



“The righteous . . . shall grow
like a cedar in Lebanon”

Psalm 92:12

Reading Companion
to the Book of
Hebrews

*“So they read in the book in the law of God . . .
and caused them to understand the reading”*

Nehemiah 8:8

By

Bill Daniels

Preface

The contents of this book were the essence of a course taught in the Bible College at New Germany Baptist Church in 2004. In order to present these materials in a form more readily available for further class use we have kept the class divisions used in the course. Listed separately on the Contents page you will find the starting pages for both the 19 class portions as well as for the 13 chapters of the book of Hebrews.

Full of severe warnings, this book of Hebrews is a stirring challenge to every soul hovering close to Christianity but still outside of refuge in the only Saviour. There could be no more reasonable argument presented for entrance into Christ than is found in these chapters. Jesus is “better” in every way than all that came through Moses. He is the perfect Mediator between God and man. There is no other answer, no other Messiah yet to come, for none could possibly be better. *“Yea, He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend”* (SoS. 5:16).

Bill Daniels

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“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”

(Hebrews 4:14)

Class 1 – Introduction

This letter to the Hebrews fulfils a very unique function in the canon of Scripture. It is an eye-opening commentary on the Old Testament (O.T.), for in it we find explanation for;

- *Why* God's people were to do what the books of Moses required in the O.T. era.
- Some of the meaning of the ritual requirements of the law and levitical system.
- How it all pointed to the fulfilment in Jesus Christ. For;
 - He is the once-for-all sacrifice for sin, answering to all of the O.T. sacrifices.
 - In Him is fulfilled every kind of cleansing required by Moses.
 - He is the true Mediator.
 - He Himself stands as the torn temple veil between man and the holiest of holies of God's presence.
 - He is the eternal High Priest.
 - He is the fulfilment of every O.T. type;
 - Mercy Seat

- Red Heifer
- Passover
- Firstfruits
- Firstborn Son
- Sabbath
- Table of Showbread
- Candelabra
- Kinsman Redeemer
- Manna
- Etc.

Therefore the great abundance of O.T. quotations found in this book of Hebrews (approx. 40). Jesus Christ is presented here as the very substance while the O.T. law and levitical system were merely the shadow of His approaching presence. The message of Hebrews is all about Jesus Christ, with the focus perhaps shading more to who He is rather than what He did, His *Person* more than His *performance*. From beginning to end we have here a lucid demonstration of both the humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book is an urgent, clarion call to carefully consider that One and what He has said;

- 3:1 – “*consider . . . Christ Jesus*”
- 2:1-3 – “*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things. . . which at the first*

began to be spoken by the Lord . . .”

Audience and Author

From the earliest days of church history the book of Hebrews was titled simply “*pros hebraious*” or “*To Hebrews*”. It’s one of that small handful of New Testament (N.T.) books aimed particularly at Jewish readers. The book seems to have been written to a particular group of Jewish people somewhere in the Roman world (13:18-19, 23), but beyond them the book carried a message to all the Jews and to all men.

Though there is much difference of opinion on the question, nobody knows for sure who wrote the book of Hebrews. There is no claim to authorship within its message. This is an intriguing point in itself and begs the question why not? Why the secrecy? We can probably make a pretty good guess as to who wrote it. The message of the book in many ways points to the Apostle Paul’s hand in it;

- We see *Jesus Christ* as such a central theme in Paul’s epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, & Colossians as well.
- As in this book, the matter of where the Jews

and their religion fit in with the salvation offered in Christ by faith was a concept Paul was at pains to explain in his epistles (Romans & Galatians).

- From a human perspective the Apostle Paul was highly trained in the O.T. under that eminent doctor of the Law, Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
- Some of the thoughts and expressions in Hebrews are similar to Paul's;
 - o The Hab.2:4 quote in Heb. 10:38 is found elsewhere in the N.T. only within Paul's writings (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 4:26).
 - o Both Paul and the writer of Hebrews refer to Jerusalem in an allegorical sense, representing that blessed place of liberty we have entered in Christ (Heb. 12:22; Gal. 4:26).
- Both Paul and this author were associated with Timothy (13:23).
- The writer spoke of his "*bonds*" (10:34) or imprisonment, as Paul often did in his prison epistles.

Apparently this book was originally included in the

canon of the N.T. partly because the early church believed it to be authored by the Apostle Paul. The author could perhaps have been one of Paul's close co-workers such as Luke or Apollos (Titus 3:13). The point has been made by some that we find phrases and words in the book of Hebrews found elsewhere in the N.T. only within Luke's writings. A joint authorship of Paul and Luke during Paul's first Roman imprisonment would make a lot of sense, perhaps even while he was being held in Caesarea, fresh from his fruitless efforts with the Jews in Jerusalem. Paul certainly had much involvement with the Jews while under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:17-31). And the comment in 13:24 may suggest the epistle was written from Italy.

So why did Paul not identify himself if he was involved in the writing? Perhaps because his name was not generally cherished among the unbelieving Hebrew people of his day. The bitter Jewish hatred that caused his first imprisonment at Rome was proof enough of that. The author was striving for the minds and hearts of unbelieving Jews, many of whom would not listen at all if they knew it was Paul.

Purpose

To understand the purpose of the book of Hebrews we must understand what a Jew faced when he left the Jewish religion and joined himself to Christianity. It was no small step! There was the pull of long-standing Jewish tradition based upon the books of Moses and backed by the greatest names in Jewish history. There was the temple of God still standing there on the temple mount in Jerusalem, a truly impressive symbol of the worship of the true God with all of the religious practices associated with it still ongoing. There was the bitter scorn and exclusion of family and friends levelled against all who went “apostate” from the Jewish faith, that celebrated religion of their faithful forefathers. There was relentless persecution from Jewish quarters directed at such “deserters”. The book of Acts reveals how ferocious was the Jewish response to the gospel message. How much more so when they lost some of their own to Christ. All of these influences combined to form a powerful force drawing a Jewish convert to Christ back into the ancient religion of his people. Indeed the religion of Christ was such an extreme offence to the Jewish religionists. For the Christian religion dared to claim the same book, yet at the same time denying;

- The need to keep the very law of God given

through Moses.

- The need of the proper levitical priesthood specified in the Mosaic Law.
- The need for the sacrifices, rites, and rituals decreed by God in His Book.

Do you see how it was such a step of faith and of the highest courage for a Jew to leave the religion of his fathers for Christ? And so this letter to the Hebrews was written to explain and encourage and warn. It was given to help resolve the conflicts, anxious uncertainties, and misunderstandings in the heart of that Jewish convert, and in those among the Jews who might be leaning toward Christ as well. There was the need to teach the Hebrew world (with the rest of the world) about;

- Who Jesus really is.
- What He brought to the world and accomplished.
- How Jesus fit into and fulfilled the O.T.
- How the details of the Jews' religion were actually only ever just the *shadow* of the coming Christ, fulfilled and finished in Him. That who Christ is and what He brought to the earth was indeed "*better*" than Moses and

what came through him.

- Christ is better than the angels (1:4).
- Bringing a better hope (7:19).
- Mediator of a better covenant (7:22; 8:6).
- Founded upon better promises (8:6).
- Having a better priesthood (7:7) and ministry (8:6).
- Offering better sacrifices (9:23).
- Providing in heaven;
 - A better substance (10:34).
 - And a better country (11:16).

Obviously “*better*” is a key word in this book (found 12 times). And together with this is the additional focal idea expressed in words such as “*eternal*” (5 times), “*forever*” (7 times), and related terms. What Christ offers is *eternal*, in contrast to the *temporary* nature of the old Mosaic covenant. A saved Jew must understand that what he had received in Christ (and what was available to the unsaved) was a far greater gain than what could be found in the religion of his fathers. He must understand that the religion of Christ was the completion and grand

finale of what began in Moses.

There was need to encourage some who were growing weary and discouraged under the continued pressure of persecution. For having begun in their Christian experience there was need to “*go on unto perfection*” (6:1) in Christ. Terms such as “*perfection*” and “*made perfect*” (found 11 times) express another key concept in this book. This is not speaking of sinless perfection, but of Christian maturity (5:12-14). To this end Hebrews teaches of Christ’s continuing ministry in our behalf as our great High Priest (7:25).

There was need to warn some who professed to have entered into salvation in Christ, but who were only *professors* and no true *possessors* of eternal life. Thus the writer of Hebrews included several strong warnings, for there was great danger;

- Of some neglecting or missing “*so great salvation*” offered in Christ (2:1-4).
- Of some hardening their hearts in unbelief and going back to the Jewish religion (3:7-16).
- Of some not progressing in their Christian life (5:11-6:8).

- Of some despising and impatiently casting away their confidence in Christ's salvation through the trials they were facing (10: 26-39).
- Of some refusing the voice of God (12:25-29).

Common to these warning sections and throughout the book is the threatening little word “*lest*” (11 times), indicating the risks involved should the specified command be ignored.

Clearly the author was convinced that the need of the hour, when there was risk of misunderstanding or misbehaving or missing eternal life, was to know who Jesus Christ truly is as the Son of God and Son of Man. Peter as well affirms our escape from “*the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (II Pet. 2:20). There was need to understand the true significance of what Jesus did and continues to do in His sacrifice, priesthood, and lordship. Throughout the book Christ is held forth as *superior*;

- To the prophets (1:1-3).
- To the angels (1:4-2:3).
- To Moses (3:1-6).
- To Aaron the high priest (4:14-5:10).

Above every O.T. institution or individual Jesus Christ is set forth above and beyond all. So the aim of the book is to lead on to a genuine, growing Christianity through growth in understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done and continues to do for us. *“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”* (4:14).

Consider

The message of this book speaks strongly concerning;

- Backsliding Christians.
 - Religious unsaved who are mere professors and not true possessors of Christ.
 - Steadfast endurance in the Christian life (chap. 10-12).
 - Separation from the world even though it may mean severest suffering.
-

Word Studies

“Forever”

- 5:6; 6:20; 7:17 – Jesus *“a priest forever”*.
- 10:12 – *“One sacrifice for sins forever”*.
- 10:14 – The sanctified *“perfected forever”*.
- 13:8 – *“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever”*.

“Eternal”

- 5:9 – *“The Author of eternal salvation”*.
- 6:2 – *“The doctrine . . . of eternal judgment”*.
- 9:12 – Christ, *“by His own blood . . having obtained eternal redemption”*.
- 9:14 – *“Through the eternal Spirit offered Himself”*.
- 9:15 – The called *“receive the promise of eternal inheritance”*.

“Everlasting”

- 13:20 – *“The blood of the everlasting covenant”*.

“Evermore”

- 7:28 – *“The Son, who is consecrated for evermore”*.

“Lest”

- 2:1 – *“Lest at any time we should let them [the things we have heard] slip”, “give the more earnest heed”.*

- **Pay attention to God!**

- 3:12 – *“Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”, “take heed”.*

- **Pay attention to others!**

- 3:13 – *“Lest any of you be hardened”, “exhort one another daily . . . today”.*

- **Care enough to exhort!**

- 4:1 – Lest *“any of you should seem to come short of . . . entering into His rest”, “let us . . . fear”.*

- **Fear coming short!**

- 4:11 – *“Lest any man fall after the same example”, “labour to enter into that rest”.*

- **Strive / labour to find God’s rest!**

- 11:28 – *“Lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them”, “he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood”.*

- 12:3 – *“Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds”, consider Christ’s endurance of “such contradiction of sinners against Himself”.*

- **Be followers of Christ!**

- 12:13 – *Lest the “lame be turned out of the way”, “make straight paths for your feet.”*

- **Do right for the sake of those following!**

- 12:15 – *“Lest any man fail of the grace of God”, “looking diligently”.*
- 12:15 – *“Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you . . . many be defiled”, “looking diligently”.*
- 12:16 – *“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person”, “looking diligently”.*

- **Be a shepherd of others!**

“Better”

- 1:4 – *“Much better than the angels”.*
- 6:9 – *The saved better than those falling away.*
- 7:7 – *Melchizedek and his priesthood better*

than Moses and his Aaronic priesthood.

- 7:19 – Christ brings a *“better hope”* than the law brought.
- 7:22 – *“Jesus made a surety of a better testament”*.
- 8:6 – Christ;
 - *“Obtained a more excellent ministry”*.
 - *“Is the mediator of a better covenant”*.
 - *“Established upon better promises”*.
- 9:23 – It was necessary for *“heavenly things”* to be purified with *“better sacrifices”* than their earthly patterns.
- 10:34 – *“Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance”*.
- 11:16 – *“Now they desire a better country . . . an heavenly”*.
- 11:35 – *“Tortured . . . that they might obtain a better resurrection”*.
- 11:40 – *“God having provided some better thing for us”*.
- 12:24 – Jesus mediated a new covenant, speaking *“better things than that of Abel”*.

“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”

(Hebrews 1:8)

Class 2 – Hebrews 1

Some have suggested that the theme of the book of Hebrews is expressed in the opening lines of the book; *God's full and final revelation in the Person and work of Jesus Christ*. From the first words this author's earnest determination to present the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ is most obvious. Christ is revealed in this first chapter as Creator (vs. 2), the exact expression of God, Sustainer (vs. 3), better than the angels (vs. 4), God's Son (vs. 5), object of angels' worship (vs. 6), *God!* (vs. 8), eternal King (vs. 8-13, & vs. 3), Champion of righteousness (vs. 9), and Lord (vs. 10). There was danger of some placing Christ *beside* Moses as an equal. There was danger of seeking to combine law and grace, gospel and ritual in one system. There was need to understand that Jesus Christ excels above all, and thus the glories of the New Covenant He brings supersede the old.

The book is without the usual opening greetings characteristic of most other N.T. epistles. This perhaps expresses a measure of urgency, or may show the author's wish to remain anonymous.

*Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners
spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

Chapter 1

1:1-3 – God’s Revelation in His Son

Vs. 1 – “*Sundry times*” seems to refer to various portions of time in the differing dispensations of the O.T. era, i.e. innocence in the garden and under the Law of Moses from Sinai.

“*Divers manners*” refers to the various ways in which the Lord brought His revelation to man, both the general revelation of Himself in His creation and the special revelation of His words. God so greatly honoured the descendants of Abraham in giving them the light of His written revelation. And He gave that clearer light through the prophets, men so appointed to be His anointed spokesmen. To and through such men His words were given in dreams and visions and even directly with audible voice. Compare Num. 12:6-8.

Vs. 2 – Comparison is now made between the Lord’s older more veiled methods of communication and His latter-day, direct communication through the

Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

living Word, Jesus Christ His Son. The Jewish reader must understand that it was the same God who spoke through the prophets now speaking through the Son. The supremacy of Christ is highlighted here, displaying the supreme worth of His words above every other source.

“His Son” – That Jesus Christ is God’s own Son expresses His sharing of the Father’s own divine nature. No being can ever generate a being of a different nature, but all beget *“after his kind”* (Gen. 1:24-25). The writer will strengthen this point in vs. 5.

“Heir of all things” – As *heir* and thus *owner*, Jesus is sovereign above all creation. Compare Ps. 2:6-9 & Matt. 28:18.

“He made the worlds” – Compare Jn. 1:3 & Col. 1:16. And not only is Christ Creator, but He is Sustainer as well, *“upholding all things by the word of His power”* (vs. 3; Col. 1:17).

Heb 1:3 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;

Why be impressed with the empty utterances of men, even well-meaning men, when God the Son Himself has spoken. Here is the import of Moses' warning in Deut. 18 and Peter's repetition of it at the end of his Acts 3 sermon. They spoke of greatest caution that we be very careful to hear that special Prophet when He comes. And implied is the need of no further communication, for we could have no better than what we have through this greatest Messenger of all.

Vs. 3 – Moving from the Son's appointment and work to His Person, we now discover that Jesus is the brilliance of the Father's own glory and the exact expression (stamp, impress) of the Father's very essence or substance (what stands under as the foundation or basis). God has manifested Himself to His creation in Jesus Christ, He who was and is "*Emmanuel*" or "God with us" (Isa. 7:14). And so one who would know the only true and living God must know Jesus Christ. "*If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also. . .*"

Heb 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father . . . I am in the Father, and the Father in Me” (Jn. 14:7, 9-11). “Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me” (Jn. 12:44-45). To look upon the person and character of Jesus Christ is to look upon the very person and nature of God Himself.

Attention is then turned to Christ’s great work of humiliation and exaltation. We see Christ’s grace in our behalf and the Father’s blessing in His behalf as a result. The moral of the story is that God blesses those who bless others through their lives. No sacrifice for others out of devotion to the Lord will ever go unrewarded.

1:4-14 – Christ is “*so much better than the angels*”

The Bible presents the angels as beyond man in strength and intelligence. The question would naturally arise how Jesus Christ compares with those exalted beings of God’s creation.

*Heb 1:5 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?*

Vs. 4 – Jesus is indeed better than the angels, having inherited a more excellent name than they. The Greek verb behind the phrase “*being made*” does not imply creation but being. If a sense of becoming is indicated it refers to Christ’s surpassing exaltation as the reward of His earthly humiliation (Phil. 2:6-11).

In vs. 5-13 the writer lists a collection of 7 O.T. quotations in support of Christ’s excellence over the angels. Obviously this comparison is a major point, indicating the likelihood of angels held in highest esteem by the readers. Notice that no effort is made to prove that the portions quoted refer to Christ, or to establish the value of such O.T. statements. In the mind of this author the Bible was clearly considered the supreme authority, and so it must ever be for us. Perhaps more than any other N.T. book Hebrews is full of O.T. quotations, expressing fullest confidence in the value of that old book.

Vs. 5 (quoting Ps. 2:7 & II Sam. 7:14) – Though

Heb 1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

called sons of God, angels are not God's sons in the sense of having God's same nature or essence. They are created, not begotten.

Vs. 6 (quoting Deut. 32:43 LXX, a portion describing the Lord's just pay-day at the time of Christ's return) – God's word proclaims Jesus an object of the angels' worship, even when He was born into the world as a man. Even the evil angels will be forced with wicked men to bow the knee (*"every knee"*) and acknowledge (*"every tongue"*) the Lordship of Jesus Christ in time (Phil. 2:10-11).

"Firstbegotten" or firstborn speaks of Christ's superior place and honour over all creation, not of the order of His existence. Compare Col. 1:18.

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Note

It seems incredible that as poor a translation as the Greek version of Hebrew O.T., called the Septuagint (LXX), should be so freely used by the N.T. writers.

*Heb 1:7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his
angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

*Heb 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.*

Their use of such a version serves perhaps to moderate the fixed-in-stone adherence to any one English translation, for God can and does use poor translations too. It is from the LXX that the author of Hebrews regularly quotes.

At the time the N.T. was written Hebrew had largely become a dead language. The LXX was basically the only Bible available to the masses, and so it was used. The N.T. writers quoted in a rather free manner from the LXX, sometimes quoting directly, often shading the meaning closer to the original Hebrew text, and sometimes even shading the meaning farther away from the Hebrew. Yet all was written as the Holy Spirit carried along His writers, breathing His inspired words in and through them.

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Vs. 7 (quoting from Ps. 104:4) – God’s angels are created beings, made to be “*ministers*” or servants.

Vs. 8-9 (quoting from Ps. 45:6-7) – To the Son is

Heb 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

ascribed no mere servanthood, but a sceptre and sovereignty, a dominion and deity. Never were such words spoken to angels.

If *God* declares the Son to be God, woe to the one who would dare deny God's words. For of such are those who twist His words to their own destruction (II Pet. 3:16). Don't miss the marvellous majesty that is Christ's here, expressed so directly and freely from the Father's own mouth. If Jesus came short of either full deity or full humanity He could never fill the role of man's Mediator-Redeemer, touching both God and man, and thus able to restore man all the way to God. Compare Job's longing for just such a "*daysman*" (Job 9:32-33).

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity" – The righteous nature of Christ's reign will stem from His own unalterable love of right and hatred of sin. Daniel long ago gave the purpose of Christ's work of redemption in Dan. 9:24. He will ultimately "*make an end of sin*", that which is so hateful to Him. How the lives and passions of we the

Heb 1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

Heb 1:11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

Heb 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.

redeemed should be given to His great cause of purity!

“Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed Thee” – All three O.T. offices requiring anointing upon entrance (prophet, priest, and king) converge upon Christ the Messiah or anointed One.

Vs. 10-12 (quoting from Ps. 102:25-27) – The Son is transcendent above His creation. Compare 13:8. He who created the angels must certainly be greater than His creation. All power is His, both to create all from nothing, and to later rearrange His creation. Peter and John spoke as well of these coming changes (II Pet. 3; Rev. 21). Though creation is changeable the Creator is not. We are wise to set our affection upon He who is unchanging, rather than upon any aspect of His transient creation (Col. 3:1-2). As our bodies fade with this perishing world how sure is the hope of our faith placed in the living

*Heb 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time,
Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy
footstool?*

*Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth
to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

and written Word of God! He is ours with all power in our earthly lives, and ours throughout eternity.

Vs. 13 (quoting from Ps. 110:1) – The Son occupies the highest position of honour beside the Father and is promised ultimate victory. Never was anything like this spoken to angels. This psalm is also quoted in Matt. 22:44 & Acts 2:34-35, and alluded to in I Cor. 15:25. Here is such a very prominent biblical theme and promise and warning! The Father's current work (to continue throughout Christ's earthly kingdom) is to bring every foe of righteousness either to friendship or footstool. The Father Himself undertakes this great work in behalf of His Son. Willing or unwilling subjection are the only ultimate options for mankind. How much infinitely wiser that we choose God's friendship over His footstool! All hope of victory in unrighteousness is a foolishly impossible dream.

Vs. 14 – The nature and work of the angels;

- They are spirits without physical bodies, though they can appear in physical form.
- Angels are servants of God (vs. 7), and of both saints and someday-saints. Even the term “angel” means messenger.

That the angels are “*sent forth*” (present tense in the Greek) speaks of their current on-going service. Consider how greatly we are honoured that such lofty beings should be sent as our servants. And how much greater our honour that Christ Himself, “*the Son of the Highest*”, should be the Servant of our salvation.

Class 3 – Hebrews 2

Heb 2:1 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.

God's purpose in this book of Hebrews is to bring man to understand Jesus Christ for who He really is. Such a stacked case for Christ, as here given, argues against any soul ever turning from the gospel message such an Exalted One brings. Through a correct understanding of Jesus Christ man comes to think rightly concerning everything else; God's words, man's nature, his need of salvation, and proper responses. Such a correct self-view and response was the result of Isaiah's vision of the Lord in Isa. 6. In 2:1-3 man's right response will be spelled out in light of who Jesus Christ is. If that's who He is, and that One has spoken, then *how much more certainly shall all that He has said come to pass!!*

Chapter 2

In chapter 1 we saw Jesus lifted high in His heavenly connection as the Son of God. In this

chapter we shall see Him brought low in His earthly connection as the Son of Man.

2:1-4 – The Surest Word

Vs. 1 – Beginning with “*therefore*” we walk into this chapter looking back over our shoulder to the thrust of chap. 1. Where the *Person* of Jesus Christ was exalted above all in chap. 1, the *message* Jesus brought is now underscored in these opening verses.

“*The more earnest heed*” to the things we’re hearing, to that message sourced in Jesus Christ, is now pressed upon every soul. The danger and warning marked by the little word “*lest*” is that one might “*let them slip*”, like a safe harbour missed or like a blind Bartimaeus meekly heeding the shushing crowd and letting Jesus pass by uncalled (Mk. 10:48). The thought here is of allowing something to slip or drift by – allowing so great an opportunity, communicated so clearly in the gospel message, to quietly slip past, never making connection in your soul – allowing the evil one through various subtle means, to snatch away the seed of the word before it even takes root (Matt. 13:19). How many so dully walk right past the free offer of that pearl of greatest price, giving it never a second glance. Compare 3:6.

*Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast,
and every transgression and disobedience received a
just recompence of reward;*

*Heb 2:3 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;*

Vs. 2-3 – If all spoken by Messiah’s messengers came to pass in every detail, how much more all that has been spoken by Messiah Himself (for “*the word spoken by angels*” in giving the Law, compare Ps. 68:17; Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:38 & 53). And if all who neglected God’s Law were fully repaid for their arrogance in the old dispensation, how much more those who ignore Christ’s gospel. The Lord will deal not only with active rebels and revilers, but with those passively preferring their darkness and careless of His eternal truths as well. For such a response (or non-response) expresses contempt for God’s greatest work of grace. As if it were not even worth a man’s consideration. As if God’s description of man’s desperate need before Him were total nonsense. The obvious here is that the Word of God is vastly more important to the Lord than the eternal well-being of a soul. No Word-rejecter or ignorer will be spared. A man’s eternal welfare centres around what he does with the Word of God, both living and written. And the warning is

Heb 2:4 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?

to we who know Christ as well, never to view lightly what the Lord holds so dear. The greatness of this saving message is underscored by the Saviour Himself bringing it.

God brings “*a just recompense of reward*”, what is fairly deserved and simply cannot be avoided (“*How shall we escape?*”). What is apparent here is that the only way of escape from so great a judgment is by giving “*earnest heed*” (not “*neglecting*”) so great salvation brought by so great a Saviour. There is simply no other way out from under the curse of the Law. There is simply no other door to God’s forgiveness and blessing (Jn. 10:9). Upon every soul presently neglecting this gospel “*the wrath of God*” even now “*abideth*” (Jn. 3:36).

Vs. 3-4 – Four-fold witness to the credibility of the gospel message;

- “*The Lord*” Jesus Christ (vs. 3). Jesus also referred to the various witnesses to His truthfulness in Jn. 5:32-47.

- *“Them that heard Him”* (vs. 3) – Referring to the faithful, confirming witness of Christ’s disciples. With the telling question of what those early followers had to gain by risking their health and wealth to testify of their Saviour it becomes evident that they were *believers*, not *deceivers*, for nobody in his right mind will die for a lie.
- *“God also bearing them witness”* (vs. 4). Through the miraculous God the Father stamped His approval upon Christ and upon those who heard Him. This is no blanket assurance of miraculous signs to be in evidence throughout this age. It is only a statement that God so graced Christ’s followers in that era of the apostles. Signs and wonders were given to confirm the true Messiah on offer at that time, and then to endorse the testimony of *“them that heard Him”*. For to them was given the task of bringing the Bible to completion through their inspired writings. Compare Mk. 16:20; Acts 2:22; II Cor. 12:11-12.
- *“Gifts of the Holy Ghost”* (vs. 4). The Spirit also expressed His support of Christ’s message of good news, completing the witness of the Trinity.

Heb 2:5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

Heb 2:6 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?

Note that the Spirit's gifts are always given as *He* wills, not as man demands. Compare I Cor. 12:11.

A man would be a fool to neglect such a four-fold witness, both human and divine.

2:5-8 – Christ's Incarnation

Vs. 5 – The author now returns to the matter of who Jesus is in comparison to angels. No angel will receive dominion over the world to come, as Jesus will.

Vs. 6-8 – Ps. 8:4-6 is quoted in support of Christ's coming reign. These words were initially spoken by David in relation to mankind as a celebration of the gracious care of God, that He would even think upon little man to visit him in his need. The word "*visit*" is bigger than just the idea of stopping by for a bit of conversation. The word behind the English was used as well of a caring doctor who visits with a mind to mend. The reference is to God's visiting

*Heb 2:7 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:*

*Heb 2:8 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.*

man's need in the Saviour. And beyond this the Lord's purpose is ultimately to exalt man to glory and honour, and even to a measure of dominion, and this only in and through Christ (Rev. 3:21; 20:4, 6). Man's inferiority to angels is only for "*a little*", for in just a little while this will all be changed, when "we shall all be changed" (I Cor. 15:51-53). This has "*not yet*" become true for mankind. But Jesus, for "*a little*" while made lower than the angels, is now exalted above them, leading the way for man. Man's dominion (Gen. 1:28), lost to Satan in the fall, is recovered for us through Christ's suffering and exaltation. And paradise, lost to man through sin, is regained in Jesus Christ.

If the Lord would so stoop to visit we who are least worthy, how continually we should visit He who is most worthy, as He has bidden us.

2:9-18 – Christ our Kinsman Redeemer

Heb 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.

With the thought of God the Son lowering Himself to humanity and death, the author then turned his attention to a common Jewish concern. It is a concern of the Muslim people as well. How could a transcendent God lower Himself to humanity? To what purpose would God allow Christ to become human and to suffer as a man?

And how could He allow Christ to suffer the cursed death of a criminal on a cross? In their way of thinking Christ could only prove Himself to be Messiah by coming down from His cross of shame. Thus they mock at His crucifixion (Matt. 27:43). That He would so suffer and die proved to them that God's *curse* was upon Him. And indeed it was. But man misunderstands that it was *man's* curse upon Jesus there, not His own. For He suffered and died as the innocent sacrificial Lamb in man's place, for our sin.

Vs. 9 – The author then applied David's words to Christ as well. Jesus Christ became man “*for the*

*Heb 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.*

*Heb 2:11 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,*

suffering of death". And through His suffering He was crowned with glory and honour. Christ's willing sacrifice declared the *glory* of His character rather than His shame, and that "*for every man*", that all men might have opportunity to enter the glory of earthly privilege and heavenly blessing.

Vs. 10 – This was an appropriate move ("*it became Him*", was fitting to Him), not inappropriate as the Jews would insist. Through His incarnation Jesus became our "*perfect*" Mediator. And through His suffering and death He became "*perfect*", not in His already perfect qualities, but in His qualification as our Redeemer. See how the way to perfection and reward through suffering is demonstrated in the experience of our Saviour. The same is true for us. And see how we who are the Lord's are now called "*sons*", and on our way "*unto glory*".

Vs. 11 – That Jesus became flesh and blood (incarnation) was necessary that He might be one

Heb 2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Heb 2:13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

with mankind, of the same nature with us as brothers. *Blessed condescension!!* Compare Christ's downward steps and upward exaltation in Phil. 2. Our new birth was necessary, that we, as Christ, might be of the same heavenly Father. In our new birth we are as miraculously born as Christ. And the fact that Jesus Christ, Son of the Highest, should not be ashamed to refer to us as His own family, to call us His brothers, should ever move us to testify without shame of our relation to Him before men.

Vs. 12 – A quote from Ps. 22:22, prophesying of Christ's followers who would become His brothers, and to whom He would declare the Father's name and nature. Compare Jn. 17:4, 6.

Vs. 13a – A quote from Isa. 8:17, foreshowing Jesus in becoming lower than the angels and like man, troubled and in need of trusting in His Father.

Heb 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;
Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Vs. 13b – A quote from Isa. 8:18, speaking of Christ with a following from among men who are God’s children as well.

Vs. 14-18 – The purpose of Christ’s incarnation. He became as the children, flesh and blood, actual humanity, “*that*” or for the purpose that;

- He might die.
- Through His death (His death overcome in resurrection) Satan might be rendered powerless. Satan “*had the power of death*” as the introducer of initial sin and as the ongoing tempter to sin, which “*sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*” (James 1:15).
- He might rescue souls from among mankind from the bondage of sin and death to eternal life (vs. 15). And that He might rescue man from slavish bondage through the fear of death. Deliverance from this pivotal fear delivers a soul from *every* fear. God has

Heb 2:16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Heb 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.

Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

instilled in man a natural sense of eternity (Eccl. 3:11), bringing fear to every heart in which eternity is an uncertain and unsettled concern. In Christ, death has become more friend than foe, for “*to die is gain*” (Phil. 1:21). Jesus has led the way in fearless death, Himself dying in peace and in communion with His Father, having finally defeated death’s power through resurrection.

Recognize the O.T. kinsman redeemer here. Jesus Christ became like man, coming with the power and will to help, that He might deliver man from spiritual bankruptcy.

- He might serve man as “*merciful and faithful High Priest*”, making “*reconciliation for the sins of the people*” (vs. 17).
- Having Himself experienced all that we experience in suffering and temptation, He

might be seen to understand what man faces, and might be able to bring comfort (vs. 18). He can *“be touched with the feeling of our infirmities”* (4:15). He is as able to deal with our concerns as He is to feel for our concerns.

Note how it was all for us, for our benefit! All that Jesus went through was all toward qualifying Himself in every way to bring us to blessing and comfort.

Rather than Christ’s humanity, humiliation, and death becoming a point of stumbling for the Jews, they rather should have recognized it as right and appropriate that God the Son should take upon Himself human nature and become one with man, that He might;

- Suffer and die *“for every man”* as the great Sacrifice.
- Bruise Satan’s head (Gen. 3:15).
- Remove man’s fear of death.
- Become our Great High Priest before God.
- Be the gentle Shepherd of our help.

And consider how all that Jesus has endured points up a salvation of man that is of paramount

importance to the Lord.

Grace! Grace! Grace!

Class 4 – Hebrews 3

Think It Through Review

Follow the flow of thought so far. Recall how in chapter 1 Jesus Christ was lifted high into the heavens far above angels and every created thing as the very *Son of God*, the Creator Himself. Then in chapter 2 Jesus was brought down to earth in His incarnation as the *Son of Man*. He was lowered to the same nature as man that He might die in man's place as our Kinsman Redeemer. And by that means He became "*a merciful and faithful High Priest*", able "*to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*" and able to stand between God and man as a Mediator more perfect than the priests could ever be. The O.T. priesthood was only a type or foreshadow of Christ.

Chapter 1 – Christ's transcendence.

Chapter 2 – Christ's condescension.

In this 3rd chapter strong warning is again given to carefully consider Jesus Christ and what He offers, with the spotlight shifting to the reader, raising the question of where the reader stands with that great Mediator.

Chapters 3

Heb 3:1 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

3:1-6 – Jesus Greater Than Moses

Vs. 1 – As in the previous chapter, we begin again with a “*wherefore*” (also chap. 4, 6, & 12) looking back to what immediately precedes. Chapter 2 in fact is summarized in the two titles given to Jesus here, describing His commission to earth in our behalf (“*Apostle*”) and His appointment as our “*faithful High Priest*”.

Notice how from the start the author’s attention is upon the reader, and particularly those who claim the Lord as their own, evident in his reference to them as;

- “*Holy*” – Those “set apart” to the Lord and *from* the world, set apart from among common men as particularly the Lord’s and to be particularly like Him.
- “*Brethren*” – All who are Christ’s are bound together in a very special brotherly relation.
- “*Partakers of the heavenly calling*” – Alike in happy reception of the Lord’s invitation to life

Heb 3:2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

eternal.

Yet the author's words speak wider than to the saved only, taking in all having come under the umbrella of the church, both those merely professing faith and those truly possessing life in Christ.

The reader is commanded to “*consider . . . Christ Jesus*”, much the same as chapter 2 opened. Jesus must ever be the object of our closest regard, both who He is and what He is to us. Yet how persistently the Lord's own children fall short in this regard and have need to be continually reminded of that central focus. Compare 12:2, where the author will call us to the same. Compare Jer. 2:32.

Vs. 2-6 – In three ways Jesus is compared to Moses, a man held in highest regard by the Hebrew readers.

Vs. 2 – Christ's faithfulness to the Father compares to that of faithful Moses. Jesus is to be received as

Heb 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.

Heb 3:4 For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

readily as Moses, for they both are approved of God. In fact Moses in all of his greatness as a man and prophet was a type of Jesus Christ, “*that prophet*” to come (Acts 3:22-26; Deut. 18). Christ’s supreme faithfulness to His Father is often highlighted in the gospels (Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38).

Vs. 3-4 – Jesus excels Moses in honour to the same degree that a builder is honoured above the house he has made. Jesus in fact displays His deity in that He has “*built all things*” (vs. 4).

Vs. 5-6 – Moses was only a “*servant*” or attendant “*in all his house*”, whereas Jesus is “*a Son **over** His own house*”. Moses, as a servant, can lead his followers only to *servanthood* to the Law, whereas Jesus, as the Son, leads his followers to *sonship*. Moses, as the Law he brought, was merely a “*servant*”, “*tutor*”, “*governor*”, “*schoolmaster*”, bringing in the Son to rule. The Apostle Paul explains the same in Gal. 3:24 & 4:1-7. Thus Jesus

Heb 3:5 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 3:6 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.

is *Maker* and *Heir* over that “house” in which Moses was only a member and servant. “House” refers to the universal “church” of all those truly redeemed of all ages. The moral of the story? Jesus Christ and the gospel message He brings supersedes the Law of Moses. Here is the essential answer for the 7th Day Adventist, who will not understand that we are no longer under the law system, of which Sabbath-keeping was a part (Jn. 1:17; Rom. 6:14; II Cor. 3).

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Question

Does 3:6 (and vs. 14) deny a once-saved-always-saved doctrine? Clearly the statement is conditional (“if”). Yet note carefully the verb tenses. Is it “*whose house we will be*” or “*will continue to be*”, or is it “*whose house we are*”? The point is we demonstrate the present reality of our saved condition by our ongoing responses. We don’t *become* or *remain* saved by our responses.

There are some difficult passages in this book, as this one, which seem at first blush to indicate salvation once gained can then be lost. Some principles to guide our approach to such passages;

- Read each portion in its context.
 - Read such difficult parts in the context of the whole of the larger Bible teaching on the subject.
 - Be careful not to read any preconceptions into the passage.
 - Collect the full meaning of all details and individual words of the passage.
-

3:7-19 – Warning

Follow in faithfulness as Jesus and Moses and be not hardened in unbelief!! The writer quotes repeatedly from Psalm 95:7-11, holding up the illustration of the hardened Israelites in the wilderness who were destroyed for their faithless, stony hearts. In fact only two adult men, Joshua & Caleb, made it into the Promised Land. Thoughts from this Ps. 95 quote;

- Vs. 7 – The Holy Spirit Himself speaks the

Heb 3:7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

Heb 3:8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

warning.

- Vs. 7 – “*Today*” is the day for response. Tomorrow may be too late.
- Vs. 7 – It’s all a question of individual willingness to “*hear His voice*”. Will you sincerely hear what God through Jesus Christ is speaking to you?
- Vs. 8 – The Spirit of God insists we not harden our hearts against hearing.
- Vs. 8 – A negative example is given of the Jewish forefathers who so provoked the Lord to anger during the years of their wilderness trek. Perhaps the particular reference is to the events in the first half of Exodus 17. Fresh out of their glorious deliverance through the Red Sea the people of Israel were murmuring from the time of their first stop at the waters of Marah (Ex. 15) where the Lord through Moses miraculously turned the bitter waters sweet. In the next chapter (Ex. 16)

they were again grumbling, this time over their lack of food. So the Lord graciously began then to send daily manna to them, which would continue throughout their years in the wilderness. Then they were back to the water matter in Ex. 17, where their contention with Moses became so sharp Moses prayed, “*they be almost ready to stone me*” (vs. 4). In answer the Lord graciously gave water out of the rock when struck with Moses’ staff (vs. 5-6). Moses named the place Massah (“temptation”) and Meribah (“chiding”) because of their provoking temptation of the Lord, foolishly questioning whether He was even among them at all (vs. 7). The obvious is that they refused a firm grasp of the obvious. They refused to trust the Lord, or to listen to His words through His appointed prophet, Moses. This became their way throughout the 4 decades of their wilderness travel. Being “*in the wilderness*” they should have been even more inclined to cast themselves in dependence upon the Lord. Yet always there was a remnant of faithful ones among them, the percentage perhaps expressed in the response of the 12 spies – 10 to 2, unfaithful to faithful.

- Vs. 9 – They refused the appropriate response

Heb 3:9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Heb 3:10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

to what they saw, the very obvious evidence of the Lord's presence and work, and that continually over a 40-year period (sea parted for them, unparted for Egypt, Marah's bitter water sweetened, daily manna, water out of struck rock, etc.).

Consider the Lord's long endurance of their 40-year rebellion. He does not desire man's destruction, but graciously grants ample time for turning. Yet don't miss how nothing is forgotten of man's long-standing unrepentant evil.

- Vs. 10 – The Lord “*was grieved*” with their stubbornness.
- Vs. 10 – Their wayward response became a settled habit (“*always*”).
- Vs. 10 – The source of their sin was an erring heart.
- Vs. 10 – They refused the knowledge of God's ways.

Heb 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

Heb 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

- Vs. 11 – The Lord’s grief ultimately turned to wrath. Don’t miss the fact that man’s sin does indeed grieve the Lord and stirs Him to wrath.
- Vs. 11 – He swore (vowed) against their ever arriving in the place of their rest. Once God comes to such a settled determination the only assurance is of *“a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries”* (10:27). The Lord’s *“rest”* here referred immediately to the rest of the Promised Land occupied. It speaks figuratively of heaven. The Lord clearly means that unbelief and sin in others, with the resulting judgment, should be an effective warning to us. *So be warned!*

Vs. 12-19 – Example applied.

Vs. 12 – To *“take heed”* is to see or look. We are wise to look well at what kept so many from ever reaching *“My rest”*! Look well lest there be in you

*Heb 3:13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called
To day; lest any of you be hardened through the
deceitfulness of sin.*

“an evil heart of unbelief”, displayed in apostatizing or “departing from the living God”. Again, genuine faith is displayed in continuance, while unbelief is displayed in apostasy or departure. Every departure from the Lord is evidence of unbelief and evil in a heart. Compare I Jn. 2:19; Matt. 13:20-21. Compare Eve allowing Satan to lead her to evil distrust of God, followed by departure from His clear command (Gen. 3). Sin always begins with the evil introduction and allowance of doubt. See here that a heart refusing to believe the obvious evidences of God is indeed an “evil heart of unbelief”.

Vs. 13 – Look well, both to yourself and to “*one another*”. Here is the shepherd’s heart, continually encouraging the flock, knowing the reality of some among us who have not come through to faith, who are yet goats among the sheep. Compare 12:15. Don’t miss the subtle “*deceitfulness*” of sin’s hardening work. Sin always comes across as a valid argument or response, yet any effect that hardens our heart toward the Lord must be seen for

*Heb 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold
the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;
Heb 3:15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice,
harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

the evil it is.

Vs. 14 – Again as in vs. 6, this verse does not indicate that we lose Christ or salvation in Him if we don't hold our confidence to the end. The statement is “*we are made partakers*”, not “shall be”. “*Made*” is actually in the perfect tense in the Greek behind the English, something like “we are in a state of having been made partakers”. The point here is present reality displayed in future response. We display the reality of our connection to Christ by our continuance. Continued faith is the proof of genuine faith.

The Bible indicates as well that it is possible for a saint to backslide from full dependence upon the Lord. A righteous soul will be vexed in such a condition until the prodigal finally returns to the blessed presence and provision of the Father (II Pet. 2:8; Lk. 15:11ff). Thus faith vexed in sin may perhaps display faith's genuineness as well.

Vs. 15 – Quoting again from Ps. 95, the writer

*Heb 3:16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke:
howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.
Heb 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years?
was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses
fell in the wilderness?*

makes application directly to the reader, and for “today”. “Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Cor. 6:2). Don’t ever put off, even for a moment, such a matter of vital concern.

Note the principle implied here, that what was spoken of old concerning another generation, holds true in principle to every generation – our generation! – “today”!!

Vs. 16 – There are always two types of response among men. Some (most) provoke the Lord with their unbelief, while some believe, arriving at His place of promised rest. Thus we must give “*the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard*” (2:1), lest any fall to the same sin and judgment.

Vs. 17-19 – Questions and answers, confirming to us that the cardinal sin is **unbelief**. Only with those continuing in the evil of this sin is the Lord

Heb 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

angry. Here is highlighted the *core evil*, the very root out of which every resulting sin springs and for which the Lord ultimately condemns a soul to eternal torment outside of His blessed place of eternal rest. Take the most earnest heed!! Pay attention to what the Lord of glory is saying to you! The eternal well-being of your soul is at stake here!

Class 5 – Hebrew 4

Think it Through

Chapter 1 – Jesus Christ exalted above all else as Son of God and Creator.

Chapter 2 – Jesus come down to man's nature as our Kinsman Redeemer and High Priest.

Chapter 3 – Look well to that man and message, so much better than that of Moses, lest you fall short of God's rest through unbelief as have many others.

Chapter 4

The thought of offered rest is carried from chapter 3 into this chapter. In fact, the word “*rest*” occurs 9 times within the first 11 verses of this chapter. The author seeks to show that there is a rest still available to “*whosoever will*”. We discover in this chapter that;

- God's rest is entered into by faith (vs. 2-3).
- The time to enter is “***Today***” (vs. 7).
- The Lord's rest is given to *His* people (vs. 9).
- It is received when one ceases attempting to enter by his own labour (“*as God did from*

Heb 4:1 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.

His", vs. 4) and trusts himself to *Christ's* sufficient labour on our behalf (vs. 10).

- His rest is missed by the disobedience of unbelief (vs. 11).

God's rest from His labours on the seventh day of creation (vs. 4) and Israel's rest in Canaan (vs. 8) are used as types of our rest in Christ by faith.

4:1-11 – Continued Promise of Rest

Vs. 1 – There is a promise of entrance into rest, a place in God's fellowship reserved or held open to every man. Yet there is a very real possibility of one falling short of entrance, failing to reach the desired end of heavenly rest. The writer speaks of missing the salvation offered in Christ. Based upon the historical record of others who failed to enter God's rest through unbelief, there should be within us the most attentive alertness and cautious care.

Consider the proper example to us here of bringing all pressure to bear upon head and heart in seeking

Heb 4:2 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.

to lead a soul to salvation.

Vs. 2-3 – Shifting to an “us . . . them” contrast, the author insists that people of every era have equal opportunity. Those Jewish forefathers in the wilderness (chap. 3) had “*the gospel preached*” to them as well. What they had was no less effective in leading them to salvation by faith than the gospel of Christ. Compare II Tim. 3:15, speaking of the O.T. Scriptures. Ruth had enough to lead her to shelter under Jehovah’s wings, even through the wayward witness of Elimelech’s family. The widow of Zarephath apparently came to faith, even in Israel’s apostate days under Ahab & Jezebel.

Conception of course requires the meeting of contributions from both sides. A soul’s lack of spiritual new birth is not through imperfect *seed*. Even in Christ’s parable of the sower and soils (Matt. 13), the potency of the seed was never questioned. The flaw is not in faulty *seed*, but in faulty *soil* (souls). No man in any age, perhaps especially our own, has any excuse for disbelieving

and thus missing God's rest in Christ. *Oh the horror of exclusion from heaven's rest, knowing that it might have been attained!*

Note some implications here;

- The fact that "*He* [the Lord] *said*" centuries prior does nothing to diminish the power of His words.
- God means that His words "*profit*" us, as something of the most priceless value.
- The phrase, "*the word preached*", is literally "the word of hearing" in the Greek behind the English. There is a hearing of the word that profits a soul, and a kind of hearing that doesn't really hear. To this day every soul refusing to actually hear the Word, refusing to combine the seed of the Word with faith within, profits nothing from any gospel message. So don't tend to look to that gospel preacher for the fault. At the root of all profitless preaching is profitless hearing. And at the root of all profitless hearing of God's word is *unbelief*, simple refusal to acknowledge the truth or assimilate it to our lives. *Treasure trashed! Potential profit pitched!*

Heb 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.

- The offer of promised rest appears to be available to all and attainable by all, not to only a select few. It appears in these two chapters that those who fail to reach God's rest fall short through their own failure to believe. God shuts no soul out. Every rejecting soul shuts himself out.

God's earnest encouragement is, *"let a man examine himself whether he be in the faith"!*

Vs. 3 – *"We . . . do enter"* is in the present tense, describing present action ("we are entering") not future. God's rest in Christ is as much a present reality as it is a future hope. A believer;

- Has settled rest in salvation.
- Has growing rest in sanctification.
- Will have final rest in glory.

Our present rest is found in forgiveness of sin and deliverance from sin's power, a cleared conscience,

Heb 4:4 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.

Heb 4:5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

freedom of entrance to the Lord, and constant communion with Him there, satisfaction of soul, etc. These are precious blessings found only in Jesus Christ.

Vs. 3-4 – The author then further illustrates this thought of rest reserved for believers. God finished His work and entered into His rest on the 7th day of the creation week (Gen. 2:2-3). The Lord's entrance into rest speaks figuratively of that rest into which He would have every soul follow and join Him. And even as the Lord finished His work and entered into rest, so it is with every believer at the moment of faith. He has come at last to an end of his own efforts to earn heaven, and he enters into rest upon Christ's finished work. The weekly Sabbath rest was meant to be a constant reminder to Israel of eternal, spiritual rest available by faith.

Vs. 5-9 – Rest “*remaineth*”.

Vs. 5 – Again the reference is to Ps. 95 as in chap.

Heb 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:

Heb 4:7 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.

Heb 4:8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

3. When Israel inherited their Promised Land this also pictured the entrance into rest only of those who believed in the Lord.

Vs. 6 – “*Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein . . .*” – Understand that God still speaks of a place reserved in His rest. David spoke in Ps. 95 of entering God’s rest *centuries* after Israel entered Canaan, but still the Lord was saying through the Psalmist “*Today, after so long a time . . . today if ye will hear His voice*”. Thus the promised rest to which the Lord referred obviously extended beyond only the Canaan rest. The same idea is in vs. 1 of a promise *remaining* to us, yet open for man’s entrance. The promise has yet to be fulfilled, that place of rest yet to be filled up. The door of the final ark remains open to you still, but promising only “*today*”! How very quickly “*today*” is gone!

Vs. 8 – The Greek word *Ιησους* (*Iesous*) here can be

Heb 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

translated either “Jesus” or “Joshua”. Compare in Acts 7:45 where the same name is translated Joshua. The reference here is to Joshua leading Israel into the Promised Land. You see, the question might arise in a thoughtful heart whether Joshua didn’t bring the Lord’s people to the *fulfilment* of God’s promised rest. The author’s point is this; if Joshua had led Israel into the promised rest at that time with all fulfilled in the conquest, then David would not have still spoken of the possibility of entrance into rest centuries later.

Vs. 9 – The obvious conclusion is that there still *“remaineth therefore a rest [Sabbath rest] to the people of God”*, to those who believe, who by their faith have entered into the very family of God. Joshua leading his people into their rest in Canaan foreshadowed Jesus leading His people into eternal rest. The salvation He offers is the answer for every troubled soul, burdened with their own futile efforts to find peace with God. Salvation’s hope of heaven, that eternal Sabbath rest, fulfils every notion or picture of Sabbath rest. That abiding rest is future, yet we begin to partake in a measure even now in

Heb 4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Heb 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Christ. Compare the Lord's invitation in Matt. 11:28-29, "*Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest*".

Vs. 10 – God's ceased labours at the close of the creation week in figure seem to point to a soul's forsaken trust in his own works of righteousness, from his own efforts to attain or maintain his salvation. In Christ, by grace, we are completely rescued from under the burden of God's righteous law (Rom. 7). In Him we "*are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses*".

Vs. 11 – The author again returns to the chapter's opening plea, our most diligent attention to Jesus, our Joshua, the Captain of salvation, and to the all-important question of whether you have allowed Him to lead your soul into God's rest. Or whether perhaps you have chosen the company of those unbelievers who fell in the wilderness, falling short of that place of rest. As certain as it is that those

Jews never made it into Canaan even so there can be no doubt that one who refuses to believe in Jesus Christ will never find entrance into heaven. Our sin in rejecting is perhaps even greater than theirs with the example of their fall before us. *Their fall is our wake-up call!* Final rest in glory “*remaineth*” only “*to the people of God*”. Are you His? Are you in? Or are you still stubbornly remaining outside of God’s fold?

The command “*let us labour*” does not demand our earthly efforts at earning salvation, but the earnest intensity necessary in all who would hope to enter God’s rest. God has already confirmed the fact that simple *neglect* of His words is enough to bring a soul to final ruin (2:1-3).

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Simple Summary

- 1) There is a rest God entered into, in His Sabbath rest when He finished His work of creation.
- 2) God wished for His people Israel to enter into that rest with Him, pictured in entrance into the Promised Land.
- 3) Many were excluded from this rest through

Heb 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.

their unbelief.

- 4) Opportunity still stood open in David's day, for the Lord yet spoke through the sweet Psalmist of that door still open to God's rest.
- 5) The door yet remains open to this day through our Joshua, the Lord Jesus Christ.

.....

Praise God for His determined desire to *share* His rest, if not with those first invited, then with others from the highways and hedges (Lk. 14:16-24). The Lord gives every opportunity for entry, confirming throughout the ages that He has “*no pleasure in the death of the wicked*” and “*is not willing that any should perish*” (Ezek. 33:11; II Pet. 3:9). He's not willing that even *one* should miss sharing His rest. He longs for a full house at the last (Lk. 14:23).

4:12-13 – No Fault in the Seed

By referring to “*the word of God*”, understand both the written word and the living Word of God, Jesus Christ. Compare Jn. 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13. The “*word of God*” is;

- “Quick” – Something living or alive. Compare I Pet. 1:23. God’s word is no dead, inactive thing, but flush with vital life.
- “Powerful” – Not only active, but working with vibrant force. As a seed is fully potent, so the seed of God’s Word is fully capable of effecting that for which it is sent. Compare Isa. 55:11. It need only meet *faith* in a soul to effectively conceive life eternal. God’s words are fully able to flatten the defensive strongholds of a man’s pet opinions and to convert his stubborn soul. It was with only His spoken words that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth. It was with only His verbal command that Jesus raised Lazarus from death.
- “Sharp” – Severing and separating to the very core of a man. Penetrating to the innermost reasons for our thoughts and purposes and defences. Cutting away habits, no matter how deeply entrenched in us by long practice. Slicing down the curtains behind which we shield from ourselves the true evil of “*the*

Heb 4:13 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.

thoughts and intents” of our hearts. Compare the image of Christ in Rev. 1:16. Keep close David’s prayer in Ps. 139:23-24, “*Search me O God*”. The Greek word translated “*discerner*” is *kritikos* (critic), speaking of He who is able and quick to discern or judge.

Vs. 13 – Transition is now made from more of a focus on the *written* Word to the *living* Word, Jesus Christ. No smallest aspect of any of His creatures is hidden from our Creator’s omniscience. Before His eyes there are no secret sins. Jesus Christ is that One “*with whom we have to do*”. He is;

- “*The door*” through which a man must pass if he would ever enter the fold of God’s rest (Jn. 10:9).
- “*The way*” to the Father’s presence and blessing (Jn. 14:6), and the *only* one.

The Greek word translated “*exposed*” here comes from the word for “neck”, suggesting the action of bending the neck back, fully exposing the throat.

*Heb 4:14 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.*

*Heb 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.*

The word indicates the ease with which the Lord can take a life. Our lives before Him are as if the throat is fully exposed to Him. And it speaks of God's awareness of our hearts to the very core of us. Remember how Jesus continually displayed this full awareness of the innermost "*thoughts and intents*" of men throughout His earthly ministry.

4:14-16 – Our "*Great High Priest*"

A new section begins here, relating Christ's priesthood. This theme will continue into chap. 10.

Vs. 14 – Turning again to Jesus, our Joshua;

- Who has led the way into heavenly rest.
- Who as the perfect High Priest has passed through the veil into the true holy of holies of God's very presence.
- Who as our High Priest, having shed His own blood for us here, now pleads there in our

behalf.

Vs. 15 – Jesus is both our High Priest and our example, having endured all that we endure without ever falling. Yet He is never aloof, for He understands what we face and tenderly feels in our behalf. Having suffered with us He can sympathize with us, knowing *how* to help us. Remaining sinless He can stand for us before the Father, being *able* to help us. And in view of our great Advocate and example the author again seeks for appropriate response in us;

- “*Let us hold fast our profession*” (vs. 14).
 - Clinging firmly to what we know to be true no matter what the pressures.
 - Boldly proclaiming the supreme worth of Jesus Christ to a mocking world.
 - Making the right principles of the Holy One our daily practice.

The surpassing excellence of Christ Himself lifts our calling to the very highest realms and bids us to never a shade of “*variableness neither shadow of turning*”. The Lord means not only that we *begin* well, but that we “*hold fast*” and *finish* well. Again, continued faith is the proof of genuine faith. “*No man, having*

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

put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Lk. 9:62).

- “*Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace*” (vs. 16). For there we are assured of help and mercy. It is “*the throne*”, speaking of divine *power* and calling us to utter *awe*. It is “*the throne of grace*”, speaking of divine *pity*, and calling us to open *access*. Compare Rom. 5:2. God’s encouragement to us is to come, and to come with confidence, humbly yet freely. He is not to us as the fearful Wizard of Oz depiction of deity. Not as Esther’s fear to enter even the presence of her own husband. Only through our Great High Priest is this possible.

Compare this section with 10:19-23. There as well we see the same combination of Christ’s work of sacrifice and priestly office, our confident freedom of entrance into God’s presence, and the plea for our unwavering profession.

Class 6 – Hebrews 5

Think It Through

Chapter 1 – Jesus better than prophets and angels.

Chapter 2 – Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer.

Chapter 3 – Jesus better than Moses.

Chapter 4 – Jesus better than Joshua, leading His people into the *eternal* Promised Land of rest.

Now in chapter 5 (perhaps even from 4:14) begins an extensive consideration of the superior Priest and priesthood in Jesus Christ, presenting Jesus as better than Aaron. This focus continues into chap. 10. In 8:1 we find a summary statement; “. . . *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*”. Thus Christ’s superior priesthood is something of the main branch of the main trunk of this epistle!

The priest was an O.T. officer serving in a unique role between man and God. He was the only man qualified;

- To represent sinful people before God.
- To handle the horror of human sin.

- To make offerings on behalf of men to God.
- To serve as the avenue to man's atonement and restoration to God's pleasure and fellowship.

Therefore God's appointed priesthood is man's only way to God. In a word, the priest is the only one appointed to serve as *mediator* between God and men. Here is why the great attention to Christ's pre-eminent priesthood. His appointment as our Great High Priest points up the *primary* role Jesus brings to man as *Mediator* in surpassing fulfilment of every O.T. concept of priest and priesthood. He is the only one qualified to stand between sinful man and holy God, restoring peace to that broken relation.

The sum of it is that Jesus Christ far exceeds every key person and procedure of the O.T. economy to which the Hebrew readers were so firmly attached. Yet they must be unattached from that umbilical connection, that they might arise to a new existence in union with Christ.

Chapter 5

5:1-4 – Priestly Qualifications

The author begins with general qualifications for

Heb 5:1 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:

the office of the priest.

Vs. 1 – A priest must be “*taken from among men*”. He must be of man’s flesh and blood nature. A *man* must serve in behalf of *men*. No angel could be so appointed. And a priest must be “*ordained for men in things pertaining to God*”. He must be approved and appointed by God to speak to God in behalf of men (see vs. 4). A priest must be qualified in this way in order to do what a priest does, offering “*both gifts and sacrifices for sin*”. Think through the indications of this. Implied is;

- The reality of man’s fall into sin.
- Man’s severed relation to God.
- Man’s inability to approach God on his own, through God’s refusal.
- Man’s desperate *need* for a mediator, qualified from both human and heavenly ends.
- The adding of offence to offence when man expects the slightest favour from God apart

from a qualified mediator. Here is every wayward religion, seeking to approach God outside of His one appointed way.

- God's gracious *desire* for man's undeserved reconciliation.
- God's initiative in providing a way for man's restored acceptance before Him.
- Hope of God's acceptance for all who come to Him in His one appointed way.

The "*gifts and sacrifices*" a priest must handle refer to;

- Free-will offerings ("*gifts*") given freely out of a desire to please the Lord and acknowledge Him as Owner of all and we only the stewards of what He has been pleased to entrust to our care. The whole burnt offering, listed first among the sacrifices in Lev. 1, was such a free-will offering. These were brought wholly as a gift out of loving gratitude to the Lord. Compare Mary's broken bottle of spikenard poured out on Jesus.
- Sin offerings ("*sacrifices*") brought in the appointed way to make atonement for sin, seeking pardon from the Lord.

Heb 5:2 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.

- Both our *“gifts and sacrifices”* can only be presented through a priest. Jesus Christ alone can both submit our good to the Father and find pardon there for our evil, through His sacrifice of Himself in our behalf. Without Him neither is our evil cleansed nor our good credited. Without His involvement even our righteousnesses are reckoned before God only as *“filthy rags”* (Isa. 64:6). Consider how badly the unsaved world misses here, thinking they have the right to expect their good works to win merit before God with no priestly mediator standing in their behalf.

Vs. 2 – A priest must be able to *“have compassion”* upon fellow men, being *“touched with the feeling of our infirmities”*. Of central importance in one representing man before God is a tender sympathy for the frailty and plight of man. A priest can neither overlook or in any way lighten the evil of sin, nor can he look down upon sinners from some supposed lofty height of perfection. He must ever despise sin in every form, yet look with compassion

Heb 5:3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

Heb 5:4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

upon sinners. The greatest angel could never be so touched, not knowing human experience first hand.

Vs. 3 – Priests of Aaron had first to offer sacrifices for their own sins before handling the sins of others. Jesus is distinct in that He is *“without sin”* (4:15).

Vs. 4 – Again, a priest must be *“called of God”* as one properly appointed. It was the Lord who assigned Aaron’s line to serve as priests (Ex. 28:1). It was the Lord who appointed a priest’s set public installation ceremony into office as well (Ex. 29). Compare God’s dealings with those who dared take *“this honour upon himself”*;

- *“The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death”* (Num. 3:10).
- Terrible death to Korah and sons in Num. 16 (vs. 40).
- The beginning of the end for King Saul (I Sam. 13:11-14).

Heb 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.

- Leprosy upon King Uzziah (II Chron. 26:16-21).

5:5-10 – Christ's Forever Priesthood

These priestly qualifications are now applied to Jesus Christ.

Vs. 5 – Jesus did not just presume Himself worthy of the office and honour of priest, but was honoured and appointed by the Father. The author quotes again from Ps. 2:7 (also in 1:5) exalting Christ as the Son of the Highest, expressing the Father's acceptance and affection and appointment of the Son as One pre-eminently qualified as Mediator.

Now understand it. Ps. 2:7 speaks not only of Christ's eternal Sonship with the Father, but of His *birth as a man*. Here is how Jesus so perfectly qualifies as a Mediator. He is one with God, as His own Son, of God's own nature. And yet He is *born* among men with a very human nature (2:9-14). In His divine nature Jesus can reach all the way up to

Heb 5:6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Heb 5:7 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;

God, much higher than Aaron could ever reach. Aaron, like his brother Moses, was only God's *servant*, whereas Jesus is God's *Son* (3:5-6). As a man Jesus can now reach all the way down to man.

Vs. 6 – Ps. 110:4 is quoted and applied to Jesus, further pointing up His appointment as priest by the Father. Yet note that His priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek rather than after Aaron's, speaking of the “*forever*” nature of His appointment. Aaron and his sons all died, only to be replaced by others. But Jesus is not only a priest, but a priest *forever* after the example of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-24). The excelling nature of this priesthood over Aaron's will be explained further in chap. 7.

Vs. 7 – Christ's earthly life was one of great hardships and anguish. He lived in dependence upon His Father as a man, especially as His death drew near. Again this earned Him that further priestly qualification of insightful compassion. For Jesus was sorely tried and “*tempted like as we are*”

(4:15), enduring all that we endure and thus fully able to sympathize with man's temptations and weaknesses. Do you see how Jesus Christ is wholly qualified to be our High Priest?

- He was "*taken from among men*" (Compare vs. 1 & 5), and thus is fully man.
- He was properly "*ordained*" or appointed by God (Compare vs. 1 & 6).
- He is the Son of God, of God's nature, and thus fully able to represent man to God (vs. 5).
- He was "*compassed with infirmity*" with His fellow man, thus able to feel for man (Compare vs. 2 & 7).

In facing what He faced on this earth, Jesus prayed "*with strong crying and tears*". He both preached and practiced the importance of praying, and with passion and persistence. And Jesus "*was heard in that He feared*". The Father listened to His prayers because of His godly reverence. Things to note here concerning prayer;

- The Father's response to prayer depends on the *character* of the petitioner.
- Though the Father heard our Saviour's

*Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience
by the things which he suffered;*

prayers, as death approached at the last there was little indication of it. Heaven was silent while Jesus was captured, tortured, and murdered anyway.

- Though there is not always earthly evidence that the Father hears the earnest prayers of His children, believe Him for that assurance. He says so right here.

Vs. 8 – Things to note concerning Christ’s suffering;

- His privileged place as Son did not spare Him from suffering. Can *we* then expect to be spared from suffering?
- His pain was necessary to qualify Him as man’s “*great High Priest*” and sacrifice for sin. Is not our pain then toward our greater qualification for ministry? Compare II Cor. 1:3-4.
- The Lord’s sufferings were for His best, our best, and greatest benefit all the way around. Can we not expect our sufferings to be toward the very best ultimate ends? Compare Ps.

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;
Heb 5:10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

119:71.

- Christ's sufferings taught Him obedience and its benefits, especially the vast blessing in His greatest obedience unto death on the cross. Can we not look to our suffering as a means of learning the virtue of submission to our Father? On Jesus learning, compare Lk. 2:52.

Vs. 9-10 – Perfect Saviour and salvation. Not “*perfect*” in the sense of faultless, for He was always so. Jesus was “*made perfect*” in that He through His earthly suffering and death became a Rescuer perfectly fitted for His work. He fulfilled everything necessary to make Him a perfect Redeemer for man, offering a complete salvation, a full and final deliverance from sin’s power, unlike the priests of the old covenant whose sacrifices carried only temporary effect. The temporary benefit of the O.T. sacrifices matched the temporary nature of the O.T. priesthood. But Christ’s offered salvation is *eternal* because His priesthood is eternal. Compare the

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

Heb 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.

O.T. provision of cities of refuge until the High Priest died (Num. 35:25). Our great High Priest never dies, offering eternal refuge to all having fled from the Avenger of blood!

Jesus Christ becomes “*Author of eternal salvation*” to all (and only to) “*them that obey Him*”. The Greek word behind “*obey*” here refers to obedience in the sense of submissive listening. The reference is to all who hear and heed Christ’s warning and personal invitation to “*come unto Me*”, to all who will hear His call.

5:11-14 – Spiritual Immaturity

Vs. 11 – There were and are many wonderful things to be taught concerning Jesus Christ. Indeed “*without controversy great is the mystery of godliness*” (I Tim. 3:16). Yet these treasures are unable to be collected by those not listening with sharp attention. Note again the emphasis upon our

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 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.

keen attention to God's words (2:1-3; 3:1, 7, 12, 15-16; 4:1, 7) and obedience in the sense of heeding what we hear (vs. 9). Compare Lk. 24:25. Man's dullness of ear is not inability, but wilful denial.

Vs. 12-14 – Things to note about spiritual growth;

- The Lord expects our progress from learner to teacher in the matters of His Word and wonders of His gospel. Those who know should teach! Note how the Lord knows not only what we know but what we *should* know by now.
- There are elementary, simpler, surface principles of God's truths, and there are deeper truths.
- Upon our salvation the Lord means for us to begin with more surface things and progress ever deeper in His things. We are *never* to be idle, but *ever* to be digging (Prov. 2:1ff)! And we are ever to be sharing with others what we

find.

- There is spiritual milk and there is solid food. Compare John and Paul's differing messages to differing age levels and genders in I Jn. 2:12-14 & Titus 2.
- There are spiritual babies among believers and spiritually mature (I Cor. 3:1-2).
- Our heavenly Father looks for progress in us from baby days to maturity, as any earthly parent.
- Lack of growth to maturity indicates something very wrong in a heart and draws the Lord's rebuke.
- The challenge of the teacher/preacher is that ever present mix in any congregation of milk and meat Christians.
- Characteristics of the mature;
 - Sharp of hearing (vs. 11).
 - Progress from learner to teacher (vs. 12).
 - Beyond milk to solid food (vs. 12).
 - "*Skilful in the word of righteousness*" (vs. 13). The "*word of Christ*" dwells

richly in them (Col. 3:16) and they know how to use that “*sword of the Spirit*” (Eph. 6:17).

- Sense of discernment well trained through long habit (vs. 14). Compare Isa. 50:4, of Christ’s awakened “*ear to hear as the learned*”.
- Able to discern between good and evil, right and ruinous (vs. 14). Even so the priest was meant to be able to chart the difference between the holy and profane (Ezek. 44:23).

It’s a matter of learning the Lord’s heart, what pleases Him and what does not, through contact with His way in His Word. From a spiritual perspective the Lord would ever have us with full appetite and senses at full alert.

“Let us go on
unto perfection”

(Hebrews 6:1)

Class 7 – Hebrews 6

Heb 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,

Think it Through

Chapter 1 – Jesus better than prophets & angels.

Chapter 2 – Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer.

Chapter 3 – Jesus better than Moses.

Chapter 4 – Jesus better than Joshua, leading the faithful into the *eternal* Promised Land of rest.

Chapter 5 – Jesus’ priesthood superior to Aaron’s.

Chapter 6

6:1-3 – “*Let Us Go On*”

The thought here follows from the challenge in the last 3 verses of chap. 5 with the opening “*therefore*”.

Vs. 1 – A foundation of primary Christian truths must be laid down in a soul. But then the Lord

Heb 6:2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Heb 6:3 And this will we do, if God permit.

would have us progress beyond foundational truths to the full growth of maturity (“*perfection*”) in Christ. For in Him “*are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Col. 2:3). We have only scratched the surface of all the wonder of Jesus Christ. “*Leaving*” such footer principles, not in the sense of abandoning, but clutching them close as we move on to ever larger things.

That pivotal turn of true repentance from sin and toward God through faith in Christ is the step across the threshold into salvation. No spiritual blessing from God precedes repentance and faith, “*for without faith it is impossible to please Him*”. And outside of repentance and faith in Christ all works, whether good or bad, are “*dead works*”, including religious rituals as a means to merit. For only through God’s appointed High Priest can we approach God and find His favour.

Vs. 2 – “*Baptisms*” refers perhaps both to our baptism with the Spirit into the body of Christ at

*Heb 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,
Heb 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the
powers of the world to come,
Heb 6:6 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.*

the moment of salvation (I Cor. 12:13) and our need of water baptism in public identification with Jesus. Baptism by immersion publicly pictures death to self and resurrection to new life in Jesus (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12). “*Laying on of hands*” refers perhaps to the initiatory rite of entrance into full membership or ministry (I Tim. 4:14; 5:22; Acts 6:6). The doctrines of resurrection and eternal judgment describe the eternal destinies of both saved and lost. A foundational grasp of such truths must be secured both *before* building up the house and *for* building up the house. The Lord urges neglect of neither the foundation nor the house.

6:4-8 – The Peril

The author now ponders a very real possibility in those who fail to go on in the Christian life, that perhaps they’re not even saved! Here is another of those difficult portions in this book. There are

many differing interpretations of these few verses;

- Some who are convinced that true believers can lose their salvation point here for confirmation of their belief.
- Some feel the reference here is to believers who are permanently set aside, losing their privilege of service through unfaithfulness. It doesn't say they perish does it?
- Some believe this an impossible hypothetical situation to give a point to God's prod for a believer's growth. An empty threat really, if a believer knows his salvation is eternal. As if the Lord rattles a sabre He would never actually use.
- The most likely reference here is to *unbelievers* who have made some moves toward Christ, yet are still short of stepping into God's promised rest in Him. This is the direction of the chap. 3-4 warnings as well.

But could vs. 4-5 describe an unbeliever? Many would say "no", and here is where they run into trouble. We must understand that the word translated "*enlightened*" doesn't have to go any further than the idea of shedding some light, without affirming reception. Compare Jn. 1:9; Rev.

18:1. The author will illustrate the two possible responses to exposure to God's truth in vs. 7-8, this agreeing with 4:2.

On the Side

Before proceeding any further, please keep the larger context of this passage in mind. This book of Hebrews addresses Hebrew readers, many of whom had made moves toward Christ, yet who were still hovering outside of salvation in Him. They were intrigued but still had refused the gospel message of justification through faith in Christ, to whom the O.T. levitical system of worship was all a great pointer. They were like one fleeing to a city of refuge, but then stopping short of the safety of the city, attempting to find refuge by hugging the city signpost just outside the city walls. They were blind to God's true righteousness and were still *"going about to establish their own righteousness"* through the works of the Law (Rom. 10:3). Remember the strong warnings already given in chap. 2-4. They were a people on whom the light of God's Word had gloriously shone over the centuries and who had witnessed first hand so much of the working of God's Spirit in the miraculous. Yet when righteousness by faith in Christ came they refused

to submit *“themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Rom. 10:3-4). The whole thrust of this book is to properly interpret Jesus Christ as the completion of the O.T., and to lead the reader fully into faith in Him.

The Hebrew people had *“tasted of the heavenly gift”* in Christ’s miraculous ministry spent within their own borders. Though they had tasted samplings, they had yet to *“buy the truth and sell it not”*. They had yet to sell all for that pearl of greatest price in Christ. Matthew Henry wrote, *“Persons may taste religion, and seem to like it, if they could have it upon easier terms than denying themselves, and taking up their cross, and following Christ”*. They *“were made partakers of the Holy Ghost”* in all of the wonders God had done and recorded among them throughout their history. They had *“tasted of the good word of God”* through their many prophets, with the flavour coming to full strength in *“that prophet”* above all others, the Lord Jesus Christ. They had *“tasted . . . of the powers of the world to come”* in Christ’s display of His dominion over every aspect of creation during His earthly ministry, proving Himself the Messiah and fully able to fulfil all prophecies of His coming kingdom. Compare

Festus and Agrippa trembling on the verge of an “almost” salvation (Acts 24:25; 26:28). Through Paul’s witness they too caught a whiff of heaven’s scent and hell’s stench, yet they refused to follow through to faith. None of the terms used in these verses necessitate salvation. Falling from a saved to a lost condition is not stated here. In the context of this book of Hebrews to “*fall away*” can only speak of veering from a follow-through to full faith in Christ, running back to a trust in the shadow priesthood and rituals of the Jewish religion. Clearly some among the readers had professed faith in Christ and had joined the Christian community, but were not yet truly saved. Note the difference put between “us” and “them”, the 3rd person of vs. 4-6 in contrast to the 1st and 2nd person of vs. 1-3, 9ff. Compare the same in 4:2, and I John 2:19-20; 4:5-6. Some of these semi-sanctified heathen had perhaps already turned from Christ back to the Jewish religion and some were still considering such a move. Consider some examples of the same kind of unsaved religionists;

- Balaam (Num. 23-24) – In his 4 discourses he showed great awareness of God’s mind (enlightened). He was “*the man whose eyes are open*” (Num. 24:3). He was empowered by the Spirit for his amazing prophecies, and thus was a partaker of the Holy Spirit in some

measure. Yet his subsequent actions prove that he was not a justified man.

- Judas Iscariot – Probably there has never been an unsaved man so enlightened as he. He was among those who cast out demons by the Spirit's power (Matt. 10:4-8). Perhaps Christ's words in Lk. 10:20 upon the return of the disciples from ministry was especially aimed at him. He was not only *aware* of the "*powers of the world to come*", but *preaching* it. Yet he, like Balaam, in his heart of hearts refused to submit to God and soon displayed his faithless, unsaved soul, ultimately falling under God's judgment. The price for associating with Jesus simply got too high at the last!
- The workers of iniquity (Matt. 7:21-23) – Jesus spoke of unsaved people prophesying, casting out demons and doing "*many wonderful works*" in Jesus' name. Though these are cast away by Christ at the last, it cannot be that they gained and then lost salvation, for the Lord said to them "*I never knew you*".

Having understood and rejected the gospel message such deserters in essence crucify "*the Son of God*"

Heb 6:7 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:

Heb 6:8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

afresh". For with their departing feet they show their allegiance to Christ's murderers more than to Christ and His followers. They express greater confidence in the animal sacrifices of the Law by such a return. They shame Jesus through their defection by implying no confidence in the worth of His sacrifice and Person. And what of the impossibility of restoration to repentance? Perhaps, as at 10:26, the point is that there simply are no other options outside of the only true Mediator and Messiah. There is nothing better yet to come, for there is none better than what God has provided in Jesus.

Vs. 7-8 – An illustration now of two very different kinds of soils (souls). Though receiving the same input there are two kinds of produce (herbs and thorns) bringing two kinds of result (blessing and burning). Compare the Lord's vineyard in Isa. 5. The problem was not the seed but the soil.

Heb 6:9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

Heb 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.

Compare again 4:1-2. We saw the same point in chap. 4:12 as well, that there is nothing wrong with the potency of God's words. Compare the second soil of Christ's parable of sower and soils (Matt. 13:20-21), describing one who joyfully receives the word, until the price tag for holding onto it gets too high. And by his defection one displays himself as no true possessor of Christ, never actually having received Him at all (3:6, 14; I John 2:19). It's very possible to live close to Christ's fold and claim to be His sheep, until the price of being a "Christian" reaches the break-out point for the one living a lie. We find warning here for all who experience something of the reality of the true God and recognize the possibility of salvation through faith in Christ, and perhaps like Judas even join themselves to the Christian community, but have never actually walked through that only door of salvation into life in Christ. There is simply no other hope outside of Him. Perhaps the price or

*Heb 6:11 And we desire that every one of you do shew
the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto
the end:*

*Heb 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them
who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

pressure of being a “Christian” has yet to rise enough to display you. *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith”* (II Cor. 13:5).

6:9-11 – *“Better Things of You”*

Vs. 9 – Having shaken those still lingering on the outside, the author now assures those within Christ’s fold. Works fit for repentance will *“accompany salvation”* and demonstrate the reality of it. A true work of the Spirit is known by the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).

Vs. 10 – Though we need strong encouragement to not disregard the Lord, He does not disregard our least labours borne out of love for Him. Such *“labour of love . . . toward His name”* is shown in our service to His saints. What we do for *them* the Lord accounts as done *for Him*.

Vs. 12-15 – The example of Abraham’s rewarded patience. God affirmed with an oath His promise to

*Heb 6:13 For when God made promise to Abraham,
because he could swear by no greater, he swore by
himself,
Heb 6:14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and
multiplying I will multiply thee.
Heb 6:15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he
obtained the promise.*

Abraham, of blessing upon Abraham's multiplied descendents (Gen. 22:17-18). He not only gave His word, but gave it under oath. *"By Myself have I sworn saith the LORD"* (Gen. 22:16). In so swearing *"by Myself"* He put His own character on the line in the most supreme assurance that He would do what He said. *Then He did what He promised!* And He did what He said;

- Though there was a long time between promise and performance.
- Though it took faith in a promise of *"things not seen"* as yet.
- Though it took a faith that *"patiently endured"*, standing the test of time and trouble.

Yet Abraham's enduring faith was rewarded with the eventual fulfilment of everything God promised. The evidence of this in history is indisputable.

Heb 6:16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.
Heb 6:17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

Abraham's example effectively speaks to his children. The assurance is that all with a faith that patiently endures to the end shall find God's promise of blessing fulfilled upon them as well (3:6, 14). But all who can be driven from their grip on the Lord, as Satan failed to do with Job but accomplished in Judas, show by their defection no true faith from the start.

Vs. 16 – A man uses the assuring addition of an oath or vow to instil confidence in one to whom he gives his promise.

Vs. 17 – The Lord too gave His promise of blessing upon Abraham's seed with an oath. And this He gave for man's sake as a confidence builder, providing man with more assurance than he really needs of God's sure word. It's God's gracious concession to the weakness of man's faith. The word of the God of truth is immutable or unchangeable as it stands, yet His oath is given to underscore its certainty.

Heb 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:

Heb 6:19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Vs. 18 – The “*two immutable things*” are the Lord’s *word* and His *oath*. Both are given to all who are grafted into the root and fatness of Abraham’s promised blessing through Abraham’s Seed, who is Christ (Rom. 11:17). And all is toward our great comfort. Our God not only wishes to fulfil His promise of final rest to all who have fled to refuge in Christ, but He wants to give us rock-steady confidence and comfort in that sure end along the way. Both the eventual keeping *and* the everyday comfort of all having fled to God’s city of refuge are His gracious interest.

Vs. 19 – Our hope in such a sure promise from God is meant to be like an anchor for our soul. Though the Lord has yet to deliver us out of the storms of life, He has anchored us from ruin on the rocks. And it’s a soul-anchor that carries right through the curtain of death’s passage, secured in the very presence of God.

Heb 6:20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Vs. 20 – It is that very way through which Jesus Christ our Forerunner has gone to secure the connection to the other side. Even as a lead climber does the rigorous and risky work of going before, that he might solidly fasten the rope to the rock for the security of all who follow.

“Now consider
how great this man was . . .”

(Hebrews 7:4)

Class 8 – Hebrews 7:1-10

Think It Through

Jesus far excels;

- The angels in their important ministry (chap. 1).
- Moses, who was only God's *servant* while Jesus is God's *Son* (chap. 3). Moses leads only to *servanthood* to the law, where Jesus leads to *sonship* to the Father.
- Joshua (chap. 3-4). Jesus leads into *eternal* rest, where Joshua led only to *temporal* rest.

In chapter 7 the author continues his effort from the end of chap. 4 to show Jesus far superior to Aaron and His priesthood greater than that of the Levites. This is such a key passage, expressing the central thrust of the book.

Chapter 7

7:1-3 – Consider Melchizedek

Vs. 1 – “*For . . .*” – The writer explains the meaning of the closing comment of chap. 6. In fact he returns to the start he made in chap. 5 (vs. 6 & 10)

Heb 7:1 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;

Heb 7:2 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;

Heb 7:3 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.

before bringing rebuke and warning for dull understanding and slowness of heart to believe with a true enduring faith (5:11-6:20). The things of Christ and Melchizedek now to be discussed require the sharpness of a mature, receiving heart.

Vs. 1-3 – He begins with historical reminder of Melchizedek. All the O.T. mention we have of this intriguing man is found within the four verses of Gen. 14:18-20 & Ps. 110:4. Consider some Bible first-mentions in Gen. 14;

- Priest – Melchizedek was the first priest mentioned in the Bible, long before Levi was even born.
- Most High God – It's the first time this name for God is found, expressing the truth that God is the highest above every other concept

of deity. In the Hebrew it's *El Elyon*, the Strongest Strong One, defined in Gen. 14 as "*Possessor of heaven and earth*" (vs. 19). Compare Christ titled "*the Son of the Highest*" in Lk. 1:32.

- Tithe – It's the first time the idea of giving the tithe or tenth appears in the Bible. Abram's tithe indicated the Most High as Owner of everything, and expressed subjection to Melchizedek as God's representative. We are still to give our offerings to the Lord in grateful recognition of His ownership of all, and in subjection to Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Bread & Wine – It's the first time these elements of the Lord's Table find mention in God's words, and in a context of worship and thanksgiving.

Melchizedek is a strange figure indeed, begging much more explanation, of which this book of Hebrews offers only a few more crumbs. The author begins with what we know from the Genesis account, moving on to what we didn't know. Melchizedek;

- Was a king.
- Was king of Salem. This was surely the city

of Jerusalem, which name means “city of Salem”. “*Salem*”, similar to Shalom, means “peace”.

- Was a priest. As Jesus, Melchizedek was both king and priest.
- Was priest of the Most High God.
- Met and blessed Abraham on his return from victory over the eastern kings.
- Received “*a tenth*” (tithe) of the spoils from Abraham.
- His Hebrew name, “*Melchizedek*”, means king (melech) of righteousness (zedek). The significance of the names is underscored here. He and his reign were characterized by *righteousness*.
- Was the king of Salem, i.e. King of Peace. Indicating significance beyond just the place of his throne. He and his reign were characterized by *peace*.
- Was without father, mother, or genealogy.
- Was without “*beginning of days*” (birth) or “*end of life*” (death).
- Was “*made like unto the Son of God*”. Compare Dan. 3:25.

- Remains “*a priest continually*”.

Who indeed was/is this man? Many have been the suggestions over the years, such as;

- A chief of a local Canaanite city or tribe. Perhaps one still clinging to the faith of the pre-flood godly line descending through Seth. These would insist that since he was called a “*man*” (vs. 4) he couldn’t have been more than a man. But then Jesus is also called a man (I Tim. 2:5). And so were the three who visited Abraham in Gen. 18, but two were angels we’re later informed (compare Gen. 18:22 & 19:1), and the other turned out to be “*the LORD*” (18:1-2, 17ff).
- Shem, the son of Noah. Jewish tradition strongly leans in this direction. Assuming no gaps in the Genesis record of genealogies, Shem actually outlived Abraham by 35 years. But the beginning of Shem’s days are on record (Gen. 4).
- An angel.
- An unfallen Adam from some other planet, sent to observe the progress of redemption.

That Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance

Heb 7:4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

of Christ (Christophany) is most probable. Christ's kingdom and reign characterized by righteousness and peace are common prophetic themes (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:4-6; Jer. 23:6; Ps. 45:6-7 quoted in Heb. 1:8-9). Jesus is the only true King of Righteousness and Prince of Peace. And the things Melchizedek is "*without*" are rather revealing as well – father, mother, genealogy, beginning or end of days. Though some take these without's only as far as the Bible record, in the sense of without record of them.

See as well how the point is made that Melchizedek is "*first*" King of Righteousness, and "*after that also*" King of Peace. Significance is placed on the order, that peace can only be built on the footer of righteousness. "*The work of righteousness shall be peace*" (Isa. 32:17). The Apostle Paul as well put "*a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty*" (I Tim. 2:2).

7:4-10 – Consider Melchizedek's Greatness

Vs. 4 – "*Now consider how great this man*".

Heb 7:5 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:

Heb 7:6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

Heb 7:7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

Melchizedek is now compared with Abraham and Levi and shown to be more excellent than they.

Vs. 4-10 – Melchizedek’s greatness is evident in that;

- Father Abraham paid tithes to him (vs. 4-6), even though he was not appointed to such an office through God’s law, as Aaron and sons (vs. 5-6).
- Abraham was blessed by him (vs. 6-7). There is no disputing that the one of greater honour is the blesser of the lesser. The father blesses the son (Gen. 27:29; 48:20; 49:28). It was given to the priests to bless their people (Num. 6:22-27). Though Abraham owned God’s promises in an unconditional covenant, he was still

Heb 7:8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.
Heb 7:9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.
Heb 7:10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

Melchizedek's inferior.

- The sons of Levi actually paid tithes (a token of homage) to Melchizedek when still in Abram's loins (vs. 9-10).

Though the Levites were exalted among their people to receive tithes, they exercised a dying, mortal priesthood, while Melchizedek lives on (vs. 8). He does not come from human descent, thus his priesthood is eternal. This is the key point of the repeated Ps. 110:4 quote, "*a priest forever*". Could he have been mere man in light of this? His forever priesthood seems to meld into Christ's as the same Being. Melchizedek was/is Aaron's priest, the priest of priests (as Jesus). Melchizedek was greater than Abraham, that man bound to God by covenant as the special "*friend of God*" (James 2:23). And by so much more he was greater than all who came through Abraham. For if greater than the father then greater than the sons. Thus clearly he was greater than Levi, the man from whom the

whole O.T. priesthood was derived.

That there was allowance right back in the beginning of the O.T. for a greater priesthood, even a replacement priesthood, indicates that there was a fatal flaw in Aaron's from the start (vs. 11). It was never meant to be forever or immortal. Since the purpose of the priesthood was to give man access to God, the provision of a different priesthood verifies that the first fell short of this aim. The *flawed* priesthood must make way for the *forever* priesthood.

The Point of the Portion

The Jewish people (or any people) would be so desperately unwise to cast Jesus aside in preference to Aaron's priesthood (or any priesthood). Aaron's priesthood;

- Was like the dead letter of the law.
- Was only ever meant to lead on to Christ's forever priesthood.
- Was only meant to bring in the new covenant of promise.

Beyond what God offers in Jesus Christ there is nothing else that He can do for dying souls destined

to perish. In that Jesus lives and remains a priest forever, He alone can offer eternal deliverance as our eternal Mediator.

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Points to Ponder

Compare how God used a similar pattern with the law as with the priesthood. The eternal priesthood was lodged with Abraham long before Aaron's temporary one was instituted. Even so relation to God by promise was established with Abraham "*four hundred and thirty years*" before Moses' temporary dispensation of law (Gal. 3:15-18). Both the levitical priesthood and the law of Moses were only given until the time came to return to what began with Abraham.

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Couldn't it be said that Jesus was also a descendant of Abraham and therefore inferior to Melchizedek?

Answer – Though born a Jew, Jesus, as Melchizedek, had no human father and therefore paid no tithes in Abraham.

.....

When we consider this matter of Levi paying tithes in Abraham (vs. 9), in some sense acting while still

in the loins of his forefather, we see the same principle of all men sinning and falling in Adam's initial sin (Rom. 5:12, "*in that all sinned*"). We were in Adam when he chose to sin, and in some sense acted with him. Which is it?

- That we shared with him in the act, and thus the guilt of the act, as Levi shared in the tithe?
- That we inherit from him a fallen human nature, as one would inherit freckles?
- That there was an actual spiritual death in that moment of initial sin, thus every child born is born spiritually dead?
- All of the above?

Do you see how we understood little of the real significance of Melchizedek and his place before this chapter of Hebrews? Do you see how we need the Spirit of God through the Word of God to explain the Word of God to us? We need the New Testament to explain the Old. There are deep things that can only be found by comparing Scripture with Scripture (I Cor. 2:13). Yet we must ever be cautious in going beyond what the Scriptures clearly reveal.

The tithe does not appear to be binding on N.T. believers, though we are to give as the Lord prospers us (I Cor. 16:2). A tenth of our income is perhaps a good starting place. The principle carries that the Lord is Possessor of all and we are merely stewards of what He has entrusted to our care. This recognition we display by our cheerful giving of a portion. Our giving should be in proportion to our increase, and should never become mere routine, but should ever be done in worship and happy acknowledgement of the Lord's ownership of our all.

Class 9 – Hebrews 7:11-28

There was some understanding within the Hebrew Christian community of who Jesus Christ is, yet there was need to “*go on unto perfection*”. It was to this end that the author of Hebrew wrote. Though they perhaps knew Jesus to be Messiah, still their view of His glory was too small, too cramped, too imperfect. It seems they were still too willing to allow Moses and Aaron a place up beside Jesus. There was need for them to consider what Christ’s coming really meant in relation to the old dispensation. All desire to combine Jesus with Moses and Aaron must be discarded. They must understand the old and new as two mutually exclusive ways (Gal. 3:9-12), with the old now actually *displaced* by the new. It’s always all about who the Lord Jesus Christ really is. A correct view of Jesus is the way forward to a correct view of everything else and the answer to every error. Peter affirmed as well that we escape “*the pollutions of the world through the knowledge (perfect knowledge) of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (II Pet. 2:20). To know this One aright is the only way to perfection.

7:1-3 – Consider Melchizedek

7:4-10 – Melchizedek’s Greatness – Far more

Heb 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?

excellent than Abraham and Levi.

7:11-28 – New Priesthood and Priest

This is a chapter of contrasts between old and new. We see contrasts here between;

- The sons of Levi, descendents of Abraham, receiving tithes from their brothers, in contrast to the one without genealogy receiving tithes from and blessing Abraham himself (vs. 5-6).
- Dying men receiving tithes, in contrast to he who lives (vs. 8).
- The displacement of the profitless, powerless commandment, in contrast to the introduction of a better hope (vs. 18-19).
- Those becoming priests without an oath, in contrast to the one who is a Priest by oath (vs. 21).
- Those becoming *many* priests in succession

because death kept them from continuing, in contrast to the one remaining forever with unchanging priesthood (vs. 23-24).

Vs. 11 – Why the need and provision made for *another* priesthood if perfection was through the law and Levi's priesthood? Obviously perfection does not come by this old way, or it would have been quite sufficient with no need for change. The levitical system and law was indeed given by God, but for a specific, limited purpose (Gal. 3:24). With Christ's coming the work of that first was finished (Gal. 3:25). The forms or shuttering boards have served their purpose and are removed once the concrete wall is poured and dried. In our current age the old legal/levitical system is now described by Paul as "*weak and beggarly elements*" of "*bondage*" (Gal. 4:9). Allowance from the beginning of the O.T. for a replacement priesthood indicates that Aaron's fell short from the start. Consider the illustration in John the Baptist of the old law and priesthood fading and finally removed before Christ's rise to prominence (Jn. 3:30, "*He must increase, but I must decrease*"). And like John, you and I must die to ourselves that Christ might rise to pre-eminence through our lives. That a man is *complete* in Christ (Col. 2:10) expresses a fundamental difference between Christ's priesthood

Heb 7:12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

Heb 7:13 For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

Heb 7:14 For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

Heb 7:15 And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

and Aaron's, which like the law "*made nothing perfect*" (vs. 19).

Vs. 12 – Because Aaron's priesthood and the law come bundled together, a change in one forces a change in the other. This in itself displays the principle of change inherent in the old, pointing up the transitory nature of it. God's law, like the old priesthood to which it was wed, was never meant to be permanent. Since the two are based upon each other, if one be proven deficient so must the other be found.

Vs. 14-15 – Two points of proof are given that the old law and priesthood are indeed changed;

- Christ, our great High Priest, did not come from the tribe of Levi as the law specifies, but from the tribe of Judah. Moses never spoke

of Judah as a source of priests, yet the priesthood has now shifted from Levi's tribe to Judah's. Matthew (chap. 1) showed Jesus as David's descendent, of the tribe of Judah, that He might inherit the throne. As early as Gen. 49:10 it was prophesied that Christ would arise as "*the Lion of the tribe of Judah*" (Rev. 5:5).

- And Christ's priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek rather than that of Aaron. He has been appointed to a priesthood of an entirely different kind.

Note how these arguments are not aimed at proving Christ's priesthood, but now assume His High Priestly appointment. He is now shown to be Priest *alone*, for Aaron's priesthood through Levi is no more. Jesus is not placed *beside* Levi, but *in his place*! All serves to point up the end of the old and the coming of a new order whereby perfection is available.

Arguments thus far;

- Perfection cannot come through Levi's priesthood.
- Jesus has arisen a Priest of a different, immortal kind.

Heb 7:16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.
Heb 7:17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

- This marks a change in the law as well.
- This change is obvious in that Jesus is no Levite.
- And this is even more evident in that Jesus is a priest after Melchizedek's order rather than Aaron's.

Vs. 16-17 – *“The law of a carnal commandment”* – It's not that the law of God was carnal in the sense of sinful, but that it was oriented toward the flesh or physical routine and ritual. The law was weak in that men in the flesh could not keep it (Rom. 7:14). The reference here as well is to earthly priests unable to preserve their own lives, and thus the priestly position passing from fathers to sons according to the flesh. Such dying priests were unable to grant eternal life to those who sought access to God through them. The new covenant, however, is not according to earthly, fleshly doing, but according to the power of endless life granted by God (as the Ps. 110:4 implies). As Christ our High

Heb 7:18 For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

Heb 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.

Priest, with the inherent power of endless or indestructible life within Himself, so Christ's priesthood and those arranged under it carry within them the same forever principle. Note the great attention to endless continuance in this chapter (vs. 3, 8, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25, 28). See the contrast in vs. 8 & 23.

Vs. 18-19 – The author now becomes more bold, adopting much stronger terms to express not only just the law's "*change*" (vs. 12), but its "*disannulling*" (abolished, displaced, set aside). This because of its "*weakness*" and "*unprofitableness*" and inability to make anything perfect. The "*better hope*" found in Christ leads to a perfection and a nearness to God, which the law could never bring through man's weakness. Perfection is a strongly highlighted subject in this book (6:1; 9:9, 10, 14; 11:40). Why look back to an empty-shell hope when "*a better hope*" has hatched out and may be had? The law and levitical

Heb 7:20 And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

Heb 7:21 (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:)

Heb 7:22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

priesthood could never justify a sinful soul, purge sin, or cleanse the conscience. Oh there was ability to draw near to God in the old dispensation, but only ever in a *limited* way, through smoke, veils, men, once a year, etc. Only with Christ's death was the veil torn (Matt. 27:51), and the way opened through His flesh to the very presence of God (10:19-20).

Vs. 20-22 – Jesus carries stronger endorsement than the levitical priests ever did. They were never certified by a divine oath as Jesus was. And this oath affirmed both the nature and duration of His priesthood (Ps. 110:4). God's assurance of Christ's continuance is something the sons of Levi never received. Again, a hint that their priesthood had a scheduled end from the start.

Christ's new and "*better testament*" or covenant brings better provisions, promises, and assurances

Heb 7:23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

Heb 7:24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Heb 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.

than the old ever could. A covenant indicates response from both sides;

- Man's side – *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”*.
- God's side – *“and thou shalt be saved”*.

Jesus is the *“surety”* of this new covenant. He is the One ensuring that the conditions are upheld. And if He *died* for His own then how could He fail to *live* for them as the One with resurrection power ensuring their eternal safety (Rom. 5:10).

Full and happy assurance!

Vs. 23-25 – Again, the levitical priesthood was changeable because it was *mortal*, while Christ's is unchangeable because He *“continueth ever”*. And therefore He is ever available to intercede as Mediator in our behalf. The salvation Christ offers is a *“to the uttermost”* salvation, for He ever

Heb 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Heb 7:27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

Heb 7:28 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.

continues to see it through to a completion.

The phrase “*to make intercession*” runs bigger than mere prayers, taking in Christ’s entire mediatorial role as our great Advocate (I Jn. 2:1). He is fully able and willing to deal with the Father on our behalf.

Vs. 26-28 – Christ’s purity and perfection. The required ceremonial cleanness of the O.T. priests pictured the perfect purity of Jesus.

“*Harmless*” – Without craft or malice. His holiness does not diminish His tender sympathy toward sinful men.

“*Undefiled*” – Untainted by the world in His passage through earthly life. Even so the Lord calls upon us

to keep ourselves “*unspotted from the world*” (James 1:27).

“*Separate from sinners*” – He is untouched by sin, both as to actual personal involvement with sin or in any binding association with sinners.

“*Made higher than the heavens*” – This likely refers to Christ’s exaltation to “*a name that is above every name*”, His reward for His holy life and sacrifice.

Consider some further contrasts between the priesthoods of Christ and Aaron;

- Jesus does not need to make continual sacrifices for sin. He sacrificed “*once*”, with a better sacrifice “*when He offered up Himself*” (vs. 27).

Why then does Roman Catholicism continue to offer the sacrifice of Christ in the mass when God has said “*this He did once, when He offered up Himself*”?

- Where Christ’s perfection is the very holiness of God the priests of Aaron were of a stained human nature, needing to sacrifice for their own sins (vs. 26-28). The attendants were as weak as their office and the office as weak as its attendants.

- Where the law made men of weakness to be priests the oath made Christ ever perfected (vs. 28). “*Consecrated*” in the old Latin sense of perfected here.

The old covenant could not give;

- Paradise or endless life (vs. 16).
- Perfection (vs. 19).
- Purity (vs. 26-27).

Summary of Contrasts

Old Priesthood

Sourced in Levi’s tribe

Aaron’s order

Dying priests (vs. 16)

Left men subject to death

New Priesthood

Sourced in Judah (vs. 13-14)

“*After the similitude of Melchizedek*” (vs. 15)

One with “*power of an endless life*”

Brings endless life

Way of “*weakness*”
and *unprofitableness*”
(vs. 18)

Received authority
through the law
(vs. 16)

Displaced (vs. 18)

“*Made nothing*
perfect” (vs. 19)

Left men apart
from God

Established without
oath (vs. 21)

Changeable through
mortal priests
(vs. 23)

Needs stained
priests cleansed
(vs. 27)

Needs daily offering

Way of “*power*”
(vs. 16)

Authority through
inherent power

Introduced (vs. 19)

Brings perfection

Brought men near
(vs. 19)

Ascertained in
nature and duration
by divine oath (vs.
20-21)

Unchangeable
through One who
“*continueth ever*” (vs.
24)

An undefiled
holy High Priest
(vs. 26)

Once-for-all offerings
(vs. 27)

Priests of
weakness (vs. 28)

One forever
perfected

Moral of the Story

The Hebrew people, as any people, must not make the mistake of holding to the ancient rule and ritual as if God ever meant these to be permanent things. One would be a fool to refuse the office and ministry of Jesus Christ, for He was meant to be the permanent answer to type or shadow, rule or ritual from the start. The Apostles themselves found it a hard struggle through this same adjustment (Acts 10-11, 15; Gal. 2:11ff).

Question

Why has Roman Catholicism consecrated a new order of priests when the earthly ceremonial priesthood is clearly displaced by Christ's eternal priesthood? Is it not true that their approach follows the wicked example of Jeroboam in I Ki. 13, who so arrogantly established his own priesthood to replace God's? Is it not true that they are motivated by the very same determination to preserve their own position and power rather than truly exalting God's one and only Great High Priest?

Class 10 – Hebrews 8

This book of Hebrews is all about comparisons. And the sum of it is that Jesus Christ is better;

- Chap. 1, than prophets and angels.
- Chap. 2, than every human kinsman redeemer.
- Chap. 3, than Moses and Joshua.
- Chap. 5-7, than Abraham and Aaron and his priesthood. Jesus qualifies as a priest because He has humanity, deity, sympathy for our human experience, and God's appointment (chap. 5). Christ's priesthood is higher than Aaron's because it is eternal, pure, and perfect. His sacrifice is not offered for His own sin as the levites had to do, and it is offered once for all as the levites could never do (chap. 7).

In chap. 8 the author will now bring to light the *real* nature of Christ's priesthood in contrast to the shadow nature of Aaron's, and the better covenant Jesus brought.

Chapter 8

Heb 8:1 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;

8:1-6 – Christ’s Better Priesthood

The thrust here is that Jesus is exalted to serve as priest of the *true* tabernacle, of which the earthly is but a signpost.

Vs. 1 – We’re now given “*the sum*” or the main thrust of the things being said. While holding the sense of Ps. 110:4 (“*an high priest*”) the author imports the thought of vs. 1 of that psalm as well (“*Sit Thou at My right hand*”, 1:13). This seat at the Father’s right hand, that place of very highest honour in all of existence, expresses the *supreme worth* of Jesus Christ. The fact that Jesus sits suggests His work finished. There is nothing more for which man now waits to be done from God’s side. “*It is finished*” the Saviour proclaimed with His dying breath. There will be no further options beyond the completed redemption now offered in Christ’s finished work.

Note carefully the wording here. Is Jesus on *His* throne reigning in His promised kingdom? No, He’s

Heb 8:2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Heb 8:3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

seated beside the Father's throne. The fulfilment of kingdom prophecies is yet to come with His return.

Vs. 2 – Jesus is Servant of the “true tabernacle”, which no man had a part in setting up. Not “true” in contrast to false, but in the sense of real, genuine, pivotal, focal. It is that heavenly tabernacle to which the earthly was ever merely an indicator. Jesus used the same word in Jn. 6:32 of Himself as the “true bread” in contrast to the manna in the wilderness. Not that the manna was an illusion, but that it was pointing to Jesus as the genuine article, the antitype of the type. The earthly tabernacle functioned as an indicator, as a disposable cast-off, as a snake skin relates to the actual animal, as a package relates to the food inside. It was a vehicle ushering the final product to its promised completion. The *true* High Priest has entered into His labours in the *true* heavenly tabernacle, making the earthly redundant.

Vs. 3 – As every High Priest, Jesus brings an

Heb 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:

Heb 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 shewed to thee in the mount.

appropriate sacrifice to be offered. In His case the sacrifice is that of His own death in the sinner's behalf. With the sacrifice of Himself finished here on earth, He then presents His offering in that heavenly tabernacle. This heavenly service is real and fitting, in contrast to its earthly cast-off.

Vs. 4 – In His earthly life Jesus could not have served as priest, being unqualified according to the law. The point was made in chap. 7 that all of this has changed, so that what He is fits perfectly with that true priesthood in the Father's presence. In just a few years time the Lord would force upon the nation the recognition that He has now cast aside the old, with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Vs. 5 – “*Example*” means indication or intimation, as a signpost indicating something. The same word is translated “*pattern*” in 9:23. A “*shadow*” is of

Heb 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.

course a mere shade caused by some true substance intercepting light. The *true* priest, priesthood, and tabernacle are there in heaven, not here on earth. This was implied from the beginning as well, when the Lord cautioned Moses to make the earthly as he was shown of the heavenly (Ex. 25:40). The earthly tabernacle was only ever a *copy* of the heavenly from the start.

Vs. 6 – By as much as the heavenly is indeed the true beyond the earthly, the *substance* more significant than its shadow, by so much Jesus and His ministry is beyond Aaron’s, “*more excellent*” in every way!

8:6-13 – Christ’s Better Covenant

The author now turns to the matter of the two covenants, old and new. A covenant is an agreement or relationship between two sides involving terms. The Lord through Moses led Israel into the old covenant at Sinai. The essence of this

covenant was the promise of privileges from God if they would obey His laws. His laws were given to provide a standard through which God might move man to a sense of his sinful nature, driving him to the Lord for deliverance. It is a standard through which God displays to man what is right, with penalties for wrong. By this means God's law provides some preservation against man's moral degeneration. The people of Israel accepted those conditions and the old covenant was established there on Sinai between God and His people. But they soon fell completely away to idolatry.

Jesus brought the new covenant through His sacrificial death. The basis of this new covenant reaches back to the pre-law days of God's old promise to Abraham of blessing to all people of the earth. That promise Abraham believed, and through his faith he found justification, picturing God's way of salvation. All who were ever saved were saved in the same way, by faith in God's promise.

Both covenants had to do with;

- Man in relation to God's law, His moral standard of right. The first covenant pressed the law upon man outwardly, the second writes it on the heart.

- Man's knowledge of the Lord.
- Dealing with man's sin.

The old and new covenants are now contrasted, with the old displayed as having been displaced by the new by God's design.

Vs. 6 – The term “*Mediator*” speaks of one who stands in the middle as a medium of communication or arbitrator between two sides. Moses was the arbitrator of the old covenant on Sinai while Jesus is the arbitrator of the new. Where Moses stood between God and man on Mount Sinai, Jesus hung between God and man on Mount Moriah (Calvary).

The Lord assuredly promised to Abraham blessing upon his people and all people of the earth (6:13-14; Gen. 22:15-18). But this promised blessing did not come through the weakness of the first covenant, which was weak through man's inability to keep it and through the law's surface orientation. As a result Abraham's promised blessing has now come through the new covenant brought by Jesus. The surpassing nature of the new covenant and its promises will be given in vs. 8-12, a lengthy quote from Jer. 31:31-34.

*Heb 8:7 For if that first covenant had been faultless,
then should no place have been sought for the second.
Heb 8:8 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:*

Vs. 7 – Again the author reasons as in 7:11. He has already exposed the weakness and unprofitableness of the law, able to perfect nothing (7:18-19). The old covenant was only a case of “if you do, then I will”, of an outward, fleshly nature (7:16), and unable to penetrate to the heart. As well, the old priesthood and tabernacle fell short, for they could not deliver men into the presence of the Lord, but ever kept the common man shut out from the Holy Place. And besides this, the old way carried in itself prophecies of a better way yet to come, as we’ve already seen in chap. 7 and as in what follows from Jeremiah’s pen. For the Hebrew people to stubbornly hold onto the old was to find themselves fighting against the Lord Himself and quite left behind as the Lord moved on according to plan.

Vs. 8 – It was in a day when the Lord found fault with His people that He spoke these words through His prophet. A reminder again of the weakness of the old.

Heb 8:9 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.

Heb 8:10 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:

Vs. 9 – “*Not according to the covenant*” at the first, expresses the old replaced with the new. The old failed “*because they continued not*”, leading to God’s rejection as He had warned at the first. It was “*they*” who trashed that first covenant. God’s final indictment upon Israel in II Ki. 17:7-23 is all about “*they*”. And note that their rejection of their God was in spite of His fatherly care for them, tenderly taking “*them by the hand to lead them out*”. But God’s persistent grace is a matchless thing, a wonder to behold! As He has promised that His “*kindness shall not depart from*” His people (Isa. 54:9-10), so He has promised a new covenant to replace the old.

Vs. 10-12 – The provisions of that new and better covenant;

- God’s law engraved on the mind and heart

(vs. 10). This indicates not only a supernatural knowledge of God's truth, but His inward prompting to obey it. This can only refer to the presence and work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Compare Isa. 59:20-21; Ezek. 11:19; 36:25ff. Here is why John the Baptist identified Jesus as that One who would baptize with the Spirit, because He was that One bringing in the new covenant. Here is what the prophet Joel meant in 2:28-32 of his book, and why Peter quoted him in Acts 2, because it was the pouring out of the Spirit as promised in the new covenant. Here is what Paul meant by his contrast in II Cor. 3:6, when he affirmed that the new testament (covenant) is "*not of the letter [of the law], but of the Spirit*". The law can only condemn our sinful nature by presenting God's righteous demands, without ability to change our hearts. Here is why the great N.T. focus on the Spirit's inward presence (Jn. 14; Gal. 3) as one of the key features of the new covenant. Now the righteous law is entrenched within through the indwelling Spirit, and the details of the law's requirements are consolidated into the central principle of love for God and man. Compare Rom. 13:9-10.

Heb 8:11 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.

- Intimate relation to God (vs. 10). This is no relationship based merely on the keeping of outward requirements (which generates pride), but an inward willingness and ability to love and follow the right and hate and shun the wrong through the Spirit's prompting. *Oh the wonder of God's grace, that man being what he is, God would still provide for our closeness to Him!!* His delight in the undelightful should ever lead us to delight in Him.
- Universal, supernatural knowledge of the Lord (vs. 11). Compare I Jn. 2:20, 27; Isa. 54:13; Jn. 6:45. This does not rule out the need of teachers (Eph. 4:11-13), but highlights the inward teaching work of the Spirit (Jn. 14:26; 16:13). The beginning of this work is in those now in Christ. The completion of it will be in glory, when that vision of the prophets shall come to pass with the world full of the knowledge of the Lord as water covers the sea (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14).

Heb 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Heb 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.

- Forgiveness of sins (vs. 12). Not the *covering* of sins, as under the old covenant (9:9, 13-14), but the actual, complete removal of sin in Christ. Justification! Full atonement! Perfect peace! Therefore the torn veil, (Matt. 27:51) indicating free access to God's presence with sin's removal and the complete satisfaction of God's wrath in His redeemed.

Vs. 13 – The old accomplished its work in ushering in the new, and then the old was “*ready to vanish away*”. The term “*new*” indicates the need to replace the “*old*”. The old covenant, with its law and levitical priesthood, certainly provided a light in contrast to the blindness and darkness of the Gentile world without God's special revelation. Yet the dim light of that first was nothing like the light of day brought through Jesus Christ. What could ever go beyond what Jesus has already brought? In Him we have;

- Full forgiveness and cleansing of sin in

justification.

- Full atonement in complete oneness with God.
- The indwelling Spirit imprinting God's truth on our inward heart.
- Intimate relation and open access to God.

What better/further/wider/greater could man ever have from God than the perfection of purity, pardon, and peace available in Jesus Christ? Why the need for new or additional "prophets" (Pope, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, etc.)? All such intrusions are Satan's diversions from the finished work of Jesus Christ our Lord?

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Consider the pointers to a temporary old covenant;

- God foretold that it would be replaced.
 - o In a new priesthood after Melchizedek's order.
 - o In a new covenant, "*not according to*" the old.
- The old provided no perfection. The ongoing practice of sacrifices proclaimed no justification or deliverance from sin through

them. Full atonement would have brought an end to sacrifices.

- The old tabernacle set-up displayed man shut out from God's presence, forbidding open fellowship as long as it stood.

Old & New Covenants Contrasted

The Old

Temporary

Physical, fleshly
(7:16)

Outward

On tables of
stone

Followed *physical*
deliverance from
Egypt

Indicator (8:5)

Shadow (8:5)

Removed outward
ceremonial
defilement

The New

Eternal (13:20)

Spiritual

Inward

On fleshly tables of
the heart (8:10)

Follows *spiritual*
deliverance from sin's
bondage

Arrival

Substance

Removes inward
moral defilement
(8:12)

Sin covered	Sin forgiven / removed
Knowledge of God	Greater knowledge of God (8:11)
Shut out of God's presence	Access to God's very presence (10:19-22)
Flawed in that it was conditional	Perfect in that it is unconditional
Holy Spirit only for special ministries	Forever indwelling Holy Spirit
Promises	Better promises (8:6)

Question

If the Lord's new covenant was to be "*with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*" (vs. 8, 10), how could it be that *Gentiles* have largely been those to benefit by it, and Israel mostly missed the blessings of the new covenant altogether? Theologians have struggled over this for centuries. Many conclude that this is what the Lord was meaning all along, that His promises to Israel would be fulfilled in His church. And if the promise of new covenant blessing was fulfilled in the church then

perhaps *all* of God's yet unfulfilled promises to national Israel were fulfilled in the church as well. Perhaps He never meant that national Israel would continue after their rejection of Jesus.

The truth is that the Lord has indeed turned to the world with the offer of new covenant benefits, because these were initially rejected by Israel in their rejection of Messiah. But this only until the day God finally redeems and restores national Israel to Himself as well, as the prophets have clearly assured us, with Christ's return to His Millennial Kingdom. We are not led to reinterpret the prophets allegorically. We are led to wait and see.

Class 11 – Hebrews 9:1-14

Heb 9:1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

Heb 9:2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

Chapter 9

9:1-10 – The Earthly Tabernacle

Vs. 1-5 – Features of the earthly sanctuary.

Vs. 2 – The first enclosure or Holy Place contained the Golden Lampstand and the Table of Showbread.

The Lampstand pictured;

- The light of the Lord's presence (I Jn. 1:7).
- Jesus as the *"true Light"* (Jn. 1:6-9) and *"the Light of the world"* (Jn. 8:12).
- All believers walking in the light of God's presence as lights in this world (Matt. 5:14; Rev. 1:20).
- Perhaps it suggested as well the mere candle-power of the old law and levitical system, in

Heb 9:3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Heb 9:4 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;

contrast to the blazing sunlight of Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:2; Acts 26:13; Rev. 1:16).

The Table of Showbread pictured;

- God as a Feeder, and His presence as that place where His people may find bread, both physical and spiritual.
- Jesus the Bread of Life come down to meet man's needs as the manna in the wilderness (Jn. 6).

Vs. 3-5 – The second enclosure or Holy of Holies.

Vs. 4 – Containing the golden “*censer*” (altar) and the Ark of the Covenant.

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Question

Why is the golden altar of incense placed here

within the Holy of Holies with the ark, rather than in the first enclosure (Holy Place)? This is a difficult one, troubling many throughout the centuries and giving rise to attack by pagan critics looking for cause against Bible accuracy. Some important points to note concerning the golden altar of incense;

- From the first description of its placement this altar's close association with the ark within the veil can be seen. *"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"* (Ex. 30:6). Compare I Ki. 6:19-22, *"the whole altar that was by the oracle [inner enclosure]"*, and Ex. 40:5, *"thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony"*. Notice that it was not to be placed before the veil but *"before the ark"*. And of course whenever the inner veil was parted, this altar, due to its position, would seem to become a part of the inner enclosure.
- This little altar of incense came into particular use on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), for on that day the High Priest would burn incense as he parted the separating veil, *"that the cloud of the incense may cover the*

mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not” (Lev. 16:13). Now understand that the proceedings in the context here in Heb. 9 relate to the Day of Atonement (vs. 7-9).

- This altar and the ark were the only items within the veils to be atoned with blood (Ex. 30:10).

The Holy Spirit now relates this little altar’s close relation to the Holy of Holies, particularly on the Day of Atonement when in a sense it became a part of the Holy of Holies, as if it actually *belonged* to that inner enclosure. He does not refer to its permanent position within the innermost enclosure. Though it was an outer enclosure furniture item, its *purpose* related especially to matters within.

In this way that little altar seems to picture believers, who are outside of the Lord’s very presence, yet belonging there. They are associated more with that sacred place than with life outside of it, though we yet live outside with the Lord’s immediate presence veiled from our view.

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The ark contained;

- The golden pot of manna. Again, it was the Lord’s reminder to His people of His provision

Heb 9:5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

for His own throughout their trek through the wilderness of life. This pot of manna pictured the Bread of Life who would come down from the Father (Jn. 6).

- Aaron's rod that budded. This resulted from that encounter in Num. 16-17 when the Lord proved Aaron's house to be His chosen high priests of the sanctuary. By this means God forever answered every attempt to invade that office of mediator between man and God. Only one chosen of God may stand in that place. This goes for all of mankind and for all time, whether within or outside of the religion of Israel. All who have ever devised other mediators only offend the true God through their arrogance.
- The two tables of the covenant on which were the summary of the law of God. These were kept in that sacred place to indicate the central place in which the law stands in the Lord's thinking, and picturing the law written on the heart in the new covenant.

Heb 9:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

Vs. 5 – Over the ark was the mercy seat. This was an obvious type of Jesus Christ, the place where the blood of propitiation (satisfaction) was applied.

Vs. 6-10 – Service of the earthly sanctuary.

Vs. 6 – There were daily services in the Holy Place of burning incense, tending the Showbread, and filling and trimming the lamps. These activities describe the essential features of the Christian life lived in God's blessed presence; daily communion with our Father, regular feeding upon His Word, and ever shining for Him as a light to this world.

Only the *priests* were ever allowed into this first sacred enclosure. Only those properly qualified dare enter into the Lord's presence. Our qualification for such entrance is found only in Christ. Compare the Lord's parable of the man improperly clothed at the feast and therefore cast to outer darkness (Matt. 22:11-13). Now is the time to be sure that you're qualified to be in God's presence, properly clothed with the righteousness of

Heb 9:7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

Jesus Christ.

Vs. 7 – Only the *high* priest ever entered into the second enclosure or Holy of Holies.

- He would go *alone*. Only *one* was qualified to so enter the Lord's very presence. Even as only Christ, our great High Priest, is qualified to enter that true heavenly tabernacle.
- The veil was a type of Christ's body (Heb. 10:20), and the parting of it a picture of His flesh torn in death for our redemption. Thus only by passing through death and shed blood could Jesus enter God's presence to make atonement in man's behalf.
- The high priest would go once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), whereas Jesus entered once for all. His atonement was effective, not for a year, but forever.
- He would go only with blood, the blood of a bullock (Lev. 16:11-14). Jesus took to the true tabernacle, not the blood of sacrificial

Heb 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:

animals, but *His own precious blood* shed in sacrifice.

That the High Priest could not enter God's presence without blood indicates that no man dare enter without blood! Only through the blood of Jesus Christ can a soul ever hope to enter God's presence.

“Which he offered for himself” – Again, contrast is made with the earthly priests, who had to first offer for their own sins and then for the people. Compare 7:26-28.

That the priest must offer for themselves and then *“for the errors of the people”* indicates the nature of our praying as well. First we plead for our own purity and progress, then we plead for *“the people”*.

Vs. 8 – Don't miss the indication of the One at work here. As we've suspected, the Holy Spirit is busy *“signifying”* things through the details of the tabernacle. And don't miss the implications of this verse;

- Implied again is the Spirit's authorship of the written record of the tabernacle details through Moses. It ever was the Spirit of God writing through the pen of men as He carried them along (II Pet. 1:20-21).
- Implied as well is a deeper meaning than what is merely on the surface of the tabernacle details. So the astute Bible reader is encouraged to search for significance below the surface. Yet note that the fact of deeper meanings does not negate the fact of the surface details. Even so, though there may be deeper significance in such things as the promise of Christ's earthly kingdom or the record of Adam or creation or any other Bible character or event, this does not negate the Bible's simple statement of these things. We read the Bible normally with a healthy dose of literalism because God does!

The Spirit was signifying through the old tabernacle that entrance into the most holy place of God's very presence was yet barred while the old system was still in effect. Note the time words pointing to the temporary nature of the old, such as "*not yet*" (vs. 8), "*for the time then present*" (vs. 9), "*until*" (vs. 10). The old law and levitical system was only ever

Heb 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;

Heb 9:10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

“until” the forever era of Jesus Christ, with “*light and immortality*” brought to light through the gospel. Now God has opened the way to Himself more completely through Christ and the complete and forever cleansing available to man in Him.

Vs. 9-10 – The gifts and sacrifices of the old system;

- Dealt only with surface ceremonies.
- Brought only ceremonial cleansings.
- Delivered only from God’s physical and temporal judgments threatened upon all who did not *do* them, though no improvement upon their eternal well-being or security was ever brought by such obedience. These necessary ordinances were all merely pointers to true cleansing of soul through “*the obedience of faith*” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26).

Heb 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;

Heb 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.

The new covenant in Christ;

- Penetrates to a purged and peaceful conscience.
- Brings soul cleansing.
- Delivers from God's spiritual and eternal judgment.
- Delivers from fear of death (2:14-15).

9:11-14 – Christ's Service in the True Sanctuary

Vs. 11 – Jesus is “*an High Priest of good things to come*”, both in the grand improvements already brought over the old covenant, and in what He will yet bring in His coming kingdom and beyond. Note the improvements;

- A “*tabernacle not made with hands*”, rather than manmade (vs. 11).
- “*By His own blood*”, rather than by “*the blood*”

Heb 9:13 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:

of goats and calves” (vs. 12).

- His blood brought “*once into the holy place*”, rather than yearly (vs. 12).
- “*Having obtained eternal redemption*”, rather than atonement effective only for a year (vs. 12).
- A conscience purged (vs. 14), rather than merely “*the purifying of the flesh*” (vs. 13).

“*The ashes of an heifer*” refers to the ordinance of the red heifer given in Num. 19. This provided the means for ceremonial cleansing to one who had touched a dead body. Again, such outward procedures only ever dealt with the problem of *ceremonial* uncleanness not with *soul* uncleanness, providing deliverance only from physical punishments and access only to earthly advantages (Deut. 28). Touching a dead body pictured the deeper moral defilement of touching death-bringing sin. Only the blood of Jesus Christ has ability to so purge a soul and conscience. Such contrasts between old and new display the imperfection of the

Heb 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?

old covenant and system.

Vs. 14 – “*Who through the eternal Spirit*” affirms that Jesus did nothing without the Spirit (Lk. 14:1, 14; Jn. 3:34). The most beautiful lampstand without the oil does none of the burning or shining for which it was made. So with our lives in Christ.

“*Without spot*” – The spotless purity of Jesus Christ answers to the old covenant requirement of sacrifices without blemish.

“And as it is appointed
unto men once to die,
but after this the judgment”

(Hebrews 9:27)

Class 12 – Hebrews 9:15-28

We saw in the first half of chap. 9 the earthly sanctuary and service compared with Christ's. In the old system;

- Only the *high priest* entered the old Holy of Holies.
- Only *alone*.
- Only *once* a year, on the Day of Atonement, and *every* year (Lev. 16).
- Only *with blood*.

By this means the Spirit of God was signifying a greatly restricted entrance into God's very presence while the old system remained.

Then by way of contrast, in vs. 11-14 we saw that Christ has now entered;

- A "*tabernacle not made with hands*".
- "*By His own blood*".
- His blood brought "*once into the holy place*".
- And "*having obtained eternal redemption*".

9:15-22 – Mediator's Will and Testament

Heb 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.

A *covenant* is an agreement between individuals, stating the terms of their relationship. It comes into effect as and when the agreement spells out, involves more than one individual, and may or may not involve a mediator or witnesses.

A *testament* can refer to a legal statement of one's wishes in the handling of property after death. In modern times a man's wishes expressed in a legal testament has come to be known as a "will", or his last will and testament. The decrees of a will become fixed and effectual only upon the death of the "testator" (the one having made the will). As we know, one is free to make changes to his will as long as he is able. A will involves only one individual and requires legal representation to be carried out.

The Greek word (*diatheke*), found 15 times in these middle chapters of Hebrews, can be used in either way, referring either to a covenant agreement or to

Heb 9:16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

Heb 9:17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

a testament in the sense of a will. The author now shifts to the latter sense of the word in these next few verses.

Vs. 15 – The purpose of Christ’s mediation of a new testament is that with His death those named in His will might receive “*the promise of eternal inheritance*”. The beneficiaries of His will have now received deliverance from their slavery and sin debt “*under the first testament*”. The first made men heirs to bondage and death while the second made them heirs to liberty and life. Sin against the law made us debtors and powerless to repay. But with our rich inheritance upon Christ’s death, Jesus paid it all! This matchless “*eternal inheritance*” is an endless supply, never exhausted and ever available to every name recorded in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

Vs. 16-17 – The will or testament only comes into force with the death of the testator, describing Christ’s last will and testament fixed and effectual

Heb 9:18 Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

Heb 9:19 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,

for every heir from the moment of His death. In fact, in the O.T. economy even a covenant was instituted with the shed blood of a sacrifice. Compare the cutting in half of animals in God's covenant with Abraham in Gen. 15:9ff (thus the literal Hebrew idiom of "cutting" a covenant). Jesus Christ has both shed His blood in cutting a new covenant with His own, and He as the Testator of His will and testament has died, making His called ones heirs to the riches of His inheritance. Compare Eph. 1:11, 18.

Vs. 18-22 – Even the first testament, imperfect and temporary though it was, required bloodshed and death to be put into effect. This described the type, of which Christ's death and shed blood is the antitype. The event related here is in Ex. 24:3-8.

Vs. 19 – Sprinkling both *"the book of the covenant"* and the people with blood signified the dedication of

Heb 9:20 Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

Heb 9:21 Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

both God and His people to the terms of that old covenant. As well, the blood sprinkled upon the people pictured the *personal application* of the blood of a sacrifice for cleansing. Again the blood of the Saviour was foreshadowed by this means. The same message was communicated in the Feast of the Passover where the blood must be *personally applied* at each house. No man comes to a right relation to God without being purified through the shed blood of Jesus Christ *personally applied!*

Vs. 20 – Jesus adopted these words of Moses at the last supper in the upper room when instituting the new covenant and the Lord's Supper as a memorial (Ex. 24:8; Matt. 26:28). Both Testaments, old & new, were sealed with blood.

With the old covenant there was need for *ongoing* sacrifice because of the *insufficiency* of those sacrifices. With the new covenant there was need only for *one* sacrifice because of the sufficiency of that once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. Consider again

*Heb 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged
with blood; and without shedding of blood is no
remission.*

the Catholic denial of this pivotal truth through their ongoing sacrifice of Christ in the mass. Because their view of Jesus Christ is insufficient, needing the support of Mary's mediation, therefore their view of His sacrifice and salvation is insufficient, needing the support of church ritual and "priesthood" rites. Mark it! A smaller-than-Bible Jesus always results in a "salvation" requiring human input or maintenance, an incomplete salvation too small to stand on its own. Here is the failure of every cult (J.W., Mormon, Christadelphian, Catholic, Muslim, etc.).

Vs. 22 – The general principle of God's law is that everything must be purified by blood. The fact that just about everything was cleansed with blood under the first covenant pointed to the need for all to be cleansed with the blood of Christ under the new covenant. From cover to cover of this Book of books is God's decree that without the shedding of blood there can be *no* release from responsibility, *no* forgiveness of sins (Lev. 17:11). It is a bloodshed that speaks of life forfeited, indeed of the

Heb 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.

Heb 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:

substitution of one life given in behalf of or in the place of another. Herein is a central decree in God's justice. Someone must die for sin, "*for the wages of sin is death*". In God's *justice* life must be given for sin. In God's *mercy* the life of one can be given in the place of another. In God's abounding *grace* His own Son took that place, dying in the place of all. "*As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him*" (Ps. 103:11).

9:23-28 – Christ's Great Service, Sacrifice, and Salvation

Vs. 23 – It's evident that there was need both for the earthly tabernacle, that "*pattern of things in the heavens*", to be cleansed with blood, and for the heavenly to be cleansed with *better* blood, the "*precious blood of Christ*". "*The blood of bulls and of goats*" held value only in that it was a type of Christ's own blood, that of inexpressible worth.

Heb 9:25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Heb 9:26 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.

Vs. 24 – We see here that “*the holy places*” of the earthly tabernacle were “*figures*” of the very “*presence of God*”.

Vs. 25-26 – The better nature of Christ’s “*sacrifice of Himself*” is seen in its permanent effect;

- Once instead of every year – A **sufficient** sacrifice.
- A sacrifice that “*put away sin*” – A **successful** sacrifice. The Greek word behind “*put away*” here speaks of abolition. The same word is used in 7:18 of the law (“*disannulling*”). Jesus did not give merely figurative or ceremonial cleansing from sin’s defilement, but *actual* cleansing, forgiveness, and removal, “*as far as the east is from the west*” (Ps. 103:12).

Jesus suffered once and the work of redemption “*is*

finished”, with the case against sin “*put away*”. Compare again that six-fold work of Messiah in His comings prophesied in Daniel 9:24;

- “*To finish the transgression*” – To bring transgression to an end.
- “*To make an end of sins*” – Sin brought to judgment and cleansing.
- “*To make reconciliation for iniquity*” – The nation of Israel fully reconciled at their final Yom Kippur at Christ’s return (Zech. 12:9-14).
- “*To bring in everlasting righteousness*” – When the King of Righteousness returns, that One after the order of Melchizedek.
- “*To seal up the vision and prophecy*” – When all predicted is fulfilled and confirmed.
- “*To anoint the most holy*” – When the most holy place of the Millennial temple is dedicated, with the Most Holy One on His rightful throne.

These great purposes are to be accomplished within the seventy sevens of Daniel’s prophecy (Dan. 9:25-27), the final seven of years held in abeyance, yet to be fulfilled in the Great Tribulation, which will

*Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die,
but after this the judgment:*

*Heb 9:28 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.*

usher in Christ's earthly presence and kingdom. The combination of these purposes is the summation of where God is going with the nation of Israel and what He will accomplish in the "*seventy weeks . . . determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city*" (Dan. 9:24). The overriding purpose of Christ's bearing of man's sin was and is that He might *remove* sin entirely, that He might carry it away as the scapegoat (Lev. 16:20-22). Remember the words of John the Baptist in Jn. 1:29, "*Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*". Christ's finished work is the completion of the temporary nature and work of the old covenant and priests. Thus there are;

- No further plans of redemption to come.
- No additional Messiahs yet on the way.
- Nothing more needed to bring down Satan's power.

Vs. 27-28 – As all men are appointed only one life, with death and judgment to follow, even so Jesus

had to live one life and to die one death, not “*to offer Himself often*” in carrying to death “*the sins of many*”. And this in order that there might no longer be in believing souls the fear of death and judgment. Now believers look with expectancy rather than anxiety for our Lord to “*appear the second time*”. Compare II Thess. 1:7-10. In Christ’s return;

- He will no longer carry man’s sin, having carried it to death as the slain sacrificial animals, and having carried it away as the scapegoat.
- He will not come in His present purpose as the sin-bearer to save men, but as Judge and Rewarder.
- He will not come to die for sin, but as One who already died, and rose, and lives forevermore.

While the saved live in earnest expectancy of the Lord’s return, the unsaved live in the hopeless dread of the death and judgment that lies before them. That judgment will usher the condemned soul into “*torments*” upon death (Lk. 16:19ff), and to ultimate, eternal torments in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). Reincarnation, and all other unbiblical after-life theories, are clearly the lies of the evil one.

For here from the mouth of God is stated the fixed outcome of every human life. All will die only *once* and then will face their Maker, saith the Lord. How prudent the soul who foresees the evil and hides himself from this certain prospect. Why live in fear when in Christ *all fear is gone*, and death becomes more deliverance than disaster?

Class 13 – Hebrews 10:1-18

Think It Through

Jesus far excels;

- Angels and prophets (chap. 1).
- Moses, who is only God's *servant*, while Jesus is God's *Son* (chap. 3).
- Joshua (chap. 3-4), for Jesus leads His people into *eternal* rest.
- Aaron and Levites (chap. 5-7), for Christ's priesthood is after Melchizedek's endless nature.
- The Old Covenant, bringing a new and better covenant (chap. 7-9).

The case for Jesus Christ presented thus far;

- His priesthood is after Melchizedek (chap. 7), who was *Aaron's* priest, one the O.T. showed greater than Abraham and Levi, with an undying, unchanging priesthood in contrast to a succession of many dying men.
- His office was initiated by divine oath (chap. 7).

- The O.T. implied a better priesthood to come, indicating a fatal flaw in Aaron's from the start.
- A change in priesthood indicates a change in the law, displaying the principle of change within God's law (chap. 7).
- Only an eternal, holy priesthood can lead men to eternal life and purity (chap. 7).
- Christ's once-for-all sacrifice indicates its potency over the ongoing, daily sacrifices of the levitical priests (chap. 7).
- Jesus is High Priest of the "*true*" tabernacle, of which the earthly is merely a manmade shadow (chap. 8).
- Christ's place at the Father's right hand indicates His highest exaltation in the Father's opinion (chap. 8).
- The O.T. promised a "new covenant", implying the need to replace the old through its inadequacy (chap. 8).
- The O.T. tabernacle knew only a restricted entrance into God's presence, indicating need for change (chap. 9). It was a dead-end system in and of itself. To what could it ever lead us, if not to something better in Jesus?

Heb 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.

- The sacrifices of the old system touched only the surface, never reaching to the consciousness of sin (chap. 9).

Chapter 10

In many ways this final doctrinal portion is something of a summary, pulling together and elaborating on many ideas previously touched on. The main theme of this passage is Christ's once-for-all sacrifice, putting away sin and ending all need of animal sacrifices.

10:1-4 – Animal Sacrifices Insufficient

Vs. 1 – As we heard in 8:5, the old covenant of the law was only a shadow of better things to come in the new covenant. Who would be fool enough to continue to honour the shadow when the substance casting the shadow has come? Something like continuing to bow to the poster on the telephone pole announcing the king's coming, when the king himself is out in the street right now. Jesus Christ

Heb 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

Heb 10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

is the “*good things to come*” with all the joy and benefits His presence brings. We find the solid substance of God’s good purpose for man in Him.

Vs. 1-3 – As also indicated in 7:11, 19 & 9:9, if the sacrifices of the law had brought any kind of perfection to a soul then there would have been no need for the continued practice of that old system. The need to *continue* in it displayed the *impotence* of it, for it was able only to remind the one offering that he was still a sinner. Obviously by the old system there was;

- No satisfaction of God.
- No satisfaction in man.
- No final rescue from sin.
- No complete reconciliation.
- No cleared conscience or consciousness of sin.
- A constant remembrance of sin.

Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

This in contrast to what Jesus Christ brings;

- A purged conscience and “*eternal redemption*” (9:12-14).
- The sense of sin and condemnation removed.
- Restored fellowship with God.

The old covenant could only *remind* of sin, the new *removes* it. This pardon in Jesus is a once for all thing through His once for all sacrifice, never needing to be repeated (9:28). As Jesus said to Peter, one having been “*washed* (bathed) *needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit*” (Jn. 13:10). The one wholly cleansed and renewed in Jesus Christ needs only the confession of sins committed through his contact with the world. Note how eternal security is implied in Christ’s words to Peter.

Vs. 4 – It was impossible for the old covenant to perfect or cleanse anything to the core. Bulls and goats are not of the same nature of either man or God to be sufficient to bring perfect reconciliation

Heb 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Heb 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.

between man and God.

10:5-9 – Animal Sacrifices Ended

Vs. 5-7 – This is a quote from Ps. 40:6-8. Note that it's "*when He cometh into the world*", not "*when He cometh into existence*". Christ's pre-existence is assumed.

Vs. 8-9 – The quote explained. The point here is that the day was already recorded in O.T. prophecy when God would no longer desire "*sacrifice and offering*", for in Christ's body the final sacrifice would be made. Though it's true that the animal sacrifices were "*offered by the law*" (vs. 8), by God's decree, yet that there would come a *new* law that would cancel the old was decreed as well by the Lord long ago.

Vs. 9 – That Jesus came to offer Himself rather than animals, and this in doing "*Thy will, O God*",

Heb 10:8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldst not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Heb 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

affirmed this change to be according to God's will. Thus for a man to cling to the old sacrifices from the point of this change is to resist God Himself, rejecting His purpose.

In Jesus Christ we see;

- The perfect union of divine and human nature (*"a body hast Thou prepared Me"*).
- The perfect Mediator, able to fully reconcile man to God, being fully man and fully God.
- The perfect example of willing submission to the Father's will (vs. 7). *"I come . . . to do Thy will O God"*. In the original statement in Ps. 40:8 it's, *"I delight to do Thy will, O My God"*. Jesus was not only willing for the Father's will, but delighting in it. The very sum of His purpose in coming from the start was all about doing the Father's will rather than His own. His whole desire was consumed in

Heb 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

fulfilling all righteousness and pleasing the All-Righteous One. Consider your own purposes and pleasures in life, in the light of this One who is our great example.

Consider again how in the unfolding of God's purposes for man we see aspects fading out and making way for others, the old ushering in and displaced by the new. Do we not see the same in the sign gifts of the Spirit, which served their purpose of communication to both Israel and the world, ushering in and displaced by the full canon of Scripture?

10:10-18 – Christ's Sufficient Sacrifice

Vs. 10 – “*Sanctified*” here speaks of our standing as set apart for God and purified in Christ at the moment of salvation. Having come to a position of holiness in Christ, our practice is to be that of growing holiness in character. And what now is the use of further sacrifices with the availability of perfect forgiveness and sanctification?

*Heb 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering
and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which
can never take away sins:*

*Heb 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice
for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;*

*Heb 10:13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be
made his footstool.*

Note how it was God's gracious will that man be "sanctified", even "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ". The fountain of man's blessing is the grace of God, that He would so will our rescue and renewal.

Vs. 11-12 – Again, the *continual* nature of the old, impotent offerings are contrasted with the once-for-all nature of Christ's effectual sacrifice. Notice even the contrast between "standeth" (vs. 11) and "sat down" (vs. 12; 1:3; 8:1). That Jesus sat down displays His work of redemption *finished* with His one offering. It's not that our great Advocate is idle, but that His work in relation to sin is done. His exaltation and rest following His days of earthly submissive service will be the experience of all who follow in His train. And as has been twice affirmed already (1:3; 8:1), Christ's place of highest reward and honour at the Father's right hand (Ps. 110:1) proves the worth of His sacrifice.

Heb 10:14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Heb 10:15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

Vs. 13 – Though the work of redemption is a done deal, there are yet further expectations in the outworking of God’s purposes. And as certainly as redemption has come about according to God’s plan, just as certainly shall His ultimate plan come to pass for all who make themselves His adversaries. Could we expect that what God the Son is now “*expecting*” might not come to pass? Both Christ’s friend and footstool purposes for man are based upon the sure promises of God. His conquest of the world will be a complete. And what *He* is confidently expecting should be *our* firm expectation as well.

That Jesus has enemies is the assurance that believers will have enemies. And that Christ’s enemies will ultimately be brought down also ensures the eventual fall of ours.

Vs. 15-17 – As in 8:10-12, the author quotes again here from Jeremiah’s prophecy of “*good things to come*” in the new covenant (Jer. 31:33-34).

Heb 10:16 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;
Heb 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Remember from chap. 8 that the new covenant includes;

- God's law engraved in the mind and heart through the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- Intimate relation to God.
- Universal, supernatural knowledge of the Lord.
- Sins forgiven and forgotten.

The Spirit again proves by this statement that there would finally come, through Christ's sacrifice, such a sufficient dealing with sin that they would be taken away. Beyond what the old covenant could ever provide, in Jesus Christ sin would actually be made *forgivable* and *forgettable*! *Complete reconciliation of man to God!* Note the stark contrast to the law's yearly "*remembrance*" of sin in vs. 3.

Note again how this author affirms that it was indeed the Holy Spirit speaking through the prophet

Heb 10:18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Jeremiah. Though men were involved, God does not speak of His Word as a production of men.

Vs. 18 – The glaring point is clear. If true and complete “*remission*” or release or forgiveness is achieved, then there is no further need of offerings for sin (or earthly priests, temple, tables, altars, or ceremonies). And that Christ’s sacrifice was indeed a once-for-all offering for sin is proof that in His offering true and final forgiveness is received. And if “*the Holy Ghost also is a witness*” to this fact then who could argue the statement or dare deny it? Jesus having now “*made peace through the blood of His cross . . . to reconcile all things to Himself*” (Col. 1:20), the entire O.T. sacrificial system is now cast aside as forever pointless. To ever run back to it is to declare the sum of Christ’s work pointless. No true believer would ever do this, though an unbeliever may indeed display himself by such apostasy.

From here on in this epistle the author will seek to apply what has been presented concerning Jesus Christ, our great High Priest.

Class 14 – Hebrews 10:19-39

From 10:19 the thrust of the book of Hebrews shifts to the reader's response in view of what has been said, in view of who Jesus Christ is and what we have in His new covenant. This approach of beginning with doctrine and then turning to the matter of our practice is typical of the Apostle Paul. Perhaps another pointer to Paul's hand in this epistle to the Hebrews. Though the Spirit of God is the Author, He superintends in such a way that there is allowance for individual human style.

This last half of chapter 10 is a call to perseverance by faith. Chapter 11 will follow up this focus with examples of faithful perseverance in a list of heroes of faith. Then comes the endurance of faith in chap. 12, beginning with the example of Christ's strength to endure, with His eyes fixed on "*the joy that was set before Him*" (vs. 1-4). Keep in mind the focus we've already seen in this book on faith's continuance proving its reality. And finally, in chap. 13 there will be more on the details of the practical outworking of faith.

10:19-25 – Privilege and Duty

Vs. 19-21 – We have wonderful privileges in Christ.

*Heb 10:19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter
into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
Heb 10:20 By a new and living way, which he hath
consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his
flesh;*

We have freedom and confidence in our access to the Father through Christ's blood (vs. 19-20). Believers are "*accepted in the beloved*" (Eph. 1:6). They own the greatest advantage of full access to God (Rom. 5:2), having access to ongoing communion with Him as we "*walk in the light as He is in the light*" (I Jn. 1:7). And we have a forever High Priest in the true heavenly tabernacle (vs. 21).

Vs. 19 – A return to the thought of 4:16 where the consideration of Christ's priesthood began, for the opening of a way to God is what the new covenant is all about. Only "*brethren*" in Christ can know this "*boldness to enter*".

Vs. 20 – Christ's way is;

- A "*new*" way, in contrast to the old, obsolete way.
- A "*living*" way, in that it provides "*eternal inheritance*" (9:15), "*eternal redemption*" (9:12), and "*the power of an endless life*"

Heb 10:21 And having an high priest over the house of God;

Heb 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.

(7:16). And this because it is the way through the Priest who “*ever liveth*” (7:25), rather than through “*men that die*” (7:8).

It would be both futile and fatal to attempt to “*enter into the holiest*” without the blood of Jesus by way of the old covenant of the works of the law. This is illustrated in the grave danger of trespassing unbidden on Mount Sinai when the Lord had come down (Ex. 19), or in those who inappropriately entered the holy place and died (Lev. 10:1; II Chron. 26:16ff). Only by this new way may we come into God’s presence with confidence and find life.

The temple veil, which separated men from the holiest place of God’s presence, is now explained as a type of Christ’s flesh or physical life. God’s purpose from the beginning was that Christ’s flesh must be torn, that He might by that means lead men through the veil into the presence of God. His life was given up that man might never die – His

death was for our life. He was torn that man might be whole – His tearing was for our healing. The impossible, impassable barrier was *cleft* that refuge might be found within.

Vs. 22-25 – A “*Let us*” list.

Vs. 22 – “*Let us draw near*” – Here is our duty *toward* God. The manner of our approach is given;

- “*With a true heart*” – With sincerity throughout.
- “*In full assurance of faith*” – Fully persuaded of the truths of God’s Word, with no double-minded distrust (James 1). It’s impossible to please the Lord without faith (11:6), thus the fuller our faith in His words the fuller His pleasure in us.
- “*Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*” – Speaking of the inward cleansing of a pure heart, leading us to freedom from evil desire, fear, guilt, etc.
- “*Bodies washed with pure water*” – Speaking perhaps of the outward cleansing of purity of life.

Believe on Christ for salvation! Walk with Him in worship, communion, and dependence! Consider

*Heb 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith
without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
Heb 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke
unto love and to good works:*

the folly and offence of such undeserved entrance to God made available at so great an expense, only for brutish souls to say “no thanks!”

Vs. 23 – “*Let us hold fast*” – Here is our duty *before* God. Not just to hold, but to “*hold fast*” (tightly) against those beings and influences which would rob us of a clear testimony. *God’s* faithfulness is the basis of ours.

Vs. 24 – “*Let us consider one another*” – Here is our duty *within* God’s house. Note the repetition of “*one another*” in vs. 24-25. The fellowship of believers is meant to be a safety net for the help of those on the drift from Christ. Compare 12:15. In answer to Cain’s arrogant query (Gen. 4), yes we are our brothers’ keeper. We should be tenderly considering one another, and always for upward purposes and positive provocations. Always calling “*one another*” to those two great commands upon which hang all the law and prophets (Matt. 22:37).

Heb 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.

Vs. 25 – Not forsaking assembly. There is no arguing the fact that it is the Lord’s will for believers that they should regularly assemble with “*one another*”. The active example of the early church in the early chapters of Acts is apparent on this score. Low or no interest in assembly with those of like faith reveals a wrong heart. One of the first indications of a dangerous heart drift is likely to be church absence. “*Provoking*” and “*exhorting one another*” are duties given to all here, not just to religious leaders. We should be as concerned for the walk of others as we are for our own walk. And we should be as willing (and no more) to confront wrong in others as we are willing to confront our own wrong.

“*Ye see the day approaching*” – Perhaps referring back to 9:27, the certainty of death and a day of reckoning before God.

10:26-31 – False Professors Warned

Note the shift to 3rd person here, as in 6:4-6.

*Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have
received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth
no more sacrifice for sins,
Heb 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment
and fiery indignation, which shall devour the
adversaries.*

Vs. 26 – To “*sin wilfully*” refers to the common theme of the book, the danger of reverting to the practices of the old covenant in the face of the most convincing evidence of its weakness and displacement by the new covenant in Jesus Christ.

“*There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*” in the sense that there will never be another or greater sacrifice than that provided in Jesus. No further answer for sin is due to arrive. No further remedy beyond Jesus Christ is or will ever be available for dealing with the sins of mankind. If we’re going to despise the one and only way toward which the whole purpose and plan and word of God has been leading all along, what hope could there be for something further? There is no salvation by any other means apart from Christ. To wilfully reject the grand finale and final fulfilment of all that has been done is only to line oneself up for *God’s* rejection.

Heb 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

Heb 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?

Vs. 27 – Judgment is as certain for the Christ-rejecter as salvation is for the believer. God's judgment is as “*fearful*” as the hope of glory is glorious. “*Fiery indignation*” indicates that there will be no reluctance in the Lord to “*devour the adversaries*”.

Vs. 28-29 – If those abusing the first covenant were sorely punished, how much more those despising the second and final covenant. Remember the similar reasoning in 2:1-3.

Vs. 29 – To tread “*under foot the Son of God*” is to deny who He is, the Messiah and only begotten of the Father. To count “*the blood of the [new] covenant . . . unholy*” is to return to “*the blood of bulls and of goats*”, thinking this is of greater worth than the “*precious blood of Christ*”.

Does “*sanctified*” mean *saved*? Compare I Cor. 7:14. The thought is sanctified or set apart for a

*Heb 10:30 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.
Heb 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the
living God.*

particular clarity of witness. Earmarked for special opportunity, as the Jewish people indeed were. This perhaps suggests those who had made an outward profession of faith as well, “*sanctified*” by their close association with believers.

Vs. 30 – This is a common O.T. assurance (Ps. 94:1; Deut. 32:35; Isa. 1:24; 59:18). It’s found as well in Rom. 12:19, but with a shade of a different emphasis there. In Rom. 12 the focus is on *God’s* vengeance rather than ours – “*Vengeance is Mine*”. Here the emphasis on the *certainty* of vengeance – “*Vengeance is Mine*”.

“*The Lord shall judge His people*” – Quoted from Deut. 32:36 and indicating that the Lord will indeed sift the true from the false among those claiming to be “*His people*”. Compare Christ’s parables of wheat & tares and the drag-net (Matt. 13).

Vs. 31 – Two times “*fearful*” (also vs. 27). No event is so worthy of the term “*fearful*” as falling “*into the*

Heb 10:32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

hands of the living God” outside of Christ’s mediation. God Himself, with His own hands, will deal with those worthy of His judgment. Compare Isa. 50:11, where those denying the blazing light of God’s truth, choosing rather to walk according to their own “*sparks*”, “*shall lie down in sorrow*” at the last, and this shall they have of God’s own hand. Where the angels will bear up Christ’s own in their hands (Ps. 91) and God Himself will wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 21), the unsaved shall fall into the Lord’s hands to be personally handled by Him.

10:32-39 – True Possessors Encouraged

Vs. 32 – “*After ye were illuminated*” – In contrast to 6:4 (“*enlightened*”) where only exposure to the light is assumed, here acceptance of the light is assumed.

Don’t miss the implication here that our pre-Christ life was darkness. And see how their “*great fight of afflictions*” only began with their entrance into the

*Heb 10:33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock
both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst
ye became companions of them that were so used.*

*Heb 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.*

light of salvation in Christ. The evil one need not harass those dwelling with him in the dark.

Vs. 33 – Those standing for the truth will become the focal point of Satan’s abuse through the world, both in the hatred they personally attract and in their willingness to bravely side with others so hated. Compare Rom. 12:15-16. A true child of God, as his heavenly Father, will empathize with the anguish of others. The humble God-pleaser will “*condescend to men of low estate*”. Such will happily stand with the unpopular. And note how a true standard-bearer for God cannot keep himself from abuse in this world.

Vs. 34 – It is noteworthy when a believer can meet trouble and loss with a positive spirit, certainly noted and recorded by the Lord. Such a response is a testimony to a “*full assurance of faith*”. Only complete confidence in eternal things can move a

*Heb 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence,
which hath great recompence of reward.*

*Heb 10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye
have done the will of God, ye might receive the
promise.*

*Heb 10:37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come
will come, and will not tarry.*

heart to respond so. As the two tabernacles compared in this book (earthly and true), so everything else in this life is only a shadow of that “*better and enduring substance*” in heaven. Though “*moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal*” our earthly “*goods*”, nothing can touch all that is “*reserved in heaven for you . . . kept by the power of God*” (I Pet. 1:4-5). Compare II Tim. 1:12.

Vs. 35-36 – The Lord will not fail to see and reward every confident keeping of His will.

Vs. 37 – The author holds up before the reader the helpful hope of Christ’s soon return. The “*for*” at the outset of the verse ties Christ’s return to the rewards promised in the two previous verses.

What may seem a long tarry from our perspective is no delay in God’s plan. When we stand at the gates

Heb 10:38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Heb 10:39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

of the eternal city and gaze down the corridors of the everlasting, our brief time of toil and trouble here on earth will seem like a drop in a bucket. Compare II Cor. 4:17.

Vs. 38-39 – Two kinds of response.

“The just shall live by faith” is the central theme of the Bible as to man’s response to God. Compare Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11. It is the nature of those truly redeemed (*“the just”*) to carry on living by faith to the grave, no matter how hard the hardships they face. They are quite simply persuaded of God’s promises, and are willing to patiently wait for their fulfilment, though never seeing them in this life (11:13). It’s the nature of faith. And it is the nature of those *not* truly saved yet claiming to be, living a lie, to eventually come to the breaking point and either enter into Christ or *“draw back”*. The Lord has *“no pleasure”* in one who turns from the very door of refuge and runs to his ruin, for again there is no pleasing Him without

faith (11:6). The one drawing back moves much farther than he might suspect, far beyond merely a return to the old mosaic system of worship, indeed even “*unto perdition*”.

Class 15 – Hebrews 11:1-16

*Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.*

Chapter 11

11:1-3 – Faith Defined

Vs. 1 – Faith is defined as;

- *“The substance of things hoped for”* – Behind “substance” here is the same Greek word used in 1:3 of God’s “Person”, speaking of His very essence. Faith is not the actual experiencing of a “hoped for” event. It is what makes a future, expected event as certain as if it were a present reality. It is the confident assurance or firm trust in things expected.
- *“The evidence of things not seen”*. Faith is the proof or demonstration of the reality of unseen things. It is as eyes to see what our physical eyes cannot see. Compare Noah’s response in vs. 7. Believers perceive and live according to a wider vision of reality than does the unsaved world, according to unseen

Heb 11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

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

spiritual realities. The unsaved perceive only about a 15° arc from the horizontal, while the saved see the full 360°, including the unseen things of heaven and hell

As displayed in this chapter, faith is;

- Judging God trustworthy to fulfil His promises – “*Because she judged Him faithful who had promised*” (vs. 11).
- Then going the step further to *cling* to those promises – “*They were persuaded of them and embraced them*” (vs. 13).
- And then going the further step to *live* or order our lives as though those promises will most certainly come to pass. Note how there is always some recorded response, whether inward or outward, connected to the faith of these faithful ones.

11:4-7 – Pre-Flood Faithful

Heb 11:4 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.

Heb 11:5 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.

Vs. 4 – Abel *worshipped* by faith. He brought a more excellent sacrifice in bringing what God had said to bring. His response displayed his faith, for his ears and eyes and heart were open to God's will. And though Abel is dead, his faithful life still speaks. The contrast to Abel is the wilful disobedience of brother Cain, who;

- Expressed no attention to God's way or heart.
- Displayed no grasp of sin or sense of guilt. He was actually angry at God's disapproval.
- Saw no need of the shedding of blood (except his righteous brother's).

Cain's view of himself in his sin was far higher and nobler than the way God saw things, even as modern Christ-rejecters.

Vs. 5-6 – Enoch *walked* by faith. The repeated

*Heb 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.
Heb 11:7 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.*

emphasis of God's testimony concerning this man in Gen. 5 is that "*Enoch walked with God*", while the focus here is that his faithful walk "*pleased God*". To walk with God, pleases God!! And it is impossible to please God without a walk of faith (vs. 6). Faith acknowledges God's existence and His rewards to all true seekers.

Consider how very far from the truth that view of God that sees Him as unmoved and untouched by human responses. He is majestic beyond all human comprehension, yet He is either saddened or gladdened by what He sees in us.

Vs. 7 – Noah *worked & witnessed* by faith. He was warned, and he got to work! His faith in God's word of warning fixed his occupation throughout the next several decades of his life, for his life from that time revolved around the building of a boat. And being warned, he warned. Peter tells us that Noah was a

“preacher of righteousness” (II Pet. 2:5). Yet how strange a message he brought to a world that apparently didn’t even know rain (Gen. 2:5-6). The whole order of nature seemed to call Noah either a liar or a lunatic in his day. “Mother Nature” contradicted him, even as the order of the natural world denies the supernatural today.

Note how Noah preached both with his *words*, and with his *works*. He was ready to answer those who asked a reason for the expectation in him, for he expected a great deal of rain. And as well, that expectation could not have been more obvious in his activities. His earnest boat-building affirmed that he expected a flood. His simple faith brought him to obedient action according to what God’s clear promise caused him to expect. Just how evident in your life, work, activities, directions, ways, and choices is your expectation that God will yet do as He has promised, that His Word will certainly come to pass? Our active response is the acid test of our faith. Faith brings such an assurance in the unseen that it becomes a present, moving force in life. Have you believed, embraced, and ordered your life *“with a true heart in full assurance of faith”* in God’s eternal words?

Now don’t miss an obvious fact here. Noah was

Heb 11:8 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.

Heb 11:9 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:

proved right to receive God's promise according to a literal, normal understanding of it. With the record of both the warning and its fulfilment in Genesis 6-9, we find that it happened just as God said. This helps to establish the way *we* are to receive God's promises and warnings – simply, literally, according to a normal reading.

11:8-12 – Faithful Abraham

Vs. 8 – Abraham *went* by faith. He left the cities of men, looking for God's dwelling place "*with foundations*" (Compare Rev. 21:19-20). He went without even knowing where he was going, only that he must leave where he was and that God would let him know when he found that "*land of promise*". Abraham was faithful to do what he knew to do, even though he didn't understand all of it from the start. Consider how it was as he obeyed what he knew to do, as he got up and got going that;

Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

- The way opened before him.
- Further revelation and clarity came.
- And even further promise came with his obedience. God hadn't clearly told him at the first that He would *give* him that land He would show him (Gen. 12:1-3). He only discovered that when he got there (Gen. 12:7).

Remember the same pattern with Israel's crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 3). God's command was to start walking. Only when their feet touched the edge of the water, and only then, did the swollen river part. "Get going", saith the Lord. "Obey what I've said, and the way will open before you." His word is "*a lamp unto my feet*", not a floodlight to emblazon the whole of His proposed will for you. Compare again faithful Ruth as she left Moab. She left that land of her nativity with the warning that she would likely die a widow and childless if she left her people. But she only knew that she must leave the land of Moab and go to Emmanuel's Land. She would have God's blessing and rest! And remember how the way opened before her, like the flooding

Heb 11:11 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.

Heb 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

Jordan before Israel. Obstacles fell before her like growling Goliath before faithful David. In no time we find her with a good and godly husband, the like of which only God could provide. When she decided to give up her way and to give herself to the Lord and to His perfect will, He met her faith with the very finest of provisions. With her response of faith the Lord smiled and was pleased and met her with reward (vs. 6). Ruth and Abraham simply obeyed what they knew to obey, regardless of the apparent costs. And the way swung open before them like the prison gates before Peter (Acts 12).

Vs. 11 – Though both Abraham and Sarah doubted in a measure at the first (thus Isaac’s name means “laughter”, Gen. 17:17-19; 18:12-15), the Lord saw their underlying faith (Rom. 4).

Vs. 12 – “*Who hath despised the day of small things?*” (Zech. 4:10). Such great things from such

Heb 11:13 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.

a small, weak beginning.

11:13-16 – Faith’s Heavenly Hope

Vs. 13 – What do God’s heroes and heroines of faith do?

- They just *believe* God’s promises.
- They just *keep* believing God’s promises.
- And they *die* still believing God’s promises, though those promises had yet to come to pass.

“*Not having received the promises*” – Not that God’s promises failed, but only that what was promised was still unfulfilled in their lifetime. The promises *remained* only promises, yet still such men and women of faith lived out their lives according to belief in God’s promises and kept that same tight grip on the Lord to their death. Herein is the contrast with those who “*draw back unto perdition*” (10:38-39), for such as those are not connected to

the Father and never were. By faith the faithful are patient to wait, for the Bible describes men and women of faith as those who wait on God. As Jacob said in prayer, *“I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord”* (Gen. 49:18). As *“just and devout”* Simeon, whom Luke tells us was in the temple *“waiting for the consolation of Israel”*. As Joseph of Arimathea, that honourable man who buried Jesus in his own tomb, described by Mark as a man *“who waited for the kingdom of God”* (Mk. 15:43). The way of the faithful is to remain unshaken in confident assurance of the Lord’s promises even though those promises should never break forth into sight in this life. The fact that life passed away and the promised possessions were not yet in their hand did not take away from their confidence in God. They knew by faith that they just had to wait a little longer.

“But having seen them afar off” – Their faith gave them spiritual sight to see the fulfilment of God’s promises afar off. Even as Job could see and know that his redeemer lived (Job 19:25). Even as Abraham could see Jesus afar off, for this is what Jesus meant when He said to the Jewish leaders, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad”* (John 8:56). Through the mist of the centuries to come Abraham could see

the far off hazy vision of the coming Messiah. And beyond Messiah's day he caught a glimpse of the coming glorious city where Christ's throne will dwell, even as a sailor sees afar off the vague vision of the mountaintops of his homeland long before he reaches the shore. He may not yet be able run his home soil through his fingers or feel it under his feet. He has yet to safely cruise into the harbour. *But it's there!* It's ever the mark of the faithful of this earth to believe the promises of God as if he actually sees them off in the distance. And his heart responds with fullness of joy in the simple believing that it will be. In many ways his belief is as solid as the actual *having*, for "*faith is the substance of things hoped for. . .*".

"And (they) confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth". "Pilgrim" refers to one dwelling in a country not his own. Note the doubling here ("*strangers and pilgrims*") for emphasis. When we are in union with this world in spirit then we have not the Holy Spirit (at least not in fullness). If I am convinced that I already *own* that world to come, why on earth should I be loyal to this one? Our loyalty depends on where our confidence lies. Compare the account of Gideon and the kings of Midian in Judges 8. 120,000 Midianites were killed in the first engagement

without a single loss to Gideon's band. But in Gideon's pursuit of the hastily retreating Midianites the trans-Jordan Israelites would not side with Gideon. They showed no loyalty to him because they had no confidence in his victory. With only three hundred men Gideon was pursuing a band of 15,000 Midianites. He was outnumbered 50 to 1, though 90% of the enemy were already dead. If we think the world will win we'll side with the world in our heart. If we really believe that Jesus Christ will ultimately show Himself victorious we will begin even now to show our loyalty and shout the victory and celebrate within and order our lives as if already on the winning side. Either we trust in what God says will come to pass, though it look as unlikely as Gideon's victory, or we fearfully keep the weight of our support on the current, oppressive rule of this world, as Israel with the Midianites, to our eventual damage and disgrace. If my treasure is truly with the Lord in that promised coming era, then how could I treasure this lot? And if my faith, my confidence, my choice, my citizenship is in that world to come, then that makes me an alien or stranger here! I'm not at home here. I'm on my way home! Martin Luther once said, "Whosoever professes that he has a Father in heaven, confesses himself a stranger on earth; hence there is in the heart an ardent longing, like that of a child living

Heb 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

Heb 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

Heb 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.

among strangers, in want and grief, far from his fatherland”. Though the Lord would have us to enjoy life, there remains a pining for the next at the core of our being. As one writer put it, the face of the heart is ever turned toward the homeland.

Vs. 14-16 – “*A better country, that is, an heavenly*” – That better country and city is of course the Lord’s very presence, described for us in Rev. 20-22.

As a result of the faith of the faithful “*God is not ashamed to be called their God*”. In their life on earth such faithful souls plainly declare their desire to have God as their God. As each of these examples of faith, they declare it both in word and works. Therefore God is not ashamed to be named as their God. Compare I Sam. 2:30. Not only is God not ashamed of them, He *delights* in the faithful. The Lord called Abraham His friend (Isa. 41:8). He unashamedly, unreservedly called

Himself “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (Gen. 20:37). He is related to all the redeemed in the same wonderful way.

I shall wait. I shall wait *for Him*. I shall believe and keep believing. Perhaps I shall die believing without ever seeing here below. But I am convinced that “*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. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation*” (Isa. 25:8-9).

Class 16 – Hebrews 11:17-40

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Heb 11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Heb 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

11:17-22 – Faithful Patriarchs

Vs. 17-19 – Further thoughts concerning Abraham. Was ever a man so “*tried*”? Though Abraham faced many challenges to his faith, never so much as when he was commanded by God to offer Isaac. For it was;

- A human sacrifice. Was this the nature of this God in whom he had believed?
- His own son.
- The only son of his wife Sarah.
- The only son he would *ever* have from her.
- That son;
 - o Who was born of a miracle (now

wasted?).

- They loved as their own soul.
 - God had promised to them.
 - For whom they had waited so long.
 - Through whom was promised a seed or nation.
 - Through whom God's promised blessing was to come.
 - Who so innocently and movingly enquired concerning the missing lamb, while Abraham knew it was he (Gen. 22:7).
- The sacrifice of whom seemed;
 - A sacrifice of Abraham's own soul.
 - To destroy his own family.
 - To undo God's promises and miracle.
 - To counter God's stated purpose.
 - To cancel the promised blessing.
 - And that son must be sacrificed by Abraham's own hands!

There were too many ways in which this assignment

just didn't make any sense. Yet, to Abraham's credit, we have no record of even the slightest hesitation in him to obey. And now we learn here in vs. 19 what was in the man's heart at the time. Abraham was fully resolved to follow through with the Lord's command without expecting to be stopped, believing the Lord quite able to raise Isaac from death since so much was riding upon his life. And what experience did Abraham have of resurrection? Yet the Lord had given His word concerning Isaac, and the man of God was convinced! Even so our faith in the resurrection, just in the word of it, is meant to bear us up through the greatest of trials. *Faith removes all doubt!*

Abraham "*received him in a figure*" in that Isaac was restored to him when in his own mind the boy was as good as dead. Isaac's "death" and "resurrection" pre-figured the "*only begotten Son*" of the Father, who did die and rise again. Greatest faith was (and always is) required in clinging to God's promises right through the most gruelling of circumstances allowed by God. And how greatly Abraham's faith was rewarded. As Hannah with Samuel, Abraham received back the son he had given up to the Lord. It was a touching foreshadow of the Father's sacrifice of Jesus, only to receive Him back. We're

Heb 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Heb 11:21 By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Heb 11:22 By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

taught that whatever we willingly give up for the Father He abundantly pays back in time.

Vs. 20-21 – Isaac and Jacob blessed their offspring, speaking prophetically of things to come. And Joseph received a double blessing for his steady, faithful integrity throughout his life of trials, with his two sons becoming heads of tribes.

Vs. 22 – Joseph prophesied upon his deathbed of Israel's eventual return to the Promised Land, and organized for his bones to return with them (Gen. 50:24-25; Ex. 13:19). This assurance would have served, with all prophecy, as an encouragement when the times of oppression later came. Joseph, like Moses, determined to remain associated with God's people, even though greatly blessed with comforts and honours in Egypt.

Heb 11:23 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.

Heb 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

11:23-29 – Faith of Moses

Vs. 23 – Pharaoh ordered all male Jewish babies to be put to death in an effort to slow the alarming population growth of the Jews in Egypt (Ex. 1). When the king's decree is out of line it takes faith to fearlessly disobey it. Faith overcame fear. Compare the son of his parents in vs. 27. The true principle ever remains that some must fearlessly risk health, safety, and life itself to preserve the life (physical and spiritual) of following generations.

“They saw he was a proper child” – There was something out of the ordinary in Moses from birth.

Vs. 24-26 – Faith overcame the world. Moses' love for God was greater than affection for his guardians, though He in a sense owed his life to Pharaoh's daughter, certainly the good life. Yet;

- He was more determined to be known as a son of Israel than a son of Egypt.

Heb 11:25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

Heb 11:26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

- He was more willing to anger king and parent than the Lord.
- He was more attentive to God's censure than society's.
- He was more willing for troubles in God's house than for treasures in Pharaoh's.
- He was more interested in eternal heavenly rewards than temporary earthly ones. It may be that Moses was being groomed for the throne.

Consider how Moses might have accepted his earthly advantages as a means to help his people, after the example of Joseph. Compare Esther's, Daniel's, & Nehemiah's opportunities in this regard. Yet his shepherd's heart cared for his people in their cruel oppression, and by faith he overcame the temptation for worldly honours and pleasures. Don't ever let Satan, through the world, convince you that it's sin to suffer when it comes to a choice

Heb 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

of sin or suffering. Moses is honoured by God because he refused to avoid suffering when the pleasures in doing so involved sin. By faith we know that the unfading riches and honours of God's house are so far greater than that of the highest earthly empire (I Pet. 1:4). And the way of sin's avoidance and God's honour will always draw the world's reproach.

Don't miss how carefully the Lord records every detail of every response of faith.

Vs. 27 – Moses did not fear, though the fury of the king of the land with all the power of the nation behind him was aimed right at him personally. And he calmly counselled the same confidence to his people in the Exodus, saying, “*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will show to you today*” (Ex. 14:13). The Lord is bigger than kings and kingdoms. Surely all who forsake the world must expect the wrath of men. We must never fear it, but rather rejoice in it (Matt. 5:11-12).

Heb 11:28 Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

Heb 11:29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Heb 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

Vs. 28 – It took faith to follow the strange precautions of the Passover procedure in order to avoid the promised destroyer, just as Noah appeared foolish to expect God’s warning in his day and to follow His instructions.

Vs. 29 – *Fear not, just believe!* Here is the call that will take us through every seemingly impossible obstacle in life.

11:30-40 – Beyond Canaan’s Conquest

Vs. 30 – Imagine how it took faith in God’s words to overcome the seeming foolishness of their approach at Jericho. From the safety of the city wall Israel’s actions must have looked like confusion. What kind of an “attack” is this, to parade around the city each day for a whole week, and seven times around on the last day? Such an approach didn’t match the impressive reputation preceding them. Imagine

Heb 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

the mocking and laughter from the wall they were forced by faith to endure. It was the Lord's purpose to show His own strength and to test their faith at the outset of their conquest. Things haven't changed much for the faithful.

God is quite able to take down every wall of opposition to His purpose and to part every barrier, as the Red Sea and Jordan. And whenever He has it to do, He raises up a man or woman of faith to stand in fullest confidence in Him against government and nation, against armies, both physical and spiritual.

Vs. 31 – Rahab's faith and deliverance, as Ruth's and Nineveh's, displays the Lord's impartiality. He has always been open to faith in Gentiles, though even with a notably sinful life as Rahab's and the Samaritan woman's (Jn. 4). Rahab's faith became evident in her good work of risking her own life in siding with the Lord and His people rather than her own. Compare 10:33-34. Consider how little this woman had to lead her to faith in her context,

Heb 11:32 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:

Heb 11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

arising as a sprout out of dry ground.

Vs. 32 – Names are now listed without mention of specific acts, highlighting that “great cloud of witnesses” (12:1) of so many who have lived and died by faith before us. The weight of their witness is meant to draw us after their good examples. None of these who are named here displayed perfect faith, yet they exercised faith nonetheless. It is the vital virtue, not missed by the Lord through human failings.

Gideon believed God’s word of victory in spite of impossible odds – 450 to 1 in fact.

Vs. 33-38 – Acts without names.

“*Subdued kingdoms*” – Joshua, David, and several of the judges. No kingdom or conquering horde is too great for the Lord to easily take down through a man of faith. Compare Elisha at Dothan against

Heb 11:34 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.

the army of Syria (II Ki. 6).

“Wrought righteousness” – Speaking of those who led others to righteousness and their own hearts to the same. Compare Dan. 12:3 & Mal. 2:6. Note how this work is placed among other great works of faith. It would seem that subduing sin and self is of the same nature as subduing kingdoms.

“Obtained promises” – This requires faith and courage as well. One must bravely cling to God’s promises against all odds before ever obtaining.

“Stopped the mouths of lions” – Samson, David, Daniel.

“Quenched the violence of fire” – Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. By their faith they refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image. It wasn’t that they necessarily believed the Lord would keep them from the fire as He did, only that He could and would deliver them from the king’s

*Heb 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again:
and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance;
that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

hand, either by life or by death. They were like their friend Daniel (chap. 1) in their refusal to compromise the purity of their faith in God alone.

“Escaped the edge of the sword” – David escaped Goliath’s and King Saul’s sword, and the nation escaped Haman’s in their Persian captivity.

“Out of weakness were made strong” – Compare in vs. 12, great things from so small and feeble a beginning. Compare King Hezekiah against Assyria (II Chron. 32) and King Asa against a million-strong Ethiopian army (II Chron. 14).

“Waxed valiant in fight” (not flight) – Faith fights with a confidence in God’s power and outcome, and undistracted by fear of death.

“Turned to flight the armies of the aliens” – Gideon, Jonathan, and his unnamed armour-bearer.

“Women received their dead raised to life again” – The widows of Zarephath (I Kings 17:17ff) and Nain

Heb 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Heb 11:37 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;

(Lk. 7:11-18), the wealthy woman of Shunam (II Ki. 4:18ff), and the sisters of Lazerus (Jn. 11). These events were foreshadows of the One who is “*the resurrection and the life*”.

Vs. 35-38 – The negative side, relating hardships endured. The faithful were willing to endure torture for their faith, with confidence in faith’s eventual rewards.

“Trial of cruel mockings and scourgings . . . bonds and imprisonment” – Among the most difficult to face is when we are thought to be *criminals* by our society, and this merely for clinging to God’s right. Good reputation before men is not an easy thing to let go of in our natural quest for the pride of life. Good reputation before God must ever be prized above all else.

Vs. 37-38 – God’s own were and are and will yet be

Heb 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

put to death in the cruellest of ways, and driven out from the society and comforts of common people. And yet the faithful are willing to endure such things through their faith in a better world to come.

“Of whom the world was not worthy” – Hear the commendation the faithful have from the only opinion that ever really matters. The back-to-front world has never recognized the true worthy ones, nor have they known what a blessing to them are the remnant of God’s children in their midst, for these are;

- All that stand between the world and God’s stroke of judgment. Compare the righteous removed before judgment fell on Sodom. Compare God’s Revelation wrath falling only after the church is removed from earth in the Rapture.

The preserving salt, hindering the wholesale plummet of the world to degradation. Compare II Thess. 2:6-8.

- The light of the world to show the way for

Heb 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

Heb 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

those willing to receive.

Men and women of faith have “*a good report*” among all those wise with the wisdom of God. And as well, they hold the grudging respect of all who would abuse them. Their lives, losses, and martyrdoms are carried in the consciences of their persecutors, often to fruitful effect (Acts 7:58).

Again, those of faith remained in faith, though not having received the promises of God as of yet.

Vs. 40 – Consider how the Lord has “*provided some better thing for us*”. How much more we have in this gospel age under the new covenant than the faithful of old had to encourage their faith. How much greater the company of examples gone before us, their illustrious lives recorded in the Book. May we be wise to follow in their way!

“Looking unto Jesus
the Author and Finisher
of our faith”

(Hebrews 12:2)

Class 17 – Hebrews 12:1-14

Heb 12:1 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,

The author continues with the matter of our Christian duty in view of all that we have in Jesus Christ. Chapter 11 laid out before us the biblical examples of faithful endurance. This is now a call for our persevering endurance under the pressure of hardships.

Chapter 12

12:1-4 – Run with Endurance

In these first few verses the believer's life is pictured as a footrace, with the spectators gathered around ("compassed about") and the course laid out ("set") before us. Every child of God is entered into the race of service for the Lord and has it to run. It's only a question of the measure of our zeal and endurance in running.

Vs. 1 – The beginning “*Wherefore*” here ties what follows with what precedes. The “*cloud (crowd or throng) of witnesses*” refers to chapter 11’s great record of those who have lived their lives of loyalty to the Lord, and who now seemingly look on our lives as interested spectators (with the angels, I Pet. 1:12). Here is encouragement toward our continuance through the example and interest of those who have run well before us.

“*Let us lay aside every weight*” – Get rid of the spare, useless bulk, indicating;

- Undue attention to things contributing little or nothing toward eternity.
- “*Things*” that chip away at our potential for the Lord (Mk. 4:19).
- Imbalanced interest in pleasures, passions, appearance, or other “*cares of this life*”.

“*The sin which doth so easily beset us*” speaks of the entangling nature of sin, as though something closely wrapped around us like clothing that hinders free movement. Get rid of every entangling thing impeding your progress as you run the course of a life lived for Christ. We cannot hope to run all out or full distance until we throw off the encumbrance of restrictive things.

Heb 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.

“Let us run with patience – The idea of the word used here is steadfast endurance, literally “remaining under” (the yoke, circumstance, pressure, etc.). Temptation to quit or to give in to temptation must be resisted. Our flesh must be denied. Fears must be conquered by faith as we follow the Lord in obedience. The author expressed a similar idea in 6:1 with his encouragement, “let us go on”. Indeed, let us go on for the Lord! Paul was at it for decades. And what did he have to show at the end of it all? The Roman world was seemingly a more dangerous place for Christians than ever before. All who claimed Christ, and even those trained for ministry, had forsaken Paul (II Tim. 4:16). The church might have seemed to be on the run. Yet Paul was strong to the last, coming out the end of his race with steadfast endurance and his faith intact (II Tim. 4:18). By faith he knew it was not as it seemed. He knew with assurance that the church of Jesus Christ would indeed be victorious, that the Lord’s words would not return void, but would accomplish all that the Lord purposed

through them. “So run, that ye may obtain” (I Cor. 9:24). If we must run, why run so as not to attain reward from the Lord’s hand?

Vs. 2 – “*Looking unto Jesus*” – Keep your eyes clear and in the right place. Every good runner knows you can’t run properly while looking backward. The Greek word used here expresses “*looking*” with intensity. Keep your eyes ahead and fixed upon the goal. Concentrate on pouring your all into what you’re doing here, not on happenings behind. Focus on Jesus and what you’re doing for Him, rather than on what everybody else is up to. “*Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee*” (Prov. 4:25). Remember the Lord’s rather curt counsel to Peter when he asked concerning John, “*what shall this man do?*” “*What is that to you?*” was Christ’s reply, “*You follow Me!*” (John 21:21). Keep your eyes on Me in your going, not John. Don’t concern yourself with other runners! And “*forgetting*” past victories “*which are behind*”, Paul ever pressed “*toward the mark for the prize*” (Phil. 3:13-14). ***Eyes on the prize!!*** And never mind about the threat of circumstances, like great waves of the sea. This was another eye problem of Peter’s when walking on the water. He began to sink when he turned his eyes from Jesus to the threatening waves (Matt. 14:30). *Keep your*

eyes right!! All focus on that Founder and Finisher of our faith. “*For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things*”.

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Tips for a Prize-winning Performance

- *Keep your weight down* – Cast aside the useless bits.
 - *Keep your limbs free* – Avoid sin’s entanglements.
 - *Keep the pace up* – Do right till the stars fall.
 - *Keep your eyes right* – Keen focus on Christ alone.
-

Jesus was able to endure even the horrors of the cross with His sight upon “*the joy that was set before Him*”. He daily took up His figurative cross, and finally carried His literal one to the place of His death.

“*Despising the shame*” – He disregarded or thought little of the supreme dishonours He faced in this life, for by faith He could see at the end the reward of honour in the Father’s presence. As it was

Heb 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Christ's faith in His Father's promise of reward that carried Him through severest trial, so with us. Note well how in relating Christ's steadfast endurance of shame in His sacrifice the divine Author immediately turned to His subsequent highest honour "*at the right hand of the throne of God*". Compare 1:3 & 8:1. Two sides of the same coin are the reproach of Christ endured here and the reward of Christ bestowed there.

Vs. 3 – Consider well what Jesus endured. From birth to death He faced the violent "*contradiction of sinners*", both in their words and in their actions. Yet He faced all with calm patience. The Lord calls upon the reader to set Jesus Christ and the example of His life always before our mind's eye. The perfection of His example is not so far beyond us that it disconnects from all effective influence.

"Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" – See how it is through our study of Jesus that we find deliverance from both physical weariness and mental gloom in the Lord's work. Again, our chosen

Heb 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

meditation is presumed by God to be enough to establish our ongoing attitude in life. We *can* help our attitude. We are not a slave to it. We can choose to keep our mind “*stayed on*” Jesus, bringing “*perfect peace*” (Isa. 26:3). The indication here is that we all face the danger of weariness and discouragement, wanting to quit, wishing to escape the scorn, tired of always standing opposed in our stand for Jesus and His truth, willing to let heresy keep her captives, tired of being the “stirrer”, passively going quiet, willing to tolerate the presence and promotion of evil. Especially when the struggle is hardest and continues long. The way to victory has everything to do with where we decide to keep our focus. Compare the undaunted Servant’s meditation centred on God in Isa. 50:4-9.

Vs. 4 – None of us have faced the measure of contradiction Christ faced “*unto blood*”. Few can say with Paul, “*I bear in my body the marks [scars] of the Lord Jesus*” (Gal. 6:17). You and I have yet to so press Jesus on this world’s conscience as to bring the lash of the whip or the pelting of stones. The Lord shames us to endurance through the

Heb 12:5 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 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

examples of those enduring so much more than our small-time troubles.

12:5-14 – Hardship from God’s Hand

Still we hear encouragement toward endurance of hardships, but now from the angle of our awareness of the One behind life’s circumstances. The honing effect of hardship is evidence of our Father’s faithful hand.

Vs. 5-8 – If God’s rod is not heavy upon us, driving us to holiness, then there is cause to question whether we’re even His. And to resist or rebel against affliction is to rebel against the Lord who brings it in love, and who brings it for our best. When we at last understand the source (God), motivation (His parental love), and purpose (our best) of our troubles, the enduring of it becomes a whole lot easier, and keeps us clear of despair.

Vs. 6 – Note how God’s love, *true* love, does not

Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Heb 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Heb 12:9 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?

tolerate wrong, but takes effective action against it.

Vs. 7 – Note the implications here; loving parents chasten (“scourge!”) their children, and the responsibility rests greatest upon fathers.

Vs. 8 – Hardship helps to confirm sonship.

Vs. 9 – If we rightly revered our *physical* parents, even under the pressure of their correction, how much more our *spiritual* Father. The implications are clear;

- It is right to receive such chastening graciously, whether from earthly or heavenly parent.
- Humble, enduring submission in trouble is what the Lord requires.
- Both the lack of trouble, and the lack of

Heb 12:10 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.

Heb 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.

endurance in trouble may indicate no true spiritual connection with the Father as His own child.

Vs. 10 – The chastening of our physical parents was sometimes more a matter of “*their pleasure*” than “*our profit*”, but never so with the Lord. Our best is ever in His view. And we rise to our best only as we become like Him in “*His holiness*”. Here is the Lord’s goal for His own. A proper understanding of His purpose is an end to all chaffing under His chastening. And godly parenting will ever seek to act according to *profit* rather than *passion* as well.

Vs. 11 – Though correction is never a pleasant thing to endure, it brings a promise of “*the peaceable fruit of righteousness*” in those corrected. The pain of correction brings righteousness, which in turn brings peace. “*The work of righteousness shall be peace*” (Isa.32:17). True peace is always the result

*Heb 12:12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down,
and the feeble knees;*

*Heb 12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest
that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it
rather be healed.*

of the true righteousness of God's holy standard. The unified peace sought by the worldly church through tolerance of evil and error is a *false* peace, for it's based on a false righteousness. To leave holiness in the pursuit of "peace" is in fact to promote evil. And if "*our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight in glory*" (II Cor. 4:17), then bring it on. That which is relatively "*light*" and brief in pain works for us a glory of "*far more exceeding and eternal weight*". Faith in such a sure promise removes all fainting and fretting.

Vs. 12 – So pick yourself up and be encouraged. The command here is to "straighten up" and stride forth into life with confidence and joy.

Vs. 13 – Allow your Christian life to level out into a steady bearing, unswayed by any circumstance you may face. "*Straight*" here is in the sense of even or level. The Lord's prod is not just toward our encouragement, but to level out our bearing and

*Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness,
without which no man shall see the Lord:*

bring to an end our easy tendency to drift back into discouragement. And a good reason is given. “*Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way*”. Lest others with faltering faith be turned away from the only right path through their observation of your doubtful life. Our thoughts must always be toward others. We bear a responsibility to others looking on, to show them the right way to respond in faith. It’s part of our obedience to that 2nd great command, “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*”.

Vs. 14 – Let your righter, lighter, brighter outlook spill over into *peaceful* relation to men and *purity* of relation to God. Compare Rom. 12:18, where the context makes it clear that the “*all men*” with whom we are to follow peace includes even those causing our pain.

Arguments for Endurance Summary

The illustrious “*cloud*” of faithful walkers before us leads the way and cheers us on (vs. 1).

Jesus endured and was richly rewarded (vs. 2-4).

Others have faced far worse than we (vs. 4).

Hardship is from the Lord's hand (*"of Him"*, vs. 5).

His afflictions prove a Father's love (vs. 6-8).

We endured the correction of our faulty physical parents, all the more that of our spiritual Father (vs. 9).

God's chastening is perfect, and always for *"our profit"* (vs. 10).

The pain of punishment carries the promise of peace through purity (vs. 11).

We live for the sake of those watching and affected by our lives (vs. 13).

Preaching Outline

Get Ready (*"let us lay aside"*, vs. 1)

Get Going (*"let us run"*, vs. 1)

Get Focused (*"looking unto Jesus"*, vs. 2)

“See that ye refuse not
Him that speaketh”

(Hebrews 12:25)

Class 18 – Hebrews 12:15-29

Heb 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;

12:15-17 – Responsibilities Outward

Vs. 15 - “*Looking diligently*” – Here is our call to watch for one another with a purely constructive consideration (supportive surveillance). The Greek word used here (episkopos) is one used of a pastor’s responsibility as a caring overseer. We are all each other’s shepherds. Compare 10:24.

“*Lest any man fail of the grace of God*” – The picture is of one lagging behind or veering from a group of travellers. It depicts an unsaved soul who;

- Is allowing himself in some measure to be led by the Holy Spirit along the way to Jesus Christ.
- Is beginning to recognize conviction of sin and the need of repentance.
- Is beginning to see the truth of that one great High Priest.

- Is still outside the fold of God, though perhaps meeting with believers in the church of God.

The author's concern is that such a one might turn back again from this way to faith in Christ, returning to the temple sacrifices. One who is truly saved cannot fall away from salvation, for a saved soul is indwelt and sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). The concern here is for one who might bolt away from the door like a frightened heifer before entering into faith in Christ, and the danger of such a one leading others into the same flight to condemnation. Compare Deut. 29:18ff. The Lord's specific prod is *alertness* to the first signs of the bitter root of foolish notions or corrupt doctrines or deeds, which might lead a soul on to complete departure from the way to life in Christ (apostasy). As long as it's hidden under the ground ("*root*") little can be known or done (as with Judas Iscariot's hidden heart). But the first sprouts of evidence must be observed and handled with bold, loving, prayerful confrontation, and even the readiness to remove the bitter root if necessary, lest "*thereby many be defiled*" and the peace of the church be lost (Matt. 18:15-18). Achan was such a bitter root, who greatly troubled his people with many deaths as a result of his evil choices (Josh. 7).

Heb 12:16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Heb 12:17 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.

His removal was the only way to restored peace.

Vs. 16-17 – An illustration from the life of Esau. The Lord now reveals the faithless heart of such departers. “*Profane*” means sensual or unspiritual, the very opposite of the word “holy” or godly. Esau showed his profane heart when he sold his birthright to satisfy his physical appetite (hunger), one momentary pleasure over the Lord’s eternal blessing. The blessing of the “*birthright*” carried the great spiritual privileges of being ancestor of the promised Messiah, and heir of the promises in that Seed and Saviour of the world. The Lord allowed the pressure of that situation to display Esau’s heart, as one having part in the family of *Isaac* but no part in the family of *God*. Even so, the Lord allows the hardship of earthly pressures and Satan’s temptations to reveal *us*. One is shown to belong to the Lord when he holds Him and His things dear, even at risk of life itself. Esau had no

faith to see the afterward, preferring *now* over *then*. But people of faith are people of the afterward. A pagan, unbelieving heart often carries the attitude, “what good is it, if it doesn’t bring gratification NOW?!” Esau, with all the faithless;

- Preferred a fleeting thrill now, over God’s abiding favour.
- Lived for the flesh.
- Cared more for satisfied physical desires than for higher, more far-reaching divine promises.
- Viewed God’s eternal things small compared to his own brute desires.
- Put himself and his interests above God.

As if horrified with such a choice, the author emphasizes the stupidity of the deal, using the word “*morsel*” rather than “meal”. “*For one morsel of meat!!*” The low price for which Esau sold out only worsens his guilt. He had no eyes of faith to see what he had. I once read of someone who purchased an old painting because they liked the frame. But when they removed the old painting, they discovered behind the outer canvas a very valuable old work, which they were able to sell for thousands. Because the original owner didn’t know what he had he threw it away. Compare Judas’

treacherous sale of Jesus (and his own soul) for a handful of silver. In casting away such surpassing spiritual opportunities Esau showed himself for what he was inside – profane, secular, ungodly!

Behold in Esau the illustration for these Hebrew readers. Some were still unbelieving, yet;

- With a privileged position, like Esau, in the physical family of Abraham (Compare I Cor. 7:14).
- Having heard the word of truth like no other people on earth.
- Having seen, first hand, the person, ministry, and miracles of Christ.
- In gravest danger of selling their birthright, by;
 - Refusing to believe on that great High Priest to which all others pointed.
 - Refusing that salvation to which the whole testimony of God led.
 - Forsaking Christ's sacrifice for the dead carcass of the Jewish sacrifices.

An end of persecution with the church of Christ and a return to ease was the draw card wooing them

back to the law (10:32-35). Their feet were in the church, but they were leaning back like the “mixed multitude” in the wilderness looked back with longing to Egypt. Because there was nothing *in* them that made enduring persecutions a necessity, therefore they stood in danger of selling out eternity for a morsel of peace! Compare again that second soil of Christ’s parable, “*for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended*” (Matt. 13:21).

Vs. 17 – When God was willing and offering, Esau was not interested. “*Afterward*”, when *Esau* was earnestly interested, God was not, and it was too late, “*though he sought it (the blessing) with tears*” (Gen. 27:30–41). Esau wept “*with a great and exceeding bitter cry*” and pled with his father that he might have *some* blessing as well, when Jacob through his deception walked away with what was intended for Esau. But alas, the blessing went with the despised birthright, and then it was too late, for “*he was rejected*”. The most bitter and anxious sorrow, tears, and pleadings could not bring it back. When he *had* the opportunity, he despised it. When he later wanted the opportunity, *he* was despised, while the man of faith walked away with the prize of God’s blessing.

Look well at the terrible results of neglecting God's eternal blessing when it's available (2:3), when God is near and knocking at *your* closed door! For when *God's* door is finally closed and it's *you* who are pleading, it will be too late, as with the closed door of the ark in Noah's day. Compare Prov. 1:24-31. N.B. how those who reject God's offer of blessing will come to bitterly regret their choice. As one writer said of Esau, "He wept, not because he had sold his birthright, but because he had lost it; not because he had sinned, but because he was a loser. Such tears are in hell too." Such sorrow for *loss* rather than for *lawlessness* is no true repentance. The tears of false repentance are not for *sin*, but for suffering sin's penalty. Had Esau sought for genuine repentance he would have found it! We know Esau's tears were not those of repentance for his wrong, because immediately after his earnest desire was rejected his hatred for Jacob flared up and he was plotting his brother's murder. With true repentance;

- No grudges are held.
- No fingers are pointed to others.
- No scores are kept.
- All fingers are pointing *inward*.

Lessons;

- *Regret* is not necessarily *repentance*!
- Never avoid hardship at God's expense, or in denial of what is true and right.
- It will be too late at the judgment to make amends.
- "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (II Cor. 6:2).

Esau is a study on apostasy. Apostasy comes of preferring some earthly advantage over the blessings of heaven. The author appeals to Jewish readers to not unwisely reject Christ for any reason. To do so would be like that infinite gap in value between Esau's morsel of food and the birthright. "*What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*" Let nothing stand in the way of eternal life in Christ. And beware Esau's wilful, profane grasp for gratification NOW. Such would surely bring loss when the wood, hay, and stubble of a wasted life are burned before the Lord. No amount of earnest weeping and pleading will avail then. *It will be too late!!* The moral of the story is rather to seek repentance now, while it may be found. "*While it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*" (3:13).

Heb 12:18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

Heb 12:19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

Heb 12:20 (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:

12:18-24 – New Covenant and Company

The two covenants, old and new, are now contrasted by comparing the two mounts, Sinai and Sion, on which they were ratified, and the differing experiences there. Compare a similar allegory in Gal. 4:22-26.

Vs. 18-21 – Old covenant at Mt. Sinai.

Vs. 18 – A mount “*that might be touched*” issuing only an earthly, external religion. Scorched, dark, and violent with storm is the best the merciless law could offer to a sin-darkened soul. Contrast the brightest hope afforded in the good news of Jesus Christ, His coming announced by a beaming star (Matt. 2:2).

Vs. 19 – They were confronted there with the

*Heb 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said,
I exceedingly fear and quake:)*

*Heb 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,*

terrifying presence of the awesome God.

Vs. 20 – They “*could not endure that which was commanded*” from the first, and have never tolerated it since.

The exclusive nature of the old covenant can be seen even from its inception, with the threat of death upon all but the few qualified to touch the mount of God’s presence. In contrast the new covenant bids all in Christ to “*come boldly unto the throne of grace*” (4:16) and with “*boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*” (10:19).

Vs. 21 – Even faithful Moses was fearfully affected by the situation. Yet no matter how supremely terrifying the manner of the law’s introduction few were frightened into its faithful keeping. Contrast the gospel era, which came as a lamb, drawing with love rather than driving with fear, a manner proving far more effective in leading a following.

Heb 12:23 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,

Heb 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.

Vs. 22-24 – New covenant at Mt. Sion.

Vs. 22 – It's now to the city where *"the living God"* dwells rather than a barren mountaintop in the barren desert where nobody lives. Do you see how even the desolate wasteland of where the old covenant was given expressed the sterile nature of what was given there? See the contrast in the happy, habitable prospect of Jerusalem.

Vs. 23 – The body of Christ or universal church dispersed throughout this earth and age.

Vs. 24 – How is it that the blood of Jesus *"speaketh better things than that of Abel"*?

- That first obedient offering of Abel's animal sacrifice could only cover sin, whereas Jesus *"put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"* (9:26).

Heb 12:25 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:

Heb 12:26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

- Abel's offering sanctified "*to the purifying of the flesh*" (9:13), whereas Christ's can "*purge your conscience*" (9:14).
- Abel's offering "*made nothing perfect*" (7:19), whereas "*we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*" (10:10).

"Better things" indeed!!

12:25-29 – Final Warning

Vs. 25 – When God speaks the wise show themselves wise by listening. There is simply no escape for those who refuse Him that attention. Compare 2:1-3. The gospel message of Christ's substitutionary death and co-resurrection for all who follow Him by faith is God's word for this age. And the more completely and convincingly God speaks, the greater man's guilt in refusing, and the

Heb 12:27 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.

Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

more certain his judgment.

Vs. 26 – Nothing is truly stable except our connection to God in Jesus Christ.

Vs. 27 – How certainly this verse was fulfilled in the destruction of the temple and O.T. form of worship so soon to come in 70 A.D. The shakeable, earthly temple was swept away by Rome (God) and is yet to be replaced, that the unshakeable heavenly temple and priesthood might be seen for its lasting stability. This new covenant will never be displaced by another, for this one remains. Therefore those who refuse this final, fixed solution for sin in Jesus Christ must perish without remedy or hope. Understand the supreme folly of one who clings to that which the Lord Himself has pulled down. The removal and replacement of shakeable things will come to fulfilment in the new heavens, earth, and Jerusalem of Rev. 21-22.

Vs. 28 – “*Receiving*”, in the sense of “while receiving”, speaks of an ongoing process rather than completed action. In view of that eternal, immoveable kingdom, which God’s own are surely receiving, “*let us*” see to our service after the example of all the faithful. By firm faith in what’s before us we face all that is around us. To “*serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” expresses what the Lord ever desires from His own, a reverent heart eager for His acceptance.

Vs. 29 – God has not changed. He is still the same righteous One who demands perfect holiness, as under the old covenant. He is still just as exceedingly terrifying to all who refuse His grace. It is still, and always will be “*a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*” (10:31).

Class 19 – Hebrews 13

Heb 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

Heb 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

This final chapter of Hebrews concerns the practical outworking of faith. Though the theme of the book of Hebrews is all about Jesus Christ, one aim of right belief and doctrine is to move the believer to right deeds. The two matters of inward principles and outward practice cannot be divorced from each other. To know Jesus aright is to know right living.

Chapter 13

13:1-19 – Christian Duties

Vs. 1-3 – Loving-kindness. A lack of true love for Christian brothers is evidence of no true love for God, for to love the One is to love the other (I Jn. 4:20). The biblical doctrine of separation must never be allowed to dull our love for brothers in Christ. And that special love among Christian brothers is meant to spill over into gracious dealings with strangers.

Heb 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Heb 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

“Entertained angels unawares” – As Abraham and Lot fed and housed the visiting angels in Gen. 18-19. The implication is that there is still potential for the same today. And by extension, all done for others in Christ’s name is as if done to Him. Compare Matt. 25:34-40; Mk. 9:41; III Jn. 4-8.

Vs. 3 – Christian sympathy in action. *“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”* (Rom. 12:15). The Lord shows His practice of this preaching in vs. 5. Compare again 10:32-34; also I Cor. 12:26.

Vs. 4 – Christian purity. Marriage and the physical relationship between husband and wife are held high. To deny any the freedom to marry for religious reasons is *“doctrines of devils”* (I Tim. 4:1-3). It was the Lord Himself who first insisted that it’s *“not good that the man should be alone”* (Gen. 2:18). Folks sometimes refer to those yet unmarried as “so innocent”, as if marriage and

*Heb 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.
Heb 13:6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my
helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

sexuality within it carry some measure of blame or stain. But the clear word on both from Scripture is “honourable” and “undefiled”.

These encouragements toward purity are actually just an extension of the Christian love and sympathy of vs. 1-3, for true love ever refuses to go beyond the boundary of propriety to abuse or “defraud” another. Compare I Thess. 4:3-8.

Consider how God’s starting point is to call immorality what it is and the immoral what they are (“whoremongers and adulterers”). Consider how modern dating is often little more than glamorised whoremongering; the irresponsible looking to exploit the irresponsible; gullibility wishing to emulate celebrity.

Vs. 5-6 – A plea for contentment and reasons why. Satisfaction sought through possessions is so often warned against in God’s word (Lk. 12:15; I Tim. 6:8-10). The biblical standard on possessions is

*Heb 13:7 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.
Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day,
and for ever.*

absolute contentment with just what I have right now, and even if I lost all of that (Phil. 4:11). To admit dissatisfaction with our present lot is to predict dissatisfaction with a bit more.

The Lord's promise of His abiding presence is so strongly affirmed here through 5 negatives in the Greek behind the English. The literal phrase is something like, "I would never possibly leave you, neither am I never possibly forsaking you". Having the Lord Himself so assuredly and eternally, we already own the most "*exceeding great reward*", yea *we have all!* Here is the foremost argument against Christian covetousness. *He is mine in life, and in death, and forever!* And to have the assurance of the Lord's help in every trouble is to have a Helper second to none. Compare Isa. 43:2, "*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee*". The Lord doesn't take away or take us away from the waters or fires, but goes through them with us. He makes our distresses His own, "*as bound with*" us and "*as being . . . also in the body*" (vs. 3). Compare

Heb 13:9 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.
Heb 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

Isa. 63:9; Acts 9:5.

Vs. 7 – Concerning spiritual leaders, we are to remember them in being mindful of them, and we are to follow their example.

Vs. 8 – Jesus Christ is unchanging and eternal. The passing example of earthly under-shepherds reminds of that Chief Shepherd who “*ever liveth . . . for them*” (7:25).

Vs. 9 – In every age there are a variety of teachings foreign to biblical truth to be denied and avoided. The truth will always tend to bring a soul to settled, satisfied joy in the wonder of God’s grace rather than in externals (“*meats*”). Occupation with the Almighty is what brings true profit to a soul.

Vs. 10 – In Jesus, we have a heavenly altar unseen by human eyes or made with human hands. It is an altar of much higher significance than any

Heb 13:11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Heb 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

earthly, outward one. It is “*the true tabernacle*” (8:2). Those clinging to the earthly priesthood stand in rejection of the heavenly, and thus are rejected by the heavenly. Qualification by faith to partake of the highest, heavenly altar so far outshines exclusion from the earthly. And we, after the figure of the levitical priesthood of old, *eat* of that altar, “*holding the Head . . . having nourishment ministered . . . increaseth with the increase of God*” (Col. 2:19). Compare Jn. 6:51ff; I Cor. 5:7.

Vs. 11-14 – A call to separation.

Vs. 11 – The carcasses of some sacrificial animals were cast outside the city walls and burned in the Valley of the son of Hinnom (Gehenna) to the southwest of Jerusalem.

Vs. 12 – Jesus was treated in a similar way, sent outside the city walls to suffer for man’s purification. As if He were society’s cast-off, like a

Heb 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Heb 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

disgustingly vile thing (He who alone was spotless and blameless!) or as a despised leper (He who cleansed lepers). As if He were unworthy of a good man's death (He who alone was good!). Such irony!

Vs. 13 – The encouragement to us is to join that rejected One outside the city, willing to bear society's scorn as He. All who stand with Him will as well be *“despised and rejected of men”* (Isa. 53:3). Every Jew turning from the law to Christ will be reviled and rejected. Every Christian will be handled the same who truly forsakes the sinful interests of this world for Jesus. Every false religionist who runs to the refuge of the truth must endure the hatred of those left in the darkness. What will you do? With whom will you stand? Compare again the faithful response of Moses when facing the options (11:24-27).

Vs. 14 – What we have in this life will not long continue anyway. *“But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever”* (I Jn. 2:17).

Heb 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.

Heb 13:16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

“Go forth therefore” now “unto Him without the camp”, willingly “bearing His reproach” by faith. Run now and seek Him, He who alone can lead your soul to peace and rest. You must leave society’s happy acceptance to go to Him. Liberalism wants to hold to both, to live at the city gate, to run back and forth. But you must forsake the one to go to the other.

Vs. 15 – Is all gloom and sadness in walking with the Lord? *Most certainly not!* To lose the world for Jesus is all joy and peace and praising! Only through Christ’s mediation are we truly able to offer up the sweet incense of our praise and thanks, so well-pleasing to the Lord.

Vs. 16 – Only through our great Mediator do we find our good works for Him reckoned to our account, whereas outside of Him all our good is as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6).

Vs. 17 – Our attitude toward leaders (civil, parental,

Heb 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.

spiritual). “Obey” here is in the sense of allowing yourself to be persuaded. This is not mindless, absolute, unquestioned obedience, but a sincere willingness to agreeably follow where those guides can show God’s way and will from His Word (Acts 17:11). Be a humble, conscientious learner and follower, while examining for yourself and graciously questioning (Acts 17:11). Our attitude toward human leadership and instruction reflects our attitude toward the Lord’s. Good reasons for submission are given;

- They have been given “*rule over you*”. Not the right to be lording “*over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock*” (I Pet. 5:3). Never lording, but ever leading by teaching and applying the truth is their appointed purpose from God (vs. 7).
- They are your *protectors*, remaining alert in your behalf to the danger of present deception and future damage. As David shepherding Nabal’s shepherds (I Sam. 25). The warnings

Heb 13:18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

Heb 13:19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

of God's watchmen should be heard with attention, disregarded only with greatest caution.

- They are the ones who *"must give account"* before God of how they served your best interests. If *"with grief"* your account must be given in that day of reckoning, *you* will be the loser. It is to your eternal profit that your guide *"may do it with joy"* in that day.

Vs. 18-19 – Ministering to ministers. Instead of resisting leaders, be asking God to direct them and to direct through them, or to remove them. Take your concern to God alone that He might have His perfect will in and through their lives. It is to our own benefit that we pray for the benefit of our leaders.

13:20-25 – Closing Comments

Vs. 20-21 – A benediction or blessing. In coming to the end of his epistle, the author now wishes for the

*Heb 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,
Heb 13:21 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.*

Lord's blessing upon his readers. We find two key words in this benediction – “*peace*” (vs. 20) and “*perfection*” (vs. 21), and both are all wrapped up in the death and resurrection of Jesus, “*that great shepherd of the sheep*”. He who is “*the God of peace*” has made a way for man's peace (with God and in himself) “*through the blood of the everlasting covenant*”. Both *peace* and *perfection* come to us only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for only through His sacrifice are we cleansed of sin, forgiven, and made perfect. And only through the purity of perfection is there peace. Man's peace is God's gracious purpose from the beginning. “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil. . .*” There is no peace for the one outside of abiding friendship and fellowship with “*the God of Peace*”. “*But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace saith my God to the wicked*”

Heb 13:22 And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

Heb 13:23 Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

(Isa. 57:20-21). All who ever found true peace, found it in Jesus Christ, the King of Salem (“peace”, 7:2). *“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Rom 5:1). Our Great Shepherd’s perfecting work of sanctification is the only pathway to peace, whether it be through;

- Our past *salvation* (our *position*).
- Our present *transformation* (our *practice*).
- Or our future *translation* (our *presence* with the Lord).

“Now the God of peace. . . make you perfect . . . through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”. The peace made available through Christ only comes in fullness through sanctification or perfection. How often we see perfection and peace linked together. Compare II Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; I Thess. 5:23.

*Heb 13:24 Salute all them that have the rule over you,
and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.
Heb 13:25 Grace be with you all. Amen.*

And only through Christ “*brought again from the dead*” is there hope after death. Just as Moses led his flock up out of the Red Sea (Isa. 63:11), He who is the Great Shepherd will lead forth His flock through death and up out of the grave, the sting of death spoiled and scattered like the waters of the threatening sea. Because of Christ’s great sacrifice God has raised Him up to be the Great Shepherd, the Head and High Priest over the church of God. Because of His humble obedience, even unto death, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name.

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Ponder Points

Psalm 22 is the psalm of the Good Shepherd who *died* for the sheep (Jn. 10). There we find a prophecy and picture of the crucifixion long before crucifixion was devised by man.

Psalm 23 is the psalm of the Great Shepherd, who being raised from death *lives* for the sheep (Heb. 13:20). “*The Lord is (not “was”) my Shepherd*”. He

is risen and living and shepherding. This is a psalm of *peace* (“*I shall not want . . . surely goodness and mercy shall follow me*”).

Psalm 24 is then the psalm of the Chief Shepherd who shall yet return for His sheep (I Pet. 5:4). To Him shall the “*everlasting doors*” be lifted up, “*and the King of glory shall come in.*”

