunder at the order of Manasseh, king of Judah. The account says that the prophet was placed between two boards for this dreadful act of brutality. Of Manasseh, Josephus reports: “But when his son Manasseh...had taken the kingdom, he departed from the conduct of his father, and fell into a course of life quite contrary thereto, and showed himself in his manners most wicked in all respects, and omitted no sort of impiety, but imitated those transgressions of the Israelites, by the commission of which against God, they had been destroyed; for he was so hardy as to defile the temple of God, and the city, and the whole country; for by setting out from a contempt of God, he barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflown with blood” (*Antiquities*, Book X, Chapter 3, 1, p.214).
- 6) Some were tempted. Enticements to sin are difficult to endure; they often produce hardship and

- suffering if the individual withstands the temptation. This general problem came upon all those great men and women of faith in the ancient times, and upon all who would serve Christ today. This point is omitted by some translations.
- 7) Some were slain with the sword.
 - a) 1 Kings 19:10: "And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."
 - b) Jeremiah 26:23: "And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people."
 - 8) Some wandered about in animal skins, being destitute, afflicted, and tormented. "Driven away from their homes, like Elijah the Tishbite (1 Kings 17:3-9; 19:3-14), like him they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being 'destitute, afflicted, tormented'" (Milligan, p.331).
 - a) 1 Kings 17:3-9: "Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee."
 - b) 1 Kings 19:3-14: "And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."
 - d. Verse thirty-eight adds a footnote to the preceding thoughts. In a parenthetical statement, the writer affirms that these he has just described were so far above the world that the world did not deserve
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- them. Though they were forced to wander in the deserts and mountains, and took shelter in dens and caves, they were superior to those in softer and more elegant circumstances.
5. Verses 39-40: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
 - a. The faithful ones Paul has discussed all lived prior to the giving of the New Covenant, thus they did not live to enjoy the privileges and glories of the gospel. Their conception of the gospel age was only partial.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:10-12: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."
 - 2) Matthew 13:16-17: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."
 - b. Despite the harsh circumstances under which they lived, and though their knowledge of the eternal plan of God was incomplete, their faith procured for them a good report. Those whose stories are related on the pages of inspiration have that report to their honor; God approved of them despite the hatred ungodly men placed upon them.
 - c. "The 'better thing' here spoken of is evidently the new and better covenant which was established on new and better promises, including all the superior blessings and privileges of the Gospel dispensation. This, the patriarchs saw afar off; for 'Abraham,' says Christ, 'rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad' (John 8:56). But none of them saw it, as we now see it, and as the Hebrews in the time of Paul saw it; for 'I tell you,' says Christ, addressing his disciples, 'that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them' (Luke 10:24)" (Milligan, pp.332f).
 - 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:3-8: "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
 - d. "The ancients while here knew but little, and enjoyed but little of the economy of God's grace. They depended for salvation on what we now see and understand. But nevertheless they persevered in well doing even to the end. And hence it is but reasonable that we should be at least

equally faithful, under like trials and afflictions; seeing that we are now in possession of that 'better thing,' to which they had all to look forward for salvation. The phrase '*without us*' may therefore be taken as equivalent to *without the religion which through Christ we now we actually enjoy*. For Christ himself is the essential bond of union which binds together the saints of all ages. Those that are united to him are also united to one another. And as the ancients were not, and could not, be perfected without the cleansing efficacy of his blood, it may be truthfully said, that they were not perfected 'without us' and the 'better thing' which we by the grace of God now actually enjoy" (Milligan, pp.334f).

- 1) The death of Christ was for the faithful ones through the ages; they could not be saved and we be lost; we cannot be saved and they be lost.
 - 2) Romans 3:24-25: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 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."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
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HEBREWS 12

A. Hebrews 12:1-3: The Example of Christ Encourages Our Faithfulness.

1. Verse 1: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."
 - a. "In the last section, the Apostle brought forward for the encouragement of his brethren, the example of many noble and faithful ones who, under the severest trials, had run with patient endurance the race that was set before them. And now returning to the line of exhortation commenced at ch. 10:19, but broken off at the close of the same chapter (10:39), he calls on his brethren in Christ to imitate the example of those noble witnesses of the faith" (Milligan, p.340).
 - 1) "Here begins the fifth and last of a series of grand exhortations in the epistle, all of them having a single purpose, which was to check the threatened defection of Christians back to Judaism. The author achieved a marvelous urgency in his words and argument. The great exhortations exhibit his purpose in writing; and of all the considerations called forth from their history and from their scriptures had only one design, namely, to keep them in the holy faith. The success of the inspired author is evident in the fact that for nearly two thousand years it has been practically impossible for Christians to be proselyted to Judaism..." (Coffman, p.307).
 - 2) "The apostle having illustrated the nature and power of faith in the previous chapter, proceeds in this to exhort those to whom he wrote to apply the same principles to their own case, and to urge them to manifest the same steady confidence in God and the same perseverance in their holy walk" (Barnes, p.291).
 - b. In view of the fact that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witness, the saints were urged to run with patience the race into which they had entered. The difficult part of the statement is to identify the witnesses indicated.
 - 1) Some Bible students have supposed that the great cloud of witnesses are those men and women who were listed in the preceding chapter, but if so, the reference is a figure of speech. Barnes suggested that "we ought to act *as if* they were in sight" (p.292).
 - 2) The Bible does not teach that those who have departed this life are able to look down upon the many activities still being conducted on earth.
 - a) In fact, we are expressly told that the dead know nothing that transpires on earth following their death: "For the living know that they shall die: but **the dead know not any thing**, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any **thing that is done under the sun**" (Eccl. 9:5-6).
 - b) One of the most basic truths of nature, which we come to know from an early age, is that one day we must die. There is no truth more evident than this. As we live on earth, we pass each day with the realization present in our minds that some day we will die. But the dead man knows nothing of what is transpiring *under the sun*. Life on earth is a probationary period during which we prepare for eternity. Following death, we face the consequences of the life we lived during this period of testing. The nature of these consequences depends on the nature of our life.
 - 3) Job 14:20-22: "Thou prevaiest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn."
 - a) When a man dies, he has no way to know what happens to his children, whether good or evil befalls them. A man's physical body changes as the years pass. When he reaches

- middle or old age, he scarcely resembles his appearance when he was ten years old. With the passing of years, the body grows older, and weaker; ailments appear; our physical abilities are eroded; and finally death wrenches our spirit from our mortal frame.
- b) As we grow older, there are many heartaches and losses that cause us pain. Our parents die, we lose our siblings; our close friends are no more with us; our family and friends change even as the world around us continually changes.
 - c) These things have been so ordered by God's infinite wisdom and power, so that no man can change these affairs. Life is composed of suffering in the body and anguish in the soul which is within us. If this life was all that there was to our existence, our lot would indeed be desperate and full of despair. But there is hope in Christ! There is the hope of Heaven before us! There is the possibility of being reunited with our redeemed loved ones in eternity!
- 4) Since the statement of the verse [Heb. 12:1] alludes to sporting events attended by great crowds, the apostle seems to be saying that, as there is a great cloud of witnesses to view games, so there are many who watch us as we run the Christian race. "In this verse there is evident allusion to the games of the ancient Greeks; or rather perhaps to those which Herod the Great had introduced into Palestine in imitation of the Grecian games....Josephus Ant. 15.8; 15:9; 19.7,5....These games consisted in such exercises as leaping, boxing, wrestling, throwing the quoit, foot-races, horse-races, chariot-races, etc. The exercises were performed in the arena of a vast amphitheatre, around which, immense crowds of spectators, often amounting to from twenty-five to one hundred thousand, were arranged on seats, rising high one above another" (Milligan, pp.340f).
 - 5) It is certain that God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and (presumably) the mighty angels of heaven, behold the lives of Christians as they are lived out on earth. It is also true that, as we live among men, our lives are constantly beheld by the unbelieving world around us. In either case, or in both cases, we may find the point being made by the inspired author.
 - a) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - b) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - c. Christians are told to **lay aside every weight** in order to enhance the running of our spiritual race. In ancient and modern races, the contestants remove every kind of weight that might hinder their speed and endurance. Athletes who are training for certain sporting events will sometimes wear weights around their ankles; this increases the strength of the legs; these weights are removed just before the race, giving the runner a sense of lightness and swiftness. Christians can allow many things to hinder their race.
 - 1) Membership and activity in organizations of a fraternal, social or sporting nature; these clubs can hinder our race, although they may not be wrong in themselves, for they can deprive us of time to serve Christ properly.
 - 2) There are habits, hobbies and practices, which may not be wrong in themselves, but which may use too much of our time and energy, which could have been more profitably employed in the spiritual arena. We understand, of course, that most of us need some outside activity, such as
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- sports, fishing, traveling, a hobby, or some other diversion, to relax and refresh us, and make us even better servants of the King.
- 3) "Far too many children of the King allow their time, talent, and money to be preempted by secondary things, things that must be recognized as 'weights,' when understood in the light of their effect on dedication to Christ and his cause on earth" (Coffman, p.310).
- d. Christians are told to lay aside **the sin which doth so easily beset us**. This statement encompasses another variety of hindrances to the Christian race. These activities, words, attitudes, or motives are sinful in nature, and will deprive us of the crown. But the text has some specific sin in mind: **the sin which easily besets us**.
- 1) The sin of unbelief is especially emphasized throughout the epistle, which leads some scholars to conclude that *unbelief* (in any of its many forms) is the sin meant.
- a) "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).
- b) "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*" (Heb. 4:2).
- 2) It might have reference to the particular sin to which the individual may have a weakness. With some, the weakness might be profanity; others might be cursed with a craving for strong drink; there is no end to the possibilities. To some Christians, there is no attraction to drunkenness, but some other sin might make a strong appeal to them.
- e. Christians are told to **run with patience the race that is set before us**. The word translated *race* is the word from which we get our English word *agony*. The word includes the idea of a contest, or a fight, a conflict. Another form of the word is used in Luke 13:24, where the Lord calls on us to *agonize* to enter in at the strait gate: "**Strive** to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24).
- 1) The race is the Christian race; it bears some similarities to the literal foot-race. However, we are not competing with other Christians. The contestants must be governed by the rules if they want to win. Many think that there are many ways to heaven, and that each can choose his own way. Not so! It makes a difference!
- a) 2 Timothy 2:5: "And if a man also strive for masteries, *yet* is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."
- b) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
- c) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
- d) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
- e) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- f) 2 Timothy 4:2-8: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the
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- righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
- g) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - h) 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (ASV).
 - i) Psalms 119:32: "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart."
- 2) The contestants must run on the proper track. "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" (Heb. 10:19-20).
- a) Isaiah 35:8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."
 - b) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - c) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - d) John 15:4: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."
 - e) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - f) Colossians 2:6: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."
 - g) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - h) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- 3) The contestants must get ready to run by making proper preparations.
- a) Psalms 19:5: "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."
 - b) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - c) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."
 - d) 1 Corinthians 16:13: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong."
 - e) Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."
 - f) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - g) 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:
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But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

- f. The Christian race is to be run **with patience**. The Greek term is from *hupo* (under) and *meno* (to abide) (Vine, Vol. 3, p.167). The term is equal with *endurance*. In order for a runner to finish the course, he must have endurance; in order for a Christian to finish his course, he needs endurance to withstand all the troubles and obstacles he must overcome.
 - 1) James 5:7: "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain."
 - 2) "James 1:3: "Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."
2. Verse 2: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."
 - a. As we run the Christian race, we are directed to keep our eyes on Jesus, the never-changing one. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8; cf. Matt. 14:30). "How wonderful is the contrast between such a spectator of our trials as Jesus and the vile Roman emperor, sitting in the stands of the Coliseum, dispensing life or death in heartless, capricious disregard of every virtue, and with total indifference to the human feelings and emotions of the contestants... ' Looking unto Jesus' means focusing all of one's spiritual vision upon the Lord..." (Coffman, p.312).
 - b. Jesus is affirmed to be the author (the captain or leader) of our faith. He is the author of the faith in that he is the source of the faith (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:18). A form of the word translated "author" is used in Revelation 3:14, where it means the "beginner" of the creation of God. The original has the definite article *the* before the word *faith*, thus the faith indicated is the gospel system: **the faith**. It is true, of course, that the Lord is the author of our personal faith, in that he provides the testimony (God's word) which produces faith in our hearts (Rom. 10:14; Acts 15:7), but here the point is that Christ is the one who gave the gospel system (the New Testament), the faith once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3).
 - 1) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to **the faith**."
 - 2) Acts 13:8: "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from **the faith**."
 - 3) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth **the faith** which once he destroyed."
 - 4) Galatians 3:23: "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto **the faith** which should afterwards be revealed."
 - c. Jesus was able to endure the horrors of the cross because of the **joy that was set before him**.
 - 1) That joy included the happiness of delivering lost souls from the horrors of hell. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14). How joyful it is for him to take these precious souls home to glory, and also to prevent their entry into that dreadful place of torment (cf. Luke 16:19-31).
 - a) Hebrews 2:10: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - b) Luke 2:10: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."
 - c) Romans 8:17-18: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be

revealed in us.”

- 2) The joy also includes the indescribable honor he now enjoys as he sits at the Father’s right hand, serving as King of the eternal kingdom.
 - a) Daniel 7:13-14: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”
 - b) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - c) Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
- d. Jesus **endured the cross**. None of us have witnessed a genuine crucifixion as practiced by the Romans of that time. It has been described as the most painful method of execution. Crucifixion was unanimously considered the most horrible form of death, even worse than burning. Aside from the physical agony, it denoted an awful shame: among the Gentiles, it was reserved for slaves and criminals; the Jews had a revulsion for it since the Law placed a curse on one who was hanged on a tree (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).
 - 1) Crucifixion usually began with scourging, a terrible ordeal of itself. Jesus underwent this dreaded punishment (John 19:1-5; cf. Isa. 52:14). Pilate's intent in the scourging inflicted upon Jesus was an attempt to evoke sympathy in his accusers toward the Lord so that they might agree to his release. "And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go. Luke And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed" (Luke 23:22-23).
 - a) John 19:1-5: “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!”
 - b) Isaiah 52:14: “As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” [It is evident that Isaiah was here giving a picture of Christ especially after his scourging].
 - 2) The victim was usually forced to carry his cross, and sometimes even goaded and beaten on the way. The execution site was in some public place, often along a prominent road, or on a hill, where the victim could be easily seen. The victim was stripped naked, with perhaps a loin cloth being allowed.
 - 3) The cross was in the usual shape we envision, or formed as a "T," or in the form of an "X." The victim was laid upon the cross and nails were driven through his hands and feet. Sometimes thongs were also used to prevent the body from slipping from the cross if the flesh should tear. The cross was erected so that the feet of the subject was only a foot or two above the ground.
 - 4) A large nail was driven through each hand, and another through each foot or one nail through

- both feet.
- a) Psalms 22:16: "For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet."
 - b) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - c) John 20:24-28: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
- 5) A wooden rod was sometimes inserted between the legs as support for the sagging body to prevent the nails from tearing from the hands and feet.
 - 6) One of the very few acts of mercy attendant to crucifixion was the practice of giving the subject a drink of medication, wine mingled with myrrh (gall), which would induce grogginess, and deaden the pain. Christ refused to accept this drink so that he might fully taste death (Mark 15:23; Matt. 27:34; Heb. 2:9). He later was accepted a drink of vinegar in a sponge (John 19:28-30). This was a mixture of sour wine and water which was used by the soldiers. The hyssop stalk (reed), on which the sponge was raised to the Lord, grew from one and a half to three feet in length.
 - 7) The wounds of crucifixion did not result in a great loss of blood, and were not directly fatal. The causes of death are given as follows:
 - a) The unnatural position and violent tension of the body caused great pain from even a small movement. The great agonies experienced contributed to death. The nails were driven through the hands and feet where a great number of nerves are located, thus great agony resulted.
 - b) The exposure of the many wounds and lacerations, including those from the scourging, brought on inflammation which tends to produce gangrene; the pain thus increases moment by moment.
 - c) "In the distended parts of the body more blood flows through the arteries than can be carried back into the veins: hence too much blood finds its way from the aorta into the head and stomach, and the blood-vessels of the head become pressed and swollen. The general obstruction of circulation which ensues causes an internal excitement, exertion, and anxiety, more intolerable than death itself" (*Smith's Dictionary of The Bible*, p.515).
 - d) The gradually increasing and lingering agony, and unbearable thirst, and the difficulty in breathing, eventually brought about death. Depending on the constitution and condition of the subject, death might be several days in coming. McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia reports the case of a young Turkish slave named Mameluke who lasted from Friday to Sunday during his crucifixion; he was noted for being an exceptionally rugged person.
 - e) Woods described the process of crucifixion with these words: "As unspeakably inhuman as this mode of execution was, it stopped just short of producing merciful death and delivery from its agony and those thus executed often lingered for days on the cross unable to live, unable to die. The wretched position made every movement one of agony; the pierced hands and feet soon became inflamed and then infected, arteries were distended and blocked, fever shot upward, intolerable headaches often drove those thus being put to death into insanity. It was to such a death that our Lord was condemned, and this by men who
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affected to be the guardians of the truth and the favored of Jehovah!" (*Commentary on John*, p.402).

- f) The Romans often left the body hanging on the cross until it decomposed or was devoured by birds. In the Lord's case, the Jews besought Pilate that the legs of Jesus and of the two thieves be broken so that death might be hastened. They were unconcerned about the length of suffering these men were undergoing; they merely wanted their bodies to be out of sight when the Sabbath came! (John 19:31; cf. Dt. 21:23; Josh. 8:29). The breaking of the legs would hasten death, according to some scholars, because it would make it impossible for the victim to push himself upward in order to breathe. The legs were broken by a strong blow with a hammer or mallet.
- e. Jesus **despised the shame** of dying on the cross. The Jews figured if they could get the Romans to crucify Jesus, this would forever taint him in the mind of the Jews, so that few if any of them would ever become his followers. They were taught under the Law that a curse was attached to one who was hanged on a tree (Deut. 21:23; cf. Gal. 3:13). The Lord was crucified but by the resurrection God was able to overcome the shame of the cross, and great numbers of Jews obeyed the gospel, even though their total number represented only a remnant of the whole nation. The full extent of the shame has been lost to us by the passing of many centuries; at best, we can only appreciate this disgrace dimly. Our Lord despised the shame, in that this was not a formidable obstacle to his willingness to go to the cross.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 21:23: "His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."
 - 2) Galatians 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."
 - 3) When we, in our minds, behold Jesus on the cross, we see no shame; we regret the necessity of his suffering death, but we glory in his sacrifice. It was only in the eyes of men that he was put to shame on the cross. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).
 - 4) To despise the shame means that our Lord did not think it was significant; it did not amount to anything important when the result of his ordeal is figured into the equation. Compare: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).
- f. Since he endured the cross and was willing to undergo its shame, he was privileged to sit down at the Father's right hand, there to enjoy all the blessings and honors that attend that position. He was seated on that throne at the time Paul wrote this epistle. It was pointed out clearly in the course of the letter that Christ is now filling the role of High Priest. Zechariah 6:12-13 predicted accurately that he would serve as priest and king while occupying this throne. Therefore, it follows beyond successful denial that the eternal kingdom predicted in Daniel 2:44 has come!
 - 1) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 2) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 3) Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
3. Verse 3: "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

- a. We are admonished to **consider him**.
- 1) Hebrews 3:1: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."
 - 2) He fully deserves and requires our earnest, intense, and sustained attention, without relaxing or diminishing our interest. He is worthy of the focus of our full attention on him.
- b. He endured the **contradiction of sinners**. "The word rendered *contradiction*...means literally opposition by means of words and arguments, and it is so interpreted by some in this instance" (Milligan, p.345). Sinful men practiced gainsaying in their verbal attacks on the Savior; they do so today to his followers. A gainsayer is one who always has some kind of reply to a truth, a reply that is nothing more than empty words.
- 1) "Those who resort to gainsaying are among the most despicable of mankind; for, having no faith of their own, they resort to all kinds of pettiness, quibbling, murmuring, complaining, and questioning regarding the faith of others...The classical example of gainsayers were the Pharisees, especially as presented in the gospel by Matthew. They maliciously contradicted Jesus; and the record of our Lord's patient endurance of their slanderous and shameful opposition is a source of encouragement for those of any age who must deal with the cunning deceit of the gainsayer, whose strategy, in the final analysis, boils down to this, that they will simply wear the believer out, if possible, causing him, at last, to faint and fall away" (Coffman, p.315).
 - 2) Liberals in the political realm follow the same pattern. They are full of words which are used to becloud an issue and intimidate anyone who stands in their way. They are more interested in "winning an argument" than in honestly investigating the truth.
 - 3) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 4) Titus 1:9-11: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."
- c. Christians are directed to consider Jesus **lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds**. Prolonged and constant battles with unbelievers in the world, sectarians in the religious world, and false teachers within the church can cause faithful saints to grow weary and weak. This opposition has always been present, but it has grown worse in our times, as we face an increasingly hostile world, and as we struggle with the spreading apostasy in the Lord's church. Liberals are heinous enemies; they are willing to say anything and do anything to destroy those who uphold sound doctrine. Woe to that gospel preacher, laboring in a congregation in which liberals strive to gain the upper hand; it is hard to imagine a more discouraging situation than that of a faithful preacher who stands alone in battling the majority in the local church which is comprised of the liberal element, the worldly-minded, the disgruntled, and the indifferent! It is enough to make a strong man weep! Coffman (p.316) gives a list of seven causes of fainting:
- 1) The arrogance of wicked men. "Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. 73:1-3).
 - 2) Spiritual starvation.
 - a) "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" (Ps. 107:5).
 - b) "When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Cor. 11:20).

- c) Those who are members of a liberal congregation are slowly starved to death spiritually. They hear so little of God's word, and what they hear is often perverted, that they cannot obtain enough nourishment to survive. The more sensible of these will attend faithful congregations to get spiritual food.
- 3) Adversity can cause one to faint. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength *is* small" (Prov. 24:10).
- 4) Sin in our own lives can cause us to faint. "Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs *are* many, and my heart *is* faint" (Lam. 1:22).
- 5) Fear can produce fainting. "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" (Luke 21:26).
- 6) The Lord's chastening can be an occasion of fainting, if we do not meet the struggle. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" (Heb. 12:5).
- 7) False doctrines, like physical maladies, can sap our spiritual strength.

B. Hebrews 12:4-11: Exhortations to be Faithful in the Face of Hardships.

1. Verse 4: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."
 - a. "There seems to be a change of metaphor here, as in 1 Cor. 9:24-27, from the agonistic race to the more severe contest of boxing" (Milligan, p.345). "In those games, the boxers were accustomed to arm themselves for the fight with the caestus. This at first consisted of strong leathern thongs wound around the hands, and extending only to the wrist, to give greater solidity to the fist. Afterward these were made to extend to the elbow, and then to the shoulder, and finally they sewed pieces of lead or iron in them, that they might strike a heavier and more destructive blow. The consequence was that those who were engaged in the fight were often covered with blood, and that resistance 'unto blood' showed a determined courage, and a purpose not to yield" (Barnes, p.296).
 - b. Some of those being addressed by the epistle had been persecuted but were still alive; they had not yet paid the supreme sacrifice for their faith. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used" (Heb. 10:32-33). The saints in that earlier day had suffered persecutions, but some of the present ones had not as yet undergone the degree of trial as their forbears in the faith.
 - c. The apostle is encouraging them to be ready for a heavier trial of faith than they had faced to this time; he does not belittle their earlier hardships; he urges them to prepare themselves for what is to come. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and *if* in the land of peace, *wherein* thou trustedst, *they wearied thee*, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. 12:5).
2. Verses 5-6: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
 - a. The quotation is taken from Proverbs 3:11-12: "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth." The author of Hebrews places the divine stamp of inspiration on the book of Proverbs, explicitly tying the inspiration of the Old Testament and that of the New.
 - b. Some of the Hebrew Christians had apostatized, and more were on the verge of doing so, but some remained faithful. To those who were yet faithful, the writer puts their troubles and hardships into perspective. Just because they were suffering because of their faithfulness to the gospel, did not mean that they had been abandoned by the Lord; chastening is essential to spiritual maturity. Some of them had forgotten this great truth. This illustrates the need for our regularly reading, studying,

and being reminded of the basics of the gospel.

- 1) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:12-13: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:1-2: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."
- c. To chasten means to correct or discipline. The word refers to those providential circumstances and experiences which, through the hardships they bring to bear upon us, lead us to develop spiritual traits and practices that make us to be more spiritually mature. We also are disciplined by studying and being taught the word of God more fully.
- d. By citing the wise man's statement, the apostle counsels us against despising the chastening sent by the Lord. To despise it would mean that we would be turned from its intended purposes, perhaps even to reject it to the extent that we hate him who sent it upon us. If we refuse the correction given us through experiences and instruction, we deprive ourselves of ingredients essential to growth. If we bemoan the hardship, bitterness might result; if we complain angrily about it, we drive a wedge between ourselves and God. At the least, we rob our souls of spiritual strength; complete apostasy resulting in eternal condemnation is the ultimate penalty.
- e. The fact of God's chastening is ignored by many today. Some seem to think Christianity is all smiles and joy, without any tears, sorrows, or difficulty. The "smile, God loves you" philosophy can be taken to a hurtful extreme. It is better to have a smile in the heart (to accept life's woes and joys, and be content with what cannot be changed, happy in the knowledge that we are right with God), than to delude ourselves that there are no sorrows or woes that should come on the faithful. One who operates with the philosophy indicated will be woefully shocked when the cold reality of heartache, hardship, persecutions, etc., comes upon him; he is unprepared for the harsh verities of life in a sin-filled world. God wants his people to be happy (Phil. 4:4, 11-13, 19; 1 Tim. 6:6; Matt. 53-12; John 16:33; 2 Tim. 3:12), but a "pasted-on" smile is a shallow facade; the happiness we are to have is a solid state of contentedness, regardless of the pressures and troubles that afflict us outwardly. It is the stable realization within our hearts that, though life may torment us, all is well with our souls.
- 1) 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."
 - 2) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 3) Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." Our Lord held no animosity toward those who were putting him to death (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21ff).
 - 4) Acts 7:54-60: "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet,
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whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

- f. In verse six the reason is given "why we should not, on the one hand, treat lightly the chastening of the Lord; nor on the other be too greatly dejected by it. The simple fact that this chastening is from God, makes it a very grave and momentous matter; and at the same time it gives us the assurance that chastening is not the punishment of revenge but the discipline of love" (Milligan, p.347). When we are chastened by the Lord, that is not a sign of the absence of God's love. God does not punish us out of caprice, but from a desire that we cultivate the necessary qualities that equip us with the kind of character that God will allow in his presence in heaven.
- 1) Psalms 15:1-5: "LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."
 - 2) Lamentations 3:33: "For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."
 - 3) Hosea 11:8: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? *how* shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."
 - 4) Ezekiel 18:31-32: "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn *yourselves*, and live ye."
 - 5) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
3. Verses 7-8: "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons" (NKJV). "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (KJV). [The term *bastards* was a perfectly acceptable word when the King James Translation was made; men have so used the term that it has become hardly more than a vulgarity today].
- a. No caring father would allow his son to participate in sinful or hurtful activities. In his ignorance, the son may not be aware of the danger, both immediate and future. A wise father knows the real dangers of smoking, and will chasten his son who tries to cultivate this habit.
 - b. Coffman tells of a case of a thirteen-year-old girl who disregarded her mother's strict warning, and gazed intently at a solar eclipse; her eyesight was permanently destroyed (pp.319f). Permissive parents are not loving parents. Those who physically and emotionally abuse their children are not the only ones who are unconcerned about their children.
 - c. The author shows that God's chastening is for the good of his child. The absence of chastening is

not necessarily a sign that the person is acceptable to God; the presence of chastening is a sure sign that the one afflicted has the approval of the Father. Illegitimate offspring are usually ignored by the one who sired them; he is ashamed of them, will not admit they are his, and offers little if any support or guidance to them.

- d. "There is an eternal purpose of God toward his children; and that purpose is personal and corrective—such is the meaning of chastisement. The full nature of it is revealed in that it wears many faces, appearing and reappearing in an infinite pattern of sorrows and hardships. It is the experience of all of God's children, there being no exceptions whatever, the absence of it denoting no favoritism on God's part, but the illegitimacy of the one apparently favored. It is a severe experience, as revealed by such a word as 'scourgeth,' applied to it here, and is not to be understood as any mock trial or superficial difficulty; but the child of God is confronted with actual tribulations designed to test the hearts of all them that pass through them. The chastening of Israel (Isa. 1:5,6) showed 'wounds and bruises'; and the true Christian bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus (Gal. 6:16)" (Coffman, p.318).
- e. The case of Job is an excellent illustration of the chastening of the Lord, which ultimately worked out to the best good of Job (Job 1:21; 2:10). That grand old patriarch did not become angry toward God; he did not rebel; he did not reject God; but he used the difficulties to grow into an even better man.
 - 1) Job 1:21: "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."
 - 2) Job 2:10: "But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."
 - 3) Job 23:10: "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."
 - 4) Job 42:1-8: "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job." [Notice that God referred to Job four times in this reading as "my servant"].
- f. Paul profited by the harsh experiences which he was called on to endure, the Lord declining his pleas for their removal. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
- g. "If ye be without that discipline of which all the children of God have ever been partakers, it would follow that ye are really not his children: but that ye are...an illegitimate offspring, whose education is commonly neglected, much to their own injury and disgrace. Instead, therefore, of

murmuring and complaining at the chastening of the Lord, you should rather feel encouraged by it, knowing that it is evidence of your sonship, and of God's love for you as his adopted children" (Milligan, p.348).

4. Verses 9-10: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness."
 - a. Our fleshly fathers chastened us according to their lights; they were usually right, but sometimes they were in error; we profited from their discipline. Men in the flesh are subject to motivations of anger, revenge, and other such shortcomings. There is no perfect parent. Parental discipline ought to be motivated by love, but frequently it is not.
 - b. We ought to be even more willing to accept and be profited by the chastisements of the Lord. God's chastening is never unreasonable, it is never more than can be borne, it is never out of mischief, or for any other wrong reason. The aim of his discipline is that we might be made more holy and be able to share his presence and blessings in heaven.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - c. God is said to be the father of our spirits. Our fleshly bodies came from our parents in accordance with God's natural laws. But God is the progenitor of our spirits. "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and **formeth the spirit of man within him**" (Zech. 12:1).
5. Verse 11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."
 - a. No chastening is pleasant when it is being administered, but it can pay rich dividends, especially to the soul. The greatest people of the Bible went through harsh circumstances. How many of those named in Hebrews 11 had an easy life?
 - 1) Psalms 119:67: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."
 - 2) Psalms 119:71: "*It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."
 - 3) Romans 5:3-5: "And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 12:7-10: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
 - b. Righteousness is the fruit of chastening. Righteousness is the condition that results when we do the will of God from the heart.
 - 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

- 4) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 5) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
 - 6) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
- c. The most important thing anyone can do is to obey God. Chastening helps, encourages, urges, and promotes obedience.
- 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

C. Hebrews 12:12-17: Admonitions to Faithfulness.

1. Verses 12-13: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."
 - a. Since many of the hardships the Hebrew saints were facing were from the Lord, for the purpose of chastening them, they had reason to rejoice; those difficulties were not indications of God's lack of concern, but of his approbation.
 - b. The figure the writer employs in the passage is likely taken from that of weary travelers, who are nearing the end of their strength, with but a short distance to go before reaching their destination. Encouraging words are often sufficient to urge them on to the end of the way. These Christians had been faithful through hardships, but as they faced even greater obstacles, or were growing weary of continuing the struggle, the apostle urged them to summon strength to the feeble knees, and find power to lift up their hands. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees" (Isa. 35:5).
 - c. They were to make paths straight; they were to encourage those others who were growing weak and faltering, smoothing the way, making it easier for them to persevere. Loving concern for our faltering brethren will motivate us to greater strength so as to assist them.
 - 1) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 3) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

- 4) 1 Corinthians 8:9-13: "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."
2. Verse 14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
- a. Here Christians are told to follow (to pursue) two things: peace and holiness. Our Savior is the Prince of peace, his reign is over the kingdom of peace, his law is the gospel of peace, his people are promoters and followers of peace, and enjoy the blessing of peace. We are to live in peace with all others, to the extent of our ability.
- 1) Romans 12:18: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."
 2) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
- b. When we preach and defend the truth, opposition is aroused; oftentimes strong, hate-filled enemies are made. This is understood, and thus the statement of Romans 12:18.
- 1) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 2) Acts 13:45-46: "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 3) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 4) 1 Corinthians 16:9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries."
 5) 2 Timothy 4:14-15: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words."
- c. Strife is devastating to peace of mind, and if it is in the church, untold harm is done to our ability to influence the community with the truth. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).
- d. We are to follow (pursue) holiness (or sanctification). Sanctification does not mean that we are invulnerable to temptation, but that through faithfulness and experience we have become strong, reliable, devout, dedicated Christians who are pure in heart and life. We have become the opposite of what is described in the next verse. No one can see God without holiness (sanctification).
- 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

- 3) 1 Peter 1:15-16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:4: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
 - 5) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
3. Verse 15: "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
- a. Other translations of this verse:
 - 1) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking carefully lest *there be* any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby the many be defiled" (ASV).
 - 2) Hebrews 12:15: "Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled" (NKJ).
 - b. The Bible is not like the little boy who called "wolf!" It offers no empty warnings. When it warns against something, the danger is real. The warning against falling from the grace of God is issued in this verse. "To fail of the grace of God" is "to fall back from" God's grace (Vincent, pp.1168f).
 - c. We are to look diligently (carefully) lest we fall. The grace of God is offered to all people (Tit. 2:11-12), but only a relative few will accept it; and not everyone who accepts it will cling to it. Therefore, the warning is given.
 - 1) Those who go back to a life of sin fall from the grace of God. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:20-22).
 - 2) Those who accepted a perverted gospel after having obeyed the gospel, fell from the grace of God.
 - a) Galatians 1:7-9: "Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - b) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - c) Galatians 5:3-4: "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

- d. We are warned against allowing a root of bitterness to spring up within us, which would trouble and defile us. A Christian can become bitter and sour, and spread this disposition to others. He not only defiles himself, but contaminates his brethren and relatives. "Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:6). Bitterness is out of harmony with the gospel.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: "Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
4. Verses 16-17: "Lest there *be* any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."
- a. The warnings of the previous verse continue into these verses. We must be diligent lest we fall from God's grace, lest we allow ourselves to become embittered, and lest we become a fornicator or profane person as Esau became. Esau had become both a fornicator and a profane man. With this statement in view, we may be sure that Jacob's brother was a sinful man, even though we may not know all the details.
 - b. Fornication is not sinful in the thinking of modern man. It is denoted by euphemisms such as "having an affair" or "involved in a relationship." In 1984, talk-show host, Phil Donohue, shuddered at the use of the word, but defended an erring member's practice of this sinful act. The case involved a lady who had committed this sin, and had been withdrawn from by the local church. She sued the church and won a sizeable judgment; this was later overturned by the state supreme court. Donohue and many in his audience strongly supported the woman and denounced the church for their stand for the truth.
 - 1) Fornication is a sin against God. "*There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" (Gen. 39:9).
 - 2) Fornication is a sin against the individual's body. "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).
 - 3) Fornication is a sin against the church, when practiced by a member of the church (1 Cor. 6).
 - 4) Fornication is a sin against marriage, which can withstand any other assault except this. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9).
 - 5) Fornication is a sin against the nation, in that it erodes the basic unit of society, the home.
 - 6) Fornication is a sin charged against the soul of each one guilty of it. "*But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he *that* doeth it destroyeth his own soul" (Prov. 6:32).
 - c. Esau was a profane man, the opposite of being holy. He was more interested in that which is earthly than in that which is holy. He was profane in trading off his birthright for food (Gen. 25:29ff). The birthright included the double portion of the inheritance that went to the elder son, the right to be head of the clan, the right to convey those blessings to his offspring, and the right to

custodianship of the sacred promises originally given to Abraham.

- d. The point Paul is making is clear: the Hebrew Christians would be following the example of Esau if they turned back to Judaism. As Esau considered something earthly more important than the birthright, so they would consider the earthly system of Judaism of greater importance than the spiritual and heavenly grandeur of Christianity.
- e. “For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind *in his father*, though he sought is diligently with tears” (ASV). Esau sold his birthright, and the bargain stood; and once the blessing was pronounced upon Jacob it could not be reversed. The repentance sought was on Isaac’s part—Esau could not get Isaac to change his mind about the blessing. The repentance had nothing to do with saving the soul, but in changing the recipient of the birthright. But Jacob’s deceit is inexcusable, and he paid for this error when he was himself deceived by his sons (Gen. 37:31-35). He grieved over Joseph for 22 years.

D. Hebrews 12:18-29: Warnings Against Apostasy.

1. Verses 18-21: “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake).”
 - a. The author begins here a contrast between the law and the gospel by discussing the events at Mount Sinai. He states that we have not come to Mount Sinai but to another mountain, one of a spiritual nature. “Ye should, says the writer, look to it diligently that no one fall short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness spring up to trouble you, and so to defile the many, and that there be among you no such licentious and profane person as Esau: for your privileges and responsibilities under the New Covenant are greatly superior to those of your fathers under the Old Covenant. For ye have not come near to the mountain that is tangible [material, and so capable of being touched], and that burned with fire; and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, etc...” (Milligan, p.357).
 - b. The scene at Sinai, when Israel presented themselves there to receive God’s law, was truly frightful. It was intended to be so, that they might be properly impressed with the greatness of their blessings if they were obedient, and to be impressed with the horror of disobedience. As our author has already said, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:31); he will say at the conclusion of this chapter, “For our God is a consuming fire” (12:29).
 - 1) Exodus 19:16-23: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it."
 - 2) Exodus 20:18-23: "And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of

the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God *was*. And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold."

- c. God had strictly forbidden any man or beast to touch the mountain under the penalty of death. "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount" (Ex. 19:12-13). The presence of God made the mountain holy. This would impress upon Israel, at its very beginning as a nation, the holiness and power of God; it would develop a lasting reverence for him. But even with this awe-inspiring start, they soon lost their reverence for the Almighty.
 - d. So fearful was this sight that even Moses feared and trembled. "For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also" (Ex. 9:19; cf. Daniel 5). Moses was not simple-minded, uneducated, or superstitious. He was well-trained and experienced in Egyptian knowledge and practice (Acts 7:22). He clearly and easily saw his utter insignificance in contrast with God's majestic presence. How completely insignificant is any man or woman, regardless of their worldly knowledge, wealth, or position, in the presence of the Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe! How totally unfit is any one of us to stand in his holy presence!
 - 1) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
 - 2) Isaiah 6:5: "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
 - 3) Daniel 5:5-6: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."
2. Verses 22-24: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel."
 - a. Zion was the poetic name for Jerusalem, the name of the mountain upon which the city was built. "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of **Zion** shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from **Jerusalem**" (Isa. 2:3).
 - 1) "At this place, the author turns to a presentation of the glories of the central authority in Christianity, a contrast being at once evident in the two mountains. Sinai was an alien mountain in a foreign land; and Zion was the poetic name for Jerusalem, the name of the eminence upon which the city was built, and which enshrined the deepest emotional affection of the whole Hebrew nation. The prophets had extolled the word of the Lord as going forth from Mount Zion (Isa. 2:3); it was toward Mount Zion that the captive Daniel had prayed in

- Babylon; and even Jesus Christ referred to it as the ‘city of the great King’ (Matt. 5:35)” (Coffman, p.330).
- 2) “Being then the seat of both the royal and sacerdotal authority, it was properly called the ‘holy hill of Zion’ (Psa. 2:6), and the chosen habitation of Jehovah (Psa. 132:13). And hence it seems to be used in our text as a type of heaven itself, the mountain of God, the site of the heavenly Jerusalem. To this intangible and glorious mountain, Christians have now come by virtue of their citizenship in the kingdom of heaven...(Phil. 3:20)” [Milligan, p.360].
 - 3) The text speaks of both the church (the kingdom) and heaven. On earth, we are citizens of the kingdom; in heaven, we will be citizens in the eternal phase of the kingdom.
 - a) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - b) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - c) 2 Peter 1:1-11: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - b. Christians have come unto the general assembly and church of the firstborn. “Firstborn” is plural, and means “firstborn ones.” The reference is to saints, not to Christ. He is the firstborn in point of rank (Col. 1:18). These firstborn ones are those who are enrolled in heaven. The “general assembly and church of the firstborn” is a reference to the whole community of the redeemed, in heaven and on earth. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. 3:14-15).
 - c. Mention is made of those whose names are written in heaven. What a magnificent thought! God has a book of remembrance; it is called “The Lamb’s Book of Life.” On its pages are inscribed the names of those who belong to him. The greatest honor available to anyone is to be enrolled therein.
 - 1) Luke 10:19-20: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - 2) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life."
 - 3) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

- 4) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
- 5) Malachi 3:16: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a **book of remembrance** was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."
- d. God is said to be the Judge of all; he will judge the world through Christ.
 - 1) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 2) John 5:22: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."
- e. The author speaks of the "spirits of just men made perfect."
 - 1) Milligan comments: "That is, to the spirits of all the redeemed, from Abel downward to the present time. These just ones have finished their course and reached the goal of their destiny and, 'therefore, they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his Temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the Sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne feeds them, and leads them unto fountains of water of life; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes'" (Rev. 7:15-17).
 - 2) "*And to the spirits of just men made perfect* refers to raised and glorified people who have passed through death after the tribulations of life, or who have been changed in a moment at the sounding of the resurrection....The number includes not Christians alone, but all of them who in prior dispensations did the will of God" (Coffman).
 - 3) We have come to Jesus, the one and only mediator. "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). There is a difference between a mediator and an intercessor; anyone may intercede (pray for) in behalf of another; but only Christ is the mediator between man and God. The blood of sprinkling is the blood of Christ, which is applied to our souls (figuratively) in our obedience. We contact it when we are baptized into Christ; as we walk in the light of his word (1 John 1:7), we maintain contact with his blood, which continues to cleanse us from our frequent transgressions. God pardons, justifies and saves all who will believe and obey his Son; the shedding of Christ's blood made this possible.
- f. The blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel. "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen. 4:10). Abel's blood cried unto God from the ground, a plea for vindication and justice. Christ's blood makes a more powerful plea unto the Almighty; it pleads with God to pardon and receive those who are estranged from him.
3. Verses 25-27: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not we escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."
 - a. God spoke to the Israelites from the top of Sinai; his voice demanded obedience and created great terror in their hearts. His message was one of threatening and doom to the disobedient. God now speaks to all humanity (not only to the Israelites) through his Son (Heb. 1:1-4).
 - b. That message comes to us in the form of the gospel (the New Testament). Although we do not hear his literal voice or see his presence physically demonstrated, yet his written word is just as authoritative and brings obligations and blessings to us, as the direct address did toward the

- Israelites. We ought to have as much dread against committing any act of disobedience to his will, as the Israelites had at the time they were shaking in fear at this manifestation of his presence.
- 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:1-4: "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:8-9: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
- c. God's voice shook the earth at Sinai, in connection with his delivery of the law to Israel. The earth and the heavens will shake when he speaks at the last day.
- 1) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 2) John 12:28-30: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:10-11: "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."
 - 4) Revelation 20:11: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."
- d. The earth and everything that pertains to it, as well as the entire universe, are things that are made; they were created for special purposes; they are not eternal, but have been made and will be burned up and will dissolve into nothingness.
- 1) Hebrews 1:10-12: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 - 2) Natural laws discovered by scientific investigation have established the fact that the ultimate end of the material world is a foregone certainty. The sun cannot burn forever; the earth will eventually run out of its stores by which humanity survives; matter is known to have had a beginning and will have an end; the universe is winding down and energy is being depleted.
 - 3) But God affirms that he will destroy the material creation. He had the wisdom and power to create it and he has the wisdom and power to destroy it. In the beginning before the creation there was nothing material in existence; at the end when he shall have destroyed the creation there will be nothing material in existence. Matter could come into existence only by the divine power of God; it is sustained in existence only by the divine power of God; it will be destroyed by that same power.
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- 4) Following the end of the universe, only those things which are non-material will survive. These include the eternal occupants of heaven (God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the angels); the spirits of just men made free (the redeemed in Christ) will enter heaven, there to live eternally. Those who were disobedient will occupy *Gehenna*, suffering the unending punishment their sins have earned them, along with the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).
 - e. The kingdom, mentioned in the next passage, is not subject to being shaken out of existence; it will stand forever. It is one of those entities that shall remain. "And hence it follows that the kingdom of Christ can never, like Judaism, give place to any thing better (Dan. 2:44); for 'this,' says Peter, 'Is the true grace of God wherein ye stand' (1 Pet. 5:12). God has nothing better to offer to any man than salvation through Christ. The man, therefore, who rejects Christ and his kingdom seals of necessity his own eternal condemnation" (Milligan, p.366).
 4. Verses 28-29: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God *is* a consuming fire."
 - a. The kingdom of God is a prominent theme in God's word. All of his promises and prophecies to Abraham and his descendants are summed up in the kingdom. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 - b. That the kingdom was set up during the first century (on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2) will not be denied by anyone who believes the Scriptures.
 - 1) It was affirmed to be at hand by the preaching of eighty-four men: John the Baptizer; Christ; the Twelve; the Seventy disciples.
 - a) Matthew 3:2: "And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - b) Matthew 4:17: "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - c) Matthew 10:7: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - d) Luke 10:9: "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."
 - 2) It was promised to appear during the life time of men living during the first century. "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1).
 - 3) The saints at Colossae (and consequently, every other Christian) were in it. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).
 - 4) John the apostle was in the kingdom. "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9).
 - c. The following chart lists comparisons between the kingdom and the church, showing that they are one and the same:
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KINGDOM	CHURCH
Col. 1:13-14 (translated)	Acts 2:47 (added)
John 3:5 (water)	Eph. 5:26 (water)
1 Cor. 15:24 (to glory)	Eph. 5:26-26 (to glory)
Heb. 12:28-29 (glorifies God)	Eph. 3:20-21 (glorifies God)
Col. 1:13-14 (saved in)	Eph. 5:23 (saved in)
Luke 22:29-30 (Lord's Supper)	1 Cor. 11:23ff (Lord's Supper)
Christ is King (Rev. 19:16; Col. 1:13-14)	Christ is Head (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
Unending (Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28)	Unending (Eph. 3:21)
Same Apostles (Matt. 19:28)	Same Apostles (Eph. 2:20)
Same Message (Matt. 16:18-19)	Same Message (Rom. 10:8)
Parables (Matt. 13)	Parables (Matt. 13)
Mystery (Rom. 16:25; Mt. 13:11; Eph 3:8ff)	Mystery (Rom. 16:25; Mt. 13:11; Eph 3:8ff)
Israel of God (Matt. 19:28)	Israel of God (Gal. 6:16)
Washing (Mt. 19:28; John 3:5)	Washing (Tit. 3:5)

- d. "Wherefore we **receiving** a kingdom..." "The participle gives no note of time, but simply indicates the fact that Christians as such receive. The preposition *para* adds to the idea of *receiving* that of transmission or communication" (Vincent, p.1173). Since the day of the kingdom's establishment, those who obey the gospel are translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13), in which they receive all the spiritual blessings of citizenship (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:3; Phil. 3:20). Each person obtains these blessings as each is born again; they enter the kingdom; they receive the kingdom and its bounty.
- 1) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 3) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
- e. In view of the fact of the kingdom, the author urges his readers (and all Christians) to have grace. Here *grace* means gratitude, thankfulness (Vincent, p.1173). The same word is used in the following verses:
- 1) Luke 4 17:9: "Doth he **thank** that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 1:12: "And I **thank** Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted

- me faithful, putting me into the ministry."
- 3) 2 Timothy 1:3: "I **thank** God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day."
- f. We are directed to have gratitude so that we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. God can be served acceptably only if our service is offered sincerely and according to his will.
- 1) *Reverence* is respectful awe toward God. It is a pious caution and carefulness.
 - a) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
 - b) Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - 2) *Fear* [*deous*] is a holy dread of doing anything that might be displeasing to the Almighty. "Its fundamental idea is timid apprehension of danger; while *fobos* is the terror which seizes one when the danger appears....In a primitive forest an undefined sense of possible danger possesses one, and makes his heart beat quickly at every rustle of a leaf. This is *deous*. When the voice and tread of a wild beast are distinctly heard *close* at hand, the *deous* becomes *fobos*. The phrase '*with pious care and fear*' not explanatory of *acceptably*. These are to *accompany* (*meta*) acceptable service. They do not imply cringing or slavish feeling, but grow out of the warning in ver. 25, which runs through the two following verses, and implies that the catastrophe of ver. 27 will be final, leaving no more opportunity to retrieve the refusal of God's invitation to the privileges of the new covenant, or the relapse into the superseded economy of Judaism" (Vincent, pp.1173f).
- g. God is depicted as a consuming fire. Although God is full of mercy and possesses infinite love for his people, he will not overlook willful disobedience; his divine nature includes infinite holiness and justice, which require the proper punishment for those who despise his word.
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HEBREWS 13

A. Hebrews 13:1-7: Exhortations to Faithfulness.

1. Verse 1: "Let brotherly love continue."
 - a. God has ordained that **brotherly love** continue. The verse is an imperative statement, as is Genesis 1:3: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." A mere suggestion was not given in either verse, but an order. Regardless of how men may react to the requirement, having brotherly love is a dictate of the Almighty, and cannot be ignored without eternal consequences.
 - b. "In the Greek classics, the word *philadelphia* (*feladelfia*) means the natural love which brothers and sisters have for one another; but in the New Testament it means the love which all Christians should cherish for each other as members of the one family of God in Christ" (Milligan, p.371). Brotherly love is a disposition of mind and heart toward other saints; it is an affection of warmth we commonly feel toward other members of God's family.
 - c. *Philadelphia* is used also in the following verses:
 - 1) Romans 12:10: "*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:9: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently."
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:7: "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."
 - d. It is God's expressed will that brotherly love continue between all those in the most holy faith. But if it continues, each individual must see to it. The absence of brotherly love and the presence of malice in an individual or church spells disaster to the soul of the individual and to the local congregation. It is an act of disobedience if we do not possess and practice brotherly love. "But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11; cf. 2 Thess. 1:7-9).
2. Verse 2: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
 - a. **Hospitality** is enjoined in this verse. Showing hospitality is a great blessing to those in need of it, but it is even a greater blessing to those who show it. In our modern society, when thieves and murderers operate under the guise of religion and need, we must exercise caution for the safety and well-being of our family; but there are many occasions in which hospitality may be safely practiced.
 - b. In certain Biblical cases, there were some who entertained angels without being aware of their identity. This was true in the case of Abraham (Gen. 18) and Lot (Gen. 19). We have no reason to believe that angels travel about the country in human form today, testing God's people about their hospitality. But in the miraculous age of the first century, such might have been possible. For us, there may be pleasant surprises and blessings obtained [especially in eternity] by being hospitable.
 - 1) Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - 2) Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - 3) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Modern transportation and accommodations have removed many of the usual opportunities that might otherwise be given us to show hospitality. "Doing good" includes hospitality.
 - c. The Mosaic Law required the Israelites to be hospitable: "*But* the stranger that dwelleth with you

- shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God" (Lev. 19:34).
- d. Elders are required to be hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2). Every Christians has an obligation to be hospitable: "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13). It is God's will that this practice should continue to be exercised.
3. Verse 3: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body."
 - a. Those suffering **persecution** on account of their faithfulness are to be remembered. We are to be in sympathy with those in bonds (imprisoned). In former days, those who could not pay their debts were put in prison, a move that punished those who would not or could not pay, and would force the family and friends of the debtor to pay the debt if they could.
 - b. Many were in prison because of persecution; these needed the encouragement and help of brethren. To show compassion for them was equivalent to showing compassion toward Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 25: 36: "Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."
 - 2) Matthew 25:40: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me."
 - c. While we are in this life, the possibility of persecution or a miscarriage of justice exists. If we show mercy to those caught up in such circumstances, we are more likely to receive sympathetic help if we should fall into similar trouble.
 - d. The writer had commended the Hebrew saints for having practiced this injunction already, which he here urges them to continue. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:32-35).
 - e. "The reader will observe that in these brief sententious admonitions, we have all the force, ardor, and characteristic haste of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Most of what precedes is written with the care, dignity, and stateliness, which belong properly to a regular treatise on the sublime themes of redemption. But in this chapter we have some of Paul's most characteristic life-like sketches" (Milligan, p.372).
 4. Verse 4: "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
 - a. **Marriage** is honorable and the marital relationship is undefiled. "*Let* marriage *be* had in honor among all, and *let* the bed *be* undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (ASV). "Many of the ancients translated this place as a declaration that 'marriage is honorable in all,' thus making it a declaration of the rights of all to enter the marriage state. The judgment of most modern scholars is reflected in the rendition given above, making it an exhortation that all should honor the marriage state. The teaching, however, leads to the same conclusion as in the old versions; for one may not lawfully depreciate the marriage state and contradict its holiness and sanctity by deeming it a contamination in some, such as priests, or by imputing to it any less holiness than pertains to any other lawful condition" (Coffman, pp.345f).
 - b. The statement may be translated as an imperative (as in the ASV) or as a statement of fact (KJV). The marital relationship is honorable; it was approved by the Lord; it is the only situation in which sexual activity is permitted by the Almighty. Marriage is to be kept honorable; the marital bed is to be kept undefiled. This is the will of God, and cannot be ignored with impunity.
 - c. "God has but one marriage law for men today. All men are to honor it, and the faithful are to
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uphold those marriages which are with God's approval and to rebuke those who are involved in dishonorable marriages. This will not be the popular attitude and action today as it was not with John the baptizer, but it will be the right thing, and that should be our goal or objective. (Mark 6:14-29). The marriage bed in lawful marriages is undefiled, for this is where God has designated that human sexuality find its fulfillment. Any and all sexual expression must be in lawful marriage relationships, for God condemns all fornicators and adulterers who do not come to genuine Biblical repentance. (Matt. 19:1-12; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 6:9-11; 7:2-4.) No man can make honorable that which God condemns! It is a grave mistake to teach the faithful or the unfaithful to commit fornication and adultery. (Rev. 2:20-22.)" (*Companion*, p.230).

- d. 1 Corinthians 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 are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - e. Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
5. Verses 5-6: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
- a. Christians are to so-order their lives that they will be without **covetousness**. The love of money or of other material wealth must not be allowed to control the way we live. The way we use our money can reveal whether covetousness abounds in our hearts. This sin is one of the *respectable* variety.
 - 1) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
 - 2) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, unclean-ness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:6-10: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:17-18: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."
 - b. "There are two means suggested in our lesson text by which we can overcome the love of money. (1) We must cultivate contentment with our possessions. This does not mean that we are to be indifferent to work and material things. It does mean that we are to be satisfied with what we have honorably earned to the best of our ability and not to fret over what is not rightfully ours but indeed may be what belongs to another. (2) We must have a firm, unshaken confidence in the providence of God. He has promised (and he cannot lie, Titus 1:2) never to fail us nor to forsake us..." (*Companion*, p.231).
 - c. We are to be content with what we have; we are to be diligent in our business or job; we are to do what we can lawfully and reasonably do to improve our situation; and leave the outcome to God, and be satisfied with the results. Those who love money are not content; they will use whatever means open to them to satisfy an insatiable appetite for more. While it is not wrong to try to improve our lot in life, we are not to emphasize financial gain over the spiritual; we are not to

allow love of money to control our hearts and lives.

- 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 3) Proverbs 23:5: "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven."
 - 4) Romans 12:11: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
 - 5) Ephesians 4:28: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."
 - 6) Ephesians 6:6-8: "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free."
 - 7) Colossians 3:22-25: "Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."
- d. We may rely on the Lord to abide with us and assist us in those things beyond our power. This is the reason we may be content with what things we have. He vows never to leave our side or forsake us in our need, as long as we abide faithful to him. This has always been God's policy.
- 1) Deuteronomy 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."
 - 2) Psalms 55:22: "Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."
 - 3) Psalms 118:6: "The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"
 - 4) James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
 - 5) 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
- e. Therefore, there is no reason why we should be terrified of mere men. Evil men were persecuting the saints—depriving them of their property, possessions, and the means of making a living. Weak Christians would be tempted to renounce Christ in order to protect their material wealth. This passage reminds the brethren that they had nothing to fear—the Lord would not forsake them, even if they lost all their possessions; he would provide for them.
- 1) Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - 2) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 3) Joshua 1:5: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."
 - 4) Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 5) Romans 8:31: "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?"

- 6) Matthew 6:25-30: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?"
- 7) Psalms 23: "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."
6. Verse 7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation."
- a. Here the saints were directed to remember those who were over them in the Lord: the apostles; the prophets; the elders of the local congregation. The apostles and prophets were given inspired messages from God to reveal to the people; these revelations were God's will. The day of inspired men on earth has passed; God has revealed all of his truth for us through those inspired men, which has now been put into writing.
- 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
- 2) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."
- 3) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
- 4) The apostles still exert their influence through the inspired revelation they delivered:
- a) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
- b) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
- b. In his word (Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1), God has made provision for the appointment of elders, who are given oversight over the local congregation where they serve. These men have the rule over the members of that church—they are given authority to govern the congregation, making decisions in matters of expediency and seeing that the Bible is taught and followed.
- 1) Hebrews 13:17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."
- 2) 1 Peter 5:1-4: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock

of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

- 3) 1 Timothy 3:4-5: "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)."
- c. While elders have authority to bear rule in their congregation, they also influence the brethren by the holy lives they lead. The apostles set good examples; so did the prophets, such as Stephen. A godly example is a powerful influence for good. One who knows the truth, who is willing and able to teach it under any circumstance, and who lives it fully, is one worthy of imitation.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:1: "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."
 - 3) Philippians 3:17: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."
 - 4) 3 John 1:11: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."
- d. "Remember them that had the rule over you, men that spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith" (ASV). Those referred to, according to this version, are spoken of in the past tense; they had the rule. "Nothing is of more moving and lasting power than a faithful example; and the author calls to mind the noble elders and ministers, already passed to their reward at the time he wrote, but who were remembered for the noble example of their faith; which, from the words here, would seem to have issued at last in some dramatic exhibition of it, as perhaps like that of Stephen's martyrdom. The lives of such noble leaders were to be imitated, not necessarily in regard to all their deeds, but rather in the supreme matter of their unwavering faith" (Coffman, p.347).

B. Hebrews 13:8-19: Admonitions to be Stable.

1. Verse 8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - a. God never changes: "For I *am* the LORD, I change not..." (Mal. 3:6). Here, we are told that Christ does not change. Divine beings cannot change; their infinite qualities are always the same. Christ is perfect in the absolute—there is no need for any change. The truth that Christ does not change is a harsh reality to those who live in rebellion to his will, but is a wonderful verity to the faithful saint.
 - b. In our world, change is commonplace and inevitable. Children grow up; adults grow old; death comes to us all. The physical face of the earth is in a regular state of change. Evil men are always trying to change the word of God. In a world of change, it is comforting to know that neither Christ nor his word can or will change.
 - 1) His attitude toward false religious systems will not change:
 - a) Matthew 15:13: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."
 - b) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - d) Ephesians 5:15-17: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but

- understanding what the will of the Lord is.”
- 2) His attitude toward false doctrines will not change:
 - a) Matthew 15:1-9: “Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”
 - b) Matthew 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.”
 - c) Matthew 4:7: “Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”
 - d) Matthew 4:10: “Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”
 - e) Matthew 7:21-23: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
 - 3) His ability to save will not change:
 - a) John 5:40: “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”
 - b) 1 Timothy 1:13-15: “Who was before a blasphemers, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”
 - c) Luke 19:1-10: “And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 - 4) He will not change in his love and compassion:
 - a) Romans 5:8: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - b) John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - c) Revelation 1:5: “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten
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- of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”
- 5) His faithfulness to keep his word will not change:
 - a) 2 Timothy 2:13: “If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”
 - b) Matthew 24:35: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
 - 6) His plan of salvation will not change:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
 - b) Jude 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - c) Revelation 14:6: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”
 - 7) His plan of worship will not change:
 - a) John 4:24: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
 - b) 1 Peter 1:24-25: “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
- c. The fact that Christ changes not gives great consolation to Christians, especially those who are under persecution or other hardship. They can take comfort in the knowledge that he will never lose his love for them, or forsake them in their troubles.
- 1) John 12:48-50: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: "Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:12: "And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 - 4) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:24-25: "For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 6) 1 Peter 3:8-12: "Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
2. Verse 9: “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied

therein.”

- a. Here is another of those many warnings in the Bible against departing from the truth. Before closing this highly significant and important epistle, the apostle makes sure that the brethren are warned to hold to the truth, as he enjoins them to reject every strange doctrine.
 - 1) Romans 16:17-18: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."
 - 2) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 3) Ephesians 4:14: "That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 1:13: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."
 - 6) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 7) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - b. A *strange doctrine* is any teaching not part of God's word. This warning is almost totally ignored by the majority of religionists today, and by many in the Lord's church. These strange doctrines include the so-called new morality, divorce and remarriage for any reason, denominationalism, modern miracles, premillennialism, humanism, the social gospel, and the authority question. The author intends that the brethren be especially warned against returning to any of the features of the Mosaic Law, since the primary purpose of the epistle is to keep the Hebrew Christians from forsaking Christ and the Gospel, and turning back to the Law.
 - c. He states that it is good to be established by grace—by what is revealed by the gospel—than to think that abstinence from certain meats will establish us. The Law of Moses prohibited certain meats. The gospel teaches that man's soul is not polluted by what is eaten, but by that which comes from the heart.
 - 1) Mark 7:19-23: "Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."
 - 2) Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 - 3) Matthew 15:18-19: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."
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- 4) 1 Timothy 4:1-5: "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; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."
- d. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). Grace reigns (exercises its power) through righteousness (the doing of God's will). When we obey the will of Christ, the benefits of God's grace are given.
- 1) Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - 2) Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - 3) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - 5) 1 John 3:7: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."
- e. We cannot make ourselves acceptable unto God by keeping a law that has been replaced by the gospel; we cannot obtain his favor by following rules and regulations which were invented by human wisdom; we cannot earn our salvation through any such means; we cannot place ourselves within the realm of his grace by any human scheme. It is only by obeying the will of the Father that we enter into the benefits of his grace.
3. Verse 10: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle."
- a. The altar which Christians have is Christ; he is a figurative altar. The Israelites partook of the altar which was in front of the tabernacle; we partake of Christ. To eat of the altar is to partake of the sacrifice offered thereon; they ate a part of their sacrifices. We partake of Christ, who was offered as a sacrifice for us.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:13: "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:18: "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?"
 - b. Only the Israelites were permitted to partake of the sacrifices they offered; it was not the prerogative of others to offer sacrifices at the altar or to eat therefrom. We have an altar which others have no right to partake of, as long as they serve another altar. "The Jews boasted of their exclusive right to partake of their own consecrated sacrifices. This doubtless made a strong and deep impression on the minds of some of the weaker brethren; and they were in this way in danger of being misled by the false teaching of the judaizing party. But as an offset to all their vain speculations about meats, and drinks, and carnal ordinances, Paul here reminds his brethren, that we Christians have also our exclusive rights and privileges; that we too have a sacrifice of which to partake as well as the Jews; a sacrifice of infinite value, and which is quite sufficient to satisfy the desires of all who lawfully partake of it. From this, however, the unbelieving Jews were all debarred according to their own ritual, as our author now proceeds to show" (Milligan, p.378).
4. Verses 11-13: "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high
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priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

- a. “The point made by the Apostle is simply this; the Jews were not allowed to eat the flesh of any sin-offering whose blood was carried into the Sanctuary by the High Priest. The flesh of all such victims had to be carried without the camp, and there consumed by fire. ‘No sin-offering,’ says Moses, ‘whereof any of the blood is brought into the Tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the Holy Place, shall be eaten; it shall be burnt in the fire’ (Lev. 6:30). According to this law, then, as the Apostle now goes on to show, the Jews, *as Jews*, were all prohibited from partaking of the sacrifice of Christ” (Milligan, p.378).
 - b. His point to the Hebrew Christians: “If you go back to Judaism, you will forfeit Christ.” How is this so? Christ was sacrificed as a sin offering outside the camp, *i.e.*, outside Jerusalem. “And as the blood of Jesus was taken by himself into the heavenly Sanctuary to make an atonement for the people, so also, according to the law of the sin-offering, it was necessary that he should bear our sins on his own body without the camp. All therefore who would partake of the benefits of his sacrifice, must do so without the gate. They must forsake the camp of Israel, leaving Judaism behind them, and take upon them the reproach of Jesus, if they would be made partakers of the benefits of his death” (Milligan, p.378).
 - c. “Since it is true, that Jesus himself voluntarily suffered for our sake, without the gate of Jerusalem, all the pain, shame, and reproach of the cross; and since it is furthermore true that his sacrifice is really the only one that can meet and satisfy the wants and desires of our souls, let us therefore courageously follow him without the pale of Jerusalem, which is but as it were a temporary camp that will soon be broken up; and let us manfully bear the reproach of Christ whatever it may be. This he now proceeds to show will result in much gain and but little loss to us” (Milligan, p.379).
 - d. “Not only in the manner of his death was the Lord made a curse (Deut. 21:23), but also the very place of his death, without the city, beyond the pale, richly symbolizes the total break away from the old system. The old law failed signally in this, that it cast forth, upon what amounted to the city garbage dump, the holy Christ himself! This was according to prophecy; but it was the sin of Israel, as well as the sin of all men, that fulfilled the prophecy; and their only means of recovering grace in the sight of God was to reverse their decision, to go beyond the camp, identify with him whom they had cast out, and accept the mercy of God in Christ” (Coffman, p.351).
 - e. The death without the camp separated Jesus from the blessings available under the Old Law; the kind of death he experienced was a curse (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13); the place of death was also outside the gate. We must leave Judaism behind to have Christ. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21; cf. 5:4). The camp was literally destroyed soon after this epistle was written, so those who rejected Christ and held on to the Law, were soon without all that they held dear. What parts of the Old Testament system does the modern Jew have today? He has no high priest; he has no priests; he has no temple; he has no altar; he has no idea of his tribal identity; he has no prophets (they rejected the Old Testament prophets then and do so now, for their prophecies pointed to Jesus); they have no homeland which all of them occupy; they have no scriptural worship; they have no hope without Christ; they have no law, for only a few of them accept the Old Testament as the fully inspired and authoritative word of God [and that Law has now been replaced by the Gospel].
 - f. Those to whom Paul wrote were fully aware of the details of the law which he broached here; he did not have to explain these items to them. This is additional evidence that the ones addressed were Jews who had obeyed the gospel.
5. Verse 14: “For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”
- a. He points out to them directly that there is no continuing city here, one in which we may find lasting safety; this is especially significant in view of the fact that in a short time, Jerusalem was
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destroyed by the Roman army. On earth there is no continuing city. At the second coming of Christ, the earth will be dissolved, be burned up, and will vanish away, and the city that has unshakable foundations and which will continue forevermore, will be opened unto the redeemed.

- 1) Hebrews 12:26-27: "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this *word*, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:10-11: "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."
- b. But heaven remains! This is the spiritual city into which Christ has gone, and where he has prepared a place for his people to live. Heaven is described as the "new heaven and new earth" wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).
- 1) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 - 2) Colossians 3:1-4: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
 - 3) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."
 - 4) See also John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:1-11; 2 Peter 3:12-13.
- c. All those who put their trust in, and work in behalf of, material things will be left with an empty hand in the Judgment. The Jews trusted in Jerusalem but it was left a heap of rubble soon after this writing.
- 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:6-7: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out."
 - 4) Matthew 24:1-2: "And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to show him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." Compare: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34).
6. Verse 15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."
- a. The sacrifice of praise has reference to the voluntary peace and thank offerings of the Law (cf. Lev. 7:11-25).
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 29:31: "Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the

- LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings."
- 2) 2 Chronicles 33:16: "And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel."
- b. The sacrifices of praise indicated in the text are offered through Christ; as with every other form of praise and prayer, it is only through Christ that anyone can have access to the Father (1 Tim. 2:5).
- 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:19-22: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
 - 4) The great lesson of the Transfiguration is the truth that only Christ is God's spokesman for today; there was a time when Moses was to be heard, and a time when the prophets (Elijah, *etal*) were to be heeded (Matt. 17:1-5), but Christ is to be heard now in all things (Heb. 1:1-4; Acts 3:22-23).
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:5,9: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 6) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
- c. The fruit of the lips includes prayers and singing. We are to be ever grateful for heaven's blessings; we cannot be obedient or pleasing unto God without sincere gratitude. Ingratitude is one of the most common and most serious affronts to God. There is an old story about a farmer giving thanks for a meal in a city restaurant. Other patrons made fun of him, and asked if everyone where he came from gave thanks for their meals. His terse reply silenced them: "The pigs don't."
- 1) Luke 6:35: "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil."
 - 2) Luke 17:17: "And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?"
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:2: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."
7. Verse 16: "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."
- a. It is not sufficient to claim the virtues of Christianity; one must also demonstrate these virtues. The second son in one of the Lord's parables promised his father he would work in his vineyard, but failed to live up to his words.
- 1) Matthew 21:28-31: "But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots

- go into the kingdom of God before you."
- 2) We must offer the proper sacrifices of praise with our lips, and demonstrate the principles of Christianity in our lives, and otherwise be fully obedient to the gospel.
- b. The word *communicate* is used in the sense of *giving* in the passage. This reference to giving includes our contributions on the Lord's day and the aid we may offer to the needy privately. "It means that a Christian is obligated to give liberally, purposefully, continually, prayerfully, and faithfully of his money and other possessions for the forward movement of the faith. A child of God who fails in this duty must be adjudged lacking in a vital area of duty" (Coffman, pp.352f).
- 1) Romans 12:13: "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."
 - 2) Galatians 6:6: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."
 - 3) Philippians 4:15: "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: "But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
8. Verse 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."
- a. This verse contains a divine injunction for the saints to be obedient to the elders in the local church. This assumes that the directions given by the elders are scriptural. If they are scriptural, it does not matter whether we believe they are the best, we are under obligation to follow their rule. Only elders of a local congregation qualify for the obedience of this passage. Elders must meet stringent qualifications before being appointed to that office; they are given sufficient authority to discharge the duties that fall to them in that work. Every eldership is comprised of two or more qualified men:
- 1) Acts 14:23: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."
 - 2) Titus 1:5: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee."
 - 3) James 5:14: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."
- b. Those who have the rule over other Christians in a local congregations are called:
- 1) Elders: from *presbuterion*. This is translated "elders" or "presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14). "Eldership" is the nearest English equivalent of *presbuterion*.
 - 2) Bishops: from *episkopos*. This word means "overseers" or "superintendents." It is used interchangeably with "elders."
 - a) Acts 20:17: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."
 - b) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 3) Pastors: "shepherds." The verb form is used in Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2 (translated "feed"). This term is used interchangeably with "elders." Elders are to pastor (shepherd) the flock. The term is used also in Ephesians 4:11, where it is placed in distinction to the work of apostles, evangelists, and prophets.
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- c. Elders watch for the souls of the members under their leadership. They have the best interests of each member at heart. They must give account of those under their oversight. This is a frightful responsibility; if any error invades the congregation, they must make sure it is eradicated; if any sinful practice appears, they must correct it; if any problem develops, they must resolve it; if any member shirks his duty, they must find out why; if any member becomes unfaithful, they must exercise discipline.
 - d. The saints are commanded to obey the elders; in so-doing, the account given by the elders of those in their charge will be joyful. If otherwise, the account will cause the elders grief, and will result in the sinful members being punished. It is no trifling matter to be an elder or to act rebelliously to their authority.
 - e. Elders are not to be obeyed in anything wrong, in any moral or doctrinal matter. They are the Lord's appointed overseers of the local congregation; they have met all the qualification and have been selected and appointed by the brethren. They see that all things are done scripturally, and use their seasoned and wise judgment in all expedient matters. The New Testament requires that we submit to their godly rule.
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 5:17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."
9. Verses 18-19: "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech *you* the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner."
- a. The author requests that the brethren pray in his behalf, that he might be restored to them the sooner. The pronoun *we* is used editorially, for he changes to the personal pronoun *I* in verse nineteen.
 - b. He speaks of his honest belief that he has a good conscience; that is, that he is doing what he sincerely believes and knows to be right. He is not acting or writing hypocritically. Because of this they may pray for him confidently. Being an inspired apostle, what he writes was formulated by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. His request for their prayers in his behalf is a clear indication that he is known to those addressed; the statement concerning his being restored to them is another such indicator. He had been with them in the past; he was not now able to be with them; he asks that they pray that they might be together again. He desired to be with them, and he had reason to believe that they wanted him with them.

C. Hebrews 13:20-25: Closing Statements.

1. Verses 20-21: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen."
 - a. This passage contains his prayer to God in their behalf. It is his heart's desire that the God of peace should make them perfect in every work to do his will, doing that which was well-pleasing to him.
 - b. In referring to Jesus, he describes the Lord as the great shepherd of the sheep, as also the apostle Peter did in 1 Peter 5:4: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
 - c. He speaks of the blood of Christ, which pertains to the everlasting covenant, which is the New Testament (the gospel). The blood of Christ is the cleansing power behind the gospel.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

- 2) Hebrews 9:22-23: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."
- 3) The New Testament will never be replaced; it will be God's standard for all humanity from the time of its inauguration until the end of time.
- d. It is his desire that the brethren be made perfect, fully developed and mature, so as to be able to do every good work that is pleasing to God. He wants them to be complete, with nothing necessary missing. The aim he has for them is that they perform every work that pleases God, which is done as people obey the gospel and live by its direction.
 - 1) Philippians 2:13: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
2. Verse 22: "And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words."
 - a. He pleads with the brethren that they would accept the word of exhortation which in the few words of the epistle he had directed to them. Much more could have been written, but this was sufficient to accomplish the purposes in mind.
 - b. When the truth has been presented fully and clearly, the burden of responsibility shifts from the teacher to the student; the individual must examine the information, see that it is truth, and put it into practice in his life. If he has honestly investigated it, and has seen it is indeed the truth, if he is sincere, he will be obedient to what he has been taught.
 - c. No truth can be taught unless it is (1) presented clearly and (2) is received honestly. The teacher has no more obligation in the process than the student; the student has as much responsibility as does the teacher.
 - d. "In this, as in many other instances, we see the very delicate, gentle, and masterly touches of Paul's pen; who being himself the Apostle of the Gentiles, and somewhat estranged from his Hebrew brethren, deals with these as gently as the nature of the case will permit" (Milligan, p.384).
3. Verse 23: "Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you."
 - a. "The twenty-third verse,' as Delitzsch observes, 'exactly harmonizes with the idea that Paul was the author of the Epistle: for no one stood in closer relation to Timothy than Paul; and this relation became more and more intimate towards the close of the Apostle's life'" (Milligan, p.385).
 - b. The language scholars report that there is a degree of ambiguity in the verse relative to the knowledge that Timothy was set at liberty. The statement, "Know ye" could be understood to mean "You know already" or "Please do know." And "set at liberty" could have reference to his being released from some prison or that he had just finished some task he was assigned to do. There is no definite evidence in the scriptures of his being imprisoned, unless this is the passage. But there is no evidence that he had finished some task, either. The natural understanding of the passage is that Timothy had been in prison, and that the brethren had received word of his release.
 - c. Timothy had been with Paul in Rome.
 - 1) Philippians 1:1: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons."
 - 2) Colossians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus *our*

- brother."
- 3) 2 Timothy 4:9: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me."
- d. The only inspired writer or other prominent individual in the New Testament record who is known to us to have such a relationship with Timothy as indicated in this verse, was Paul. It is the most natural understanding of this verse to see Paul as the author, when he speaks so tenderly of his son in the faith.
4. Verses 24-25: "Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace *be* with you all. Amen."
- a. The conclusion of this epistle is in keeping with the usual conclusion as given to Paul's epistles. While the Holy Spirit is the real source of the letter, he selected words from the human instrument's mind and vocabulary.
- b. He asks the brethren to salute the elders of the congregations where these saints served. Even inspired apostles did not speak slightly of elders, but held them in high regards; we can do no less.
- c. Paul sent his salutations to all the saints. The saints were living members of the Lord's church. Men have invented the notion that one cannot be a saint unless he is dead and some official proclamation is made by which he is canonized.
- d. Those with Paul in Rome sent their salutations to the brethren. This naturally places Paul in the land of the Italians, precisely in Rome.
- e. He closes with the statement of his desire that the grace (of God) would be with them all.
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THE BETTER THINGS OF HEBREWS

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Book of Hebrews was addressed to Jewish Christians who were about to return to Judaism.
1. The inspired writer used heavenly wisdom to keep them faithful to Christ.
 2. There was much about Judaism that was appealing to some people.
 - a. The beautiful temple at Jerusalem appealed to many.
 - b. The impressive ceremonies of the Law had a strong appeal.
 - c. The rich garb worn by the High Priest and his assistants was attractive.
 - d. The worship acts were outward demonstrations, and did not rely on much inward insight.
 3. There were several forces at work to undermine their faith.
 - a. The peer pressure of Jews made life for a Christian very difficult.
 - b. The Christian's family would place great pressure on him to return to Judaism.
 - c. The Judaizing teachers used arguments to convince Christians to compromise the gospel.
 - d. The Jews and Romans carried on a war of persecution against the Christians.
- B. Hebrews lists several arguments to convince them of the superiority of the gospel to the law.
1. The book discusses the following points of superiority.
 - a. Christ is superior to the prophets and the angels: Hebrews 1-2.
 - b. Christ is superior to Moses: Hebrews 3:1—4:13.
 - c. Christ's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood: Hebrews 4:14—8:5.
 - d. The new covenant is superior to the old covenant: Hebrews 8:6-13.
 - e. The offerings under the gospel are superior to the offerings under the law: Hebrews 9:1—10:18.
 2. Paul uses the word *better* several times in the book to exalt Christianity over Judaism.
 - a. Hebrews 1:4: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - b. Hebrews 6:9: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."
 - c. Hebrews 7:7: "And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better."
 - d. Hebrews 7:19: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God."
 - e. Hebrews 7:22: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."
 - f. Hebrews 8:6: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."
 - g. Hebrews 9:23: "*It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."
 - h. Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - i. Hebrews 11:16: "But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."
 - j. Hebrews 11:35: "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."
 - k. Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
 - l. Hebrews 12:24: "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel."

II. DISCUSSION: A Consideration of these "Better" Verses.

- A. Christ is better than the angels.
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1. Hebrews 1:4: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?"
2. "The Jews had developed an elaborate system of angelology....They came to think of angels as intermediaries between God and man (and) also believed that there were millions of them. They had many duties. They delivered messages, presided over the destiny of Israel, controlled the movement of stars, manipulated history. There were angels over the sea, the frost, the dew, the rain, the snow, the hail, the thunder and lightening. There were angels who were wardens of hell and torturers of the damned. There were destroying angels and angels of punishment" (Robert L. Gargill, *Understanding the Book of Hebrews*, quoted by Coffman, *Commentary on Hebrews*, p.56). Because of their views, it was necessary to show that Christ is superior to the angels.
3. Angels delivered the Mosaic Law, which would cause prejudiced Jews to exalt angels above Jesus.
 - a. Acts 7:53: "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*."
 - b. Galatians 3:19: "Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."
 - c. Hebrews 2:2-3: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us..."
4. Since the power of angels was so great, and Christ is greater than they, the superior power of Christ is greatly exalted before us.
 - a. Isaiah 37:36: "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses."
 - b. Matthew 28:2-4: "And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*."
5. Angels were created by Christ.
 - a. Hebrews 1:7: "And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."
 - b. Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them."
 - c. Nehemiah 9:6: "Thou, *even* thou, *art* LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that *are* therein, the seas, and all that *is* therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."
 - d. Colossians 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."
6. Angels are in subjection to Christ. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22).
7. Angels worshiped Christ. "And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:6).
8. The Father called Christ his *Son*, and referred to him as *God*. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?...But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Heb. 1:5,8).
 - a. While Christ was on earth, he was for that time "made a little lower than the angels" in order to be able to die for mankind: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste

- death for every man” (Heb. 2:9).
- b. Following his earthly mission, he was exalted to the right hand of God to rule over the spiritual kingdom which the Father gave him.
 - 1) Daniel 7:13-14: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”
 - 2) Philippians 2:4-11: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
- B. ”Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you” (Heb. 6:9).
1. This statement is a contrast to the preceding verses.
 - a. Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
 - b. Using a figure of speech, Paul then stated that the earth brings forth all kinds of growth; some are good and useful; some are thorns and briars, which are burned. "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing; whose end *is* to be burned" (Heb. 6:7-8).
 - c. The strong warning of these verses affirms the impossibility of turning one back to Christ who has rejected him, and returned to Judaism.
 2. The apostle did not consider them to be apostates; they were still his beloved brethren. Although they were on the verge of falling away, they had not done so yet; there was hope for them.
 3. He stated his conviction that they would continue to retain those things which accompany salvation, which include the items indicated in verses 4-5: "...Enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come."
 4. In consequence to their continued faithfulness, God would not forget all their many labors. "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:10).
 - a. Studying God’s word is wonderfully important to faithfulness; those who fall away usually are those who study the least.
 - b. These brethren had been accused earlier of neglecting to study God’s word. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).
 - c. But they had continued to minister to the saints. If they lived up to Paul’s expectation, they
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would be rewarded richly for their faithful service.

C. Under Christ, we have a better hope than that which the Mosaic Law provided.

1. Hebrews 7:19: "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God."
 - a. The law made nothing perfect.
 - 1) Galatians 2:16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - b. The Old Law required perfect obedience; once a man violated an ordinance of the law, he was condemned by the law as a lawbreaker; it contained no provision for pardon. It was only a shadow of the good things to come.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - 2) Galatians 2:21: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."
2. The gospel of Christ includes provision for full pardon. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:14).
 - a. The gospel has a provision for the pardon of alien sinners.
 - 1) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 8:37-39: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."
 - 5) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. The gospel has a provision for the pardon of erring Christians.
 - 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - 2) James 5:16-20: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and

- the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
- 3) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
3. The gospel of Christ offers us close fellowship with the Almighty, which is the primary application made in the text concerning the better hope.
 - a. Under the law, the Jews could approach God in public worship only through the work of the Levitical priests. The ordinary sacrifices were offered by the priests; on the day of atonement, the high priest had special duties to perform in behalf of all the people, including himself.
 - b. The Mosaic system had mere men to be the intermediaries between man and God. In a sense, the worshipers were kept at arm's length from God.
 - c. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - d. Ephesians 2:12-13: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."
 4. Under the gospel system, each Christian is a priest, and can offer worship unto God through Christ, without the agency of some other human.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - b. 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - c. Hebrews 13:15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."
 5. Under the Mosaic system, the great acts of public worship were to be offered at the temple in Jerusalem; the Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. The gospel system removes the need for special places of worship, and emphasizes the nature and kind of worship that is accepted. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:20-24).
- D. Christ is the mediator of a better testament.
1. This better testament is the New Testament (the gospel system).
 - a. Hebrews 7:22: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament."
 - b. Hebrews 8:6: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."
 2. No oath was given for the Levitical priesthood, but a great oath from God confirmed the priesthood of Christ.
 - a. Psalms 110:4: "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the
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- order of Melchizedek."
- b. Hebrews 7:17: "For he testifieth, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." God will never set aside Christ's priesthood—he swore to this.
3. This oath shows the immutability of the gospel, that it is God's last revelation to man. Christ left heaven, lived among men, suffered persecution, endured death on the cross, was buried, was raised from the dead, ascended to sit at God's right hand, and now intercedes for us.
 - a. These facts show the absolute dependability and unending nature of the New Testament. It is the plan God formulated in eternity before time began; he timed its inception perfectly; he intends that it is to remain in force until the end of time.
 - b. "When God is said to repent, the meaning is that he simply wills a change; and when it is said that he will not repent, it means that he will never will a change. And consequently there is nothing beyond the priesthood of Christ, to which it will ever give place, as a means of accomplishing God's benevolent purposes in the redemption of mankind" (Robert Milligan, *Hebrews*, p.210).
 - c. The immutability of the gospel is also taught elsewhere.
 - 1) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 2) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." *Once* means "once for all time" (cf. Heb. 9:28).
 4. The New Testament gospel is superior to the Old Testament law for several reasons.
 - a. It was established on the basis of God's oath that Christ would be a priest forever.
 - b. It offers full pardon from every manner of sin on the conditions God gave.
 - c. It gives us the privilege to "draw nigh unto God."
 - d. It is the substance, not the mere shadow, of God's eternal plan.
 - e. It is the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25), while the law was a yoke of bondage (Acts 15:10).
 - f. It has a perfect mediator (Christ), whereas the law had only Moses and the high priests.
- E. Christ's gospel offers better promises than Moses' law could give.
1. Hebrews 8:6: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."
 2. The Mosaic system placed great emphasis on earthly rewards, while the gospel system places greatest emphasis on spiritual blessings and attainments.
 3. Faithfulness in tithing under Moses resulted in financial and material increase, but under Christ the blessing is spiritual.
 - a. Malachi 3:8-10: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*"
 - b. Acts 20:35: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8: "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."
 - d. Philippians 4:17: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your
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- account.” By giving to Paul, they were more greatly blessed with the spirit of giving.
- e. 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."
4. The blessings of obedience to God under Moses were measured in terms of material prosperity, continued ownership of the land, and long life; under Christ the blessings are spiritual blessings here and especially in heaven.
 - a. Deuteronomy 5:16: "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."
 - b. Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - c. Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 5. Worldly-minded Jews of the Old Testament centered their hopes on prosperity in the land, financial well-being, a sizeable number of children (especially boys), and other similar advantages and possessions. Under Christ, the faithful focus on bringing honor to God and Christ, helping others to become Christians, and to enter heaven.
 - a. Colossians 3:1-4: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
 - b. 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - c. 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
 - d. Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - e. Hebrews 11:16: "But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
 6. Specifically, the promises we have in Christ include these great things.
 - a. Forgiveness of all our past sins when we obey the gospel, and pardon of those sins we commit afterwards.
 - 1) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one

with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

- b. The assurance of success as we labor for the Lord.
 - 1) Romans 8:31: "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?"
 - 2) Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 - 3) 1 John 5:4: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith."
- c. God's providential help as we face the challenges and difficulties of life.
 - 1) Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 - 3) Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
- d. Fellowship with the best people on earth.
 - 1) Mark 10:30: "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 12:25-26: "That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."
 - 3) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life."
- e. Privilege of prayer.
 - 1) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
- f. Moral purity.
 - 1) Colossians 3:5-11: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all."
 - 2) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
- g. The privilege of helping the needy.
 - 1) Psalms 41:1-3: "Blessed *is* he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will

- strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness."
- 2) Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - 3) Matthew 25:40: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me."
- h. The blessing of contentment within ourselves and peace with God.
- 1) Philippians 4:11-12: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:6-8: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."
 - 3) Romans 5:1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- i. We will be raised from the dead at the return of Christ. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).
- j. We will have a new, spiritual body. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).
- k. We will be united with the redeemed of all ages.
- 1) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 3) Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
- F. Christ has provided better sacrifices.
1. Hebrews 9:23: "*It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."
 2. The tabernacle, which was purified by blood, was a type of heavenly things. The Holy Place was representative of the church of Christ; the Most Holy Place was representative of heaven; the table of showbread represented the Lord's Supper; the incense represented the prayers of the saints; and the candlestick represented the light of God's word.
 3. The church is comprised of people whose souls have been purified by the blood of Christ. His blood makes it possible for us to enter the church (his body) and to go on to heaven at the end.
 4. The writer showed in the chapter the necessity of blood in both the Old and New Testament systems, and exalts the blood of Christ over the blood of animals.
 - a. Hebrews 9:18, 20-22: "Whereupon neither the first *testament* was dedicated without blood.... This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by
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the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

- b. Hebrews 9:13-15: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 5. The sacrifice of Christ is vastly superior to the sacrifices of the Judaism.
- G. Christ has provided for a better resurrection.
1. Hebrews 11:35: "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection."
 2. There were cases of resurrection in the Old Testament which involved women.
 - a. 1 Kings 17:17-24: the son of the widow of Zarephath was raised by Elijah.
 - b. 2 Kings 4:18-37: the son of the Shunemite woman was raised by Elisha.
 3. There is a better resurrection.
 - a. Those who were raised from the dead in Bible times all died again (except Christ); when we are raised at the end of time, there will be no more physical death for us.
 - b. Those who are to be raised from the dead at the end of time will be divided into two groups: those who were faithful to God's word will enter heaven; those who lived in disobedience will be consigned to *Gehenna*.
 - c. To be raised to eternal life is a far better resurrection than to be raised to live a short time more on earth, and it is certainly a vastly better resurrection to be raised to enter heaven than to be raised to eternal condemnation.

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. Christ's blood speaks better things than does the blood of Abel.
1. Hebrews 12:24: "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel."
 2. Abel's blood cried out from the ground unto God (Gen. 4:10). This is a figure of speech, denoting the fact that his death called for punishment to be inflicted on his murderer.
 3. Christ's blood has a much more powerful plea to the Father: it calls on God to forgive the guilty.
 - a. Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - b. Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"
- B. These powerful arguments could keep the Hebrew saints from falling away.
1. Christ is better than the angels: Hebrews 1:4.
 2. There was hope for them if they had not yet forsaken Christ: Hebrews 6:9.
 3. Christ is able to make us perfect by his gospel: Hebrews 7:19.
 4. Christ is the mediator of a better testament: Hebrews 7:22; 8:6.
 5. Christ offers better promises than did the law of Moses: Hebrews 8:6.
 6. Christ's sacrifice is better than those offered under Judaism: Hebrews 9:23.
 7. Christ provides for a better resurrection.
 8. Christ's blood speaks better things than does the blood of Abel: Hebrews 12:24.
- C. Commitment to these same great truths will bring us salvation and keep us from falling away.

Lessons From the Tabernacle

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. The Old Testament's laws and commands are not binding on people today.

1. Colossians 2:12-16: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."
2. But there are many things in the Old Testament which are of great interest and importance to everyone who wishes to serve God in the Christian Age:
 - a. Romans 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."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:7, 11: "Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play....Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
3. And there are many types and shadows given in the Old Testament which are fulfilled in the New Testament. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1).

B. There are many New Testament truths illustrated by the various aspects of the Tabernacle.

1. This study deals with the beautifully clear, pictorial outline of certain things in the Christian system illustrated by the tabernacle. "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:1-6).
 2. The Lord gave the design for the Tabernacle, the materials to be used, and all the significant details pertaining to its construction and its services, along with warnings: "And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount" (Exodus 25:40).
 3. The Tabernacle was to be a representative dwelling place for God.
 - a. Exodus 25:8-9: "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make *it*."
 - b. 1 Kings 8:27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"
 - c. Acts 17:24: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands."
 4. God met with men in the tabernacle: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the
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testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel"(Ex. 25:22).

5. The church of Christ is the place where God meets with men today, and he dwells in the church indirectly today.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 6:17-18: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - c. Ephesians 2:21-22: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - d. 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

II. DISCUSSION:

A. The Outer Court of the Tabernacle is representative of the world.

1. The Israelites could enter the court, but since the average Hebrew was not a priest, he was not allowed to enter the Tabernacle proper. One had to have certain definite qualifications before he was permitted to enter the Holy Place.
2. Those who would enter God's true tabernacle today (the church), must be converted from the world, and lose the stain of sin.
 - a. Isaiah 6:1-3: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory."
 - b. Isaiah 6:5: "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
 - c. Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - d. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - e. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"
 - f. Ephesians 2:12: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
 - g. Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." [Since nothing contaminated can enter Heaven, so nothing tainted can enter the Lord's church. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17)].
3. No one could enter the Holy Place without meeting the qualifications and receiving the purification of priestly appointment, so no one can enter the True Tabernacle without meeting the qualifications of gospel obedience (faith, repentance, confession), and receiving the purification provided by the blood of Christ in baptism.

- a. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- b. Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- c. 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- d. Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

B. The Altar of Burnt Offerings is representative of the Sacrifice of Christ.

1. The Altar was used in offering up the many sacrifices which God commanded Israel to offer.
 - a. Leviticus 9:7: "And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded."
 - b. Leviticus 17:11: "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."
2. The sacrifices involved the offering of the blood of animals.
3. The Israelites provided the sacrifices which were costly to the individuals.
4. Without the shedding of the blood of the animals offered, there was no means of their approaching God. Compare: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).
5. The Antitype is in the Lord's sacrifice of himself for the sins of all men.
 - a. Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - b. Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - c. Hebrews 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."
 - d. Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - e. Hebrews 10:10: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus

Christ once *for all*."

- f. Hebrews 10:16-19: "This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these *is, there is* no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."
- g. Hebrews 10:22: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

C. The Laver has its counterpart in the New Testament System.

1. The laver was a basin containing water: "And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations" (Ex. 30:18).
2. The Type involves the following particulars.
 - a. God specified its location: Between the tabernacle and altar: "Thou shalt also make a laver *of* brass, and his foot *also of* brass, to wash *withal*: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein" (Exodus 30:18).
 - b. Those entering the tabernacle were to lay aside their old clothes before washing and putting on the priestly garments.
 - c. Those entering the tabernacle were to wash before entering lest they die.
 - 1) Exodus 29:4: "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water."
 - 2) Exodus 30:19-20: "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD."
 - d. After washing and before entering, they were to put on their priestly garments prior to assuming their priestly duties (Exodus 29:4ff).
 - e. They had to be ceremonially pure before they could perform their priestly services acceptably: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver *of* brass, and his foot *also of* brass, to wash *withal*: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, *even* to him and to his seed throughout their generations" (Ex. 30:17-21).
3. The Antitype holds true to the pattern.
 - a. God specified the location of baptism: between Christ's sacrifice and salvation.
 - 1) Acts 2:36-38: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:21: "The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
 - b. We baptize rebellious children of the devil; they are rebelling against Satan and desire to obey God sincerely.
 - c. We must lay aside our practices of sin (by repenting) before we can be washed.

- 1) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Romans 6:6: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
 - 4) Colossians 3:8-9: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds."
- d. The impurities (guilt) of sin are removed in baptism.
- 1) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 2) Romans 6:17-18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:19-22: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
- e. After this washing, we put on our spiritual garments.
- 1) Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - 2) Colossians 3:15-20: "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."
- f. We are now spiritually pure and our services can be offered acceptably: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:5,9).
- D. The Holy Place typifies the church of Christ.
1. Bible statements:
 - a. Acts 15:16-17: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are."
 - c. 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - d. Hebrews 9:7-11: "But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this
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signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."

2. There are several items of significance pertaining to the Type.
 - a. There was only one entrance.
 - b. Definite qualifications had to be met before one was authorized to enter the Holy Place: he had to be of the right lineage and age.
 - 1) Exodus 28:1: "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons."
 - 2) Numbers 3:10: "And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."
 - 3) Numbers 4:1-3: "And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation."
 - c. Only those who had been washed were permitted to enter.
 - d. Those who entered did not do so merely for their own pleasure and benefit; they entered to serve God according to his revealed will: "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service *of God*" (Heb. 9:6).
 - e. Those qualified to enter the Holy Place were afforded the privilege of eating the showbread and burning incense upon the altar.
 - f. Those who were in the Holy Place had the benefits furnished by the candlestick.
 - g. The only entrance into the Most Holy Place was through the Holy Place.
3. The church is the great antitype.
 - a. There is only one entrance: Obedience to the gospel which culminates in baptism at which point the Lord adds us to the church.
 - 1) Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - b. The qualifications required before one can enter the Lord's church are: faith, repentance, confession of faith in Christ, and baptism for the remission of sins. Underlying this process is the fervent, loving commitment to serve the Lord.
 - c. One must be washed from his sins.
 - 1) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-23: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible

- seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
- 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
- d. While there are immeasurable blessings and privileges of being in Christ, yet we are not in the church merely for our pleasure; we are here to serve.
- 1) Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
 - 2) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
- e. Only those who are faithful members of the Lord's church have the privilege of eating the Lord's supper and praying.
- 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - 3) Luke 22:16-20: "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."
 - 4) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 11:20-30: "When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he* took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
- f. Faithful members of the Lord's church see by the light of God's word.
- 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) Acts 20:32: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are

- sanctified."
- 3) 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 5) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - 6) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - 7) 2 Peter 1:1-11: "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 8) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- g. Only by going through the church can any accountable person have hope of entering heaven.
- 1) Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 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."
 - 3) Matthew 16:17-18: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:24: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:5-11: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The
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Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. 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."

E. The Candlestick depicts the Word of God.

1. The thick tenting material closed out all the natural light, dust, and rain. The candlestick of the Tabernacle was to burn continually, and furnished the only light for the Holy Place: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually" (Lev. 24:1-4).
2. The Word of God is the only light needed in the Antitype, the Lord's church.
 - a. All man-made precepts, commandments, and creeds are specifically excluded. We must insulate the church from all error!
 - 1) Mark 7:7-13: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
 - 2) Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 3) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - b. God's word gives light.
 - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 2) Psalms 119:130: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."
 - 3) Acts 26:18: "To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
3. While we draw light and strength from the word, we must also be proclaimers and defenders of the word.
 - a. Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every

- creature."
- b. Romans 1:14-16: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - c. 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - d. Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
4. Our lives, words, and attitudes are to be reflectors of the light of the word of God.
- a. Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Philippians 2:15-16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
- F. The Altar of Incense has its counterpart in the Lord's Church.
1. Exodus 30:1-9: "And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: *of* shittim wood shalt thou make it. A cubit *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits *shall be* the height thereof: the horns thereof *shall be* of the same. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make *it*; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. And thou shalt make the staves *of* shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. And thou shalt put it before the veil that *is* by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon."
 2. A morning and evening ceremony was held each day in obedience to God's decree that this should be done perpetually. As the priests were burning the incense in the Holy Place, the people would be outside the tabernacle praying.
 3. Prayer is the counterpart of this service in the gospel system.
 - a. Revelation 5:8: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." In John's vision, the golden vials full of odors (incense) represented the prayers of the saints.
 - b. Prayer is a perpetual privilege and obligation for members of the Lord's church.
 - 1) Matthew 6:6-15: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily
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bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

- 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."
- 3) 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."

G. The Table of Showbread has its counterpart in the Lord's Church.

1. This table contained twelve loaves of bread which were replaced every sabbath.
 - a. The priests were to eat the loaves that were replaced. "Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually. And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it *is* most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute" (Lev. 24:3-9).
 - b. Only the priests were authorized to eat this bread.
2. The Lord's Supper is the counterpart in the church of Christ.
 - a. Every first day of the week, the saints come together and eat this supper in remembrance of Christ. It is a perpetual command.
 - 1) Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 11:20-30: "When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he* took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
 - b. Only Christians have the right to partake of it.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:5,9: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 2) Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in

breaking of bread, and in prayers."

- 3) Luke 22:16-20: "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."
- 4) 1 Corinthians 11:20-30: "When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he* took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

H. The Veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place has its counterparts.

1. The Veil is described in Exodus 26:31-37 as a very costly and beautiful curtain: "And thou shalt make a veil *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made: And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim *wood* overlaid with gold: their hooks *shall be of* gold, upon the four sockets of silver. And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy *place* and the most holy. And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy *place*. And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars *of* shittim *wood*, and overlay them with gold, *and* their hooks *shall be of* gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them."
 - a. It was made of fine twined linen of cunning work and dyed with the costly colors of blue, scarlet, and purple.
 - b. Only the High Priest could go beyond the veil, and that only on the Day of Atonement when he offered the blood of the atoning sacrifice for all: "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" (Heb. 9:7; cf. Lev. 16).
 - c. The Veil concealed the items in the Most Holy Place: the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat.
2. The Veil, and its being rent at the Lord's death, depicts several significant things.
 - a. It symbolizes the mysteries of God's eternal plan which was unrevealed until the New Testament was given
 - 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was

- kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
- 2) 2 Corinthians 3:14-16: "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 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: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- b. It symbolizes for us death by which we leave this world and enter eternity. Its having been rent depicts the great truth that Christ, by his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, has won victory for us over death.
- 1) Isaiah 25:7-8: "And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:20-22: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:55-57: "O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Hebrews 2:14-15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
- c. The rending of the veil at the death of Christ symbolizes the abrogation of the Old Covenant.
- 1) Matthew 27:50-51: "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 3:14-16: "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:7-10: "But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while
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- as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation."
- d. It symbolized the separation between God and men, and the need for a mediator which role the Levitical high priest filled. The rending of the veil proclaims that all men are on equal standing with God and need no human priest as mediator.
 - 1) Matthew 23:8: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:5: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:5.9: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ....But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 4) Revelation 1:6: "And he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (ASV).
 - e. Its rending symbolizes the fact that Christ, our High Priest, is in heaven, and has offered the atoning sacrifice for us: "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth" (Heb. 9:6-17).
 - f. The veil being rent pictures the fact that the way into heaven has now been opened.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:8: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:19-22: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."
- I. The Most Holy Place represents Heaven.
1. The Ark of the Covenant rested there.
 - a. It contained the tables of the law, Aaron's rod that budded and a pot of manna; the golden censer of Hebrews 9:4 is likely the one from the Holy Place which was taken into the Most
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Holy Place on the day of atonement: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that *is* upon the testimony, that he die not: And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times" (Lev. 16:12-14).

- b. It was covered by the Mercy Seat, which was made of pure gold.
 - c. It was in this place, at the mercy seat, that God met with his people: "And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which *are* upon the ark of the testimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 25:22).
 - d. No artificial light was in this place; the glory of God was sufficient light.
2. The Antitype is Heaven itself.
- a. The ark of the covenant and the tables of the law suggest the New Covenant.
 - 1) Jeremiah 31:31-34: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:7-13: "For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away."
 - b. The manna suggests Christ who is the bread of life: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:47-51).
 - c. The mercy seat suggests our Advocate and Mediator in Heaven—Christ: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2).
 - d. The Most Holy Place itself is Heaven.
 - 1) Hebrews 6:19-20: "Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,

and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

- 2) Hebrews 9:8: "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:24: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."
3. There is no need for the sun, moon, or other light; the glory of God the Father and of the Son is sufficient: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

III. CONCLUSION:

A. God Gave the Details Pertaining to the Building and Services of the Tabernacle.

1. He commanded the placing of the furniture and the other arrangements thereof.
2. The showbread was eaten and the incense was burned inside, not outside, the Tabernacle.
 - a. Leviticus 24:1-9: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations. He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually. And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it *is* most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute."
 - b. God warned that all things were to be according to his plan.
 - 1) Exodus 25:40: "And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."

B. Those who are in Christ do not need baptism.

1. Some try to move baptism and put it in the church, and speak of it as "Christian" baptism. But it is not for a Christian, but in order to become a Christian.
2. The Laver was outside the Tabernacle; the priests had to wash there before they were allowed to enter the Holy Place. Baptism puts one into the church (into Christ).
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - b. Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - c. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."

C. On entering the Holy Place (the church of Christ), one is prepared to serve.

1. We are not members of the body of Christ merely for our own pleasure and profit, but to serve God and our fellowman.
 - a. Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

- b. 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - c. Ephesians 2:8-10: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
2. Our obligations are ordained by the God of heaven:
- a. **To worship of God:** "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24).
 - b. **To live pure lives:** "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).
 - c. **To spread the gospel:** "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).
 - d. **To defend the faith:** "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3; cf. 2 Tim. 4:7c; 2 Cor. 2:17).
3. Thus do we prepare for Heaven!
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