

Hebrews

RUNNING WITH PATIENCE



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Hebrews

Introduction to the Epistle of Hebrews	7
The book of Hebrews was written to wavering Jewish Christians	7
Hebrews demonstrates Jesus Christ's superiority over the Old Jewish system	8
Hebrews contains internal evidence concerning the author of Hebrews	9
Hebrews 1:1-2:18 – The Superiority of the Son	10
The revelation of Jesus is superior to all previous revelation	10
Jesus is superior to the angels	12
<i>First warning: The danger of drifting</i>	13
The author emphasized Jesus' superiority to the angels	13
Jesus was temporarily humiliated when He became human	17
Hebrews 3:1-4:16 – The second warning passage in Hebrews	22
Jesus is far superior to Moses and the Old Testament system	22
<i>Second warning: The danger of doubt</i>	26
The failure of the Exodus Generation served as a warning	26
A challenge presented to enter God's rest through trust	34
Hebrews 5:1-7:28 – Jesus Our High Priest	47
The high priesthood of Jesus is superior to Aaron's priesthood	47
<i>Third warning: The danger of dullness</i>	51
The author warned against the audience's spiritual dullness	51
The author instructed the audience to move toward maturity	53
Drifting believers are in very precarious positions	57
The author admonished his readers to bear fruit	63
Abraham is an example of inheriting promised blessings	66
The author encouraged his audience to grasp promised hope	67
The author used glorification truth to encourage resolve	69
Jesus' priesthood is better than Aaron's Levitical priesthood	70
Hebrews 8:1-13 – The All-Encompassing High Priestly Work of Christ	84
Jesus' priesthood is superior to the priesthood of the Levites	84
Jesus' work enabled the establishment of the New Covenant	87

Hebrews 9:1-28 – The Surpassing Value of the Sacrifice of Christ	90
Christ’s sacrificial work was superior to the Levitical sacrifices	90
Christ’s sacrificial work served its intended purpose	94
Christ’s work enabled New Covenant’s establishment	97
Christ’s work was superior; being both final and sufficient	100
Hebrews 10:1-39 – The Value of Christ’s One-time Sacrifice	101
Christ’s sacrifice was successful	101
The scope of Christ’s sacrifice	103
<i>Fourth warning: The danger of defiance</i>	105
Christ’s sacrifice provides motivation	105
The author warned of the sin of abandoning Christ’s work	107
The privilege of suffering for Christ’s sacrifice	112
Hebrews 11:1-40 – Practical Daily Faith Illustrated	114
After quoting Habakkuk 2:4, the author began to explain faith	114
The author examined many people known for their faith	116
The author showed that faith brings God’s approval	128
Hebrews 12:1-29 – The Race of Faith	130
<i>Fifth warning: The danger of desertion</i>	130
The author likened the Christian life to running a race	130
God’s discipline in the contest of faith	134
Running the race through pain and injury	137
Running the race for the good of others	138
Running the race with correct incentives	140
The readers must finish the race by heeding God’s Word	143
Hebrews 13:1-25 – Instructions on How to Love, Live, and Finish Well	146
The author instructed his audience on how to love well	146
The author instructed his audience on how to live well	150
The author instructed his audience on how to finish well	157

The Epistle to the Hebrews

I. Introduction to the Epistle of Hebrews

A. The book of Hebrews was written to wavering Jewish Christians

1. Since the book of Hebrews was written to an audience of 1st century Jewish converts to Christianity, the author made many references to **Old** Testament passages that would have been familiar to them.
 - a. The author used the spiritual disaster of Israel's Exodus Generation as a primary example of what to **avoid** in the Christian life.
 - b. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the author referred to the Old Testament tabernacle, priesthood and worship **system**.
 - c. The author quoted extensively from the **Psalms** (8, 40 and 110), which was Israel's hymnbook.
 - d. In Hebrews 11 the author cited numerous Old Testament **heroes** of the faith. The author did not need to explain who these people were as his Jewish audience would have been familiar with them.
2. Throughout the epistle, the author of Hebrews assumed that the recipients of his letter were **believers**.
 - a. Even though they were on the verge of regressing spiritually, the author called the recipients of the letter *holy brethren and **partakers** of the heavenly calling*. Hebrews 3:1
 - b. The author referred to his readers as **beloved**. Hebrews 6:9
 - c. Although he wrote extensively about his readers' need for spiritual **growth**, the author never questioned their salvation. Hebrews 5:11-14
 - d. Through the entire epistle, the author included himself in each of the warning passages, showing that he considered his readers to be **saved** just as he was. Hebrews 2:1-3, 3:6, 3:14, 4:1, 6:1-3, 10:26, 12:25
3. To stir up their thinking, the author reminded his readers that they had made spiritual progress in the past, even to the point of **suffering** persecution for their faith. Hebrews 6:10, 10:32-34
 - a. Sadly however, they had stopped growing in their faith. Possibly because of adverse circumstances (Heb. 12:4), these Christians were beginning to **drift** away from what they had come to believe. Hebrews 2:1
 - b. Some of his readers were guilty of ignoring God's **Word**. Hebrews 2:1-3, 3:7, 4:7

- c. As a result, they were hardening their **hearts** toward the Word of God.
Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15
 - d. The Hebrew Christians had lost their ability to understand the **deep** things of scripture.
Hebrews 5:11-14
 - e. They had become **lethargic**. Hebrews 6:11-12, 10:23
 - f. They were losing their confidence and **assurance** in the Lord. Hebrews 6:11-12, 10:35-36
 - g. Some of the Hebrew Christians had stopped meeting together with the **body** of Christ.
Hebrews 10:25
4. The author strongly warned his readers to not drift away from the faith. He compared their error to the sin of **unbelief** committed by Israel's Exodus Generation.
Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:6 4:1; 5:12-19; 10:35; 12:25
- a. The maritime theme and imagery of "drifting away" is significant in the book of Hebrews. Note how one falls into apostasy. Little by little, over a period of time, the erring believer **stops** renewing his mind through ongoing faith in the scripture.
 - b. Believers who fail to **renew** their minds consistently through God's Word will over time find themselves drifting away in the ocean of human viewpoint.

B. Hebrews demonstrates Jesus Christ's superiority over the Old Jewish system

1. In order to dissuade the Hebrew Christians from turning back to the Law of Moses and its enslaving legalism, the author contrasted Christ and His revelations to the old Jewish **legal** system with its tabernacle and priesthood.
2. The revelation given through Christ was clearly superior to the revelations given through the Old Testament prophets. The Old Testament prophets spoke of Jesus and His coming. Once Jesus came, it was time to hear **Him** and the progressive revelation He brought.
Hebrews 1:1-2
3. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature. Jesus is not simply a reflection of God's glory like the moon that reflects the sun; Jesus is **God** Himself.
Hebrews 1:3a
4. Jesus upholds the universe through the *word of His power*. Jesus **sits** at the right hand of God showing His co-equality with God. Hebrews 1:3b
5. Jesus is **superior** to angelic beings. Hebrews 1:4-14
6. Jesus Christ's ministry of salvation by grace through faith is superior to the ministry of the **Law** given through Moses by the agency of angels. Hebrews 2:2, 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, Galatians 3:21-22
7. Jesus the Messiah fulfilled the mandate of Genesis 1:26-28. One day God will subject everything under Christ. Jesus Christ will subdue and **dominate** the earth.
1 Corinthians 15:20-28, Hebrews 2:5-10
8. The leadership of Jesus is superior to the leadership of **Moses**. Hebrews 3:1-5

9. The priesthood of Jesus is superior to the priesthood of **Aaron**. Hebrews 5:1-7
10. The priesthood of Christ is after the **order** of Melchizedek and is superior to the Levitical priesthood. Hebrews 7:1-28
11. Jesus' ministry is *more excellent* than that of the high priests' **ministry** in the tabernacle. Hebrews 8:1-6
 - a. The tabernacle in the wilderness, and later the temple, was merely an **earthly** representation of the heavenly tabernacle. Hebrews 9:11-12, 23-24
 - b. Christ Jesus is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly tabernacle, presiding as the King-Priest of the **universe**.
12. Jesus is the mediator of the future New Covenant with Israel as prophesied in the Old Testament. The **New** Covenant is by far superior to the Old Covenant Israel had under Moses. Hebrews 8:13, 9:15
 - a. The New Covenant is based on **better** promises than the Old Covenant. Hebrews 8:6
 - b. The **blood** of Jesus is superior to the blood of bulls and goats. Hebrews 9:12-14
13. Jesus' **sacrifice** was better than the animal sacrifices practiced under the Law of Moses. Hebrews 10:1-18
14. Jesus, as the Author and Perfecter of our faith, is the one supreme **leader** to whom we look. Hebrews 12:1-3
15. Heavenly Mt. **Zion** and the New Covenant will be far superior to Mt. Sinai and the Mosaic Law. Galatians 4:24-26, Hebrews 12:18-24
16. The sacrifice of Jesus on the **cross** was far superior to the sacrifice of Abel. Hebrews 12:24
17. As the Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus is immutable and **eternal** as opposed to the temporary nature of Moses and the Covenant he mediated. 2 Corinthians 3:13-18, Hebrews 13:8
18. The priests of the Old Testament had no rights to our **altar**. Hebrews 13:9-10

C. Hebrews contains internal evidence concerning the author of Hebrews

1. In Hebrews 2:3-4 the **author** appears to have intentionally excluded himself from being counted as one of the apostles.
2. Hebrews 13:22-25 establishes the general background of the writing of Hebrews and shows that the author personally **knew** Timothy and was aware of his imprisonment. The fact that Timothy was imprisoned is not revealed anywhere else in the New Testament.
3. As with much of the New Testament, in writing the book of Hebrews the author took for granted that Jerusalem was **still** standing and animal sacrifices were still being practiced at the temple. Hebrews 13:10-14
 - a. This implies that Hebrews was written sometime before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (AD 70), probably between the **years** AD 64-67.

- b. If this were the case, it would place the writing of Hebrews around the time of Peter and Paul's martyrdoms in the latter years of the reign of Nero.

II. Hebrews 1:1-2:18 – The Author Confirmed to the Wavering Hebrew Christians the Superiority of the Son

A. Hebrews 1:1-3b – The revelation of Jesus is superior to all previous revelation

1. Hebrews 1:1a – *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets...* Initially, God gave special revelation to Israel through Old Testament prophets. Isaiah 1:1, 6:1-13; Jeremiah 1:1-10
2. Hebrews 1:1b – *At many times and in various ways...* In the Old Testament, God spoke on many occasions and by various methods.
 - a. In times past, God revealed His plans to the prophets through dreams and visions. Daniel 2:1, 27-30; 7:1-16, 10:1-14
 - b. On other occasions, God revealed truth through angelic messengers. Hebrews 2:2; Daniel 8:1-19, 9:20-23
 - c. God even revealed Himself through personal appearances in human likeness. This manifestation is often referred to as a theophany, or Christophany. Examples of Christ appearing as a theophany can be found in Genesis 18:16-17, Exodus 3:1-16, and Daniel 5:1-31.
 - d. Old Testament prophets recorded events that, unbeknown to them, would later be used as types by New Testament authors as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11; and Hebrews 4:8
 - 1) The book of Hebrews includes several Old Testament types. These types foreshadowed many things such as how to practically live out the Christian life on a daily basis, the ongoing ministries of Christ, and future heavenly events. 1 Corinthians 10:1-11
 - 2) For example, in Hebrews 3-4 the author instructed and warned Church-Age believers using Israel's Exodus Generation as a historical type to represent the error of refusing to believe God's promises and walk by faith.
 - 3) In Hebrews 7:1-3 the author used the ancient priest/king Melchizedek as a historical type of Christ's royal priesthood.
 - 4) In Hebrews 9:1-28 the writer used the tabernacle as a historical type of the heavenly tabernacle and the ongoing high-priestly work of Christ. Hebrews 8:1-6
 - 5) In Hebrews 11:17-19 the story of Abraham and Isaac is used as a historical type to foreshadow the resurrection of the dead. Genesis 22:1-18
3. Hebrews 1:2a – *In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...* The New Testament revelation given by Jesus Christ is the culmination of the Old Testament revelation given by God through the prophets. Luke 9:28-36, Ephesians 2:20

- a. In Greek the first part of the verse literally reads, “*In the last of these days [God] has spoken to us in His Son.*”
 - b. The statement, “*in the last of these days,*” refers to the final days of the Old Testament dispensation of **Law**. This was the period under which Christ was born and lived. Galatians 4:4
 - c. God began His revelation with the Old Testament prophets. He concluded His revelation with Jesus **Christ** who was by far superior to the prophets of the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 18:15, John 1:14-18, Acts 3:22-26, Luke 24:25-27
4. Hebrews 1:2b-3 – The revelation given by the Son of God is far superior to previous revelations because of the **supreme** nature of Christ and the preeminence of His accomplishments. 1 Timothy 6:15b-16
- a. Hebrews 1:2b – *Whom he appointed heir of all things...* Jesus is the supreme and rightful **owner** of the universe. Psalm 2, Hebrews 2:5-10
 - b. Hebrews 1:2c – *And through whom also he made the universe...* Being God, Jesus is the Co-creator of everything that exists. John 1:1-3
 - 1) When God spoke the universe into existence in Genesis 1, Jesus was the One who spoke. Jesus is called the **Word**. John 1:1-3, 14; Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24-28; Colossians 1:16-17
 - 2) The universe was wisely and intelligently designed through the personal creative **actions** of the Word, Jesus Christ. Proverbs 8:12-31
 - c. Hebrews 1:3a – *And He is the radiance of His glory.* The **Son** is supreme and has revealed the glorious essence of God. Isaiah 9:1-7; John 1:14, 8:12, 9:5
 - 1) As the Light of the world, through the incarnation Jesus blazed forth God’s Shekinah **glory** before the nations. John 1:1
 - 2) The Shekinah glory was first revealed in the Old Testament as a flaming **torch** when God in grace made a covenant with Abraham. Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-21
 - 3) The Shekinah glory of God was later revealed to Moses at the burning **bush** commanding him to lead God’s people out of Egypt. Exodus 3:1-10
 - 4) When Israel was delivered from Egypt and later built the tabernacle in the desert, the Shekinah glory of God came down and filled the tabernacle. That glory was God’s own magnificent **presence** dwelling among sinful man. Exodus 40:34-38
 - 5) The term Shekinah glory does not occur anywhere in the Bible; however, the concept does. Coined by Jewish rabbis, this extra-biblical expression means “He causes to **dwell.**”
 - d. Hebrews 1:3b – *And the exact representation of His nature...* Since Jesus is God, He shares all the divine **attributes** God the Father possesses. Colossians 2:9
 - 1) Jesus is **eternal**. Psalm 110:1-4, Hebrews 7:13-17

- 2) Jesus is immutable. This means He is unchanging over the course of time, and in fact, is completely unable to be **changed**. Hebrews 13:8
 - 3) Jesus is omniscient. He **knows** everything there is to know about every subject. Revelation 2:18, 23; Jeremiah 17:10
 - 4) Jesus is omnipresent. Being God, He is **present** everywhere at all times. Matthew 28:20
 - 5) Jesus is omnipotent. He has unlimited **power** and is able to do anything whatsoever. John 1:3, 10
- e. Hebrews 1:3c – *And upholds all things by the word of His power...* Christ **sustains** the whole universe simply by speaking. Mark 4:35-41, Colossians 1:17

B. Hebrews 1:3d-14 – Jesus is superior to the angels

1. Hebrews 1:3d – *When He had made purification of sins...* Through His incarnation, Jesus made purification for our sins on the **cross**, which was something no angel could ever accomplish for humanity. Hebrews 2:17, 10:10-14; Romans 3:21-26
2. Hebrews 1:3e – *He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...* After Jesus finished the perfect work of salvation through the cross, God **exalted** Him to His own right hand. Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 4:14
 - a. The right hand of God is the highest position of **honor** in the universe. This type of sovereignty is what the fallen angel Lucifer sought but never obtained. This position was never, and will never, be given to any angel.
 - b. God exalted His Son to the position of supreme authority because of His perfect obedience to the Father's will, including His substitutionary **sacrifice** on the cross. Acts 2:33-36
3. Hebrews 1:4a – *Having become as much better than the angels...* Through His victory over principalities and powers on the cross (Col. 2:14-15), Jesus is clearly superior to **angels**. Ephesians 2:20-21, 1 Peter 3:22, Revelation 5:1-10
4. Hebrews 1:4b – *As He has inherited a more excellent name than they...* Christ has inherited a more excellent **name**, or title of authority, than the angels. Hebrews 2:5-9
 - a. The word for *inherited* KLERONOMEIO speaks of receiving great **favor**. *The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me.* Psalm 16:6
 - b. According to the good pleasure of God the Father, Christ inherited a greater **title** of authority than angels will ever obtain. Joshua 14:2, Proverbs 16:33, Ephesians 1:5-6
 - c. Philippians 2:9-10 – *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed [CHARIZOMAI to show favor or kindness] on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will **bow**...*
5. Hebrews 1:5a – *For to which of the angels did He ever say...* David prophesied that the Messiah would be **greater** than angels, a prophecy that was accurately fulfilled.

6. Hebrews 1:5b – Quoting the books of Chronicles and Psalms, the author showed that Messiah would be God’s very own **Son**, a position obviously greater than that of a servant angel. 1 Chronicles 17:11-14, Psalm 2:7-9
7. Hebrews 1:6 – Exhibiting Christ as supreme, the psalmist in Psalm 97:7 commanded all angels to **worship** Messiah. Revelation 5:6-14
8. Hebrews 1:7 – Psalm 104:4 establishes the fact that angels were meant to be ministering **spirits** to humans and were not designed to rule over them. 1 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 21:9, 22:8-9
9. Hebrews 1:8-9 – Psalm 45:6-7 presents the coming Messiah as God manifested in **flesh**. Christ is God who became a man. John 1:1-4, 14-18
 - a. Hebrews 1:8a – *But of the Son He says, “Your throne, O **God**, is forever and ever.”* The writer of Hebrews clearly declared the Messiah to be God. Isaiah 9:1-7
 - b. Hebrews 1:8b-9 – *...and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.* Messiah’s **throne** will be eternally righteous, an affirmation that belongs only to God. Isaiah 11:1-5
10. Hebrews 1:10-12 – The author of Hebrews quoted Psalm 102:25-27 to teach that Messiah was the **Creator** of the universe, emphasizing His eternal nature. Psalm 93:2, John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16-17
 - a. Hebrews 1:10a – The Messiah laid the foundations of the **earth**. Revelation 3:14
 - b. Hebrews 1:10b – The **heavens** are the work of the Messiah’s fingers. Psalm 8:3-6, Hebrews 2:5-10
 - c. Hebrews 1:11-12 – Creation will grow old and perish but the Messiah will **remain** forever. Hebrews 13:8, John 8:35, Revelation 1:7-8, 17-18, 19:11-22:21
11. Hebrews 1:13 – The author of Hebrews quoted Psalm 110:1 to show the supreme and absolute **authority** of Messiah. Matthew 28:18, Luke 22:69-70
 - a. Hebrews 1:13a – *Sit at my right hand...* The honor, majesty and authority intrinsic to being stationed at God’s **right** side were never granted to any angel. 1 Peter 3:22
 - b. Hebrews 1:13b – *...until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.* God commanded the Son to sit at His right hand, the unique station of **honor** that only the Son rightfully possesses. Acts 2:32-36, 5:30-31
12. Hebrews 1:14 – The author concluded that while the Son has supreme authority, the angels are ministering servants. They have been commissioned to **serve** humanity; especially those who will inherit salvation. Hebrews 2:16, Genesis 19:1-26

First warning: Hebrews 2:1-4 – The danger of drifting

C. Hebrews 2:1-8 – The author emphasized Jesus’ superiority to the angels

1. Hebrews 2:1-4 – The writer of Hebrews warned his readers not to foolishly **neglect** the truth surrounding their salvation. (**The first warning passage in Hebrews**)

- a. Hebrews 2:1-2 – The readers were exhorted not to ***drift away*** from what they heard.
- 1) Hebrews 2:1a – *For this reason...* Since Christ is superior to angels, there are some important things to **consider**.
 - 2) Hebrews 2:1b – *We must pay much closer attention...* Since Christ is superior to angels, the readers were encouraged to pay closer attention to what they had heard, namely the revelation of Jesus Christ. They should **focus** greater attention on the doctrines of Christ.
 - 3) Hebrews 2:1c – *So that we do not drift away from it.* These Hebrew believers were in danger of drifting away from the **word** they had been taught. 1 Peter 1:13, 2 Peter 1:5-11
 - a) To *drift away* PARARREO is a compound word in the Greek that was used to describe a **vessel** that carelessly floated past its destination and became aimlessly adrift. Hebrews 2:3
 - b) In order to avoid the disaster that comes from spiritual drifting, the readers needed to be purposeful to daily **walk** by faith in the teachings of the Word of God. Hebrews 3:7, 15
 - c) Drifting away from the Word of God is a **passive** form of unbelief that leads to hardness of heart and spiritual disaster. Hebrews 3:8, 12-13; 5:11-14
 - 4) Hebrews 2:2 – If the Mosaic Law given by the assistance of angels was not to be changed and demanded a strict penalty for disobedience, how much more important would it be to follow Messiah’s **words** and not change any of His message? Galatians 3:19
- b. Hebrews 2:3-4 – Since Christ’s word is superior to the words of angels, the readers were warned not to **neglect** their great salvation. If they reverted to Judaism, they would precariously drift away from God’s enabling grace for daily life. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
- 1) Hebrews 2:3a – *How will we **escape** if we neglect so great a salvation?* This does not mean you are in danger of losing your eternal salvation or that God is going to get even with you later if you fail today as a believer.
 - a) Grammatically the word escape EKPHEUGO implies finding **refuge** or safety from calamity.
 - b) The word is in the future tense, middle voice and indicative mood meaning that the **day** of need was sure to come.
 - c) The believer who was tempted to return to the legalistic system of Judaism was duly forewarned that when the inescapable pressures of life eventually came, he would **not** find help or refuge.
 - d) Disregarding what they had in Christ and in their threefold salvation (past, present and future) would result in their own **ruin**, as the next clauses in this verse will teach. Hebrews 4:14-16

- e) Where can we find refuge if we neglect our salvation? To whom can we turn?
Could they truly hope to find real help in a return to Judaism's religious rituals?
Galatians 3:1-4
- 2) Hebrews 2:3b – *How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?* The word neglect AMELEO speaks of extreme carelessness or even blatant disregard. An attitude of apathy toward our great salvation should never characterize the believer in Jesus Christ.
- 3) Hebrews 2:3c – *How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?* It would be good to recall that our one salvation comes in three phases. There is a past reality, a present reality and a future reality to our one amazing gift of salvation.
- a) The past reality of our salvation refers to the day when we trusted in Christ and were gloriously saved from the penalty of our sins. We call this historic moment in our live justification. Hebrews 1:3b, 14; 2:3, 17; 10:10-14
- b) The present reality of our salvation refers to the ongoing process of being saved from the power or domination of sin (or the sin nature) in our daily living. We call this process sanctification. Romans 6:19, 22
- c) The future reality of our salvation refers to the promise of deliverance from God's wrath in the future and states that one-day we will be saved completely out from the presence of all sin. We call this future event glorification. Romans 5:9
- d) If we neglect our incredible three-part salvation package, either carelessly or in bold disregard of these realities, then our practical, ongoing, daily sanctification will not proceed in a positive way. This is at the heart of the warning in this verse.
- e) It is important to understand that the verb "save" or the noun "salvation" can refer to deliverance from any one of the following: 1) the penalty of sin, 2) the present power of sin in this life, or 3) the presence of sin in the future.
- f) Context dictates how we interpret the word save.
- 4) Hebrews 2:3d – *How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? **After it was at the first spoken through the Lord...***? The Lord Jesus, not angels, preached to us this awesome and amazing salvation. John 3:11-18, 7:37b, 14:25-29, 16:4, 17:5-8
- 5) Hebrews 2:3e – *How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation after ...**it was [also] confirmed to us by those who heard?***
- a) This means that the apostles confirmed what Christ taught regarding salvation. Matthew 1:21, John 20:19-29, Acts 1:21-22, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
- b) The apostles were willing to die for this message. It would be preposterous for us to ignore the message not only preached by the Lord Jesus Christ, but then also confirmed by His followers.

- c) If the Mosaic Law which came through angels was unalterable and punishable (by death), then how much **more** important are the words of Christ and the apostles concerning our great salvation?
- 6) Hebrews 2:4 – *God also testifying with them...* When the apostles confirmed the message of salvation that Christ taught, God supernaturally authenticated their message with **signs** and wonders. 2 Corinthians 2:12, Acts 19:11-20
- a) Hebrews 2:4a – *Both by signs...* By means of sign **gifts** like tongues, God revealed to the nation of Israel the legitimacy of the Gospel message. These signs confirmed God’s gracious offer of salvation to all who would believe. Acts 2:1-11, 10:44-47
- b) Hebrews 2:4b – *...and [by] wonders and by various miracles...* God also bore witness to the apostles’ confessions concerning our great salvation by granting **wonders** to be performed through them. Acts 2:43, 5:11-14, 6:8, 8:13, 14:3
- c) Hebrews 2:4c – *and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.* Finally, God bore witness to our great salvation by granting additional spiritual **gifts** to the apostles. Ephesians 4:8
- d) The fact that God authenticated the apostles’ message by signs, wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit is yet another reason not to ignore the importance of God’s message of salvation.
2. Hebrews 2:5-8 – In order to further establish Christ’s supremacy, the writer of Hebrews quoted from Psalm 8. The author used this Messianic passage to prove that relative to the earth, man, especially Christ, enjoys a higher **rank** than the angels. Psalm 8:5-9
- a. Hebrews 2:5 – The long prophesied Messianic **Kingdom** was not designed for angels.
- 1) Originally God mandated that mankind, not angels, was to **rule** over and subdue Creation. Genesis 1:26-28
 - 2) This reality will come to fruition in the Kingdom when Christ ultimately conquers and subdues all God’s **enemies**. 1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Hebrews 12:22, 28
- b. Hebrews 2:6 – Mankind will play an extraordinary role of authority in God’s future **plans** for the earth. This is highlighted in the Messianic title Son of Man in this quote. Psalm 8:4-5; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 13:41-43, 19:28; Luke 22:66-70
- c. Hebrews 2:7a – *You have made him for a little while **lower than the angels**.* By becoming a man, Christ was temporarily made lower than the angels.
- 1) The word *angels* in the Hebrew **text** is the word ELOHIM.
 - 2) This term ELOHIM was translated **angels** (AGGELOS) in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint LXX).
 - 3) Normally ELOHIM was translated by the singular term **God**.

- 4) Sometimes ELOHIM was translated **gods**. The context always determines the meaning and the proper translation of the term. In Psalm 82:6 ELOHIM is translated gods.
 - 5) As with Psalm 82:6, Psalm 8:5 is best translated, “*You have made him for a little while lower than gods (ELOHIM),*” or even better as most translations put it, “*You have made him for a little **while** lower than angels ELOHIM.*”
 - 6) Accordingly, Hebrews 2:7 translated the word ELOHIM in Psalm 8:5 to mean angels just as it was rendered in the **Greek** Old Testament translation (Septuagint LXX).
- d. Hebrews 2:7b – *You have made him **for a little while** lower than the angels.* The Son of Man was only temporarily made a little lower than the angels. Now, and in eternity, Christ has greater authority than the angels; and someday, together with Christ, we will **judge** angels. 1 Corinthians 6:3
 - e. Hebrews 2:7c – Concerning the Son of Man, this verse states, “*You have crowned Him with glory and honor, and have appointed Him over the **works** of your hands.*”
 - 1) In the beginning, God made mankind ruler of the earth, but **Satan** undermined man’s dominion. Genesis 1:26-28
 - 2) One day the man Christ Jesus will completely **remove** the usurper Satan from his position of dominion over Creation. Luke 4:5-8, Revelation 20:10
 - f. Hebrews 2:8a – *You have put all things in subjection under His feet. For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him.* In the future, the man Christ Jesus (not angels) **will** rule over all Creation. Genesis 1:26-28, Daniel 7:27, 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
 - g. Hebrews 2:8b – *But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.* Even if they could not see all things subjected to Christ at that **moment**, these Hebrew believers should not doubt the supremacy of Christ nor move away from their great salvation. Philippians 2:9-11

D. Hebrews 2:9-18 – Jesus was temporarily humiliated when He became human

1. Hebrews 2:9 – To die as our substitute, Christ submitted to extreme **humility**. Jesus became a man to redeem us.
 - a. Hebrews 2:9a – *But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus...* In order to become a perfect substitute for fallen humanity, Jesus, God’s Son, humbly and willingly became a **human** being. Philippians 2:6-8
 - b. Hebrews 2:9b – *Because of the suffering of **death**...* Being made human, Jesus was capable of dying as our substitute on the cross.
 - c. Hebrews 2:9c – *Because of the suffering of death **crowned with glory and honor**...* Because Jesus humbled Himself and went to the cross, God the Father has exalted Jesus to the place of greatest honor in heaven. Philippians 2:9-11, Hebrews 12:2

- d. Hebrews 2:9d – ***So that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone...*** God’s judgment of Christ as the substitute for sinful man was an act of profound grace.
- e. Hebrews 2:9e – ***So that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone...***
- 1) Jesus tasted death for every human being when He died for our **sins**. *Tasted* means He fully ingested death in all its ramifications for us. Romans 5:8, 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:28
 - 2) Jesus’ death was the **perfect** substitution needed to rescue mankind. John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 2:2
- f. Hebrews 2:9f – Jesus’ death as our substitute was an **act** of tremendous significance and explains doctrines like the incarnation, our redemption, reconciliation, justification, imputation of righteousness, propitiation of God’s wrath and the ascension of Christ to God’s right hand.
- 1) In the incarnation, Christ took upon Himself true humanity, a **truth** that is indispensable to Christ being a substitute for mankind. John 1:1, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3
 - a) God needed to become truly **human** in order to personally save us from the eternal consequences of sin.
 - b) In the virgin **birth**, God the Father submitted Christ to the lowliness of human childbirth in order to make it possible for Him to be our substitute.
 - 2) The **doctrine** of redemption likewise has a substitutionary component. Mark 10:45, Galatians 3:13, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:13-14, Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:18-19
 - a) By means of His infinitely valuable death on the cross, Christ is able to rescue believing humanity from the **slave** market of sin.
 - b) The ransom price for the rescue of every human has been **fully** provided and salvation (all three tenses) is available to all through faith alone in Christ alone.
 - c) In His death, Christ made a full payment (He fully paid the **price** for all sin) so that the purchase of every person from his or her sinful state could be freely offered.
 - (i) The Bible teaches we are **born** slaves to sin. John 8:34, Romans 6:20
 - (ii) Only Christ can set us **free** from that slavery. John 8:36
 - 3) Our reconciliation to God also came about through the substitutionary work of Christ on the **cross**. Romans 5:6-10; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-19; Colossians 1:21-22
 - a) The work of Calvary graciously removes God’s hostility toward believing sinners and provides us **peace** with God. Romans 5:1
 - b) Due to Calvary, God is no longer at war with those of us who believe in Christ. As believers in Christ we are now **friends** of God.
 - 4) The doctrine of propitiation is also **based** on substitution.

- a) Christ died as our perfect substitute so that God's **wrath** could be appeased. Isaiah 53:4-12, Romans 3:21-26, Hebrews 2:17
 - b) The demands of God were fully **met** in Christ's offering. All of man's sin was transferred to Christ who removed all sin through his death to allow God now to be at peace with believers. John 1:29
- 5) In God's justice, our justification before Him is based on the **legality** of the incrimination of Christ in our stead. Hebrews 10:10-14; Romans 3:21-28; 5:1, 18; 8:30-34; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:7
- a) Justification is God's judicial declaration that the believer in Christ is deemed righteous before Him apart from any human **merit**. This legal standing is possible based on the legitimacy of Christ' execution in our stead. Romans 3:28
 - b) This judicial triumph was accomplished through the substitutionary death of **Christ**. Romans 4:22-25, 5:9
- 6) The doctrine of imputation is also based on **substitution**. Isaiah 53:6
- a) Even though He was perfectly innocent of any wrongdoing, Jesus the human stood in for us and in His death, God attributed our sin to **His** account.
 - b) Imputation explains the act of God transferring to Christ all sin of all time in the moment of His substitutionary death. Now He transfers to us who believe the **legal** perfection of Christ so that we are deemed right before God's eyes. 2 Corinthians 5:21
- 7) The doctrine of substitution is also important in order to understand the **ascension** of Christ. Psalm 110
- a) Now, for the first time ever, a true human, in the **person** of Christ, resides in heaven interceding on our behalf. Having ascended, Christ now represents us before God. Hebrews 1:3, 7:24-27
 - b) Now the riches of God's grace are freely **shared** with believers through the priestly, intercessory, and advocacy ministries of the Man Christ Jesus. Romans 8:31-34, Ephesians 1:18-23, Colossians 3:1-4, 1 Timothy 2:5-6
2. Hebrews 2:10 – In order to be a suitable substitute for humanity, Christ, the **Author** of our faith, experienced suffering. John 1:29; Hebrews 4:15, 10:5-10
- a. Hebrews 2:10a – *For it was fitting PREPO for Him...* PREPO means to stand out as the right thing. In order for Jesus our Savior to be a perfect substitute, it was clearly the **right** thing for Him to experience suffering. Colossians 1:19
 - b. Hebrews 2:10b – *For whom are all things, and through whom are all things...* As Creator and **Owner** of all, God devised the plan whereby humankind could be reconciled to Himself. 1 Corinthians 8:6, Romans 11:36, 1 Timothy 1:17

- c. Hebrews 2:10c – In order for humankind to be reconciled to God, God the Father planned for God the Son to become the suitable substitute for humanity. Therefore, ***in bringing many sons to glory, God planned to perfect the author of their salvation...***
Ephesians 1:9-10, Colossians 1:19-20
- d. Hebrews 2:10d – God perfected *the author of their salvation through sufferings*. Through suffering, Jesus became the unique and worthy author (ARCHEGOS- **founder**, pioneer, or originator) of salvation. Hebrews 4:14-15, 5:8-10, 12:2
- 1) The verb to *perfect* TELEIOSAI means to bring to an **end**. In reference to Jesus, Jesus' suffering ended any question concerning His qualifications as far as being a worthy Savior.
 - 2) The author stated that in order to **qualify** as the Savior of humanity Jesus had to experience human suffering.
3. Hebrews 2:11-13 – In becoming human, Christ fully **identified** with us. His identification with us enabled Him to save us from eternal death. This is something angels could not do. Romans 8:3
- a. Hebrews 2:11a – ***For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father...*** At our salvation, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ became our Father also. We are identified with Jesus Christ in that we both have the same Father. John 1:12, Romans 8:15-17, 1 John 3:1
 - b. Hebrews 2:11b – ***For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father...*** Jesus is the **Sanctifier** and we are the sanctified.
 - 1) Christ sanctified us positionally at salvation by setting us aside in Himself as His **own** possession. This aspect of our sanctification cannot be undone. Hebrews 10:10-14, 13:12
 - 2) Christ continues to sanctify us practically on a **daily** basis. 1 Corinthians 1:7-9; Philippians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 5:23
 - c. Hebrews 2:11c – ***For which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren***. Since we are children of the heavenly Father through the sanctifying work of Jesus Christ, Christ is not ashamed to **associate** with us as His brothers and sisters.
 - d. Hebrews 2:12-13 – To further highlight Messiah's identification with humanity, the author turned to two Messianic **passages**: Psalm 22 and Isaiah 8.
 - 1) Hebrews 2:12 – Psalm 22:22 foretells that the Messiah would proclaim God the Father's name to His brethren and sing praise **among** the congregation. This psalm shows Messiah's identification with mankind and how He, as human, would be among humanity.
 - 2) Hebrews 2:13 – Here the author cited Isaiah 8 to show the humanity of **Messiah**.

- a) *I will put My **trust** in Him.* The author cited Isaiah 8:17 to show Jesus would live trusting in God the Father. This was because, when He became a man, He laid aside His independent rights to express His divinity.
- b) *Behold, I and the children God has given Me.* The author also cited Isaiah 8:18 to show Jesus identifying very closely with the redeemed, calling them His **children**. John 17:6-12
- e. Hebrews 2:14-15 – Jesus Christ identified with us so that He could **deliver** us from Satan.
- 1) Hebrews 2:14a – *Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same...* Jesus became human just like us so that He could take our **place** in death. John 1:14, Philippians 2:5-8, 1 Peter 2:24
 - 2) Hebrews 2:14b – *...that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the **devil**.* By dying on the cross, Jesus left Satan powerless over death. John 11:25, 12:31, 1 Corinthians 15:56-57, Colossians 2:13-15, 2 Timothy 1:10, 1 John 3:8
 - 3) Hebrews 2:15a – *And might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.* Jesus Christ offers deliverance from the **fear** of death. John 11:25, Romans 8:15-17
 - a) Jesus died in your place for **all** your sin. No more payment is required. Romans 6:8-11, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - b) As a believer there is no reason for you to fear **death**. Romans 5:1-2, 8-10, 8:31-38, 1 John 4:18
- f. Hebrews 2:16-18 – Jesus Christ identified with us so that He would qualify to be our high **priest**.
- 1) Hebrews 2:16a – *For assuredly He does not give help to angels...* Christ did not die for **angels**.
 - a) We ought to understand that Christ did not come to **help** angels.
 - b) The angels were created to give **service** to God (Lk. 1:19), the Messiah (Ps. 91:10-11, Mk. 1:13), and believers (Matt. 18:10, Heb. 1:14), and not the other way around.
 - 2) Hebrews 2:16b – Jesus came to help Abraham’s offspring. *...but He gives help to the descendant of **Abraham**.*
 - a) It is interesting that the author used the term “*descendant of Abraham*” in speaking to believing **Jews** who were threatening to return to their old ways under the Law.
 - b) Spiritually speaking, God deems all who believe in Christ to be the **seed** of Abraham. Genesis 12:3b, Romans 4:16, Galatians 3:29 (Note: This does not mean we become spiritual Israel.)

- c) Abraham was forecasted to become the father of **many** nations, not just the father of the nation of Israel. Genesis 17:4-5, Romans 4:16-18, Galatians 3:26-29
- 3) Hebrews 2:17a – *Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things.* To qualify as our high priest, Jesus, in His humanity, had to become in **every** respect like one of us. Romans 8:3
- 4) Hebrews 2:17b-c – A high priest must serve **both** God and man. As both God and Man, Jesus Christ was uniquely suited for that task.
 - a) Hebrews 2:17b – *So that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.* In His ministry as a high priest on God’s behalf, Jesus was able to faithfully convey God’s **mercy** to mankind.
 - b) Hebrews 2:17c – *To make propitiation for the sins of the people.* In His ministry as a high priest on man’s behalf, Jesus propitiated (pacified) the **wrath** of God that had long festered because of man’s sin.
 - (i) Propitiation means that those who have trusted in Christ no longer stand as strangers and enemies before God. Jesus became both the **peace** offering (sacrificial lamb) and peacemaker (priest) for sin. 1 John 2:2
 - (ii) In His ministry on our behalf, Jesus made heaven to be at peace with unworthy humanity. Once and for all, Christ **pacified** God’s righteous indignation against us because of our sin. Romans 1:18, 5:1-2, 10
- 5) Hebrews 2:18a – *For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered.* As our high priest, Jesus continues to help us in our trials because He faced similar **trials** and hardships during His lifetime on earth. Isaiah 53:4-5, Luke 4:2, Philippians 2:7-8, Hebrews 4:14-15, 1 Peter 5:7
- 6) Hebrews 2:18b – *Therefore He is able to come to the **aid** of those who are tempted.* Jesus’ priestly work on your behalf makes Him infinitely superior to the angels and uniquely suited to meet your needs. Why look elsewhere?
 - a) Do not inadvertently **drift** away from what you have heard!
 - b) Do not willfully **neglect** your great salvation!

III. Hebrews 3:1-4:16 – The Hebrew Readers Warned Not to Repeat the Spiritual Calamity of the Exodus Generation (The second warning passage in Hebrews)

A. Hebrews 3:1-6 – Jesus is far superior to Moses and the Old Testament system

1. Hebrews 3:1 – The readers should carefully consider **why** Jesus is superior to Moses. Hebrews 12:1-3

- a. Hebrews 3:1a – This verse begins with, “**Therefore**,” clearly tying back to Hebrews 2:17 which states, “*He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*”
- b. Hebrews 3:1b – Because the readers were saved, the author called them **holy brethren and partakers** of a heavenly calling.
- 1) They were called *holy brethren*, or saints, because once for all through faith in Christ they had been sanctified (set **apart**) as God’s exclusive possession. 1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:10, 14
 - 2) They were *partakers of the heavenly calling* because the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ had given them **access** to the heavenly holy of holies where Jesus now resides as King-Priest of the universe. Hebrews 10:19-22
- c. Hebrews 3:1c – They were told to *consider **Jesus**, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.*
- 1) *Consider* (KATANOEEO) is an aorist active imperative verb that means, “**Observe** thoroughly and understand!”
 - 2) *Jesus, the **Apostle**...* An apostle is a sent one. God sent Jesus. Jesus came as the supreme Apostle of our faith. John 17:18, Ephesians 2:20, 1 John 1:2
 - 3) *Jesus, the Apostle and **High Priest**...* Jesus came as a high priest to represent us to God and God to us. Hebrews 4:14-16
 - 4) *Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession... **Confession*** HOMOLOGIA is the verbal acknowledgement of what is believed. What we believe and acknowledge came from Christ. John 1:17-18
2. Hebrews 3:2 – *He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His **house**.*
- a. The word house OIKOS as used here is in reference to the people or **family** of God. The house in which Moses was faithful was the Israelite nation and the house Jesus Christ manages is His **body**, the church. Numbers 12:7
- 1) House also represents the obligations associated with their **area** of responsibility. Moses and Christ were both responsible for the growth, maturation, and edification of their respective houses.
 - 2) Ephesians 4:11-12 – *And He (Christ) gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ.***
- b. Just as Moses was faithful over Israel, God’s house; Jesus, *the Apostle and High Priest of our confession*, was **faithful** to the One who appointed Him over the church.

3. Hebrews 3:3a – *For He has been counted worthy of **more** glory than Moses...* These Hebrew Christians who were being tempted to return to Judaistic religion needed to know that to belong to Jesus is more prestigious than to pertain to Moses. John 1:14-18, 2 Corinthians 3:7-11
4. Hebrews 3:3b – *...by just so much as the **builder** of the house has more honor than the house.*
 - a. The builder has much more honor than the house he **builds**.
 - b. Jesus, as the builder of God’s heavenly household, is far greater than the sum **total** of His work, the church, even though it is glorious. 1 Corinthians 3:9-11; 1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 2:10, 12:2
5. Hebrews 3:4 – *For every house is built by someone but the builder of all things is God.* God, as the Creator of **ALL** things, is the greatest of all. He is the Creator of Israel and the church and everything else that exists. Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 8:6
6. Hebrews 3:5 – **Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later.**
 - a. Moses was a faithful servant in God’s house, Israel. He faithfully carried out all God’s **orders** in his leadership of Israel. Exodus 14:31, 40:16; Numbers 12:6-8; Deuteronomy 18:18
 - b. For example, when Moses received instructions on how to erect the tabernacle, He did it **exactly** according to God’s plans. Exodus 39:42-43
 - c. Scripture indicates that Moses modeled the Old Testament tabernacle after God’s throne and heavenly **abode**. Exodus 25:40, Hebrews 8:5
7. Hebrews 3:6a – *But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house.* Christ was faithful, but not as a servant like Moses. Christ, who is over God’s house, is the actual **Son** of God, not a servant.
8. Hebrews 3:6b – *Whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope **firm** until the end.*
 - a. Hebrews 3:6c – **Whose house...** In this chapter, the author of Hebrews used the type of Israel as the house over which Moses presided to prefigure the church as Christ’s house.
 - 1) This verse implies that these Hebrew believers, by threatening to return to a Judaistic system, were toying with the idea of leaving Christ’s house and returning to Moses’ **house**.
 - 2) This in no way implies they would **lose** their salvation, since that is a biblical impossibility, but it does imply they would lose out on their fellowship with Christ in their practical daily living.
 - b. Hebrews 3:6d – **We are if...** Practically speaking, we are Christ’s house and enjoy fellowship with Him if we walk by faith in Him in our daily lives.

- 1) In koine Greek, a phrase that begins with the word “if” is classified in one of four different classes. In this case, the statement is a third class condition projecting a **hopeful**, but not certain, outcome of success.
 - 2) By using the third class condition, the author indicated that he and his readers **may** or may not enjoy the benefit of the outcome, but he hoped they would. It was their choice. Colossians 1:22-23
- c. Hebrews 3:6e – **We hold fast**... The words *hold fast* KATECHO communicate to have a firm **grip**, to carefully conserve, or to hold the course. What were the Hebrew Christians supposed to grasp tightly in order to remain Christ’s house? Hebrews 4:14, 10:23
- 1) Hebrews 3:6f – **Our confidence**... Since we were saved by faith in Christ, we ought to continue to live by **faith** in Him. Romans 1:17, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 2:6, Hebrews 10:38
 - 2) Hebrews 3:6g – **And the boast of our hope**... Paul said in Galatians 6:14, “*But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*” 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Philippians 1:21; 3:3, 8-9
 - a) Since Christ has met every requirement necessary for our salvation, we boast in **Him**. He is the one who has secured our hope. Colossians 2:18-19
 - b) The Hebrew Christians should not trust or boast in Moses and the Law, because righteousness does **not** come through the Law. Romans 3:20, 10:3-4; Galatians 3:21-22
 - c) We are unable to please God by our **works** for justification or sanctification. Romans 3:10, 7:18; Ephesians 2:8-9
 - d) Our only hope is Christ. Christ saved us from both the penalty of sin and the power of sin in our daily lives. **Christ is the boast of our hope**. Romans 6:14-15, Galatians 2:20, 2 Peter 1:3-4
- d. Hebrews 3:6h – **Firm until the end**. This means that we are to continue to walk by faith throughout our lives in order to continually benefit from all that we have in Christ.
- 1) We are to **hold** tightly to our hope (walk by faith) until the end for the sake of our daily practical sanctification.
 - 2) There is no such thing as autopilot in the Christian life. The **minute** you cease to trust you begin to go backwards.
- e. The metaphor of being Christ’s house could be compared to the prodigal son who left his father’s house to pursue his own pleasures rather than **abiding** with his father.
- 1) Even though the prodigal son left, he was still a son, but he lost out on the daily **benefits** of His father’s house. Finally, he said, “*I will get up and go to my father,*” and so he returned to the blessings of his father’s house. Luke 15:11-32

- 2) In the same way, being in Christ's house is a question of practical sanctification and not one of salvation from **hell**.
 - a) Our eternal standing before God occurs at the moment of salvation when we hear and believe the **Gospel** message. Ephesians 2:6-9, Colossian 3:3
 - b) Because we are God's children, we will **always** belong to the Lord. The Lord has promised to never leave us nor forsake us. John 10:28-30, Hebrews 13:5
 - c) A lack of faith does not affect our justification, but it can practically **affect** our ongoing sanctification. Hebrews 10:38
- f. In a practical **daily** sense, we are Christ's house only as we continue to walk by faith.
 - 1) Walking by faith is virtually the same as abiding in Christ, keeping in step with the Holy Spirit, walking in fellowship with Lord, and **waiting** on the Lord. Isaiah 40:31; John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:16, 22-26; 1 John 1:2-7
 - 2) All of the above expressions speak of depending on the Lord Jesus Christ rather than depending on **self**. Proverbs 3:5-6, 2 Peter 1:3-4
 - 3) We are Christ's house when we **depend** on Him by faith to live His life in and through us. Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:16-17
- g. If we cease to **abide** in Christ, there are serious consequences. Jeremiah 17:5-6
 - 1) At Kadesh-Barnea when God sent the Israelites back into the desert, some of them tried to enter Canaan anyway, on their **own**, apart from God going with them. Of course, their enemies defeated these Israelites. Deuteronomy 1:41-46
 - 2) If we try to live by our own efforts and rules instead of by depending on Christ by faith, God will **resist** us. He will not guide us or strengthen us when we do not depend on Him. 1 Peter 5:5b
 - 3) If we do not walk according to the Spirit, we are by default walking according to the **flesh** and consequently out of step with the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:17
 - 4) If we walk according to the flesh, we will produce the works of the **flesh**, which lead to death and corruption. We ought not to willfully allow ourselves to do the sinful works the unsaved practice. Romans 6:21, 8:5-9; Galatians 5:19-21
 - 5) If we do not abide in Christ, we cannot **bear** fruit. John 15:6
 - 6) If we constantly refuse to abide in Christ, we may eventually even **die** physically. Romans 8:12-13, 1 Corinthians 11:30-32, 1 John 5:16-17

Second warning: Hebrews 3:7-4:16 – The danger of doubt

B. Hebrews 3:7-19 – The failure of the Exodus Generation served as a warning

1. Hebrews 3:7-11 – The author of Hebrews referenced Psalm 95:7-11 to explain God's **reactions** to the failures of the Exodus Generation.
 - a. Hebrews 3:7a – **Therefore...** Since Christ is so much greater than Moses...

- b. Hebrews 3:7b – ... *just as the Holy Spirit says...* The Holy Spirit **inspired** David to write Psalm 95:7-11. David wrote Psalm 95 to call his generation back from repeating the same error as the Exodus Generation.
- c. Hebrews 3:7c – *“Today if you hear his voice...”* When the author said, “Today,” he spoke concerning our **present** life here on earth. He was not speaking of our future life in eternity.
- 1) Today we can hear the voice of the Holy Spirit through the **pages** of the written Word of God. 2 Peter 1:19-21
 - 2) Just as it was urgent in Old Testament times to heed God’s Word, the believer in Christ should heed God’s Word today - **now**. Romans 10:17, Colossians 3:16, 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- d. Hebrews 3:8-9 – *“Do not **harden** your hearts as when they provoked Me... Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me and saw My works for forty years.”*
- 1) The Exodus Generation was a **redeemed** generation. In His grace, God had delivered them from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Deuteronomy 7:8, 15:15
 - 2) But although they were redeemed, they were notorious for **willfully** hardening their hearts and failing to believe God for the practical things of life. Exodus 15:13, 17:2-4; Psalm 78:6-53; 95:8
 - 3) The Exodus Generation tested God when they continually **refused** to believe Him, even though they had seen His great works.
 - 4) The writer of the book of Hebrews warned his audience not to harden their hearts like the Israelites of the **Exodus** Generation.
 - 5) We harden our hearts when we see and **read** about God’s works as revealed in His Word and yet still refuse to believe Him.
- e. Hebrews 3:10a – *“Therefore I was angry with this generation.”*
- 1) God was angry PROSOCHTHIZO, vexed, and **displeased** with the Exodus Generation. Psalm 95:9-10
 - 2) God’s anger was understandable since they constantly complained even though He **provided** them with everything they needed, e.g., water, manna, meat, protection, durable clothing, etc. Psalm 78:21-33
- f. Hebrews 3:10b – Why was God angry with that generation of saved Israelites? *“They always go astray in their **heart**.”*
- 1) The key problem of the Exodus Generation was that they refused to **trust** God in their daily walk. Psalm 106:13-33
 - 2) By discounting His great redeeming **power** demonstrated in Egypt, the Exodus Generation continually resisted, grieved, and challenged God. Psalm 78:40-53

- 3) The climax of their rebellious disobedience came when the entire congregation decided to return to Egypt rather than believe God and enter the Promised Land. Because of their rebellion, God sentenced that generation to **die** in the desert. Numbers 14:1-38
- 4) At this point, the Exodus Generation crossed a line from which they would never recover; they were going to die in the wilderness without ever experiencing the **rest** of the Promised Land. Numbers 14:11-33
 - a) God said, *“According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your **guilt** a year, even 40 years, and you will know My opposition.”* Numbers 14:34
 - b) The sentence the Lord gave them was not hellfire or any kind of post-death punishment. Their sentence was in **time**. They would languish as they wandered about in the desert. That generation would physically die off over the course of a 40-year period.
- g. Hebrews 3:11 – *“As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest.”* Filled with anger, God declared in an oath that the Exodus Generation would not **enter** His rest. Psalm 95:11, Numbers 14:28-30
 - 1) We often think of the inheritance promised to Israel as picturing our future glorification in heaven, but that is **not** what it pictures.
 - a) Israel’s rest was the day by day possession of the land of Canaan through real battles with real enemies. Even after they possessed the land, these enemies remained a **constant** threat to their rest. Isaiah 28:11-12, Jeremiah 6:16
 - b) In eternity we will not have to fight enemies. Rest at that time will be for **all** believers and it will never be in jeopardy of loss.
 - c) The rest pictured here is believer’s **daily** rest of faith. It is living the abundant life through trials and battles fought as we live by grace through faith. Matthew 11:29, John 10:10, Hebrews 4:11
 - d) The abundant life of the believer is constantly in jeopardy. This is what Paul meant when he said, *“Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered **shipwreck** in regard to their faith.”* 1 Timothy 1:19
 - 2) God offered the Exodus Generation rest during their lifetime on earth. To experience and enjoy that rest they’d have to labor, fighting battles with real enemies, but in truth, **God** was the One who promised to fight for them.
 - a) Deuteronomy 1:30 – *The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself **fight** on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes.* Exodus 14:14
 - b) Deuteronomy 3:21-22 – *...Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so the LORD shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. Do not fear them, for the LORD your **God** is the one fighting for you.*

- c) Joshua 10:25 – *Joshua then said to them, “Do not fear or be dismayed! Be **strong** and courageous, for thus the Lord will do to all your enemies with whom you fight.”* Joshua 10:14, 23:3
- 3) When the Israelites fought in their human strength, they **lost** and found no rest.
- a) Deuteronomy 1:41 – *Then you said to me, “We have sinned against the Lord; we will indeed go up and fight, just as the Lord our God commanded us.” And every man of you girded on his weapons of **war** and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country.*
- b) Deuteronomy 1:42 – *And the Lord said to me, “Say to them, ‘Do **not** go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated before your enemies.’”*
- c) Judges 2:15 – *Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for **evil**, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.*
- 4) In the very same way, our battles in life (today) are to be supernaturally fought and **won** by actively trusting the Lord for strength and wisdom to live victoriously.
1 Timothy 6:12
- 5) When we walk in **step** with the Spirit (in the yolk with Christ) He actively works on our behalf and we enjoy His rest. Exodus 33:14, Matthew 11:28-29
- h. Hebrews 3:11 – *“They shall not enter My rest.”* That generation **lost** the chance to enter and enjoy God’s rest in the Promised Land.
- 1) The Exodus Generation was already eternally saved, so in spite of their serious sin that God so harshly punished, they went to **heaven** when they died.
Numbers 14:11-23, Psalm 78:34-39, Nehemiah 9:16-21
- 2) But when they failed to believe God and enter Canaan, God drew a **line** in the desert sands and stopped them from further progress into the Promised Land of rest. Numbers 14:39-45; Hebrews 3:18, 4:10-13
- 3) That generation underwent a sin-unto-death type of punishment (their punishment was the loss of their physical lives while living in the wilderness) but not a loss of salvation (or their eternal life). Hebrews 3:17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:27-32, 5:1-5
- a) Later Moses and Aaron also lost their **chance** to enter God’s rest, but they never lost their eternal salvation, i.e., their deliverance from the penalty of sin.
Numbers 20:8-13, 33:38-39, Deuteronomy 32:48-52, 34:5-8
- b) Peter, James and John witnessed Moses spiritually glorified on the **Mount** of Transfiguration. Luke 9:28-33
- 4) Only Joshua and Caleb escaped the divine discipline because they had faith in God’s promises. They were the only **two** people from the Exodus Generation who later went in and enjoyed God’s rest in the Promised Land. Numbers 14:24, 30

- 5) For the Israelites, enjoying God’s rest meant **believing** God by crossing the Jordan, entering the land with swords drawn, waging war, clearing out the idols, and slowly possessing what God had promised to give. Hebrews 6:9-12, 10:32-36
 - 6) Enjoying God’s rest included continuing to live by faith once they finally possessed the land. Their rest was never permanent; it was always conditional. It had to be maintained by continual dependence on God through **faith**. Judges 2:1-4
 - 7) The Exodus Generation completely lost the chance to rest in their lifetime and was forced to traverse the **desert** for 40 years. Psalm 95:11, Hebrews 3:18-4:2
 - 8) It is possible for a believer to live out a desert-like existence in life, failing to **enjoy** the peace and rest God has made available to everyone who has trusted in Christ.
 - 9) Far too many believers refuse to live by faith and ultimately **miss** out on the abundant life Christ has promised. Philippians 3:12, Hebrews 4:1, 11
 - 10) The saints to whom Hebrews was written could possibly be disciplined for refusing to **trust** the Lord and possess the rest God offered. Hebrews 12:5-11
 - a) As Christians, if we refuse to live trusting in the Lord as rebellious Israel did in the desert, we will invariably face **discipline**.
 - b) If we harden our hearts in unbelief and refuse to continue to walk by faith, we could **doom** ourselves to living out our Christian experience here on earth without enjoying the genuine rest God promised. Matthew 11:28-30, Hebrews 10:38, 2 Peter 2:19-21
2. Hebrews 3:12-14 – The Hebrew writer applied the example of the Exodus Generation to his readers to warn them to not fall away (or turn away) from the living God through similar **unbelief**. Hebrews 2:1-3a, 12:25
- a. Hebrews 3:12 – The author cautioned his readers, *“Take care, brethren, lest there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.”* This was a warning against unbelief. Unbelief was the **real** problem of the Exodus Generation.
 - 1) Hebrews 3:12a – Take care, brethren... The phrase take care BLEPO is a present active imperative verb meaning “watch out.” We must pay close **attention** to how we live life.
 - 2) Hebrews 3:12b – *...lest there not be in any one of you an **evil**, unbelieving heart ...*
 - a) God’s calls an unbelieving heart **evil**. Romans 14:23, Hebrews 11:6, James 1:5-8
 - b) Nothing is more displeasing to God than **unbelief** in the life of a believer. Hebrews 10:38-39, 11:6; Jude 5
 - 3) Hebrews 3:12c – *...an evil, unbelieving heart **that falls away from the living God**.* The phrase falls away APHISTEMI means to “withdraw” or “move from a point of reference” and implies rebellion.
 - a) An unbelieving heart is a form of rebellion; it is an independent heart that says, “I don’t need God; I’ll figure it out for **myself**.”

- b) When you do not trust the Lord, you are rebelliously distancing yourself from God. Unbelief is an evil malady that causes you to forfeit your walk with Christ and God's peace.
- c) The danger for the Hebrew Christians was that if they quit walking by faith, they would eventually become calloused toward the living God. They would develop an evil untrusting attitude that would keep them from rest.
- b. Hebrews 3:13-14 – The author commanded his readers to **encourage** each other daily. The writer made practical application of Psalm 95:6-11 to their lives to help deliver them from hardness of heart.
- 1) Hebrews 3:13a – *But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today."*
- a) *But encourage one another.* The word encourage PARAKALEO means to "call to your side" or "appeal to." Galatians 6:2, Philippians 2:4
- b) As believers, we are all part of one body, the body of Christ, and therefore we are responsible for one another's well-being. Ephesians 4:4-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 14; Hebrews 10:25
- c) *As long as it is still called "Today."* On any given day (today), a lack of faith can creep up and harden you against your living God and His life-giving Word. Unbelief cuts you off from God's provisions.
- 2) Hebrews 3:13b – *So that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* We are all in jeopardy of becoming hardened by the deceptiveness of any sin and particularly the sin of unbelief, as was the case with the Exodus Generation. Romans 14:23b
- a) We should encourage each other to walk in grace and to not *be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.* 2 Corinthians 11:3
- b) On the converse, the Galatians seemingly did what the Hebrew believers were tempted to do when they departed from the grace of Christ as revealed in the Gospel. Galatians 1:6, 3:1
- 3) Hebrews 3:14a – *For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.*
- a) In Greek, the word *partaker* METOCHOS is a synonym for the word partner KOINONOS, which is derived from the word fellowship KOINONIA.
- (i) To see this synonym in action, compare Luke 5:7, where the word partaker METOCHOS is used, with Luke 5:10, where the word partners KOINONOS is used.
- (ii) See also Romans 11:17 (fellow partners), 2 Corinthians 8:23 (partner), Hebrews 12:8 (partakers), 2 Peter 1:3-4 (partakers), 1 John 1:3 (fellowship).

- b) The readers of this letter were in danger of missing the whole point of salvation. God saved them so they'd be restored to **friendship** with Christ. John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 1 John 1:1-3
- (i) Jesus was to be their enduring **companion** and they were to relentlessly look to Him for life. They were to live in a relationship of dependence on Christ.
 - (ii) This was God's desire from the beginning when He created Adam and Eve. God wanted Adam and Eve to live in **dependence** on Him, the Provider of their every need.
 - (iii) But when Adam and Eve decided to live independently of God, they **forfeited** their relationship with Him.
 - (iv) Through Christ's provision, we can once again experience a personal relationship of daily dependence on God as Adam and Eve originally experienced. This is what it means to be *partakers of Christ*. John 15:4-5
 - (v) To be partakers of Christ is synonymous to being Christ's **house**.
- c) In spite of the differences that exist between the concepts, fellowship with the Lord, abiding in Christ, and walking by the Spirit are **parallel** doctrines. 1 John 1:2-7, 2:1-6; Galatians 5:16, 22-23
- 4) Hebrews 3:14b – *For we have become partakers of Christ, if we **hold fast**...* This verse is not teaching works salvation.
- a) The writer of Hebrews is restating Hebrews 3:6: *We are his house if we hold fast...* to show the conditional **nature** of being considered partakers with Christ.
 - b) This is a question of enjoying **fellowship** (sanctification salvation) not a question of obtaining eternal salvation (justification salvation, or deliverance from the penalty of sin).
- 5) Hebrews 3:14c – *...if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance **firm until the end**.* Believers are partakers with Christ in life only as they maintain daily fellowship with Christ. Sanctification salvation for the believer is a daily-faith issue.
- a) Some Hebrew Christians were being tempted to **turn** back to the rules-based, religiosity of the Mosaic Law. Galatians 5:4-6
 - b) If they went back under the Law, they would **lose** out on the rest that only comes through grace by dependence on Christ. Colossians 2:2-9, 20-23
 - c) Our faith must rest in God's **power** as taught in the Word of God, not in any other source. 1 Corinthians 2:5, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Colossians 3:15
 - d) Sanctification is not a one-time **event**. Believers are to firmly persevere in a faith-walk with Christ (fellowship) every day until the end of their lives. This is what it means to become partakers of Christ today and to enter and enjoy His rest now. John 17:3

3. Hebrews 3:15-19 – The author warned the Hebrew readers against following the Exodus Generation’s example. The Exodus Generation was a saved people who lost their chance to rest during their sojourn on **earth**.
- a. Hebrews 3:15a – *Today if you hear His voice...* Far too many believers choose to live in a spiritual desert. These unbelieving believers are waiting for life to **end** so they can finally find rest when all the while spiritual rest and peace is offered to them here and now.
 - b. Hebrews 3:15b – *Do not harden your hearts...*
 - 1) If a believer refuses to hear the call of the Lord to rest and hardens his heart, he will **not** enter Christ’s rest during the days of his life here on earth.
 - 2) If a believer refuses to rest in the Lord, he will also suffer **loss** in eternity. A believer can lose reward (1 Cor. 3:10-15, 9:24), rank (Phil. 3:14, 2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 2:26-28), commendation (Phil. 3:14-15), glory (2 Cor. 4:17-5:1), and crowns (1 Thess. 2:19-20).
 - c. Hebrews 3:15b-16 – *As when they provoked Me. For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?* It was redeemed Israel (the **saved** Exodus Generation) that provoked the Lord in the wilderness.
 - 1) Under God’s leadership, Moses guided them in the desert, but instead of trusting the God who miraculously provided for them over and over again, the people complained about food and **water**. Exodus 15:22-17:7; Numbers 14:11, 22, 27
 - 2) As they traveled through the wilderness, God went before them as a pillar of cloud and fire, and later He was in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle in radiant **light** (Shekinah glory), but even with this observable presence of God the people continually rebelled. Acts 7:36-43
 - 3) Moses continued to **teach** them God’s Word, but the people refused to believe the Lord. Hebrews 3:19
 - 4) Finally, when they hardened their hearts in unbelief one **last** time, God condemned them to die in the wilderness. For 40 years they traversed a very difficult path in the heat and desert rocks of Sinai and had no rest. Joshua 5:6
 - d. Hebrews 3:17a – *And with whom was He angry for forty years?* God was **angry** with redeemed Israel. He was grieved with the Exodus Generation for 40 years (not eternity). Numbers 32:13, Deuteronomy 2:7
 - e. Hebrews 3:17b – ***Was it not with those who sinned...?*** The Exodus Generation sinned continually with their constant complaining, proving how little they actually trusted God. Finally, they crossed a line that barred them from enjoying rest. Numbers 14:1-11, 26-38
 - f. Hebrews 3:17c – *Whose bodies fell in the wilderness?* The Exodus Generation died in the desert outside the boundaries of the Promised Land. They never entered rest. Deuteronomy 2:14-18

- g. Hebrews 3:18 – *And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?*
- 1) God swore an **oath** of great anger against the disobedient Exodus Generation, which banned them from moving in and enjoying their inheritance, His rest, in the Promised Land. Numbers 32:10-13
 - 2) The rest God offered was the land of Canaan where they would have enjoyed the amazing privilege of living as God’s **special** nation under His blessing. Deuteronomy 7:22-24; Joshua 21:44, 23:1-3
 - 3) All God asked was that the Israelites **believe** Him and willingly move forward by faith (obey). Deuteronomy 6:1-3, 7:12-15
- h. Hebrews 3:19 – *So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Not believing God was their real problem. This was the same real **danger** the recipients of this letter were facing. Would they stop believing God and regress into Judaistic legalism?*
- 1) This, sadly, is the résumé of many believers. All too often Christians refuse to walk by faith. We’d rather walk by sight, by common sense, and/or by our **own** effort. All these equate to the sin of unbelief. Proverbs 3:5-6, Jeremiah 9:23, Romans 14:23, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 3:1-5
 - 2) The Exodus Generation was not able to enter God’s rest because of **doubt** in God’s ability fight and win against their enemies. Their faithless rebellion culminated at Kadesh-Barnea in Numbers 14 at the conclusion of the spy mission. Deuteronomy 1:21-38

C. Hebrews 4:1-16 – A challenge presented to enter God’s rest through trust

1. Hebrews 4:1-10 – The promised blessing of enjoying God’s rest is attainable. Believers experience God’s rest as they daily **rely** on Him as taught in His Word. Failure to trust the Lord is a sin that keeps believers from entering God’s rest.
 - a. Hebrews 4:1a – ***Therefore, let us fear...*** The word *therefore* **ties** this warning back to chapter 3. Chapter 3 teaches that without losing one’s salvation it is possible to stray from Christ (Heb. 3:1-6) by refusing to actively trust the Lord (Heb. 3:7-19).
 - b. Hebrews 4:1b – ***Therefore, let us fear...*** What should a believer in Christ **fear**?
 - 1) God’s rest in life is absolutely **vital** to a believer’s spiritual growth and usefulness. Therefore, the author calls his readers to fear coming short of the promise of God’s rest. Hebrews 4:11
 - 2) The word *fear* PHOBEO implies we ought to be found frightened. We ought to be frightened at the thought of missing out on God’s promised rest through a **lack** of faith. John 5:40
 - 3) The Christian life was not meant to be a life of drudgery or of restless failure. It was meant to be an **abundant** life. John 10:10, 17:3

- 4) We need to actively **rely** on the Lord and His promises; to fall short is to deprive ourselves of vital rest. Isaiah 40:28-31, Jeremiah 17:5-9
- c. Hebrews 4:1c – *Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come **short** of it.* Canaan was the rest the Exodus Generation did not claim. Likewise, it would be a spiritual tragedy for us to miss out on Christ’s promised rest.
- 1) For ancient Israel, peace, prosperity, and blessing from God were at stake both nationally and individually if they failed to **claim** God’s rest.
 - 2) Had Israel **believed** God, entered the land, removed the pagans, lived under the Mosaic Law and in fellowship with God, they would have enjoyed rest in Canaan. Deuteronomy 7:12-15
 - 3) Throughout history most of the time Israel did not believe God and do what God said. As a **result**, they repeatedly forfeited God’s rest.
 - 4) The point of this warning to us today is to believe God’s Word and experience spiritual rest here and **now** as we live life under the sun.
- d. Hebrews 4:2a – *For indeed we have had good news preached to us...* The writer of Hebrews reminded his readers they had the good news concerning **rest** preached to them.
- 1) The good news preached to the Exodus Generation was the same **good** news we have today.
 - 2) The good news the author was talking about is not the good news about our eternal salvation but rather the good news about **rest** for our lives here and now. John 16:33, Romans 8:6, Philippians 4:7
 - 3) Through Jesus Christ’s work on the cross, God has provided **everything** necessary for us to be able to live a life of restful dependence and fruitfulness. 2 Peter 1:2-4
 - a) We are **complete** in Christ; God has provisioned us with all we need for successful Christian living. Ephesians 3:1, 18-20, Colossians 2:2-3, 6-10a
 - b) Romans 6 says that at the point of salvation we died with Christ to sin and rose again to newness of life. In our newness of life, we are now **dead** to sin and alive to God. God wants us to live in this truth by faith.
 - c) Because of the fact that we are no longer under obligation to the sin nature (Rom. 8:12-13), we have the freedom to cease from me-centered efforts (*it is no longer I who live*) and **present** ourselves to Christ so that He can freely live through us. John 15:4-5; Galatians 5:16, 22-23
 - d) Galatians 2:20 – *I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by **faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

- e) Presenting ourselves to God is equivalent to keeping in step with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4, Gal. 5:16). When we keep in step with the Holy Spirit, Christ can actively **produce** His righteousness through us, and we rest from our human efforts. John 15:4-5, Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6
 - f) Similarly, when we are in the **yoke** with Christ, He does the major work of pulling the load while we keep in step with Him. Matthew 11:29-30
- 4) Just as the Exodus Generation failed to enter God's rest, after Joshua died other generations of Israel **also** missed out on God's rest.
- a) In the same way, we might miss out on this rest if we do not **daily** continue to believe God and trust His promises. Colossians 3:15
 - b) If we reject God's provisions for our rest, in essence we are repeating the Exodus Generation **error** by saying, "I can do this on my own." Galatians 3:1-3
 - c) When we try to obey and please God in our **own** strength, we do not rest. Instead of resting we strive, fret and worry. Philippians 3:3, Luke 10:38-42
- e. Hebrews 4:2b – *For indeed we have had good news preached to us, **just as they also...***
Numbers 14:7-9
- 1) Moses preached good **news** to the Exodus Generation.
 - a) Exodus 3:16-17 – *...The God of your fathers [said], 'I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. ...I **will** bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt... to a land flowing with milk and honey'.*
 - b) Deuteronomy 7:13 – *He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground...the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He **swore** to your forefathers to give you.*
 - c) Deuteronomy 7:14 – *You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female **barren** among you or among your cattle.*
 - d) Deuteronomy 7:15 – *The Lord will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful **diseases** of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.*
 - 2) Israel was invited to enter and enjoy God's rest and then to keep on enjoying it as they persevered by faith in God and His Word **day** by day. Sadly, when the time came to possess the land, Israel refused to believe God's power and promises. Numbers 13-14
 - 3) Let's take the time to review Israel's **failure** to believe the good news and enter God's rest.
 - a) Numbers 13:27 – All spies who returned from the spying mission agreed the Promised Land was very **fruitful**, flowing with milk and honey.

- b) Numbers 13:28 – Regretfully, 10 of the 12 spies gave a bad report. They said Israel could **not** possibly enter God’s inheritance rest because of the strength of the enemy, *“The people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large.”*
- c) Numbers 13:30 – Caleb refuted their report by reminding the people of Israel of God’s good news message: *“We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will **surely** overcome it.”*
- d) Numbers 13:32-33 – Caleb’s exhortation to believe God and possess the land was rejected. The 10 spies exaggerated saying, *“The land through which we have gone in spying out is a land that **devours** its inhabitants; and all the peoples ...are men of great size.”*
- e) Numbers 14:1-4 – The bad report of the 10 spies completely dispirited the congregation with unbelief. Instead of trusting God’s promised victory to enter and find rest, they **cried**, grumbled and moved away from the Lord (committed apostasy).
- f) While Moses and Aaron interceded for them, Joshua once again preached **good news** to the revolting crowd. He exhorted them to trust God and enter the land.
- (i) Numbers 14:7-8 – *“The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and **give** it to us.”*
- (ii) Numbers 14:9 – *“Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the **Lord** is with us; do not fear them.”*
- g) Numbers 14:10-11 – As Joshua preached, the rebellious congregation of Israel decided to **stone** their leaders. At this critical juncture, the Lord personally intervened to stop the evil plans of Israel.
- h) Numbers 14:12-21 – Moses’ intercessory prayer **saved** the Exodus Generation from immediate destruction, but even so they lost out on rest.
- i) Numbers 14:22-25 – God judged the Exodus Generation for constantly drifting away from His Word in unbelief and ultimately hardening their hearts. They refused to trust God even though they had **seen** all His glorious miracles in Egypt.
- (i) Numbers 14:22 – *“Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the **test** these ten times and have not listened to My voice...”*
- (ii) Numbers 14:23 – *“Shall by no means see the land, which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me **see** it.”*

- j) Numbers 14:26-35 – Because the Israelites were God’s redeemed people, God continued to meet their basic **needs** of food and water, yet they wasted away as they circled aimlessly for 40 years.
- k) Numbers 14:36-37 – God immediately punished the 10 spies who gave bad reports. They **died** of “*a plague before the Lord.*”
- 4) Joshua 1:1-9 – Later after the **children** and grandchildren of the Exodus Generation finally entered the Land, Israel trusted the Lord. Under Joshua’s leadership they entered God’s rest during their earthly lives by fighting battles.
- 5) Psalm 95:7b-8a – Years later King David continued to preach the **good news** of the accessibility of God’s rest to ensuing generations, saying, “*Today if you would hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.*” David stated that rest was still available to them right then.
- f. Hebrews 4:2c – But the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. The good news that was preached to the Israelites of the Exodus Generation did not **profit** them simply because they did not believe it.
 - 1) Remember that good news in this context is related to sanctification not justification (initial salvation). In contrast to the unbelief of the Exodus Generation, the Hebrew Christians needed to believe God’s **promises** so they could enjoy His rest on a daily basis. Psalm 107
 - 2) It is still the same today. In order for the good news concerning spiritual rest to profit us, we must **believe** it. Hearing the good news is not enough; we must by faith appropriate this good news in order to enjoy rest in the present. Galatians 5:22, 6:8b
- g. Hebrews 4:3 – This offer to enter God’s rest by faith is for every generation, including the Church Age. The question is: Will you by faith obediently **accept** His offer to rest or not?
 - 1) Hebrews 4:3a – For we who have believed enter that rest... Christians who daily live by faith are in the **process** of rest today.
 - a) In obedience, Joshua’s generation entered God’s rest by faith and little by little conquered **more** and more of the Promised Land. Exodus 23:27-33
 - b) Some of Israel’s descendants continued to **live** by faith, and thereby maintained their rest, while others did not.
 - c) The book of Judges chronicles the successes and failures of subsequent generations to believe God and **rest**.
 - d) As saints, we entered Christ’s rest at salvation, but in order to maintain and continually enjoy the ongoing rest of fellowship we must by faith fight the spiritual **battles** we face on a daily basis.

- 2) Hebrews 4:3b – *...just as He has said, “As I swore in My wrath, they shall **not** enter My rest.”* The writer of Hebrews quoted Psalm 95:11, which was a judgment against the Exodus Generation.
- a) God said the Exodus Generation who heard but did not believe the good news of promised rest in Canaan would not **enter** His rest.
 - b) Because of their faithless disobedience, God did not **allow** them to enter and enjoy His rest.
- 3) Hebrews 4:3c – *...although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.* After God created a perfect world, He rested because the world was **complete** and ready for man to enjoy.
- a) Lest we doubt this rest is truly available to us today, the writer asserted the fact that God Himself has been resting since the creation of our world. He announced this rest in the book of **Genesis**.
 - b) God’s rest does not mean God does **nothing**.
 - c) God’s rest in Genesis 2:1-3 means that in relation to His project of creating the world, God is not presently fretting, anxious, trying harder or stressed. Creation was completed. Therefore, it is now time to **enjoy** what was finished.
 - d) In a sense, from the beginning, mankind in general, and Israel in particular, has largely rejected God’s announced rest. In the case of the Exodus Generation, God took away the chance to rest altogether and disciplined His unbelieving **children**.
 - e) Here the writer warned us all not to fall short of God’s rest through unbelief. Rest is available for you to **enjoy** if you will learn to live by faith, but like the Exodus Generation, it is possible to miss out on this rest altogether.
Romans 1:17, Hebrews 10:38
- h. Hebrews 4:4-6 – God prohibited the Exodus Generation from entering His rest because of their shameful unbelief. Although there was rest prepared for the Exodus Generation, they **never** got to enjoy it.
- 1) Hebrews 4:4 – *For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.”* The **pattern** for entering God’s rest was established during the creation week. Hebrews 4:10
 - a) God **finished** His work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh.
Genesis 1:1-31
 - b) On the seventh day God did not say, “And there was evening and there was morning the **seventh** day.” God left the Sabbath day open-ended, implying that the seventh day goes on and on. Genesis 2:1-3

- 2) Hebrews 4:5 – And again in this [passage], *“They shall not enter My rest.”* The writer reminded his readers of what he already quoted in verse 3 of this passage, *“They shall not enter **My** rest.”*
 - a) Christ is the Provider of rest. First, He **offers** rest in our salvation. *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”* Matthew 11:28
 - b) Then He extends the offer of rest to believers when He adds, *“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR **SOULS**.”* Matthew 11:29
 - c) This second offer of rest for the **believer** is what the Exodus Generation missed and what you also might miss if you do not walk by ongoing faith in Christ.
 - d) A life driven by the arrogant **pride** of ego is the opposite of resting in the Lord. Self-reliance will result in frustration and defeat. Hebrews will teach us that without faith it is impossible to please God. Isaiah 40:31, 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, Hebrews 11:6
- 3) Hebrews 4:6a – *Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it...* God’s promise of rest remains open to those saints who will **continue** to believe in God on a daily basis just as they initially believed in Him for salvation. Colossians 2:6
 - a) Sadly, the Exodus Generation did not enter God’s rest because they did not start going to **battle** against their enemies when God told them to do so.
 - b) Therefore, the Exodus Generation lived and died in the **desert**. They never even tasted the sweet grapes, drank the milk or ate the honey of the Promised Land.
- 4) Hebrews 4:6b – *And those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience.* The Exodus Generation was **disobedient**.
 - a) Their disobedience in moving ahead was the direct result of their failure to **trust** God’s power and promises to defeat their enemies.
 - b) In like manner, the Hebrew Christians reading this letter needed to persevere in confidence and **hope** in the Lord and not go back to some form of Judaism. If they would walk by faith, they too would enter and enjoy a faith-rest life. Hebrews 10:38-39
- i. Hebrews 4:7-9 – These Hebrew Christians had the **chance** to enjoy a life of restful dependence on the Lord just as was offered to the Exodus Generation.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:7a – *He again fixes a certain day, “Today...”* By quoting from Psalm 95:7-8, the author of Hebrews taught that even today in the **Church** Age rest could still be appropriated by faith.
 - 2) Hebrews 4:7b – *...saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, “**Today** if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”*

- a) David preached the good news of rest to his generation even though most of **Israel** before him, the generations that followed Joshua in particular, failed to persistently enjoy to the full the benefits of their inheritance rest.
 - b) **Obedience** to the command to rest is still required today. This rest has to be daily appropriated by faith.
- 3) Hebrews 4:7c – *Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.* The readers were bluntly challenged to not **harden** their hearts against God’s call to rest. The author was applying Psalm 95:7-8 to their situation.
- 4) Hebrews 4:8 – *For if Joshua had given them rest, [David] would not have spoken of another [ALLOS] day after that.* David’s command to rest so many years later showed that ever since the **time** of the Exodus Generation, rest continued to be offered to each generation.
- a) A paraphrase of this verse could read: For if Joshua had given them rest, David would not have afterward repeated the command of **another** (ALLOS, another of the same kind or type) day of rest.
 - b) Though Joshua’s generation inherited the Land, Israel did not consistently **maintain** rest in the land as is witnessed in the book of Judges.
 - c) **David** would not have called his generation to rest had Israel maintained their rest.
 - d) This teaches that the peace found in maintaining a faith-rest life by means of implicit trust in God and His promises is an **individual** choice that each generation must make.
 - e) Sadly, as in Israel’s example, most of God’s children failed to enter His rest. Child of God, don’t you fall **short!**
- 5) Hebrews 4:9 – *So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.* The author summarized his teachings up to this point stating, “Child of God, you **can** rest, and that rest is available today and now.”
- a) The reference to the **Sabbath** makes clear that the rest the author is talking about is a rest that had already been established by God since the creation of the world and not a future eschatological rest.
 - b) The author’s reference here, and also in verses 3-4, to God’s rest on the Sabbath is **not** a reference to future rest. In fact, the author is intentionally speaking to the contrary.
 - c) The author specifically did not want us to get mixed up in our thinking and consider his discussions here a **future** issue of eschatological rest. He is teaching about a Sabbath type of rest, a rest already established by God since the creation of the world.

- d) The author's entire discussion in this passage is not about future rest (Rev. 21:6) but about rest offered or retracted **TODAY**, depending on the reader's willingness to hear His invitation to rest by faith or not.
- (i) The Sabbath observance of Israel was modeled after God's rest. One day a week the Israelites were required to rest from their **work** just as God rested from His work.
 - (ii) As Church Age saints we are not required to remember the Sabbath, but we are required, as an everyday affair, to cease from our human **striving** and efforts and to live by His divine power. Galatians 3:2-3
- e) God's creation rest therefore **remains** to be appropriated even today in the Church Age. Hebrews 11:39-40
- j. Hebrews 4:10 – ***For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.*** This verse **unveils** some practical ramifications of rest.
- 1) *Works* ERGON means endeavors, deeds, actions, or that which results from industry. The author therefore taught his readers to cease from their own **human** toiling and efforts and to enter into God's rest. Jeremiah 17:5-8, Galatians 3:3
 - 2) To enter God's rest means we cease from **our** labors and striving in a way that is reflective of how God ceased from His labors on the seventh day. Genesis 2:1-3, Luke 10:41-42
 - a) It was not **their** own personal rest (laziness) into which they were to enter but rather God's rest; a rest affirmed from the creation of the world.
 - b) God was not tired after the six days of Creation. He ceased His work simply because there was nothing more to **add** to it. He had finished His work and all of it was good. Genesis 2:1-3
 - c) From a **seated** position on the throne, God now manages with joy and satisfaction what He has already made. Isaiah 40:28-31
 - 3) After Jesus finished His work of salvation on the cross (Jn. 19:30) and was resurrected, He also rested by **sitting** down at the right hand of God. Now He is waiting "*for His enemies to be made a footstool for His feet in order to rule in the midst of [His] enemies.*" Psalm 110:1-2
 - 4) What does this mean practically for the **child** of God?
 - a) As believers, we are by faith to enter in and participate in the triumphs of Christ's **labor** accomplished on our behalf. On the cross, Christ took care of the sin issue once for all. God wants us to rest by faith in Christ's work on our behalf. Colossians 2:6-11
 - (i) Romans 6:9-10 – *knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is **never** to die again...For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.*

- (ii) Romans 6:11 – *Even so **consider** yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*
 - (iii) Romans 6:12-14a – *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin...but **present** yourselves to God...For sin shall not be master over you.*
 - b) In Christ we have all we **need** for life and godliness. Romans 10:2-4; 1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:3, 2:4-7; 2 Peter 1:3-4
 - c) Through the person of the Holy Spirit, Christ **lives** in us. We are not to try to do on our own that which only Christ can accomplish. Galatians 2:20, 3:3, 5:25
 - d) We are not to try to be righteous in our **own** strength and efforts. We are to depend on Christ to live His life in and through us. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6, 12:9-10; Ephesians 3:17, 20; Philippians 3:2-11
 - e) We are to depend on Christ for **everything**. This includes our strength, guidance in life, protection, solutions to problems, and even the results of our labors. Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:9; Jeremiah 17:5-7; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2:1-5
 - f) Because Jesus Christ **finished** the work on the cross (“*it is finished*” John 19:30), we now have access to the throne of grace to find mercy and help in our time of need. Hebrews 4:16
2. Hebrews 4:11 – The Hebrew Christians were encouraged to be **diligent** to enter God’s rest because to not do so would be to open themselves up for tragic failure and sin.
- a. Hebrews 4:11a – *Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest. Be diligent* SPOUDAZO means to be eager, to be busy, to make every effort, to strive, to take pains or to earnestly **endeavor**.
 - 1) The writer exhorted these believers to make every conscious effort to enter God’s rest. He was referring to **active** faith in God’s promises and truth as found in the scriptures. 2 Peter 1:3-4
 - 2) On the negative side, we are not to be disobedient by unbelief like the many generations of Israelites. Not only will we miss out on rest now in time, but we will also lose **reward** in the future. 2 Peter 1:10-11
 - b. Hebrews 4:11b – *So that no one will **fall**, through following the same example of disobedience.* The readers needed to avoid the negative example of the Exodus Generation that died in the desert without ever enjoying God’s rest. 1 Corinthians 10:1-14
 - 1) The point of this section is continual **day** by day, moment by moment faith in God throughout our entire life and service and not just quickly trusting God when problems arise. Romans 1:17

- 2) This is about the **way** we live life in time, doing God's work from a position of rest. To do God's work successfully we must learn to trust His enabling power.
 - 3) We must stop our self-trust and cease reliance on our own abilities. We are to learn to fully rely moment by moment on **His** enabling grace as shown in God's Word. Jeremiah 17:5-8
3. Hebrews 4:12-13 – It is disastrous for you as a believer to defy God's Word concerning your rest. If you disobey God's Word, His Word will go on the offensive. God's Word will cut open and **expose** your flawed thinking.
- a. Hebrews 4:12a – *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing.* Don't defy God's Word; it is a **weapon**.
 - 1) *The Word of God is living.* A literal Greek translation would read, "Living indeed [is] the Word of God." John 1:1, 14; Ephesians 5:6, 6:17; I Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Revelation 19:13
 - 2) *The Word of God is...**active**.* In Greek the word active ENERGES carries the idea of being "full of result-causing energy." Jeremiah 23:29
 - 3) *The Word of God is...**sharper than any two edged sword**.*
 - a) God's Word is sharper than a double-edged sword MACHAIRA. The machaira sword of the Roman army was a short sword designed to pierce and wound the opponent with quick straight jabs.
 - b) As a sword, God's Word cuts straight through to the heart. God **knows** in whom we are really trusting. 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalms 44:21, 17:3
 - c) God's two-edged sword cuts out the bad and cleans up the good in our lives. Nothing **escapes** His blade. Ephesians 6:17
 - 4) *The Word of God is...piercing.* It will penetrate and **convict**.
 - a) The verb **pierce** DIKNEOMAI is a compound word that comes from DIA through and HIKANOS to reach or attain. The idea is that God's Word will cut through barriers in order to precisely incise where it needs to go.
 - b) Just like the Exodus Generation, you cannot **rebel** against God's Word without suffering the consequences. God gave that generation an oath that they would not enter the Promised Land.
 - c) After God gave this oath, the Israelites of the Exodus Generation defied God's edict by going in and fighting anyway and they suffered the consequences. They were cut **down** by the Canaanites. Numbers 14:28-45
 - b. Hebrews 4:12b – *And piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow...* God's sword is able to **separate** good and bad motivations, good and bad emotions, true and false ideas, and anything hidden from others and even ourselves. 1 Corinthians 4:3-5

- c. Hebrews 4:12c – *And able to **judge** the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* The heart of man is a deep place; who can know it?
- 1) When it comes to penetrating deep into the **soul** and spirit, God’s Word inserts its blade at the precise intersection between the joints and marrow. 2 Peter 1:19
 - 2) Jeremiah 17:9-10 – *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? **I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.***
 - 3) God’s Word is designed to reveal **true** motivations, and when necessary, rebuke the restless heart of the untrusting saint. 1 Corinthians 4:5
- d. Hebrews 4:13 – The writer reminded the readers that since the Lord Jesus stands behind His **Word**, they were directly accountable to God.
- 1) And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare... Nothing is veiled from God’s omniscience and omnipresence. You cannot **deceive** God. Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
 - 2) *To the **eyes** of Him with whom we have to do. God is the Judge and Reviewer of the intentions of our hearts.* We are fully accountable to Him. 1 Corinthians 4:3-5, 2 Timothy 4:1, 1 Peter 4:5
4. Hebrews 4:14-16 – The author of the book of Hebrews encouraged his readers onward. Our high priest Jesus won in every **test** He ever faced. He can sympathize with us in our trials to believe God and rest. Let’s go to His gracious throne for help to gain the rest we need.
- a. Hebrews 4:14a – *Therefore, since we have a great high priest...* As our high **priest**, Jesus understands our weaknesses. Jesus is God and great beyond all comparison. Hebrews 1:2, 2:17, 7:24-27
 - b. Hebrews 4:14b – *Who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God...* Jesus is our high priest who mercifully represents us before our heavenly **Father**. From His position at the right hand of God, Jesus graciously represents us. Romans 8:34, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 7:25
 - c. Hebrews 4:14c – *Therefore... let us hold fast our confession.* This verse encourages us to hold tightly to what we say we believe. The readers were challenged to live in a manner commensurate with what they **said** they believed. Hebrews 3:6, 14; 10:23
 - 1) Our confession HOMOLOGIA is our statement of allegiance and the verbal acknowledgement of what we **believe**.
 - 2) These Hebrew Christians should have firmly rested in their comprehension of and confidence in Jesus. The opportunity to rest in His ministry for us is the hope-giving significance of His priesthood. To **drift** from Him would be completely irrational.
 - d. Hebrews 4:15 – The author reminded his readers that they had a faithful high priest in the **Person** of the ascended Lord Jesus.

- 1) Hebrews 4:15a – *For we do not have a high **priest** who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses...* Jesus can sympathize with us.
 - a) **Sympathize** SUMPATHEO being in the aorist tense, active voice, and infinitive mood implies emphatic and absolute sympathy.
 - b) Being fully **human** and having lived life here below, Jesus can entirely sympathize with us in regard to our weaknesses. Hebrews 2:17-18, 5:2
- 2) Hebrews 4:15b – *But One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.* Though Jesus faced temptations just as we do, Jesus never committed any **sin**. Hebrews 7:26-27, 1 Peter 2:22
 - a) In Luke 4:1-11 the devil tempted Jesus to **not** believe God’s words, plans and promises.
 - b) When Jesus faced the cross, He faced His greatest **trial** ever. As a human, He was tempted to not give Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, especially understanding all that it entailed. Luke 22:41-42, Hebrews 5:7
 - c) Jesus had no sin nature or personal sins, yet because He was a true human being He can perfectly sympathize with our **frail** human tendencies. Psalm 22:24, Hebrews 5:8
- e. Hebrews 4:16 – Finally, in view of Jesus as our great High Priest, we should draw near and **pray** with confidence. Romans 8:4, Hebrews 7:24-25
 - 1) Hebrews 4:16a – **Therefore** *let us draw near...* It is because of the priesthood of Christ that the author of Hebrews could beckon to his readers to draw near to the throne of grace. Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18
 - 2) Hebrews 4:16b – *Therefore let us draw **near**...* The verb draw near PROOSERCHOMAI is in the present tense, middle voice, and subjunctive mood. While this is not a command, it is an invitation to the hearts of the readers to come near, or approach, His throne. Ephesians 3:12
 - 3) Hebrews 4:16c – *...with **confidence** to the throne of grace.* The concept of confidence PARRRESIA is freedom and openness, especially in speech. In other words, you can humbly cry out for exactly what you need without worrying about perfection in your words. Romans 8:26-27, 1 Peter 5:7
 - 4) Hebrews 4:16d – *...with **confidence** to the throne of grace.* We are encouraged to draw near with confidence and boldness in our petitions because of God’s grace. Because of grace, there is freedom to speak boldly and honestly before God’s throne. Romans 8:34
 - 5) Hebrews 4:16e – *So that we may receive **mercy** and find grace to help in our time of need.*
 - a) When we draw near *in our time of need* (which is virtually **all** the time), God provides mercy and grace to help us. John 15:5, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

- b) This should encourage you as a reader of Hebrews. God's throne is not characterized by terror, anger, judgment or rejection but by grace **because Jesus Christ has purchased your redemption and reconciliation with God.**
Romans 8:31-39; Ephesians 1:7, 2:4-7
- c) The author used the term throne of grace to indicate that God's throne is characterized by free and unwarranted favor for His people **based** on Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. Romans 5:1-2, 8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13

IV. Hebrews 5:1-7:28 – Jesus Our High Priest Belongs to a Greater Order of Priests than the Aaronic priesthood

A. Hebrews 5:1-10 – The high priesthood of Jesus is superior to Aaron's priesthood

1. Hebrews 5:1-4 – In order for his readers to understand how Jesus is superior to Aaron, the author explained the **office** of the Old Testament high priest.
 - a. Hebrews 5:1a – *For every high priest taken from among men...* Every high priest had to be **human**. Exodus 40:12-16, Jeremiah 33:18
 - 1) No **angel** could serve as high priest.
 - 2) Since the high priest was human, he had certain limitations. Being a human from Adam he would be a **sinner**.
 - b. Hebrews 5:1b – A high priest *...is appointed on behalf of men in things pertaining to God.* A high priest represented God to mankind while at the same time offering sacrifices to God for mankind. Leviticus 1-7
 - 1) In order to qualify for service as a high priest in Israel, the individual had to be appointed by **God**. He had to come from the Levite tribe and specifically from Aaron's family. Aaron was Israel's first high priest. Exodus 40:12-15, Numbers 3:5 10
 - 2) The high priest served as the top man in the Levitical priesthood, making him the **highest** authority over Israel's religious life. Numbers 18:1-2, 6-7
 - c. Hebrews 5:1c – *...In order to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.* By offering sacrifices, a high priest would **atone** for the sins committed by the people. This was his primary responsibility. He would also offer God special gifts (peace and fellowship offerings) on behalf of the people.
 - d. Hebrews 5:2-3 – By God's design high priests were to deal **tenderly** with both the ignorant and the wayward they served.
 - 1) Hebrews 5:2 – *He can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness.* Since high priests were human beings, they were fraught with frailty. This made them empathetic with the people.
 - a) Since the high priest had his **own** personal human weaknesses, he was able to gently correct the ignorant and pilot the misguided. Hebrews 3:10

- b) As a human, a high priest was **suitably** qualified to deal compassionately with both the misguided and the ignorant.
 - (i) The **misguided** PLANAO speaks of one who is led astray or made to wander. Isaiah 53:6, Matthew 18:12-13, John 10:1-8
 - (ii) The **ignorant** AGNOEO speaks of one who does not have understanding. It could also refer to someone who willfully remained ignorant.
- 2) Hebrews 5:3 –The high priest was obligated by God to **serve** the people.
 - a) Hebrews 5:3a – *And because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people...* The high priest was responsible to **offer** sacrifices for the sins of the people.
 - b) Hebrews 5:3b – *...so also for himself.* Not only was the high priest responsible to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, the high priest was also a sinner. Therefore, he had to also offer sacrifices for his own sins.
- e. Hebrews 5:4 – *And no one takes the honor to himself, but receives it when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.* The office of high priest was not taken, rather God gave it. Aaron was called by God to be Israel’s first high priest. Exodus 28:1, Numbers 16:40, 2 Chronicles 26:18
- 2. Hebrews 5:5-10 – The author applied the previous principles concerning the high priesthood of Aaron to the high priesthood of Jesus. Jesus was **both** human and appointed by God, making him qualified in those ways to be a high priest.
 - a. Hebrews 5:5-6 – The author quoted two Old Testament portions from the Psalms concerning Christ’s priesthood. These passages show that Jesus qualified for the honorable **position** of high priest. Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4
 - 1) Hebrews 5:5a – God the Father established Jesus’ qualifications as high priest when He stated, *“You are my **Son.**”* Hebrews 2:17
 - 2) Of course, as we have seen in this passage, in order to serve mankind as a high priest, Jesus had to be fully **human**.
 - a) Jesus was truly unique in His human **birth**. Hebrews 1:1-14
 - b) Psalm 2:7 confirmed the unique humanity of Jesus. *“Today I have begotten you,”* can be understood as, *“Today I have made you to be **born.**”*
 - c) Christ was God’s uniquely-born Son in both His physical birth and later in His resurrection from the **dead**.
 - (i) The word begotten GENNAO was used in scripture to speak of Christ’s unique physical birth through a **virgin**. John 1:14, 3:16
 - (ii) *Begotten* was also used to speak of Christ’s unique standing as resurrected. He was the firstborn from among the **dead**. Acts 13:30-35, Colossians 1:18

- 3) Hebrews 5:6 – In order to be a legitimate high priest, Jesus needed to be appointed. Psalm 110:4 confirms that Jesus did not name Himself as priest; **God** appointed Him. God declared that He was a priest forever. Hebrews 7:24
- a) Psalm 110:4 predicted Jesus Christ being appointed as high priest. The Psalmist said Christ would never stop being a **priest** and that His priesthood would be from the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 7:1-28
 - b) Since Christ was not a **Levite**, He did not qualify to serve as a priest in the Levitical priesthood.
 - (i) This was not a problem for God since God qualified Him as a high priest under a higher **order** of priesthood.
 - (ii) **Christ** became a king-priest after the order of Melchizedek. Genesis 14:18, Hebrews 7:17
 - c) Everlasting priesthood was something the Aaronic priesthood could not achieve. As priests **died**, they were constantly replaced. Hebrews 7:23
 - d) As God's firstborn from among the dead, Christ lives forever directly in the presence of God. He will never need to be **replaced** as high priest. Hebrews 1:3, 7:24-25
- b. Hebrews 5:7 –The fact that God listened to Jesus' passionate intercession shows that His priesthood is effectual. His passionate intercession shows how He is empathetic towards us in ways the Aaronic priests could never **express**.
- 1) Hebrews 5:7a – *In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications...* While He was here on earth, Jesus earnestly **pled** with God for help and was heard. Luke 6:12-17
 - a) **Prayers** DEESIS likely speak of the petitions that Christ made on His own behalf. The word prayer speaks of petitions from deep personal or urgent need. His prayer in the garden was this type of heart-felt personal appeal. Matthew 26:36-46
 - b) **Supplication** HIKETERIA is a word in Greek that refers to the olive branch held out from the hand of a peacemaker. Supplication means earnestly seeking **peace** on behalf of others. This is what Jesus did in His prayer for the disciples and us in John 17.
 - 2) Hebrews 5:7b – *With loud crying and tears...* Christ shed **tears** and piercingly cried out when He petitioned the Father. As a high priest, Christ sincerely understands our desperate longings and is able to passionately intercede on our behalf. John 12:27, Luke 22:44
 - 3) Hebrews 5:7c – *And He was heard because of His piety.* Because of His personal **integrity**, God listened to Christ's intercessions. We can be sure Christ stands utterly approved before the throne of God on our behalf. Acts 2:22-24; 3:12-16

- c. Hebrews 5:8 – *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.* Even though Jesus was the Son of God, in His humanity He learned to **obey** by means of the suffering He experienced. Luke 9:22-23; John 8:28, 42, 49; 10:15-18
- 1) We learn to obey God by **suffering**. Through suffering we learn to more quickly look to Him in faith to make right choices and avoid wrong ones. Psalm 119:67, 71; Romans 8:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Galatians 6:7-8; 1 John 2:6
 - 2) As a human, Jesus learned to obey through the things He suffered and not through the easy times. Whereas we might get angry or depressed in suffering, Jesus persisted with **ongoing** confidence in God. He never sinned. Romans 5:2-5, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-9
 - 3) In His suffering, Jesus **passed** every test and proved to be an obedient and trustworthy son. He forever stands before God as the perfect Person to serve as our high priest.
- d. Hebrews 5:9-10 – Jesus became our **perfect** high priest. Philippians 2:4-9
- 1) Hebrews 5:9a – *And having been **made perfect**...* Jesus Christ passed every test and requirement to qualify as our faithful high priest. He was completely obedient to the Father's will. Isaiah 53:9; John 17:4, 19:28; Romans 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22
 - 2) Hebrews 5:9b – *He became ...**the source** of eternal salvation.* Jesus is the Source (Author, Originator, or Captain) of eternal salvation (our justification). John 1:4, 3:16, 14:6, 11:25; Acts 3:15, 4:12
 - 3) Hebrews 5:9c – *He became **to all those who obey Him** the source of eternal salvation.* 1 Peter 4:17
 - a) This is **NOT** teaching works for salvation. Romans 3:27-28, 4:2-3, 6; 1 Corinthians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8-9
 - b) The Gospel is simply an offer of eternal salvation to anyone who will obey Christ's command to **believe** in Him. Matthew 11:28; John 3:36, 6:29; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 1:5, 16:25-26; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - c) Anyone who does not obey the Gospel, which commands us to believe in Christ **alone** for salvation, is condemned forever. John 3:16-18, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 2 Thessalonians 1:8
 - 4) Hebrews 5:10 – *Being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.* Modeled after the priesthood of Melchizedek and not Aaron, Jesus Christ is God's **choice** as the greatest high priest of all time. Psalm 110, Hebrews 7

Third warning: Hebrews 5:11-6:20 – The danger of dullness

B. Hebrews 5:11-14 – The author warned against the audience’s spiritual dullness

1. Hebrews 5:11a – *Concerning him* [Christ our high priest] *we have much to say*. There was a lot the readers needed to learn concerning the high priesthood of Christ.
 - a. Before expounding in detail on the priesthood of Christ in chapters 7 through 9, the author admonished his readers concerning their indifference toward Christ and His work.
 - b. It was imperative for the Hebrew Christians to understand the superiority of Christ’s Melchizedekian priesthood in order to be set free from their attraction to Judaism and its lesser priesthood.
 - c. A devaluation of the importance of Christ was at the heart of their spiritual failure. We will see in chapter 6 how it is impossible to progress in the Christian life until an appreciation for Christ and His work has been fully embraced. Colossians 2:1-11
2. Hebrews 5:11b – *And it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing*. In an effort to stop the apathy of these Hebrew Christians, the author took a detour. Sadly, the recipients of this letter needed to relearn some of the basics of the Christian faith.
 - a. It is a great tragedy to experience hearing loss. Although the readers of this letter had not experienced actual physical loss of hearing, they had become dull of hearing.
 - b. Dull NOTHROS is an adjective meaning lazy or slothful. This word is also translated in Hebrews 6:12 as *sluggish: so that you will not be sluggish* NOTHROS.
 - 1) The readers were disinterested in the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ. Like many believers today, they probably thought they had more important things to do than to learn some obscure doctrine.
 - 2) Their misplaced priorities were causing them confusion about cardinal truths like salvation, eternal security, the completed work of Christ, and the truth about the priesthood of Christ.
 - 3) Whether you believe it or not, devaluing these basic truths will cause progress in your Christian life to grind to a halt. Many today claim that doctrine is unimportant. The author of Hebrews strongly disagreed, teaching rather that ignorance is destructive.
3. Hebrews 5:12a – *For though by this time you ought to be teachers*. The author was distressed because while his readers should be teaching, they were actually forgetting and regressing in their faith. As lazy learners they were losing what they already knew.
4. Hebrews 5:12b – *You have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God...* These believers needed a crash course in elementary Bible doctrine, starting with the person and work of Christ (the Gospel). Acts 2:41-42
 - a. In the beginning they had a good doctrinal foundation. Hebrews 6:4-5, 7

- 1) At one time they had a **great** testimony of faith and good works. Hebrews 6:10
- 2) Previously they had also **suffered** persecution for their beliefs. Hebrews 10:32-34
- b. Therefore, the author lamented their need for someone to ...**teach** [them again] *the elementary principles*. Elementary STOICHEION are the basic components from which things are comprised.
 - 1) The Hebrew readers needed to go back to **basics** of the Christian faith.
 - 2) However, they did not need to go back and reestablish the foundations basic to **Judaism**, which is something they were being tempted to do.
- c. *The oracles* [LOGION] *of God* are the sayings or revelations of God. The oracles of God constitute the Old Testament. Without returning to Judaism, the Hebrew audience needed to relearn **basic** biblical truth.
5. Hebrews 5:12c – *And you have come to need milk and not solid food*. Having atrophied spiritually, they now required spiritual **milk** as if they were babies. They were no longer able to chew the solid food of the spiritually mature. John 4:31-38, 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, Hebrews 13:9-13
6. Hebrews 5:13a – *For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness*. These believers were no longer accustomed to eating **solid** food.
 - a. The Hebrew Christians had grown so spiritually lethargic they were no longer accustomed to getting into the **meat** of the Word.
 - b. These believers were not ready for the *word of righteousness*. The word of righteousness is synonymous to *solid food*. The word of righteousness was designed to strengthen them for righteous **living**.
 - c. In this passage, the solid food the writer referred to was the doctrine of the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ. The author wanted to teach his readers this solid foundational truth, but since they had become sluggish in their understanding, teaching was rather **difficult**.
7. Hebrews 5:13b – *For he is an infant*. Why couldn't they understand the priesthood of Christ and its importance for their lives?
 - a. The author said they had become like infants in the faith, unable to **eat** solid food.
 - b. The word *infant* NEPIOS is the word for a very young **child** and could even refer to a newborn baby.
8. Hebrews 5:14a – *But solid food is for the mature*. The first thing the author mentioned in relation to the mature was solid food.
9. Hebrews 5:14b – *Who because of practice*.... The mature person gets mature by practice. *Practice* EXIS means constant use.

- a. The mature believer is one who constantly consumes and effectively digests solid food. A mature believer **feeds** on the meat of the Word of God and constantly puts into practice what he learns. James 1:25
 - b. Romans 6 is a good example of this process. First a believer comes to know the truth (Rom. 6:6), then he counts on it (Rom. 6:11), and then he presents himself to God for service (Rom. 6:12-13). As a believer lives this way more and more, he becomes **mature**. 1 Peter 1:6-9
10. Hebrews 5:14c – *Have their **senses** trained...* Senses refers to one's perception, or ability to discern.
11. Hebrews 5:14d – *Have their senses **trained**...* Trained GUMNAZO is a participle meaning to work out or exercise.
- a. A participle in Greek is a **verb** that is altered (for example, yell to yelling) and can grammatically remain a very descriptive verb or adverb or it may become an adjective (**yelling** woman) or a noun (loud **yelling**).
 - b. The mature have senses that are exercised. Because of having exercised their senses, their perception is in good **shape**. Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:17; Philippians 1:9-11, 2:12-18, 4:8-9
12. Hebrews 5:14e – *Have their senses trained to **discern both good and evil**.* Discern DIAKRISIS speaks of distinguishing or deciding between two things.
- a. Because a mature believer has exercised senses, he is able to distinguish right from **wrong**. Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 2:7-16, Colossians 1:9-10
 - b. **Good** KALOS means beautiful, fine quality, honorable, useful or advantageous.
 - c. **Evil** KAKOS means below standard, bad, inferior, morally depraved, ugly, worthless, unskilled or wicked.
13. What can we say here?
- a. The Hebrew audience was lazy when it came to understanding biblical truth. For this reason, the Hebrew Christians were dull and childish. They languished, even becoming **unclear** on the person and work of Christ their Savior.
 - b. Like babies, they ingested milk only, not meat. Instead of becoming established through use of the Word, they **drifted** aimlessly.
 - c. What a sad commentary. Chapter 6 will reveal that a lackadaisical attitude creates **disaster** in the life of a believer.

C. Hebrews 6:1-3 – The author instructed the audience to move toward maturity

- 1. Hebrews 6:1a – *Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ.* In order to move on to maturity, the Hebrew believers needed to **leave** the elementary teaching about the Messiah.

- a. The word **leaving** APHIEMI means to send away or to leave alone. It is an aorist active participle in Greek, meaning, “Leave right **now**.”
 - b. The NET Bible translates this phrase this way: *Therefore, **we must progress beyond elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity.***
 - c. *Elementary* ARCHE refers to the beginning or starting point. It is that which comes **first**. The *elementary teaching about the Christ* is the teaching of the Old Testament that pointed to Messiah.
 - 1) This elementary **teaching** is not the same as the elementary principles of Christianity in Hebrews 5:12.
 - 2) In Hebrews 5:12 the word elementary STOICHEION speaks about the basic components of something, i.e., the basic **elements** of Christianity.
 - 3) Here in chapter six verse one the author referred to the beginning teaching concerning the Messiah. This was teaching that **every** God-fearing Israelite, every Hebrew saved or unsaved, would have had settled in his or her thinking from childhood.
 - 4) Although it was imperative for the Hebrew believers to know and understand both the beginning teaching about the Messiah and basic Christian doctrines, they needed to **move** on to maturity.
 - 5) In order to move on to maturity, the Hebrew believers needed to **do** two things:
 - a) They needed to **leave** the Old Testament teaching about the Messiah. Hebrews 6:1
 - b) They needed to grow up from only taking in the milk of the Word (the elemental components of Christianity) to being able to take in **solid** food. Hebrews 5:12-14
2. Hebrews 6:1b – *Let **us** press on to maturity.* Since unbelievers cannot be encouraged to mature, the readers were clearly saved.
 - a. The problem with the readers was not their salvation from sin’s penalty; it was their **daily** sanctification.
 - b. The author included himself in this admonition saying, “*Let **us** press on to maturity.*”
 - c. In Hebrews 3:1 the author called his readers holy brethren and in Hebrews 5:11-14 he told them they should already *be **teachers***.
 3. Hebrews 6:1c – *Let us **press on** to maturity.*
 - a. It is important to note that Hebrews 6:1-3 is one long sentence in Greek, with the main verb being found in the phrase, “*Let us **press on** to maturity.*”
 - b. **Press on** PHERO (present passive subjunctive) means to **move** something from one position to another.
 - 1) The verb is in the present tense, meaning the believers should move on **now**, today.

- 2) The verb is in the subjunctive mood, conveying a hopeful anticipation of **progress**.
 - 3) The verb is also in the passive voice, conveying the idea of allowing, or **letting**, this forward progress happen to them. 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:19, 23-24
4. Hebrews 6:1d – *Let us press on to **maturity*** TELEIOTES. In order to mature spiritually, the readers needed to get beyond the basics of the faith.
 - a. The phrase *press on to maturity means*, “Let’s **allow** ourselves to be carried forward toward spiritual completeness.”
 - 1) Spiritual growth comes from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, personal fellowship with God, learning God's **Word**, faith, testing, and application. Ephesians 4:12-15, 1 Peter 2:2, 2 Peter 3:14-18
 - 2) Spiritual maturity refers to progressive levels of spiritual **growth**. To mature you must spend large amounts of time walking by means of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:13, Philippians 3:12-14, 1 John 2:12-14
 - b. We will see that in order to *press on to maturity*, the Hebrew believers first needed to **leave** behind the *elementary teaching about the Christ*.
 5. Hebrews 6:1e – *Not laying again a foundation*. Not laying again is a present active participle in Greek conveying that in the process of pressing on to maturity, the Hebrew believers did not need to **lay** the groundwork of their Christian faith all over again.
 - a. In building a house, you must lay a foundation. But even though the foundation is necessary, you don’t keep working on it after it is laid. You move on to constructing the rest of the **house**.
 - b. The author included six foundational doctrines that did not need to be introduced **again**.
 - c. Most Jewish people would have understood these six doctrines from **childhood**, way before they became believers, and therefore they did not need to be reexamined.
 - d. For the Hebrew believers to return to these **basic** truths would have meant a step backwards in their growth in Christ.
 6. Hebrews 6:1f-3 – The author mentioned these six doctrines that were basic to Judaism. All of these doctrines were foundational truths taught in the Old Testament. The Hebrew believers needed to **stop** going over these doctrines and move on. 2 Timothy 3:15
 - a. Hebrews 6:1f – *Repentance from dead works*... Every Hebrew knew that the works the unsaved heathen did in their false religions were **dead** and that they needed to change their minds about such foolishness. Psalm 115:8, Jeremiah 10:1-8
 - b. Hebrews 6:1g – *Faith toward God*... This was not a **new** truth.
 - 1) **Faith** in God was a basic foundational doctrine in the Old Testament, for both salvation and godly living. Psalm 32:1-2, Isaiah 12:2, Jeremiah 17:5-8, Habakkuk 2:4
 - 2) There was no need to reestablish this doctrine. Even **unsaved** Israel would have recognized this basic doctrine taught from the Old Testament. 1 Peter 1:18-20

- c. Hebrews 6:2a – *Of instruction about **washings**...*
- 1) Since the word *washings* here is plural it **cannot** be speaking about the New Testament believer's baptism in water.
 - 2) *Washings* were connected to Old Testament Judaistic worship and **cleansing**. Exodus 30:19-21; Numbers 5:23, 19:7; Leviticus 1:9, 13:34, 54; Deuteronomy 21:6
 - 3) The Pharisees in Jesus' day had developed their own version of **rules** concerning washings. Matthew 15:1-2, Mark 7:1-8
 - 4) Whether Old Testament Mosaic laws or New Testament Pharisaic traditions, the rules about washings were **not** to be reapplied to the lives of the Hebrew Christians.
- d. Hebrews 6:2b – *And **laying on of hands**.*
- 1) The laying-on-of-hands ritual taught a principle of substitution in which the sins of the worshiper were symbolically transferred to an innocent **animal**, which was then killed to fulfill the death sentence against the sinner. Leviticus 1:3-5, 4:13-15, 16:20-22; 1 Peter 3:18
 - 2) Since Jesus Christ as the **Lamb** of God took away the sin of the world through His substitute sacrifice on the cross, there was no reason to go back and reestablish this substitution doctrine of the laying on of hands. John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 2:9, 1 Peter 3:18
- e. Hebrews 6:2c – *And the resurrection of the **dead**...* This truth was understood in the Old Testament. Matthew 22:31-32, Acts 2:24-32
- 1) The conquering of our age-old enemy death was taught in the Old Testament. Abraham, for example, believed in the resurrection of the **dead**. Hebrews 11:19
 - 2) The fact that there is life beyond the **grave** carried over from the Old Testament and into the preaching of the apostles as a foundation of the Christian faith. Daniel 12:2
 - 3) The Hebrew readers did not need to go back and rebuild this doctrine since virtually every **saved** Israelite should have understood it well. Exodus 3:6; 1 Samuel 2:6; Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:8-11, 17:15, 49:9; Isaiah 26:19
- f. Hebrews 6:2d – *And **eternal judgment**...* Eternal judgment was also understood in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 27:26; Job 4:20; Psalm 1:6, 9:5; Jeremiah 11:3; Daniel 12:2; Obadiah 1:10
- 1) Luke 16:19-31 – When Jesus taught about the rich man and Lazarus, He did not need to explain about the **fiery** judgment of the wicked, since God-fearing Israelites already knew this doctrinal information. Matthew 24:46, John 5:25-29, Acts 23:8
 - 2) For the Hebrew believers to mature they did **not** need to go back and reestablish the doctrine of eternal judgment, since it was already fundamentally understood. Acts 13:38-41, Revelation 20:15

- g. Hebrews 6:3 – *And this* [leave these doctrines behind and move on to maturity] *we will **do**, if God permits.*
- 1) Although it is imperative believers know basic truth, they must increasingly move beyond basic truths in order to **grow** and not drift.
 - 2) The Hebrew readers were in **danger** of missing the advanced truths concerning the Christ and therefore losing out on the rest and maturity available for the Christian life. Philippians 3:8-10
 - 3) Like the Exodus Generation, the readers were close to being stuck in a desert-like existence. Because of unbelief, God did not allow the Exodus Generation to enter the promised rest of Canaan; therefore, they lived out **empty** lives without any spiritual advancement or real rest.
 - 4) God will not allow a believer to mature by means of self-effort and law. Maturity comes only God's **way** – through ongoing faith in Christ. Colossians 2:6-7, 23
 - 5) Even today you could find yourself in a similar spiritual condition. Growing in your Christian faith by means of God's grace is where you need to be. Don't stagnate in beginner's doctrines or aimlessly drift from the **truth**.

D. Hebrews 6:4-6 – Drifting believers are in very precarious positions

1. Introductory thoughts concerning **verses** 4-6.
 - a. Verses 4-6 constitute another **long** sentence in Greek.
 - b. The central **thought** of this sentence is found in verse 6 where the author states, *“It is impossible to renew them to repentance.”*
 - 1) *Renew* ANAKAINIZO means make **fresh** again or restore to a more desirable state.
 - 2) *Renew to repentance* METANOIA means to change one's **mind** in order to be restored to the right way of thinking.
 - 3) In this context the phrase *“renew to repentance”* means to bring back to a place where one once again **thinks** correctly about Christ and the Christian faith.
 - c. There are six descriptive phrases (Greek participles) that serve as antecedents of the pronoun “them,” making each phrase a direct **object** of the word “renew.”
 - 1) All six phrases describe different aspects of a singular **group**, namely those whom it is impossible to renew to repentance.
 - 2) As we study this passage, we will see that each of these participle phrases describe the **saved**, not the unsaved.

2. Hebrews 6:4a – The first descriptive phrase is, “*for in the case of those who have once been enlightened.*” In other words, in English we would read it in this way, “To restore to repentance *those who have **once** been enlightened is impossible.*”
 - a. *Once enlightened* is equivalent to having full knowledge of something. They were *enlightened* PHOTIZO when they received the **truth** about Jesus Christ, the Author of their salvation. 2 Corinthians 4:6, 2 Peter 2:21
 - b. Hebrews 10:32 – *Remember those earlier days after you had **received the light**, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering.*
 - c. The readers had been **once enlightened**. Since Christ died only once, a person can only be saved once and the Bible confirms that once obtained, salvation remains eternal. John 3:16; Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:26-27, 9:25-26, 10:10-18; 1 John 5:13
3. Hebrews 6:4b – The second descriptive phrase is, “*and have **tasted** of the heavenly gift.*” To restore to repentance those who *have tasted of the heavenly gift* is impossible.
 - a. The word *taste* GEUOMAI means to taste, eat or experience. It is the same word used in John 8:52 (*taste of death*, meaning **experience** death) and in 1 Peter 2:3 (*tasted* [experienced] the *kindness of the Lord*).
 - b. Hebrews 2:9 – *Christ tasted GEUOMAI death for everyone.* Christ did not partially endure death; He **fully** absorbed and experienced death on behalf of every human being. Matthew 26:39-42, Mark 10:38
 - c. The Hebrew readers had already experienced the heavenly gift. By faith in Christ they **had** received eternal life. John 1:11-12, 6:47-58
4. Hebrews 6:4c – The third descriptive phrase is, “*and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.*” To restore to repentance those who *have been made partakers of the Holy **Spirit*** is impossible.
 - a. Made, or became, partakers GINOMAI of the Holy Spirit meant they had shared in, or become **participants** with, the Holy Spirit. Galatians 3:2
 - b. The readers became partakers of the Holy Spirit at **salvation**. Ephesians 1:13
 - c. Speaking of all believers, Hebrews 3:1 says, “*Therefore, holy brethren, **partakers** [GINOMAI, the same word] of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.*”
5. Hebrews 6:5a – The fourth descriptive phrase is, “*and have tasted the good **word** of God.*” To restore to repentance those who have tasted the good word of God is impossible.
 - a. This is the second time **tasted** is used in this section. *Tasted* [GEUOMAI] *the good word of God* meant the Hebrew believers had individually taken in the Word of God and experienced its life-giving essence.
 - b. What they had ingested was the word of God, the **seed** that had given them new birth. 1 Peter 1:23-25, 1 Peter 2:3

6. Hebrews 6:5b – The fifth descriptive phrase is, “*and have tasted... the **powers** of the age to come.*” To restore to repentance those who *have tasted the powers of the age to come* is impossible.
- a. In the Greek, the verb tasted goes with **both** the “*good word of God*” and “*the powers of the age to come.*”
 - b. At salvation, the readers had tasted the power that will become fully manifested in the coming Millennial Kingdom. 1 Corinthians 4:18-21, Ephesians 1:18-23, Colossians 1:13, Hebrews 2:3-4, Revelation 20:1-10
7. Hebrews 6:6a – The sixth and final descriptive phrase is, “*and then have **fallen** away.*” To restore to repentance those who have then fallen away is impossible.
- a. Written as a strong statement to forewarn his readers, the phrase to have fallen away is an aorist active participle describing a person who purposefully **fell** away from a former position.
 - b. To fall away is to abandon the Lord Jesus and the truth about Him. It is to **regress**, rather than progress, in the faith.
 - 1) To *have fallen away* is a very good way to describe Israel’s **willful** refusal to believe God and go in to possess the inheritance land of rest in Hebrews 3:7-12.
 - 2) The Galatian believers fell from grace because of their regression into **legalism**. They were severed from fellowship with Christ because they sought again to be justified by law. Galatians 5:4
 - a) These believers did not lose their eternal life, but they did lose the **benefit** of the grace of God for living restfully.
 - b) They were severed from fellowship with Christ, not from a relationship with Christ, since scripture teaches that it is impossible to be **removed** from Christ. Hebrews 13:5
 - 3) The author did not say his readers had **already** fallen away at this point.
 - a) The author simply clarified that if someone did fall away there would be **sad** consequences, as we will see.
 - b) Later in Hebrews 10:25 the author stated that some of the Hebrew believers were no longer attending church, which might suggest that those believers were indeed in the **process** of falling away.
 - 4) This should be a warning to every believer to stop and consider where he or she is right now in **relation** to the Lord.
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:17 – *Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and **fall from your secure position.***

8. Hebrews 6:6b – *It is impossible to **renew** them again to repentance.* Why can the above described believers not be renewed to repentance? Because first of all, they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and secondly, they put Him to open shame.
- a. Greek grammar may help us to better understand the impact of this statement. In Greek, the phrases “again crucify” and “put...to open shame” are both **present** tense participles.
- 1) The participles here in this passage are **verbs** that have been changed to make adjectives.
 - a) The phrases “again crucify” and “put to open shame” are adjectives that describe the **condition** of a believer who has drifted away from Christ.
 - b) The author called believers who have drifted away from Christ and gone back to rituals and legalism Christ-crucifiers and Christ-shamers because by their **actions** they crucified Christ again and shamed Him publicly.
 - 2) Since these adjectives are in the present tense and active voice, they underscore **ongoing** audacity.
 - a) Any Hebrew believers who were tempted to drift from Christ and return to the basic doctrines of Judaism would become one of the **people** described here.
 - b) The danger was that they would get trapped or locked into that error and while in that state (presently and actively) they would not be able to repent so as to be renewed to a **correct** way of thinking.
- b. If the Hebrew Christians returned to the Jewish sacrificial system, it would be a complete rejection of Christ’s work for all the world to **see**.
- c. As long as a believer is in a state of being a Christ-crucifier and a Christ-shamer there is no hope for him to change his **mind**.
- 1) A believer who returns to any form of ritualistic religion in essence **rejects** and denies everything Christ once and for all did for us through His cross.
Hebrews 10:29, Colossians 2, Galatians 3:1-5
 - 2) Just as the Hebrew believers could not mix Judaism with Christianity, believers today cannot mix their religion with Christianity. It is either Christ or works; it cannot be a **mix** of the two. Romans 3:21-28, 4:5,11:6
 - 3) If a believer insists on returning to ritualistic legalism, he cuts himself off from Christ and falls from the grace he so urgently **needs** for living life today.
Galatians 3:1-3, 5:1-4
 - 4) A believer who rejects the finished work of Christ is in a **state** of quenching the Holy Spirit so that the Holy Spirit is unable to convict, teach and guide him into the truth about Christ. John 14:26, 1 Thessalonians 5:19
 - 5) A change of mind will not **occur** while a rebellious believer is in the falling away condition of re-crucifying the Son of God and publicly shaming Him.

- d. While this verse says it is impossible to renew such a person to repentance, it does not specifically state that God **withholds** repentance.
- 1) God wants **all** people to come to repentance, whether it is the unsaved for salvation or the saved for sanctification. 2 Peter 3:9
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:25-26 says that the bondservant of Christ should be careful to communicate truth so that perhaps God would **grant** erring believers repentance.
- e. This verse is not teaching that a believer can **lose** his salvation. If a believer could lose his salvation, once lost he could never get it back since it is impossible to renew such a person to repentance.
- f. Nor does the verse teach that the person described here was never really saved in the first place. We have already shown that these verses describe **believers**.
- g. We conclude therefore that this verse is a warning against willfully falling away and getting hopelessly **trapped** in a state of rebellion.
9. Hebrews 6:7-8 – The author used the concept of a well-watered yet unfruitful garden to illustrate how someone might reach a point of no **return**.
- a. Introduction to the **garden** illustration of Hebrews 6:7-8
 - 1) In a garden, seeds are planted and watered in hopes of a bountiful **harvest**.
 - 2) In the event of a crop **failure**, there comes a point in the lifecycle of a garden where it is too late to rework the soil and replant.
 - 3) If a field yields only weeds all season long, the farmer's only option is to slash and burn the failed crop. The farmer will **burn** the field in an effort to destroy both the weeds and their seeds.
 - 4) When this happens, there is not rejoicing in the present and there will not be a fruitful harvest in the **late** summer.
 - b. Hebrews 6:7 – Generally, a well-watered garden is fruitful, being blessed by God's provisions of sunshine and **rain**.
 - 1) Hebrews 6:7a – *For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it...* When land soaks up the rain that frequently falls on it one naturally expects a good **harvest**. Isaiah 55:10-11
 - 2) Hebrews 6:7b – *And brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled...* A good harvest is useful to the farmer because it provides **food** and income. 2 Corinthians 9:10
 - 3) Hebrews 6:7c – *Receives a blessing from God.* When land receives abundant rain and produces a good harvest, it is a **blessing** from God. Genesis 1:11-12
 - c. Hebrews 6:8 – A well-watered garden should **not** produce weeds.
 - 1) Hebrews 6:8a – *But if it yields thorns and thistles...* There is something wrong with a well-watered garden that yields only **thorns** and thistles.

- 2) Hebrews 6:8b – *It is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.* An unproductive garden that produces only thorns and thistles is useless. Since the field produced no useful crop, only thorns and thistles, the farmer is forced to **burn** it.
- d. Let's consider what the author was seeking to communicate to his Hebrew **readers**.
- 1) As believers, we are like a well-watered garden. In **Christ**, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing and have all we need for life and godliness. John 15:5; Romans 6:1-2, 8-11; Ephesians 1:3, 18-19; 2:4-7; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:7-11; Colossians 2: 1-3, 8-10; 2 Peter 1:2-4
 - 2) Religious systems based on human effort cannot produce **righteous** living. Romans 3:20-26, Galatians 2:21, Colossians 2:20-23
 - 3) If a believer returns to a religious system and fleshly effort, he will produce only **thorns** and thistles. John 15:4, Romans 7:4-6, Galatians 5:19-21
 - 4) The Hebrew audience needed to go beyond the basics and take in the *whole counsel of God* in order to know and benefit from God's **grace** bestowed on them through Jesus Christ. Hebrews 6:1-3, 2 Peter 1:2-4
 - 5) A believer who bears fruit receives a blessing, but a believer who walks according to the **flesh** will reap corruption. Galatians 6:7-10
 - 6) *Being burned* in verse 8 does not refer to eternal judgment or hell. It is the **crop** that is burned, not the field itself.
 - 7) The believer who does not grow good crops through his life will come under God's discipline in the **present**, during this lifetime.
 - a) John 15:2 – Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He **prunes** it so that it may bear more fruit.
 - b) Hebrews 12:6 – For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every **son** whom He receives.
 - c) 1 Timothy 4:16 – Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who **hear** you.
 - d) 1 Timothy 1:20 – *Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to **Satan** to be taught not to blaspheme.*
 - e) 1 Corinthians 11:27 – *Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be **guilty** of the body and the blood of the Lord.*
 - f) 1 Corinthians 11:30-32 – *For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number **sleep**. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.*

- g) 1 Corinthians 9:27 – *but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*
- 8) Although the fruit in these verses concerns life in time, there will also be rewards and loss of rewards in eternity. In eternity, good works will be rewarded while bad works (not the person) will be burned up. John 15:6; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 9:24-27; 2 Corinthians 5:6-11; Philippians 3:14; 2 Timothy 2:11-13

E. Hebrews 6:9-12 – The author admonished his readers to bear fruit

1. Hebrews 6:9-10 – Rather than expecting failure from his readers, the writer of Hebrews hoped for the best. 1 Corinthians 13:4a, 7
 - a. Hebrews 6:9a – *But, beloved...* The author continued to refer to his readers as beloved ones. Never at any point did the author doubt the genuineness of his reader's salvation.
 - b. Hebrews 6:9b – *But, beloved, we are **convinced of better things concerning you... though we are speaking in this way.***
 - 1) Despite the strong warning of not being able to be restored to repentance, the author was *convinced of better things concerning his readers.*
 - 2) Their lives did not need to be characterized by weeds (human efforts) and burning (discipline in time and the loss of rewards in eternity); rather the author expected them to live lives of productive fruit bearing.
 - c. Hebrews 6:9c – *We are convinced of better things ...**that accompany salvation**.* The word *salvation* SOTERIA is found seven times in Hebrews.
 - 1) Salvation SOTERIA means deliverance, or preservation, and can refer either to physical or spiritual salvation. Context dictates how it is to be understood.
 - 2) The three phases of our one salvation are as follows:
 - a) Phase 1 salvation is justification, or one time salvation from the sin penalty. We are saved from a hell we deserve to a heaven we will never merit. Titus 3:5
 - b) Phase 2 salvation is sanctification, or ongoing salvation from sin's power. This ongoing process continues in time as God separates us from sin's domination. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 2:15
 - c) Phase 3 salvation is glorification, or future salvation from the presence of sin. In the future we will be saved from the realm of sin either via death or at the rapture. Romans 5:9
 - 3) Let's examine the use of the word salvation SOTERIA in Hebrews. We will see that the author uses the word primarily to refer to the spiritual aspects of salvation.
 - a) Hebrews 1:14 – Phase 1 salvation: *Those who will inherit salvation* refers to eternal salvation from sin's penalty.

- b) Hebrews 2:3 – Phases 1, 2 and 3 salvation: *How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...* refers to justification, sanctification and glorification. We cannot have practical **victory** in life if we ignore our great three-phase salvation.
 - c) Hebrews 2:10b – Phase 1, 2 and 3 salvation: *To perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.* The one who authored our three-part salvation is Jesus **Christ**.
 - d) Hebrews 5:9 – Phase 1 salvation: *He became to all those who obey Him the source of **eternal** salvation.* This use of salvation refers to justification.
 - e) Hebrews 6:9 – Phases 1, 2 and 3 salvation: *Things that accompany salvation...* speaks of the practical blessings (sanctification) and rewards (glorification) that spring from being **saved** (justification). Romans 5:1-2
 - f) Hebrews 9:28 – Phase 3 salvation: *Christ ...will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.* This salvation is not justification or sanctification but rather our salvation from sin's **presence** (glorification).
 - g) Hebrews 11:7 – Physical salvation: Noah *...in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household.* This speaks of Noah and his family's physical salvation from the waters of the **flood**.
- d. Hebrews 6:10 – The writer was encouraged by the Hebrew Christians' past and present **service** to the saints.
- 1) Hebrews 6:10a – ***For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown...***
 - a) God keeps careful accounts of the good works performed by believers. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, He will not withhold duly **earned** reward. Matthew 10:41-42, Luke 6:22-23
 - b) By affirming their work, the writer sought to motivate the Hebrew believers to *press on to maturity* and **continue** to be useful fruit-bearers.
 - 2) Hebrews 6:10b – ***For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.***
 - a) In the early church, many believers suffered persecution from both political and religious sources. The Hebrew believers had graciously **helped** these suffering saints in the past and they continued to do so in the present. Hebrews 10:32-34; 13:1-3, 23
 - b) God had not forgotten their work ERGON (**deeds**, actions, occupation or service) and love AGAPE administered to fellow believers. Colossians 1:4-5, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

- c) Their *work and love* were accomplished in God's **name**. The Hebrew Christians' work and love were the outworking of their love for God. When they helped other believers, they were actually serving and loving God. Matthew 25:37-40, Acts 26:14b
2. Hebrews 6:11-12 – The author's desire for each of his Hebrew readers was for them to be imitators of those who lived by faith. He wanted them to be **diligent**, not sluggish. He wanted them to produce the good *things that accompany salvation*. Hebrews 6:9
- a. Hebrews 6:11a – *We desire* EPITHUMEO is more than just a wish; it communicates a deep **longing** like when a person sets his heart on something.
- b. Hebrews 6:11b – *That each one of you show the same* **diligence**. The author wanted his readers to earnestly and enthusiastically press on.
- c. Hebrews 6:11c – *...so as to realize the full assurance of* **hope** *until the end...* In Greek this phrase is comprised of a preposition PROS meaning towards with the noun *full assurance* PLEROPHORIA.
- 1) This verse is not teaching introspection to determine one's **salvation**.
 - 2) Assurance of salvation comes by simply believing God's Word concerning the **promise** of eternal life. John 3:16, 36; 1 John 5:13
 - 3) The hope spoken of in this verse is our **future** glorification. Even though this hope is a certainty for every believer, not all believers live with certainty. Ephesians 1:18 20, Colossians 2:2
 - 4) The author wanted his readers to be fully **assured** of their future glorification. He knew that such assurance would change the way they lived day by day. 2 Peter 1:3-5, 1 John 3:2-3
 - 5) *Until the* **end** *could be understood as "up until the point of the end."* All through life until death we should live with confidence based on the certainty of the promises of God in Christ (our hope). Romans 5:2-5, 8:24-25, 12:11-12, 15:13
3. Hebrews 6:12a – *So that you will not be sluggish*. As we have seen in Hebrews, the Hebrew believers were in danger of drifting, becoming **dull** of hearing and basically stagnating.
- a. The purpose for showing diligence was so that the believers would not become **lazy**. Hebrews 5:11
- b. Instead of becoming lazy and sluggish, the Hebrew believers were to **imitate**, or mimic, believers who by their faith and patience inherited the promises of God.
- c. The truth about all Christians is that without an ongoing daily **reliance** on the Lord, you inevitably become sluggish and slack off in ministry. Romans 13:11; Hebrews 10:25, 12:12-13
4. Hebrews 6:12b – *But* **imitators** *of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises*.

- a. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob received from God the promise of inheriting land, blessings and descendants. This **promise** did not become a full reality in their lifetimes; in fact, most of the promise is still to be fulfilled. Matthew 8:11, Hebrews 11:9
 - 1) Abraham **remained** faithful to God and patient in the face of spiritual testing and opposition from the surrounding pagan worldview.
 - 2) Isaac on the other hand also inherited the promise but he was impatient and **lacked** faith. Isaac hastily passed on the Abrahamic blessing to the next generation (Jacob), a full 80 years before his death. His impatience was very destructive to his family.
 - 3) Jacob, on the other hand, held on to the Abrahamic blessing as long as he could and passed it on only when he was nearly dead. He was **patient** concerning the promise he was going to inherit, adoring God as he leaned on his staff. Hebrews 11:21-22
- b. In the upcoming verses, Abraham will be put forth as an example of a person who **waited** for his inheritance with faith and patience.
- 5. Let's examine the other 5 uses of inherit and inheritance in Hebrews. To inherit is **not** the same as to merit. Galatians 3:18
 - a. Hebrews 1:4 – *Jesus ...having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.* There is no biblical teaching on angels inheriting anything. This verse teaches that Christ has inherited a **title** that is more excellent than the title (authority) of angels.
 - b. Hebrews 1:14 – *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? Since salvation is a free gift, you never merit it; you inherit it **based** on Christ's merits.*
 - c. Hebrews 9:15 – *...He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions... those who have been called may **receive** the promise of the eternal inheritance.*
 - 1) Our **identification** with Christ which came about on the day we responded to the call of salvation makes us inheritors. Ephesians 1:11, 3:6; Galatians 3:29
 - 2) We will receive our eternal inheritance based **exclusively** on the death of Christ and not based on our personal merit. 1 Peter 1:3-5
 - d. Hebrews 11:8 – *By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance.* Based on his **faith**, Abraham received the promises of land, seed and blessing. This will come to fruition during the Millennium. Romans 4:13, James 2:5

F. Hebrews 6:13-15 – Abraham is an example of inheriting promised blessings

- 1. Hebrews 6:13a – *For when God made the promise to Abraham... God originally made a promise to bless Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3, 15:17-18) and years later He repeated that promise to him through an **oath**.* Genesis 22:11-18

- a. God promised Abraham He would bless him by giving him a **son** and would multiply his descendants through that son. That promise ultimately pointed to Messiah and His earthly kingdom. Galatians 3:15-16
 - b. By faith Abraham patiently **waited** for God to fulfill His promises, but God did not entirely do so during Abraham's earthly life. Most of the promises are yet to be fulfilled in the future Messianic Kingdom.
2. Hebrews 6:13b – When God reiterated his promises to Abraham *since He could swear by no one greater, He swore **by Himself***.
 - a. An oath confirms a promise, or settles disputes or questions, with **finality**.
 - b. Through an oath people swear by the **authority** of someone greater than themselves.
 - c. Since God could not swear by anyone greater than Himself, He made an oath to Abraham based on His **own** name.
 3. Hebrews 6:14 – *Saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely **multiply** you."* By means of a sworn oath, God reconfirmed the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant to His servant Abraham.
 4. Hebrews 6:15– *And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.* The promise was that Abraham would have a son and through that **son** a blessed nation that would inherit the land of Canaan. Romans 4:18
 - a. In Romans 4:16 Paul stated, *"Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by **grace** and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring."*
 - b. Later, on the very day it seemed God was about to **break** His promise by having Abraham kill Isaac on an altar, not only did He not break His promise, He confirmed it with an oath.
 - c. God had not lied to Abraham; He was going to **keep** His promise.

G. Hebrews 6:16-18 – The author encouraged his audience to grasp promised hope

1. Hebrews 6:16a – *For men swear by one greater than themselves.* When a person makes an oath, he holds himself to his oath by swearing by someone **greater** than himself. Genesis 21:22-24
2. Hebrews 6:16b – *And with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every **dispute**.* Here is an important general principle—an oath is given to end every word of opposition. By the name of the greater party, an oath becomes the collateral of the eventual fulfillment of a promise. Genesis 21:25-34
3. Hebrews 6:17a – *In the same way God...* Just as men make oaths as collateral to their promises, God made an oath to Abraham as everlasting **proof** of the trustworthiness of His promises.

4. Hebrews 6:17b – *In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise... **Why** did God make an oath to Abraham when He had already made him a promise? Was it for Abraham's sake alone?*
 - a. No, it was also for **our** sake as coheirs of the promise. God gave the oath to Abraham in Genesis 22 for our sake so that we too would lay firm hold on the promise. Romans 4:13-18, 9:7-8; Galatians 3:14, 20-22, 29; Ephesians 3:6; Hebrews 2:16
 - b. In His oath in Genesis 22, God did not add any **new** information or blessings to His previously declared promises to Abraham back in Genesis 12 and 15.
 - c. Galatians 3:29 – *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, **heirs** according to promise.* We are co-heirs of the promises made to Abraham by virtue of our faith in Christ Jesus.
 - d. Galatians 4:7 – *Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a **son**, then an heir through God.*
 - e. Hebrews 1:2 – *In these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed **heir** of all things, through whom also He made the world.*
5. Hebrews 6:17c – God wanted to make very clear to the all the heirs (us) what He promised, so He confirmed it with an oath. *To show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an **oath**.*
 - a. For the sake of assurance, Abraham received the oath (Gen. 22:15-18) in addition to the original **promise**. Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1-18
 - b. Since we as believers are coheirs of the promise God made to Abraham by virtue of our faith in Christ, the author reminded his readers of God's oath to Abraham in order to give them strong encouragement and great **hope**.
 - c. The oath is **proof** of the unchangeableness of God's promises and was designed by God to keep the heirs strong and resolute in their faith. This was a reminder to the Hebrew readers to stay strong and to not drift.
6. Hebrews 6:18a – *So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie... The two *unchangeable things* by which it is impossible for God to **lie** in this context are God's promise and God's oath.*
 - a. *God **cannot lie*** (Titus 1:2). Every word of God can be trusted. Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29
 - b. God's character is unchangeable, and since He cannot lie His promises and sworn oaths are **sure** and fixed. Hebrews 13:8
7. Hebrews 6:18b – *We who have taken refuge... Any believer who takes **refuge** in the Lord has every reason to remain secure in the trustworthiness of His promises and oaths.* 1 Kings 8:56, Psalm 9:10

8. Hebrews 6:18c – *...would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.* We can have great confidence to tenaciously hold onto the **hope** set before us.
2 Corinthians 7:1, Colossians 1:5
- a. Since we have the certainty of being co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) because of our identification with Him (Eph. 1:13-14) and because of God's great and precious promises, we have every reason to take **firm** hold of the hope set before us.
Ephesians 1:3, 1 Peter 1:3-6, 2 Peter 1:4-5
 - b. In all eternity we will rejoice in our glorified bodies. We will forever be with the Lord. Therefore, we ought to be encouraged to hold tightly to our sure and **certain** future hope. Romans 5:1-5, 1 John 3:1-3

H. Hebrews 6:19-20 – The author used glorification truth to encourage resolve

1. Hebrews 6:19a – *This hope we have as an **anchor** of the soul...* Our future hope is not wishful thinking. Our hope is as certain as the trustworthiness of God Himself.
2 Timothy 1:12
2. Hebrews 6:19b – *We have ...a hope both sure and steadfast and one, which enters within the veil.* Jesus **Christ** is our hope. 1 Timothy 1:1
 - a. Jesus eternally serves as our high priest behind the **veil**. The anchor of our hope is fastened to the Lord Jesus Christ behind the veil in the heavenly Holy of Holies.
 - b. Our hope is like an anchor attached to the safest and most **secure** place in the universe. Our hope is one of the better *things that accompany [our] salvation*. Ephesians 1:18, Hebrews 6:9
 - c. Our anchor being in Christ guarantees that we are saved **forever**. In order to maintain stability, we need to keep the truth about our anchor firmly in mind, especially in times of trouble.
3. Hebrews 6:20 – Our anchor (hope) is secure because Jesus, our Melchizedek-like high priest, is now in the heavenly Holy of Holies where He **performs** high priestly duties on our behalf.
 - a. Hebrews 6:20a – *Where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us.* Jesus went into heaven **before** us for our benefit.
 - 1) Jesus has entered the heavenly Holy of Holies as a forerunner of the rest of the heirs who will, generation by generation, **follow** after Him. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, Hebrews 12:1-3
 - 2) The fact that Jesus has made it proves **we** will make it also. Ephesians 2:6, Colossians 3:1-4
 - b. Hebrews 6:20b – *...having become a high priest forever...* Jesus became a high priest **forever**. A priest represents people to God.
 - 1) Jesus, as our high priest, is now in heaven in the true Holy of Holies. There He **mediates** on our behalf. Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 3:1, 4:14

- 2) Jesus was our substitute sacrifice for sins. He died for all our sins, past, present and future. After He died, He rose again and ascended into heaven. He eternally **intercedes** on our behalf. Romans 8:34
 - 3) Following are various passages that explain the priestly **ministry** of Jesus Christ on our behalf: John 14:2-3; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3-4, 4:14-16, 8:1, 9:24; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 John 2:1-2.
- c. Hebrews 6:20c – *...according to the order of Melchizedek*. In the following chapters we will spend considerable time studying the Melchizedekian high priesthood of Christ. We will see how His priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood and how He is **worthy** of all our worship.

I. Hebrews 7:1-28 – Jesus’ priesthood is better than Aaron’s Levitical priesthood

1. Hebrews 7:1-3 – The author started this section by giving a history lesson on Melchizedek’s meeting with Abraham. This will help us understand some similarities between Melchizedek and Jesus Christ and show how Jesus can qualify as both **king** and priest.
 - a. Hebrews 7:1a – *This Melchizedek...* Melchizedek, was not only a king, He was also a priest of the Most High **God**. Genesis 14:18-20
 - 1) Melchizedek is mentioned 10 times in the Bible. Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 5:6; 6:10, 20; 7:1, 10, 11, 15, 17
 - 2) At the time Abraham defeated the armies that had taken his nephew Lot captive, Melchizedek was the ruling king over the city of **Salem**, a place that later came to be called Jerusalem.
 - b. Hebrews 7:1b – He *...was king of Salem and priest of God Most High*. Melchizedek was a **unique** individual, because although a king, he was also a priest of the one true God.
 - 1) First, the fact that he was a priest of the one **true** God Most High was uncommon in that day since many nations had abandoned God for idols.
 - 2) Second, the fact that he was **both** a king and a priest was something special in biblical history.
 - 3) Later, in the Messianic Psalm 110:1-4, David mentioned Messiah who would be given a **throne** (Ps. 110:1-2) and would also be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 110:4
 - a) The fact of His royalty was confirmed by Jesus in Mark 12:35-37 when He cited Psalm 110:1-2 and asked why David would call one of his descendants *my Lord*. Mark 12:35-37
 - b) Likewise, in his first sermon, Peter confirmed the divine **royalty** of Christ, also citing Psalm 110:1-2. Acts 2:33-36
 - c) Here in Hebrews the fact that Christ would be a high **priest** after the Melchizedekian order of high priesthood is clearly established and linked with His prophetic right to be king.

- c. Hebrews 7:1c – *He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him.* When King Melchizedek met Abraham after the battle against the five kings and the rescue of Lot his nephew, he did the priestly **duty** of blessing Abraham and praising God. Melchizedek recognized that God had given Abraham victory. Genesis 14:20
- d. Hebrews 7:2a – *To whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils...* Abraham **gave** Melchizedek one-tenth of the spoils of the battle.
- 1) Being a priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek rightly deserved the **honor** Abraham gave him.
 - 2) Since at that time tithing was an act of worship, Abraham’s action shows that he recognized Melchizedek as a **priest** of God. The fact that the Bible is specific about the percentage clearly shows that it was indeed an offering similar to the tithe Israel practiced under the Law.
 - 3) Hebrews 7:4-10 will expand on this act of worship (tithing) by Abraham and contrast it to the tithe of the Israelites that the Levites received. The text will show that as a Melchizedekian priest, Christ is **superior** to the Levitical priesthood.
- e. Hebrews 7:2b – *Melchizedek ...was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of **peace**.*
- 1) Melchizedek was a king of righteousness. When translated from Hebrew, the name Melchizedek literally means king of righteousness (MELEK means king and TSEDEQ means **righteous**).
 - 2) Melchizedek was the king of **Salem**. Most scholars confirm Salem to be the ancient name for Jerusalem. This would situate the ancient city of Salem on mount Zion.
 - 3) The word Salem SHALEM means peace. Since Melchizedek was king of Salem, he was also **king** of peace. Psalm 76:2
- f. Hebrews 7:3 – Just like Melchizedek, **Jesus** was a permanent king-priest.
- 1) Hebrews 7:3a – Melchizedek had a unique history with no record of family lineage, no account of a beginning and no biblical record of an **end** to his life and ministry.
 - a) According to the New Testament, Melchizedek had no [recorded] father, mother, genealogy, beginning or **end** of days.
 - b) This verse can legitimately be interpreted that there simply remains no **public** information concerning these details.
 - c) Because of this verse, some have concluded that Melchizedek was a theophany. If you **isolate** this verse you can see how someone might come to this conclusion.
 - d) The authors of this curriculum hold the view that Melchizedek was a human king-priest who ruled over the city of Salem at the time of Abraham. As with any difficult passage, you should study carefully what we present here and come to your own conclusion based on the **Word** of God.

- 2) Hebrews 7:3b – *Without father, without mother, without genealogy...* The author used the uniqueness of the fact that Melchizedek had no recorded genealogy in scripture to make a comparison with Jesus, the **Son** of God.
- a) The mention of this **fact** was not to prove that Melchizedek had no father or mother. That is not the author's emphasis in this comparison.
- (i) Quite to the contrary, Jesus indeed had a complete, recorded genealogy through His adoptive father Joseph (Matt. 1:1-17) and a recorded biological ancestry through his mother Mary (Luke 3:23-38), all the way back to **Adam**.
 - (ii) The point of comparison is the fact that Christ did not **need** to have a certain genealogy to qualify as a priest of the Most High God.
 - (iii) Israel's priesthood required a genealogy that was from the tribe of **Levi**, and to be a high priest you had to descend directly from the family of Aaron.
 - (iv) Since Jesus was declared to be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, there was no need to prove parentage, nor did He need genealogical ties to the tribe of Levi or the family of **Aaron**.
 - (v) Just as genealogy was not necessary for proving Melchizedek's priesthood, it was **not** necessary for proving the priesthood of Christ.
- b) Hebrews 7:3c – *Having neither beginning of days nor end of life...* The comparison to the lack of birth and death **records** of Melchizedek is provided as evidence that Christ's priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood since the service of every Levitical priest ended in death.
- (i) Since He is God, Jesus never had a beginning and He will never have an **end**.
 - (ii) On the contrary, we must note that as a human Jesus did have a beginning and He died, but then He **lived** on once again due to His resurrection.
 - (iii) Just as there was no record of Melchizedek's term of service as priest ending by death, even so Jesus Christ was declared by God to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek; therefore, Jesus will never **cease** to be a priest. We will see this in detail as we proceed.
- c) Hebrews 7:3d – *...but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.* Melchizedek was **made** to be like God's Son, Jesus Christ.
- (i) This phrase is **key** to understanding that Melchizedek was not actually God's son. The phrase *made like* ΑΦΟΜΟΙΟΟ is one word in the Greek, which means to make something be very much like something else. It does not mean that it is one and the same.

- (ii) Due to the fact that there is no record of his death, Melchizedek prefigured, and thus resembled, the Son of God in his continuous qualification as a priest. Therefore, Melchizedek was an Old Testament **type** of Christ.
 - (iii) Unlike Melchizedek, Jesus did die, but due to His **victory** over death through the resurrection, He lives on forever as a Melchizedekian high priest.
 - (iv) Even though it is not clearly shown from the Old Testament, this verse undeniably declares that Melchizedek remains a priest forever. Like Melchizedek, Jesus Christ also **continues** to be a priest forever without an interruption to His service and without ever needing a successor.
 - (v) Sadly, the Jewish Christians in Hebrews were questioning Jesus' priesthood, asking if Christianity was truly superior to Judaism. Doubts enticed them to **return** to Judaism with its Levitical priesthood.
2. Hebrews 7:4-10 – The author showed that the priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to the Levitical priesthood. The fact that Melchizedek blessed Abraham and the fact that Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek showed that Melchizedek was **greater** than Abraham.
- a. Hebrews 7:4a – *Now observe how great this man was...* There were several important points the author did not want His readers to **miss**.
 - 1) In the next four verses, the author provided three important **proofs** attesting to the superiority of King-Priest Melchizedek over the Levitical priesthood.
 - 2) In each of these points, the author drew **attention** to the greatness of Melchizedek.
 - 3) These verses show the greatness of Jesus in the Melchizedekian priesthood. Why would these Hebrew believers go back to a lesser priesthood when the one to which they were related was so much **better**?
 - b. Hebrews 7:4b – *To whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils...* The **first proof** of the greatness of Melchizedek was the fact that Abraham, the most important Israelite to ever live, paid tithes to Melchizedek.
 - 1) Abraham, the patriarch of the Hebrew **nation**, revered Melchizedek. This is the first important fact the author highlighted to show the greatness of the Melchizedekian priesthood.
 - 2) Melchizedek did not refuse that offering from Abraham, nor did Abraham refuse a **blessing** from Melchizedek.
 - 3) It is interesting to note that in the **same** account Abraham clearly refused anything from the king of Sodom. Genesis 14:22-24
 - c. Hebrews 7:5a – *And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a **tenth** from the people.* The Law of Moses required tithes be exacted from all the Israelites. Numbers 18:7

- d. Hebrews 7:5b – *To collect ... from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.* The Levitical priests were **equal** to the people from whom they collected tithes in that they all had the common denominator of being from Abraham.
- e. Hebrews 7:6a – *But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them...* Here again we have a **clue** to the fact that Melchizedek was a man and not the pre-incarnate Christ. It does not say that Melchizedek had no genealogy but rather that his lineage cannot be traced back to Israel.
- f. Hebrews 7:6b – *Melchizedek ...collected a tenth from Abraham...* Abraham showed honor to Melchizedek when he willingly gave him tithes. This **tithe** was similar to the tithes Israel later paid to the Levitical priests. Numbers 18:20-32, 1 Corinthians 9:13
- g. Hebrews 7:6 – *And blessed the one who had the promises.* In this short statement the author confirmed that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, the possessor of the promises. The New Testament confirms that we also have tapped into these **promises** by faith apart from human merit based on the Law. Romans 4:13-16; Galatians 3:16-18, 29
- h. Hebrews 7:7 – *But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.* Here we find a **second proof** of the greatness of the priesthood of Melchizedek.
- 1) Unlike the Levitical priesthood in which the priests exacted tithes from their equals, their brethren, Melchizedek was not an **equal** with Abraham.
 - 2) It is always the greater who blesses the lesser. When Melchizedek blessed Abraham, he was shown to be the **greater** and Abraham the lesser.
 - 3) The blessings associated with Christ and his priesthood will be shown to be greater than the blessings associated with Aaron and the Levitical priesthood. Why would the Hebrew readers be tempted to return to something of **inferior** significance?
- i. Hebrews 7:8 – *In this case mortal men...* The tithes that were paid to the Levitical priests were paid to **mortals**. Mortal APOTHENESKO means to be in imminent danger of dying.
- 1) Since Levitical priests died and were replaced generation-by-generation, this was added by the author to contrast the fact that Melchizedek was never recorded to have **died**.
 - 2) Since Melchizedek's death was not recorded in scripture, it is as though his priesthood lives on forever. Since Christ has been declared a priest after the order of Melchizedek and because He will never die, His priesthood is likewise ongoing and **eternal**. Psalm 110:4
- j. Hebrews 7:9-10 – Here in these next two verses we see the **third proof** that the Melchizedekian priesthood is superior to the Levitical priesthood.
- 1) Hebrews 7:9a – *And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, **paid** tithes.* Levi, the great grandson of Abraham, became the father of Israel's priestly tribe and thus a receiver of tithes from Israel.

- 2) Hebrews 7:9b-10 – *...even Levi...paid tithes for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.* The Levites descended from Abraham. The Law of Moses authorized them to exact tithes from **Israel**.
 - a) Scripturally a person is regarded as having participated in the deeds of his **ancestors**. For example, when Adam sinned, we all sinned in him. Romans 5:12
 - b) Therefore, in a figurative way, the Levitical priests paid tithes to Melchizedek being in the **person** of Abraham way back on the day when Abraham and Melchizedek met.
 - c) This of course would make Melchizedek **greater** than the Levitical priests.
3. Hebrews 7:11-14 – The priesthood of Levi and Aaron was deficient since it was never able to make people **perfect** before God.
 - a. Hebrews 7:11-12 – Because of the deficiency of the Levitical priesthood, Jesus had to be from a superior **order** of priesthood like that of Melchizedek.
 - 1) Hebrews 7:11a – *Now **if** perfection was through the Levitical priesthood [though it was not] ...* The “if” statement here is a second class condition in Greek that assumes a statement to be false.
 - 2) Hebrews 7:11b – *Now **if perfection** was through the Levitical priesthood...* In order to help his readers’ reason through his conclusions, the author correctly assumed that the Law of Moses that established the Levitical priesthood could never bring anyone to perfection, completion or fulfillment.
 - 3) Hebrews 7:11c – *Now **if perfection** was through the Levitical priesthood...* The priesthood based on the Mosaic Law was insufficient to perfect the people it represented. Its offerings were inadequate and had to be repeated **day** after day.
 - a) Hebrews 7:19 – *(for the law made nothing perfect), and a **better** hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.*
 - b) Hebrews 9:9 – *This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were **not** able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.*
 - c) Hebrews 10:1 – *For the Law, since it has only a **shadow** of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.*
 - d) Hebrews 10:4 – *It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to **take** away sins.*
 - e) Hebrews 10:11 – *Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; **again**, and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.*

- 4) Hebrews 7:11d – *...was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law) what further need was there for another priest to **arise** according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?*
- Why was another priesthood necessary to **replace** the Levitical priesthood?
 - Since the Levitical priesthood was **unable** to bring about perfection, God concluded that it was inadequate and in need of replacement by the Melchizedekian order of priesthood.
 - Therefore, the Levitical priesthood was replaced by a once-for-all sacrifice made by a better priest, Jesus Christ. **Christ** serves eternally under the superior priesthood of Melchizedek.
- 5) Hebrews 7:12 – *For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.* With the change in priesthood there had to be a change in the **laws** that governed that priesthood.
- The Mosaic **Law** only allowed priests to be from the tribe of Levi. All other tribes were excluded from service as priests.
 - Jesus was from the tribe of **Judah**, so a change in the rules governing the priesthood was absolutely required if there was to be a new priesthood.
John 1:17, Romans 6:14
 - Since God said through David that Messiah would be a **priest** according to the order of Melchizedek, the rules governing this new priesthood had to come from what we know to be true of Melchizedek. Those rules, as laid out here in Hebrews, were derived from Genesis 14:17-24 and Psalms 110:1-4.
- b. Hebrews 7:13-14 – Being a descendant of Judah, Jesus could never **fit** into the Levitical priesthood.
- Hebrews 7:13a – *For the one concerning whom these things are spoken... The **One** spoken of in the prophecy of Psalms 110 was Jesus, the Christ.*
 - Jesus was from the **tribe** of Judah.
 - By means of an oath, God declared Him to be a priest forever after the **order** of Melchizedek. Hebrews 6:19-20
 - Hebrews 7:13b – *He ...belongs to another tribe...* According to the rules, or laws, that governed the Levitical priesthood, Jesus Christ would never **qualify** to be a priest.
 - No one from the tribe of Judah **ever** served as a priest.
 - Of course, this limitation did not **apply** to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, since He was never supposed to be an Aaronic or Levitical priest.

- 3) Hebrews 7:13c – He *...belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar*. The mention of **altar** speaks of the altar in the earthly tabernacle and temple.
- a) According to the laws of the Levitical priesthood, Christ had no **rights** to serve the earthly altar in Jerusalem.
 - b) In Hebrews 13:10 we will see that we have an altar from which the Levitical priests have no rights. This altar is located in **heaven** and is superior in every way to their altar.
 - c) Hebrews 6:19-20 – *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the **veil**, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*
- 4) Hebrews 7:14 – Messiah’s rights to priesthood were not according to lineage or the Mosaic Law. *For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning **priests**.*
- a) Since the Messiah was never supposed to be from the tribe of Levi, nor serve as a Levitical priest, the author unashamedly acknowledged the fact that the **tribal** lineage of the Christ disqualified Him from the Levitical priesthood.
 - b) Christ’s rights to priesthood come from the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy in Psalm 110:4, not from **ancestry**.
4. Hebrews 7:15-22 – David predicted that the priesthood of Melchizedek would go on forever, but he did not say the same about the Levitical priesthood. This **shows** the limitations of the Levitical priesthood. Matthew 22:41-45, Acts 2:29-36
- a. Hebrews 7:15-17 – Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek. Melchizedek was not a priest based on a family tree but rather on an enduring priesthood. Christ was declared by God to be a priest **forever** in the royal priesthood of Melchizedek.
 - 1) Hebrews 7:15a – *And this is clearer still...* refers to the fact that Christ is disqualified as a Levitical priest. The author is not running from any argument or objection that some might put before him in order to disqualify Christ from Levitical priesthood. He openly and gladly embraces that **fact**. Hebrews 5:4-10
 - 2) Hebrews 7:15b – *...if another priest **arises** according to the likeness of Melchizedek.* Well, another priest has arisen. His name is Jesus Christ and He is indeed in the likeness of Melchizedek. The author will now develop this thought even more.
 - 3) Hebrews 7:16a – *Who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement...* Christ did not become a priest on the basis of a physical requirement demanding He descend from the family lineage of the tribe of Levi or some other **legal** requirement found in the Law of Moses.

- 4) Hebrews 7:16b – Contrary to physical requirements, Christ became a priest *according to the power of an indestructible life*. Jesus is a perpetual priest based on His **nature** as the God-man. In Psalm 110 the Messiah was promised to live on forever as a Melchizedekian priest.
 - a) Christ has the advantage of the **power** of an indestructible life. Indestructible means perpetual, or endless.
 - b) By His **divine** nature and through His resurrection to life, Jesus proved His indestructibility. He was thus supremely qualified for this new priesthood.
 - c) The Levitical priests continually died and were replaced. They could not help their adherents in an eternal sense. On the contrary, Christ, through His perpetual priesthood, is able to give **ongoing** spiritual assistance to His people.
 - d) David stated that the priesthood of Melchizedek would go on **forever**. This was never said of the Levitical priesthood. This detail shows the limitations of the Levitical priesthood.
- 5) Hebrews 7:17a – *For it is attested of Him, “**You** are a priest forever...”* Christ has the witness from the psalmist David that He, as Messiah, is a priest forever. But what type of priest?
- 6) Hebrews 7:17b – Christ was a priest *according to the **order** of Melchizedek*. The Melchizedekian priesthood was the unique priesthood from which Christ would serve as a king-priest.
- b. Hebrews 7:18 – The **Law** could not do what was needed. *For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness.*
 - 1) Because of inherent *weakness*, the Levitical priesthood’s mediation for mankind was inadequate. God therefore set it **aside**, together with all its qualifications mandated in the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law. The word weakness ASTHENES means to be without any strength or powerless.
 - 2) The author likewise referred to the laws governing the Levitical priesthood as *useless ANŌPHELES*. That word means unprofitable or serving no apparent **purpose**.
 - 3) The Levitical priesthood was inadequate to resolve man’s real problem. What the Law could not do God accomplished in the priestly **work** of Christ. Romans 8:3-4
- c. Hebrews 7:19a – *(for the Law made nothing perfect)* This phrase inserted into the text by the author of Hebrews concludes that the Law of Moses, which governed the Levitical priesthood, never made anything fully **right** in God’s sight.
 - 1) The author, to state in no uncertain **terms** that the Law could never make anything perfect TELEIOO or complete, used the aorist active indicative tense of the word perfect.

- 2) On the contrary, Christ's priestly work makes **perfect** those who approach God through Him. He is the model priest of perfection fashioned after the priesthood of Melchizedek. 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 1 John 2:1-2
- d. Hebrews 7:19b – Since Christ delivers all believers right into the actual presence of God, His priesthood is perfect. Christ's priesthood is the only priesthood that makes people fully able to approach God. *And on the other hand, there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw **near** to God.*
- 1) A better, or more secure, hope came with Jesus Christ. That hope was through the full forgiveness of **sins** provided for us in Christ. Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-24
 - 2) The hope that we have in Christ is absolute, and therefore not doubtful in any way. In our **hope** we have eternal life, resurrection in glorified bodies, promised kingdom blessings and the opportunity to earn eternal reward.
- e. Hebrews 7:20-22 – Levi was not a priest by an **oath**. Jesus was. The priesthood of Aaron went on year after year, from father to son, without needing a firsthand confirmation by God.
- 1) Hebrews 7:20 – *And inasmuch as it was not without an oath.* This new priesthood of the Messiah with its governing principles was established by means of a solemn oath spoken by **God** the Father in Psalm 110:4.
 - 2) Hebrews 7:21a – *...for they indeed became **priests** without an oath.* On the contrary, Levi's children became priests without God ever making them a solemn oath.
 - 3) Hebrews 7:21b – *but He with an oath through the One who said to Him, "The Lord has **sworn** and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever.'"* The Melchizedekian priesthood became unchangeable and permanent by means of an oath.
 - a) God gave Christ a sure **promise** when in essence He stated, "I give my word and won't take it back: You are a priest forever."
 - (i) *...The Lord has sworn...* In contrast to the Levitical priesthood, the promises in the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ are **sure** and steadfast giving us eternal hope. Hebrews 7:24-28
 - (ii) *...and will not change His mind...* Once spoken in an oath, God will never change His mind about his promises. When He declares an oath, we can know without any **doubt** we have what we hope for. Hebrews 6:17-20
 - b) In the case of the priesthood of Christ, God verbally intervened in history to **establish** Christ as a permanent priest after the order of Melchizedek. Psalm 110:4
 - c) By means of the Melchizedekian priesthood established by God's oath, Christ now intercedes as our priest on our **behalf** not here on earth but actually before the throne of God in heaven. Romans 5:10, 8:34

- 4) Hebrews 7:22 – *So much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.* Jesus Christ was the One specifically chosen by God to mediate a **new** covenant. He has become the guarantor of a new and better covenant designed to replace the inferior covenant established by Moses under the Law.
- a) First, we need to understand that a covenant is a promise made between two **parties**.
- (i) The establishment of a better covenant was part of the priestly work of Christ. *Jesus has become the guarantee of a better **covenant**.*
 - (ii) Christ has become the guarantee of [the] better covenant to be established with the nation of **Israel** in the future.
- b) The covenant spoken of here is the prophesied New Covenant with Israel. The New Covenant is a **future** unconditional covenant that God specifically pledged to Israel.
- (i) When God first designed the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3) it had three **major** components.
 - (ii) There was the promise of **land** as reiterated in the Real-estate Covenant with Israel in Deuteronomy 30:1-10.
 - (iii) There was the promise to make a great **nation** out of Israel with absolute national sovereignty. One of Abraham’s descendants through David would come to rule forever as stated in the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:14-16.
 - (iv) There was the promise of **blessings** to the whole world through Israel as later reiterated in the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34.
 - (v) These three aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant will be **fully** realized in the coming millennial kingdom.
- c) The Mosaic Covenant (or the Mosaic Law) on the other hand was conditional.
- d) In the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ez. 36:25-28; Rom. 11:23-27; Heb. 7:22, 8:8-13, 10:15-18) God promised Israel that in the future she would enjoy everlasting unbroken **fellowship** with Him.
- e) Although there is just one New Covenant established specifically with Israel, the whole **world** will be blessed through that covenant as prophesied in Genesis 12:3. Hebrews 8:8-12
- (i) The **church** will play an administrative role with Christ in the fulfillment of the New Covenant (2 Cor. 3:6), which was established specifically with the house of Israel by means of the blood of the cross of Christ (1 Cor. 11:25).

- (ii) Because of the Melchizedekian priestly ministry of Christ established through His death, resurrection, ascension and session to the right hand of God, we **already** taste some spiritual benefits and blessings of the coming New Covenant.
5. Hebrews 7:23-25 – Why is Jesus Christ's priesthood **better** than the Aaronic or Levitical priesthoods? The Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ was enduring in character. Let's examine some practical evidences of the superiority of Christ's priesthood.
- a. Hebrews 7:23 – The Levitical priests were numerous and temporary by means of death. In contrast to Christ's eternal and consistent priesthood, the Levitical priests were constantly **replaced**.
- 1) Hebrews 7:23a – *The former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers...* The disadvantage of the Levitical priesthood was the sheer volume of workers. How could so many diverse individuals faithfully represent people in a consistent way? Christ was **one**. He faithfully and consistently ministers without divergence.
 - 2) Hebrews 7:23b – *...Because they were prevented by death from continuing.* The Levitical priests were constantly replaced. This too provided an obstacle to consistency and continuity in the priestly office. Christ resolved this dilemma. Being a Melchizedekian priest forever, He eternally and consistently serves before God's altar in **heaven**.
- b. Hebrews 7:24 – Since as God Jesus **exists** eternally, His priesthood is enduring.
- 1) Hebrews 7:24a – *...but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever...* Since Jesus has a priesthood that continues forever, His **help** to us is abiding.
 - 2) Hebrews 7:24b – *...holds His priesthood permanently...* Because the Levitical priests died, their help was imperfect and **incomplete** and needed to be replaced.
- c. Hebrews 7:25a – *Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him...* Since Jesus Christ will never die, He is able to keep those who come to God through Him **saved** for eternity.
- 1) There is only one **way** to God. Jesus' death for our sins and resurrection made that way possible. John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
 - 2) Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to God except through Him. There is no other **name** under heaven by which we can be saved. John 11:25-26, 14:6; Acts 4:12
 - 3) When Jesus Christ gives eternal life to someone that person will **never** perish. John 3:36, 10:27-30
- d. Hebrews 7:25b – *...since He always lives to make intercession for them.* Jesus Christ is able to keep those who come to God through Him safe and secure eternally because He is **alive** forever and able to defend those He has saved. Hebrews 13:5
- 1) Jesus Christ ever **lives** to make intercession for believers. Romans 8:34-35

- 2) The high priestly work of Christ keeps us eternally **secure**. Hebrews 10:10-14
6. Hebrews 7:26-28 – When we analyze the high priesthood of **Christ**, we discover His high priesthood is superior to that of Aaron’s Levitical high priesthood.
- a. Hebrews 7:26-27 – Jesus Christ is our perfect High **Priest**. Hebrews 1:3
- 1) Hebrews 7:26a – *For it was **fitting** for us to have such a high priest...* It was fitting for us means it was distinguished or conspicuous among others. Christ is perfectly tailored to meet our needs as High Priest. John 19:30; Romans 6:10; Hebrews 9:12, 10:10-18; 1 Peter 3:18
 - 2) Hebrews 7:26b – *For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy...* Christ is a high priest who is completely **holy**. Hebrews 1:9
 - a) The word holy means unpolluted with wickedness and right in relationship with God and His laws. This is something that no Aaronic priest could claim. They not only had to offer sacrifices for the people but for their own **sins** also. Hebrews 7:27
 - b) The perfection of Christ’s holiness means security and blessings for us. We never have to worry that Jesus might not have our best interest in mind or that He is somehow being unrighteous in His treatment of us. Christ is **holy** and therefore entirely incapable of committing sin.
 - 3) Hebrews 7:26c – *For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest holy, innocent, **undefiled**...* Christ as a high priest is utterly unstained by sin. The two words *innocent* and *undefiled* further describe what it means to be holy.
 - a) The word innocent AKAKOS means something without fault or guilt. Jesus Christ our great High Priest is completely guiltless, **pure**, and untainted by sin. Hebrews 5:7
 - b) The word undefiled AMIANTOS means **unstained** or unpolluted by sin. We can rest knowing that there is nothing that defiles the high priest who represents us, either in actions or in character. Hebrews 9:14, 1 Peter 1:19
 - 4) Hebrews 7:26d – *For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest holy, innocent, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens.* These two remaining descriptive phrases further highlight Christ’s **holiness** as our high priest.
 - a) Christ is *separated from sinners*. In relation to sinful humanity, our faithful High Priest Jesus Christ never participated in the sinful conduct of **man**. Though Christ became one of us and even took our sins upon Himself, this statement declares that He remained morally uncorrupted by the sinful ways of man. John 1:30-34, Romans 1:4

- b) Christ has been exalted above the heavens. This phrase describes the present exalted **position** of Christ in His glorification. Even though it is impossible to corrupt Christ by sin, we see the added statement that He is now eternally stationed in a place that is completely free of all sin. Hebrews 1:13; Psalm 110:1,4-7
- 5) Hebrews 7:27a – *Who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices...* Christ, as our high priest, once-for-all **finished** all the work needed for our restoration to God.
- a) His sacrifice calmed the just **wrath** of Holy God against us and provided us with His peace. Since there is now no need for ongoing daily sacrifices like those in the Levitical priesthood, Christ's High Priesthood service is superior.
- b) It should have been unthinkable to the Hebrew believers who understood the superiority and sufficiency of the priesthood of Christ to remain attached to the **old** Levitical priesthood.
- 6) Hebrews 7:27b – *...first for His own sins...* Here we clearly see a major deficiency and weakness in the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priests had to offer sacrifices for their **own** sins first before they could help Israel. This confirms the fact that they were sinners.
- 7) Hebrews 7:27c – *...and then for the sins of the people...* Only after they took care of their own needs were the Levitical priests able to **serve** and help the people. Christ on the other hand did not suffer from this condition.
- 8) Hebrews 7:27d – Christ did not need to offer sacrifices for His own sins before He could get around to helping us. *Because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.* Since Jesus did **not** have sins of His own, He could go straight to work on our behalf.
- a) As a sinless high priest, He **alone** was suited to take away our sins forever.
- b) The sacrifice He made for the sins of the world was a one-time sacrifice that finished the work **forever**.
- b. Hebrews 7:28a – *For the Law appoints men as high priests who are **weak**...* The Levitical system appointed weak men as high priests.
- 1) The Mosaic Law had the deficiency of appointing priests who were **sinful**.
- 2) Apt to **die**, the Levite priests had to continually be replaced. This fact made the Levitical priesthood inherently weak.
- c. Hebrews 7:28b – *...but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a **Son**...* God's plan involved appointing His own Son Jesus Christ as the greatest priest of all time. Christ is absolutely perfect forever. He is our eternal high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

- d. Hebrews 7:28c – ...*appoints a Son, made perfect forever*. Contrary to the Law of Moses that appointed priests only from the tribe of Levi, God declared by means of an **oath** that His Son would be a priest forever.
- 1) Christ came on the human **scene** after the Mosaic Law and the Levitical priesthood had been established.
 - 2) *Made perfect forever* refers specifically to Christ's high priestly **work**.

V. Hebrews 8:1-13 – The All-Encompassing High Priestly Work of Christ

A. Hebrews 8:1-6 – Jesus' priesthood is superior to the priesthood of the Levites

1. Hebrews 8:1-2 – The author reminded his readers of the qualifications of our High Priest and of His ongoing **work**.
 - a. Hebrews 8:1a – First we observe that we have a high **priest** who has finished His work.
 - 1) How do we determine that Christ's work is finished? Because the text states that *we have such a high priest, who has taken His **seat***. Hebrews 4:14-16, 10:19-22, 12:2
 - 2) What is significant about Christ having taken His seat? The Levitical priests **never** sat down. They never rested. Their work was never done. Hebrews 10:11-12
 - 3) We should remember that in the earthly tabernacle there were no **chairs**, signifying that the job of the Levitical priests was never considered complete. Exodus 29:36, 39; John 19:30
 - b. Hebrews 8:1b – Where has our high priest taken His seat? *He is at the right **hand** of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*. Our high priest is seated, ministering from the most exalted position in the universe. Hebrews 4:14-15, 7:26-27, 10:21; 1 Peter 3:22
 - c. Hebrews 8:2 – What **role** does Christ, our high priest, presently fulfill?
 - 1) Hebrews 8:2a – Christ is *a **minister** in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle* in heaven. As a minister LEITOURGOS in the heavenly sanctuary, Christ serves in the presence of God the Father from a position of rest (seated). Romans 8:34
 - a) The **word** *minister* LEITOURGOS, chosen by the writer of Hebrews to express the ongoing priestly work of Christ, is derived from LEITOS, of the people and ERGON, to work.
 - b) This term *minister* was also used to describe the **service** of the government for its citizens (Rom. 13:6), the apostleship of Paul to the gentiles (Rom. 15:16), and in a general sense to describe the service rendered by angels. Hebrews 1:7
 - c) In His present ministry, Christ **aids** us in our relationship to God. His priestly service is not the slaying of animals like that of the Levitical priests, instead, seated, He intercedes for us, His people, before God. Hebrews 5:7, Luke 23:46
 - 2) Hebrews 8:2b – Christ is *a **minister**... in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the **Lord** pitched, not man...*

- a) Christ is serving in God's **throne** room, not merely in some earthly tabernacle built by human hands.
 - b) This fact is mentioned to heighten the superiority of Christ's priestly **work** in the estimation of the readers. Exodus 25:40
2. Hebrews 8:3 – What makes Christ, our high priest, **superior**? What is Christ's present contribution to help us in our relationship to God?
- a. Hebrews 8:3a – We must understand that one major **job** of every high priest was to offer something to God on behalf of man. *For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices.* Exodus 14:18-19; Hebrews 9:11-14, 9:23-26, 13:12
 - b. Hebrews 8:3b – *So it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer...* What does our seated high priest, Jesus Christ, offer on our behalf at this time?
 - 1) According to Hebrews 8:2, our high priest offers continual service on our **behalf** from the position of one who has concluded His primary priestly work once and for all. Hebrews 10:10-12
 - 2) Let's examine Christ's high priestly **duties** found in Hebrews chapter 7.
 - a) Hebrew 7:24 – Christ's priesthood is infinite. *...but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, **holds** His priesthood permanently.*
 - b) Hebrew 7:25a – Christ's priestly work was eternally sufficient. *Therefore, He is able also to **save** forever those who draw near to God through Him...*
 - c) Hebrew 7:25b – Christ's priestly service is relentlessly empathetic. *...since He **always** lives to make intercession for them.*
 - d) Hebrews 7:26 – Christ's character as high priest is perpetually righteous. *For it was fitting for us to **have** such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens...*
 - e) Hebrew 7:27a – Christ's priesthood is unparalleled. *...who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His **own** sins and then for the sins of the people.*
 - f) Hebrew 7:27b – Christ's priesthood climaxed on Calvary where He offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our redemption. *...because this He did **once** for all when He offered up Himself.*
3. Hebrews 8:4-6 – Any **Hebrew** would know that under the Law of Moses Jesus could not possibly qualify to be a priest. The author anticipates an accusation of illegitimacy and preemptively provides a biblical solution.
- a. Hebrews 8:4a – *Now if He were on earth, He would not be a priest at all...* If Christ were seeking to serve as an earthly high priest, He would not qualify. Being from the tribe of **Judah**, He had no priestly authority to minister in the earthly tabernacle.

- b. Hebrews 8:4b – *...since there are those who offer the gifts according to the **Law***. Jesus was not from Levi or Aaron’s line. He was from the tribe of Judah. Under Mosaic Law, He was plainly disqualified from the Aaronic priesthood. Hebrews 7:21
- c. Hebrews 8:5a – Aaronic priests served *...a **copy** and shadow of the heavenly things*. Although Jesus was excluded from service in the earthly tabernacle, He was perfectly suited for priestly duty in the heavenly tabernacle. Hebrews 9:23-24
- 1) Christ is a **priest** after the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 5:10, 7:17
 - 2) Christ currently serves in the **real** tabernacle in heaven, not on earth. Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, Revelation 15:5
- d. Hebrews 8:5b – *“See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the **pattern** which was shown you on the mountain.”* Christ serves in the true tabernacle in heaven, which God pitched, and not in an earthly tent. His ministry is more splendid in every way to that of the Levites.
- e. Hebrews 8:6a – *But now Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry...* Since Christ lives directly in the **presence** of God, He has come to possess a superior ministry to that of any earthly priest.
- f. Hebrews 8:6b – *...by as much as He is also the mediator...* Christ is **superior** in His priesthood because He ratified a better covenant than the Old Covenant Moses mediated and from which Israel’s priesthood was formed. Hebrews 12:24
- g. Hebrews 8:6c – *...of a better covenant...* Contrary to the Mosaic covenant full of **strict** regulations, Christ mediated a greater covenant. In the ensuing verses we will observe the New Covenant Christ in His priestly service mediated on Israel’s behalf.
- h. Hebrews 8:6d – *...which has been enacted [legislated] on better promises*. The **New** Covenant Christ mediated in His high priestly work was decreed on superior promises to those of the Old Covenant.
- 1) The term *enacted* NOMOTHETEO means to draw up as a **contract**, to legislate, or to constitute legally.
 - 2) In Hebrews 7:11 the **same** word and verb tense was translated *“received NOMOTHETEO the Law,”* (NASB) but could have been translated *“established the Law.”* (NIV)
 - 3) The way the term NOMOTHETEO (*enacted*) was translated here could give the impression that the New Covenant is **already** in effect, yet the larger context shows that it is yet future and will be specifically with the House of Israel. Hebrews 8:8
 - 4) This **verse** could be translated *“by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which [has been legislated] on better promises.”*
 - 5) All the prerequisites of the New Covenant have been lawfully fulfilled through the **work** of Christ, but we will observe how the actual inauguration of the New Covenant is yet future.

B. Hebrews 8:7-13 – Jesus’ work enabled the establishment of the New Covenant

1. Hebrews 8:7 – The New Covenant was promised as a replacement for the **Old** or Mosaic Covenant with its many demanding requirements. Israel was unfaithful in regard to the Mosaic Covenant.
 - a. Hebrews 8:7a – *For if that first covenant had been faultless...* The first covenant is not referring to the faultless Abrahamic Covenant duly established by **God** in Genesis chapter 15.
 - 1) Here the **first covenant** refers to the Mosaic or Old Covenant and will be replaced by the New Covenant. Galatians 4:24
 - 2) The Mosaic Covenant was a **bilateral** agreement between God and Israel. Hebrews 8:9 clearly bears out that Israel failed to keep her end of the covenant. Exodus 19:5, Jeremiah 31:32
 - 3) In His incarnation, Christ fulfilled **all** the righteous requirements of the Mosaic Covenant. Matthew 5:17-18, John 1:17, Romans 10:4, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 4:4-5
 - b. Hebrews 8:7b – *...there would have been no occasion sought for a second.* In other words, **if** Israel had kept the Mosaic Covenant, God would have seen no need to replace it. Amos 2:4
2. Hebrews 8:8 – Why did God desire to replace the Mosaic Covenant? Was the Mosaic Covenant at fault? No, **Israel** was at fault. Romans 7:7, 12
 - a. Hebrews 8:8a – *For finding fault with **them**, He says...* God saw the need to replace the Mosaic Covenant because He found fault with the **nation** Israel. Judges 2:17; 2 Kings 17:19; Jeremiah 6:19, 16:11
 - 1) The word **fault** MEMPHOMAI means wholly disgraceful and condemnable. Deuteronomy 29:25-26
 - 2) Israel had total **blame** for failure in regard to the Old Covenant. Nehemiah 9:26
 - b. Hebrews 8:8b – The author now quoted from Jeremiah 31:31 where God promised a **solution** to Israel’s failure. *Behold, days are coming, says the Lord when I will effect a new covenant...*
 - c. Hebrews 8:8c – *...with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...* This statement **predicted** the fact that God would originate the New Covenant with the nation of Israel. Hebrews 7:22, 8:13, 9:15, 12:24
 - 1) Through Christ’s **death** everything legally necessary to authorize the promised New Covenant with Israel was fully provided. Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:24-28; Jeremiah 23:3-6
 - 2) God can be **trusted** to fulfill this promised covenant with Israel just as He predicted in Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31:31, 32:37-41
3. Hebrews 8:9-12 – What will life be like for Israel under the **New** Covenant?

- a. Hebrews 8:9 – The author first emphasized that life for Israel under the terms of the New Covenant will be very **distinct** from that under the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant required punishment for failure. Deuteronomy 28:15-68
- 1) Hebrews 8:9a – *Not like the covenant, which I made with their fathers...* Israel repeatedly experienced **judgment** because of her lack of compliance with the terms of the Old Covenant.
 - 2) Hebrews 8:9b – *For they did not continue in my covenant...* Even while still at the foot of Mount Sinai, Israel failed in her promise to **obey** the Mosaic Covenant. Exodus 32:1-35
 - 3) Hebrews 8:9c – *And I did not care for them, says the Lord.* Under the Old Covenant God was not obligated to **care** for the Israelites if they disobeyed; instead, they were insured of punishment. Exodus 19:1-8
- b. Hebrews 8:10-11 – On the other hand, under the **terms** of the New Covenant, life will be glorious for Israel. *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord...*
- 1) Hebrews 8:10a – *I will put my Laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts...* This has **never** yet happened in the history of the world, not with the church or with Israel.
 - a) This miraculous change under the New Covenant will involve the writing of the Word of God onto the **heart** and soul of every Israelite.
 - b) Similar to how the human conscience tells us right from **wrong**, under the New Covenant the Israelites will have the Law of God written on their hearts to instruct them internally. Of course, the New Covenant will be far superior to the human conscience.
 - c) This promise of the Law being written on their minds and hearts is **not** a promise to all people on earth. Although the nations will be blessed as an overflow of the New Covenant, they are not part of it. Romans 11:12
 - d) This promise is **valid** solely for Israel and will be initiated at the beginning of the Millennium when God fulfills all the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Romans 11:26-27
 - 2) Hebrews 8:10b – *And I will be their God and they shall be My people.* After so many centuries, God will finally receive and maintain Israel's full and unadulterated **devotion**. Isaiah 59:21, Romans 11:26-27
 - 3) Hebrews 8:11a – *And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen...* No Israelite will need to **teach** his fellowman anything concerning God. The truth will be written onto the heart of every Israelite universally. Isaiah 59:21, Jeremiah 31:33

- 4) Hebrews 8:11b – ...*Saying **know** the Lord. For all will know me from the least to the greatest of them...* All of Israel, from the most important to the least important, will know the Lord without any need of being taught. This has not yet happened.
Jeremiah 31:34
- c. Hebrews 8:12 – Under the New Covenant, each and every Israelite’s sins will be **forgiven**; God will never again bring their transgressions to memory. Isaiah 45:17, Jeremiah 31:1, Romans 11:26
4. Hebrews 8:13 – So **when** will this all happen? Has the New Covenant begun? No, it has not yet started. It will be initiated during the Millennium.
- a. Hebrews 8:13a – *When He [God through Jeremiah] said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first **obsolete**.* The Old Covenant was first declared obsolete way back when God inspired Jeremiah to write about a coming New Covenant.
- 1) The moment the prophet Jeremiah mentioned the **need** and promise of a New Covenant, he declared the Mosaic Covenant to be lacking and in need of replacement. Jeremiah 31:31-34
 - 2) Although God provided a replacement for the Old Covenant through Christ’s death on the **cross**, the Old Covenant was already declared obsolete long before that event.
- b. Hebrews 8:13b – *When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete.* What does he mean by the Old Covenant being **obsolete**?
- 1) The word *obsolete* PALAIOO means to declare to be **old**, out of fashion, worn out, or outdated.
 - 2) *Obsolete* PALAIOO is in the **perfect** tense, meaning that it happened at a particular point in the past with a continuing result all the way to the present.
 - 3) By quoting Jeremiah’s ancient **prophecy**, the author reminded his readers that the Old Covenant was declared obsolete long ago.
- c. Hebrews 8:13c – *But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to **disappear**.* We understand this statement to apply to the Old Covenant, including its priesthood and place of worship. The Mosaic Covenant has been ready to disappear for a long time.
- 1) This statement was designed to **remind** the author’s Jewish Christian readers of the pointlessness of returning to Judaism with its outdated covenant.
 - 2) With the destruction of the **temple** in AD 70, the already faded remainders of the Mosaic Covenant and its outdated priesthood were abruptly terminated.
5. In summary, when we look at the literal interpretation of Hebrews 8:8-12, we discern that New Covenant prophecies have **not yet** been initiated with Israel. We perceive that the New Covenant prophecies did not refer to the church and are not being fulfilled in the present age.

VI. Hebrews 9:1-28 – The Surpassing Value of the High Priestly Sacrifice of Christ

A. Hebrews 9:1-10 – Christ’s sacrificial work was superior to the Levitical sacrifices

1. Hebrews 9:1-5 – The author explained in detail the place of **worship where** people originally approached God under the Old Covenant.
 - a. Hebrews 9:1a – *Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship...* Under the Old Covenant a person had to approach God in God’s **way** and His way only. Any deviation could be met with swift judgment. Exodus 19:12, 30:20; Leviticus 10:1-2; Number 26:61
 - b. Hebrews 9:1b – *...and the earthly sanctuary.* God, through **Moses**, gave very specific instructions as to where to worship Him.
 - c. Hebrews 9:2a – *For there was a tabernacle prepared...* God also instructed the Israelites **how** to construct the tabernacle. The tabernacle had two rooms.
 - d. Hebrews 9:2b – *The outer one ...* this is called the holy place. The first room was called the **Holy Place**. It had a couple of important features that the author mentioned here.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:2a – *...in which were the lampstand...* First, the author mentioned the **Menorah**, a seven-flame lamp that lit the Holy Place. As a key duty, the High Priest ensured that this lamp never went out, day or night. Exodus 25:31-40, Leviticus 24:1-4
 - 2) Hebrews 9:2b – *...and the table and the sacred bread.* Second, the author mentioned the special gold-plated **table** on which twelve loaves of bread were displayed. Exodus 26:35, Leviticus 24:6
 - 3) Hebrews 9:2c – *...and the sacred bread.* These **twelve** loaves, made through fire (baked) and displayed on the golden table, reminded Israel of her place of honor before God. Exodus 40:22-23; Leviticus 6:20-21, 24:5-9; 1 Chronicles 23:29
 - e. Hebrews 9:3-5 – The second room was smaller and more exclusive. It was located behind an **inner** curtain.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:3 – *Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies.* This innermost **room** was the place where God at times appeared in shining glory.
 - 2) Hebrews 9:4a – *...having a golden altar of incense...* Included in the description of the Holy of Holies is the golden **altar** used for burning incense. Exodus 40:1-8
 - a) In the Old Testament, this piece of furniture was depicted as being located in the Holy Place, right in front of the **curtain** that blocked off the Holy of Holies (also called the Most Holy Place). Exodus 30:6, 40:26; Luke 1:9

- b) In Scripture, the altar of **incense** pictured the prayers and intercession of the people as a sweet aroma rising up before God's presence. Psalm 141:2, Luke 1:10, Revelation 8:3-4
 - c) Here the author of Hebrews described the golden altar of incense as **closely** associated with the Holy of Holies, using language that could sound as though the golden altar was possibly inside the Holy of Holies.
 - d) Either way, whether inside the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place, the golden altar of incense was clearly located right **next** to the curtain.
- 3) How can we best understand this seeming discrepancy?
- a) Some theologians believe the golden altar of incense was positioned **inside** the Most Holy Place, as the wording in Hebrews 9:4 can be understood this way.
 - b) The following scriptures would seem to **disagree** with this assessment.
 - (i) Exodus 40:26 – *Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in **front** of the veil.* Exodus 30:6-7
 - (ii) Also, in Luke 1:9 we have the **priest** Zechariah (John the Baptist's father) who was not of high priestly ancestry chosen to go into the temple to burn incense on this particular altar.
 - (iii) It is unlikely that Zechariah went into the Most Holy Place to do this duty since entrance into that place was strictly prohibited to all except for the **High** Priests. Leviticus 16:1-34; Hebrews 9:7, 25, 10:11
 - c) Being located right next to the Holy of Holies and **closely** associated with it, the author may have simply included it in his description of the Holy of Holies. Exodus 40:5, Leviticus 16:12, 1 Kings 6:22
 - (i) The author did not specifically say that the Holy of Holies housed the golden altar of incense. He said, "...**having** a golden altar of incense."
 - (ii) A form of this Greek word is also translated as **nearby** in Mark 1:38 and as accompany in Hebrews 6:9 The author may have simply been saying that the golden altar of incense accompanied, or was near to, the Holy of Holies.
 - d) Either way, the author intentionally associated the **altar** of incense with the Most Holy Place and God's divine presence. Exodus 37:25-29, 40:26-27
- 4) Hebrews 9:4b – *...and the Ark of the Covenant covered on all sides with gold...* From Scripture it is clear that the **Ark** of the Covenant was located in the Holy of Holies behind the second veil. Exodus 37:1-5
- a) The Ark of the Covenant housed **three** important articles. *In which was...*
 - (i) *...A golden jar holding the **manna**...* It housed a golden pot full of manna. This was the bread from heaven God gave Israel every morning six days a week as Israel wandered about in the desert for forty years.

- (ii) *...Aaron's rod, which budded...* It held a tree **branch** belonging to Aaron that sprouted leaves to prove God had chosen Him to be the first high priest in Israel.
 - (iii) *...The tables of the covenant...* It contained the stone **tablets** on which were written the Ten Commandments. These were the laws found in the Mosaic Covenant Israel made with God.
- b) Each of the articles in the Ark of the Covenant reminded Israel of God's grace while equally exposing their failure.
- (i) **Manna**: The manna reminded Israel of God's gracious provisions for their **survival** in the desert (Ex. 16:35). It also reminded them of their ingratitude and failure to trust the Lord for their daily needs. Numbers 11:4-15
 - (ii) **Budding Rod**: This branch reminded Israel of God's provision of Aaron as High **Priest** to represent them before God. But this also reminded them of their defiant challenge of Aaron's authority. Numbers 17:1-13
 - (iii) **The Law**: This covenant was Israel's constitution that gave her the right to **exist** as a nation while at the same time constantly reminding the Israelites of their failure to keep their agreement with God. Psalm 78:10-11
- 5) Hebrews 9:5a – Lastly there was the **lid** of the Ark of the Covenant called the Mercy Seat. Exodus 25:22, Numbers 7:89
- a) Arguably, this was the single most important piece of furniture in the tabernacle. It was in this place God determined to **dwell** in glory and show Israel mercy. Psalm 80:1, 99:1; Isaiah 37:16
 - b) Attached to the lid of the Ark were two golden statues of **Cherubim** (angels), one at each end, facing each other with wings extended upward over the Ark. Exodus 37:7-9
- 6) Hebrews 9:5b – *...but of these things we cannot now speak in **detail**.* The author concluded that even though these things were important, this was not the time to delve into them.
2. Hebrews 9:6-7 – The focus now shifts from the place of worship to the **method** of worship. The author reminded his readers of the priest's temple duties under the Old Covenant.
- a. Hebrews 9:6 – *Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship.* After everything was set up, the Levitical priests would daily go in and out of the **Holy** Place, fulfilling their duties to the Lord.
 - 1) Their **duties** included refilling the lamps, burning incense and replacing the loaves of showbread. Most of the work involved the repetition of daily tasks.
 - 2) In this way the priests **worshiped** God.

- 3) Their priestly worship involved a lot of manual **labor** and not as much praise and prayer as we might envision. Romans 12:1
- b. Hebrews 9:7 – *But into the second, only the high priest enters **once** a year...* In clear contrast to the daily service occurring in the Holy Place, the innermost tent, called the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies, was typically accessed only once a year.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:7a – *...not without taking **blood**...* Once a year the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies alone, carrying a container of blood from animal sacrifices that he sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, the golden lid of the Ark of the Covenant.
 - 2) Hebrews 9:7b – *...which he offers...* The blood offering that was brought before the Lord into the Holy of Holies was a **covering** for sins for two reasons.
 - a) *...for himself...* The first reason was to cover the sins of the high priest. **All** Israel's high priests were sinners.
 - b) *...and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.* The second reason to enter the Most Holy Place was to **atone** for the unintentional sins of the entire nation of Israel committed during the previous year. Exodus 30:10, Leviticus 16:34
 - c) The concept of atonement has a **twofold** significance.
 - (i) The literal meaning of the word is to **cover** over. Sins were covered or hidden from sight.
 - (ii) Atonement also had the idea of **pacifying** of God's wrath.
3. Hebrews 9:8-10 – The Old Covenant did not allow direct **access** to God. The priesthood and tabernacle served as an elaborate visual reminder that no ordinary Israelite could directly approach God.
 - a. Hebrews 9:8a – *The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the **way** into the holy place has not yet been disclosed...* The Holy Spirit used all these restrictions of the Old Covenant to show that under the old Mosaic system the way into the Most Holy Place, i.e., the presence of God, was forbidden.
 - b. Hebrews 9:8b – *...has not yet been disclosed while the outer **tabernacle** is still standing.* Under the Old Testament priestly system, ordinary people did not have access to the Holy of Holies.
 - 1) Now in the Church Age, believers have unrestricted **access** to the heavenly Holy of Holies. Ephesians 3:12, Hebrews 4:16
 - 2) This verse reminded the readers of Hebrews that it was **absurd** to try to approach and worship God through the Old Covenant, since under the Old Covenant only the Levitical priests had direct access to God.
 - c. Hebrews 9:9-10 – The never-ending work of the Levitical priests was a teaching aid, or **symbol**, for the Hebrew readers.

- 1) Hebrews 9:9a – *Which is a symbol for the present time...* The Greek word translated *symbol* PARABOLE is the word **parable**. Jesus often taught using parables.
 - a) The Holy Spirit used the tabernacle with all its priestly activities as a **visual** aid for the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews.
 - b) The Hebrew readers needed to understand that as long as the Levitical priesthood remained operative, the **way** into the Holy of Holies remained inaccessible. Matthew 13:3, 10, 13
- 2) Hebrews 9:9b – *Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience.* Why was the way into the **Holy** of Holies inaccessible under the Levitical priesthood?
 - a) It was because of the powerlessness/inability of the **gifts** and sacrifices offered by the Levitical priests to cleanse the consciences of the ones who brought them.
 - b) To go back to the Old Covenant would be **foolish** now that God had provided a better way through Christ.
- 3) Hebrews 9:10a – *Since they relate only to food and **drink** and various washings...* Hebrews 6:1-3
 - a) The Old Covenant simply dealt with external ordinances concerning **food**, beverages and ceremonial washings. Exodus 24:9-11, Colossians 2:16-17
 - b) The author used the visual aid of the Levitical priesthood and the tabernacle to show his readers that the Old Covenant did not deal with the **internal** issues of the human heart. Hebrews 7:19
- 4) Hebrews 9:10b – *Regulations for the [human] **body** imposed until a time of reformation...* The Old Covenant enforced outward rules and regulations until Christ came with a new and better way. John 1:16-17, Galatians 3:22-25, Colossians 2:21-23

B. Hebrews 9:11-15 – Christ’s sacrificial work served its intended purpose

1. Hebrews 9:11-12 – Christ came to **prepare** the way for the future inauguration of the New Covenant. Hebrews 10:1
 - a. Hebrews 9:11a – *But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come...* At the appropriate **time** in history, Christ appeared as High Priest of future things pertaining to heaven and glorification.
 - b. Hebrews 9:11b – *He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle...* Since Christ was High Priest, He entered the **heavenly** tabernacle.
 - c. Hebrews 9:11c – *...not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation.* After His **death**, Christ did not enter the tabernacle in Jerusalem; He entered the more perfect tabernacle located in God’s presence in heaven.

- d. Hebrews 9:12 – *And not through the blood of goats and calves...* The High Priests on Israel entered the earthly Holy of Holies bearing the **blood** of animals. Without blood they could not enter that holy place and live.
 - e. Hebrews 9:12 – *But through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all...* **Christ**, on the other hand, did not enter into the heavenly Holy of Holies by means of animal sacrifices. He entered by means of His own blood, which He shed once for all on Calvary.
 - f. Hebrews 9:12 – *Having obtained eternal **redemption**.* By means of His payment in blood, Christ purchased us from the slave market of sin. His payment made us free from sin forever.
2. Hebrews 9:13 – *If under the Mosaic Covenant the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the **flesh**, how much more will the sacrifice of Christ cleanse us now?*
- a. Initially when God gave the Law to Israel at Mount Sinai and the Israelites **agreed** to keep it, Moses sprinkled the altar and the people with the blood of animal sacrifices.
 - b. Exodus 24:7-8 – *Then he [read] ...the book of the covenant ...and they said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will **do**, and we will be obedient!” So, Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you...”*
 - c. The blood served as a sign of the covenant the Israelites made with God, marking their **promise** to be obedient in everything. Exodus 19:5-8, 24:3, 7-8
 - d. In Numbers 19 the **ashes** of a burnt offering were used for cleansing a defiled person. Numbers 19:17-19
 - e. Later, in order to ceremonially **purify** the priests, Moses sprinkled them with the blood of the animals. Exodus 29:19-21, Leviticus 8:22-30
 - 1) Although cleansing a defiled object or person by sprinkling it with blood and ashes may seem an unlikely mode of purification to us, it was used in the Old Testament for setting people **apart** for God (sanctifying them).
 - 2) Even though the people were still sinful on the **inside**, their body, or flesh, was considered cleansed when purified in this way.
 - 3) Sadly, this was not a remedy for their consciences, since their sins could not actually be **forgiven** in this way.
3. Hebrews 9:14 – What about Christ? What does His sacrifice **provide** for us?
- a. *How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God...? Is Christ’s high priestly **work** better than that of the Levitical priesthood?*

- 1) Christ offered Himself by means of the eternal Holy Spirit. This speaks of the fact that while on the cross, Christ was at the same time **both** the sacrifice and the High Priest who offered it. Romans 3:26, Hebrews 1:3, 10:12
 - 2) As the spotless Lamb of God, Christ's **superior** and unequalled sacrifice took away the sin of the world. John 1:29, 1 Peter 1:19
- b. What does the work of Christ do? It *cleans[e] your conscience from dead works to **serve** the living God*. The ultimate results of the sacrifice of Christ go deep. His sacrifice did three things the Aaronic priesthood under the Old Covenant could never accomplish.
- 1) Christ's sacrifice cleansed the conscience of the believing sinner. His sacrifice **purified** the heart. This was something the Aaronic priests never once accomplished. 1 Peter 1:2, 22
 - 2) Christ's sacrifice delivered the sinner from the uselessness of approaching God by means of ritualistic **dead** works. Under the Old Covenant, Judaism had created a system of dead works.
 - 3) Christ's sacrifice also served to open the door of effectual service to our living God. As believers we are able to serve **God** from a good conscience.
- c. You do not need to **wait** until the New Covenant is inaugurated, i.e., put into effect, to benefit from these three blessings. They are yours now through believing exclusively in Christ's death and resurrection on your behalf.
- 1) It is important to note that the author mentioned these benefits totally **apart** from the New Covenant.
 - 2) He will mention the New Covenant in the next verse and show that beyond these **three** matters of the purification of our consciences, freedom from dead works, and an open door of service, there are also future benefits for national Israel.
4. Hebrews 9:15 – In **addition** to the accomplishment of the full purification of our sins, Christ also became the mediator of the New Covenant. Hebrews 8:7, 13
- a. Hebrews 9:15a – *For this reason He is the **mediator** of a new covenant*. Since Christ was perfect man and perfect God in one, He was the ideal person to mediate Israel's New Covenant with God.
 - 1) In the Old Testament God promised to make a **new** covenant with Israel, but it was never stated who would mediate that covenant. In His sacrifice on the cross, Christ perfectly qualified to mediate this new covenant.
 - 2) The context here shows that not only did Christ pay for all sins while on the cross; He **also** mediated the New Covenant that was promised to Israel in the Old Testament.
 - b. Hebrews 9:15b – *So that, since a **death** has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant*.

- 1) As required under the Old Covenant, when Christ died on the cross, He paid the redemption **price** for Israel's transgressions.
 - 2) Christ redeemed Israel because of the tremendous **debt** incurred by her failure to keep the Old Covenant.
- c. Hebrews 9:15c – *So that... those who have been called [Israel] may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.* This was done so that those called, meaning national Israel in this **context**, might come to receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.
- 1) If Christ had not **died**, Israel's debt of sin under the Old Covenant would not have been resolved. Israel would not have been qualified to receive the eternal inheritance promised to Abraham and his offspring.
 - 2) Christ's death not only redeemed Israel from the sin **debts** incurred under the Old Covenant, His death also legally brought an end to the Old Covenant.
 - 3) As we are about to see, not only did Christ's death bring about redemption and an end to the Old Covenant, through His death Christ also became the **mediator** of the New Covenant with Israel.

C. Hebrews 9:16-22 – Christ's work enabled New Covenant's establishment

1. Hebrews 9:16a – *For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the **death**...* Every covenant required a sacrifice victim to die in order for it to become legally binding. (See verse 17)
 - a. As will be explained in verses 9:18-22, the (Old) Mosaic Covenant was **legalized** in association with the blood of sacrificed victims. Exodus 24:6-8
 - b. God alone legalized the Abrahamic Covenant when He passed through the **blood** of the sacrificed animals. Genesis 15:7-20
 - c. The New Covenant also had to be legalized through the blood of a sacrificial victim (Christ). Christ's death made possible the **legalization** of the New Covenant. Hebrews 7:22
 - d. If Christ already legalized the New Covenant on the cross, a couple of **questions** need to be answered. What participation does the church have in the New Covenant? Why isn't the New Covenant already in effect with Israel?
 - 1) Just as the Abrahamic Covenant has already been **legalized** even though much of it is yet to be realized in the future, so also with the New Covenant.
 - 2) The New Covenant is actually an expansion of the blessings paragraph of the Abrahamic Covenant and is yet to be instated at a **future** time. Genesis 12:2b-3
 - 3) Hebrews 8:8 – *For finding fault with them, He says, "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will effect a **new** covenant with the **house of Israel** and with the **house of Judah**..."* Jeremiah 31:31
 - 4) The New Covenant is **not** for the church.

- 5) The church's participation in the New Covenant will be on a **legislative** level as we reign with Christ throughout eternity.
 - 6) Church Age believers will administer the New Covenant as servants and not as its recipients. 2 Corinthians 3:6 says God *...also made us adequate **as servants** of [a] new covenant.*
2. Hebrews 9:16b – *For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the **death of the one who made it.***
- a. The stipulations of a covenant might change before the death of the sacrifice victim, but after the death of the sacrificed victim (typically an animal) it become legally **binding**.
 - b. In the case of the New Covenant, Christ became the sacrifice victim to make it legally binding. Once Christ died, the terms and promises of the New Covenant became **unchangeable**.
 - c. According to the author of Hebrews, the New Covenant was legalized in Christ's **blood**. Hebrews 9:23-26, 10:9-18
 - d. When Christ took up the **cup** during the Last Supper, He publicly mentioned the promised New Covenant with Israel, saying He was personally legalizing it by means of His sacrifice on the cross.
 - e. The disciples **witnessed** and recorded Christ's statements concerning the New Covenant exactly as He spoke them that night. Matthew 26:28-29, Mark 14:24-25, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25
 - 1) That evening Christ promised to never again drink any kind of **wine** until He returns to drink it anew in the Kingdom of God.
 - 2) Interestingly, it is in the Millennial Kingdom that the New Covenant will finally be **implemented** with Israel. Matthew 26:29, Mark 14:25, Luke 22:17-18
 - f. We understand that the sacrifice of Christ not only provided forgiveness for the sins of the entire world, but also was absolutely necessary to permanently **legalize** the New Covenant with Israel.
 - 1) Some might not **agree** that the blood of Christ was necessary for the legalization of the New Covenant.
 - 2) But according to Scripture, Christ's blood was necessary in fulfillment of Old Testament sacrificial **typology**. The author of the book of Hebrews clearly states that *without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.* (Heb. 9:22b) See also Leviticus 6:7, 17:11
 - 3) Christ could not provide **forgiveness** for sins (for all) or the legalization of the New Covenant (for Israel) if He were merely killed, for example, by drowning or choking. He had to die the horrific death of a substitutionary sacrifice for our sins.

- 4) We should never fear teaching, or communicating, this **fact**. Christ had to die as a blood sacrifice on the tree (cross), which served as His altar. Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Galatians 3:13, Hebrews 13:10-14
 - 5) When Christ died on the cross, He was made a **curse** for us; Christ died as our substitute to take away our sins. Romans 3:24-25, 5:9; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 2 Corinthians 5:20; Galatians 3:13; Colossians 1:20
 - 6) Although to us the blood of Christ is indeed **precious** (1 Peter 1:19), this is not to be equated with treating the blood of Christ as a talisman, or “pleading the blood of Christ” in defense against Satan or evil. These Concepts are not taught in the Word of God.
3. Hebrews 9:17a – *For a covenant is valid only when men are dead...* This could also be translated, “For a covenant to be **valid** a death is necessary.”
 - a. This **model** of covenant making through death is seen clearly in the Old Testament in both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants.
 - b. In the Bible, a covenant became legally binding at the time a death was executed by the one who **made** the covenant, either the death of an animal, or in the case of the New Covenant, the death of the Lamb of God!
 4. Hebrews 9:17b – *...for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.* A better translation here might be, “For a covenant is never made **firm** (*in force*) without the death of a sacrifice victim.”
 - a. **Literally** this verse could read, “*For it is never in force while the one (the sacrifice victim) who made it (legal) lives*”. This verse is not teaching that the one who makes the covenant must die. That would be an unfortunate way to make a contract!
 - b. Historically a covenant was not legally binding **before** the death of the sacrifice victim. As clearly seen in the Old Testament, it was only after the sacrifice victim died that a covenant became legally binding.
 5. Hebrews 9:18 – *Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood.* The author pointed out to his readers that the **Mosaic** Covenant initially required the blood of the sacrifice victim to be shed in order to legally set it in motion.
 6. Hebrews 9:19 – The author recounted that when Moses read the terms of the Old Covenant, he took the blood of sacrificed animals and **sprinkled** both the written document and all the people. This act made Israel legally bound by its terms. Exodus 24:5-8
 7. Hebrews 9:20 – **Moses** clarified the significance of the sprinkled blood with the words, “*This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.*” The death commemorated in blood launched the Mosaic Covenant.
 8. Hebrews 9:21 – In order to show the magnitude of the Mosaic Covenant, after explaining to the people the significance of the blood (v20), Moses ceremonially **set** them apart by sprinkling the people (v19), the tabernacle, and all its furnishings with blood.

9. Hebrews 9:22a – *And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are **cleansed** with blood.* Under the Mosaic Law, not only was blood a requirement for the establishment of virtually every covenant, but it was also a requirement for the ceremonial cleansing of people. Leviticus 4:20, 26, 35; 17:11
10. Hebrews 9:22b – *...and without shedding of blood there is no **forgiveness**.* Under the Law, blood from a substitutionary sacrifice was not only vital in the establishment of covenants; it was also essential for forgiveness.

D. Hebrews 9:23-28 – Christ’s work was superior; being both final and sufficient

1. Hebrews 9:23a – *Therefore it was necessary for the **copies** of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these...* Under the Mosaic Covenant, the cleansing of the earthly tabernacle by the blood of animals only dimly mimicked the greater significance of what Christ would come to do.
2. Hebrews 9:23b – *...but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* By means of a once-for-all substitutionary sacrificial death, Christ sanctified **forever**, all who pertain to God. This includes us. Hebrews 10:10
3. Hebrews 9:24a – *For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one...* Jesus Christ didn’t enter the **earthly** Holy Place in Jerusalem on our behalf.
4. Hebrews 9:24b – *...but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of **God** for us.* Christ entered the authentic Holy of Holies as our mediator. On our behalf He presented Himself to God as the final sacrifice for all sins. Titus 2:14, Hebrews 1:3, 4:14, 7:25, 9:11-14, 13:12, 1 John 2:1
5. Hebrews 9:25 – *Nor was it that He would offer Himself **often**, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own.* As the greatest High Priest of all time, Christ doesn’t need to offer a repeated sacrifice like the high priests under the Levitical system did.
6. Hebrews 9:26a – *Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world...* If Christ’s **sacrifice** were insufficient, as was the case with the sacrifices under the Aaronic Priesthood, then throughout history He would have needed to constantly come and be offered for sins.
7. Hebrews 9:26b – *...but now **once** at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* Christ, as God’s final solution for sin, exceeded all other sacrifices in His once-for-all sacrifice of Himself.
8. Hebrews 9:27 – *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.* Because every person **will** die and face the eternal consequences of impending judgment, Christ’s one-time substitutionary sacrifice ought to be of supreme importance to us all.
9. Hebrews 9:28a – *So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many...* Since everyone is going to face judgment after death, Christ’s one-time sacrifice was **critical** to take care of sin forever.

10. Hebrews 9:28b – *Christ ...will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who **eagerly** await Him.* The next time Christ appears, it will not be for saving us from sin; He already did that on the cross.
- The next time Christ comes, He will come to save us from this sin-cursed **world**.
 - Bible-believing Christians are looking forward to that **day**!

VII. Hebrews 10:1-39 – The Value of Christ’s One-time Sacrifice

A. Hebrews 10:1-10 – Christ’s sacrifice was successful

- Hebrews 10:1 – *For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come...* When we consider the **Law**, which emerged with the Old Covenant, we observe that at best it was a mere faded picture of the amazing realities Christ would bring.
 - Hebrews 10:1a – *And not the very form EIKON of things...* The Law was not the actual entity EIKON that provided forgiveness; it was merely a dim **shadow** of what was to come.
 - Hebrews 10:1b – *Can never, by the same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year...* The ineffectual nature of the Law forced Israel to continually make the **same** sacrifices year by year.
 - Hebrews 10:1c – *Can never... make **perfect** those who draw near.* As required by the Law, Israel approached God through the required yearly sacrifices, but sadly those offerings never freed them from guilt or made them perfect in God’s eyes.
- Hebrews 10:2-3 – The Law with its offerings for sins **failed** to resolve the sin issue.
 - Hebrews 10:2a – *Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered?* If the sacrifices required by the Law had made Israel acceptable to God, there would have been no need to continue offering them. The fact that they were constantly **repeated** showed they were deficient.
 - Hebrews 10:2b – *Because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins...* If Israel had been forgiven by their sacrifices, their consciences would have been clear, and they would have enjoyed **finality** in regard to sin.
 - Hebrews 10:3 – *But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.* Instead of giving them a sense of conclusiveness, the ongoing sacrifices constantly **reminded** them of their depravity.
- Hebrews 10:4 – *Why didn’t animal sacrifices provide a sense of forgiveness? Because ...it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.* The blood of **animals** required by the Law could not remove peoples’ sin debt and associated guilt.

4. Hebrews 10:5-6 – *Therefore, when He **comes** into the world, He says...* Since animal sacrifices never brought resolution to the sin problem, the Old Testament predicted that in the incarnation Christ would announce God’s rejection of their sacrificial attempts.
Psalm 40:6-8
- a. Hebrews 10:5a – *...sacrifice and offering you have **not** desired...* Christ would come and preach that animal sacrifices were inadequate for the forgiveness of sin.
Psalm 51:16-17; Proverbs 21:3; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6; Matthew 12:7, 9:13; Mark 12:33
 - b. Hebrews 10:5b – *...but a **body** you have prepared for Me...* As a man, Christ would have a human body that could be offered as the perfect substitutionary sacrifice.
Isaiah 53:4-5, 11; Luke 22:19; 1 Peter 2:24, 4:1-2; Hebrews 10:10
 - 1) In His sinless humanity, Christ was God’s perfect **provision** for sins. Galatians 3:13
 - 2) In the incarnation, God planned for Christ to be sacrificed as the **final** solution to the sin problem. His sacrificial death would provide what the Law could not provide.
John 1:29
 - c. Hebrews 10:6 – *In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure.* Christ would **announce** that God did not take pleasure in their constant animal sacrifices. The Levitical priesthood did not propitiate God’s wrath. 1 Samuel 15:22, Acts 17:24-25
5. Hebrews 10:7 – *Then I said, “Behold, I have come...”* The Old Testament predicted Christ would come and **preach** the good news. He would say why He had come into the world, which was primarily to die for sinners. Isaiah 11:2-4, 42:1, 61:1; Mark 12:33; Luke 19:10; John 10:11-18, 17:4
- a. Hebrews 10:7a – *“Behold, I have come (in the scroll of the Book it is written of Me...)”* He would acknowledge that His coming had been plainly prophesied. Luke 24:44; John 5:36, 39; 10:25
 - b. Hebrews 10:7b – *...to do **your** will, O God...* Jesus would come with an attitude of “not My will but Yours,” toward the Father. He would come only to do the will of God.
Psalm 40:6-8, Matthew 26:42, John 6:38
6. Hebrews 10:8 – Long before His incarnation in the prophecy from Psalm 40:6-8, the psalmist **predicted** Messiah’s words and message.
- a. Hebrews 10:8a – The psalmist first communicated that Messiah would teach that, *“Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did **not desire**, nor were you pleased with them.”* Messiah would inform Israel their sacrifices were ineffective toward God.
 - b. Hebrews 10:8b – Even *...though they were offered in accordance with the law.* Even though Israel offered sacrifices correctly as commanded in the Law, their efforts **failed**. God’s wrath was not propitiated.

7. Hebrews 10:9 – *Then He said, “Here I am, I have **come** to do your will.”* Due to the Law’s inability to do what God wanted done, Messiah would come and accomplish God’s will. He would satisfactorily pay the Law’s demand.
 - a. Hebrews 10:9a – *He sets **aside** the first...* What the Law could not accomplish, Christ did. By fulfilling the Law’s requirement, He made it obsolete. This verse shows that long-ago God already had a replacement in mind for the old system of Law. Matthew 5:17
 - b. Hebrews 10:9b – *In order ...to establish the **second**...* through Christ’s once-for-all sacrificial death on the cross, God provided a perfect way to obtain eternal and complete forgiveness. Romans 8:3
8. Hebrews 10:10 – *And by that **will**...* Because of His willingness and determination to do the will of the Father, Christ succeeded where the Law had failed. Luke 9:51, 18:31; John 4:34; Galatians 4:4-5
 - a. Hebrews 10:10a – *...we **have been** made holy...* This is a strong statement of eternal security. His sacrifice was enough to make every believer holy in the sight of God. We cannot improve on what He has accomplished. We are already holy because of Christ’s sacrifice.
 - b. Hebrews 10:10b – *...through the **sacrifice** of the body of Jesus Christ...* Under the Old Covenant the sacrifices done by the Levitical priesthood could never accomplish what Christ did in His own body on the cross.
 - c. Hebrews 10:10c – *...through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**...* When a person trusts in the perfect, once and for all sacrifice of Christ he or she is eternally deemed to be holy by God.

B. Hebrews 10:11-18 – The scope of Christ’s sacrifice

1. Hebrews 10:11 – The sacrifices of the Levitical priests were of **inferior** quality.
 - a. Hebrews 10:11a – *Every priest stands **daily** ministering...* Under the Mosaic system, every single day the priests would stand, not sit or rest, providing their inept religious services.
 - b. Hebrews 10:11b – *And offering time after time the same sacrifices...* In daily repetition priests would offer the same **inadequate** sacrifices.
 - c. Hebrews 10:11c – *Which can never take away sins.* Sadly, their constant stream of sacrifices **never** took Israel’s sins away.
2. Hebrews 10:12-13 – Christ’s sacrifice was **final**.
 - a. Hebrews 10:12a – *But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time...* In stark **contrast** to the service of the Levitical priests, Christ offered a once-for-all sacrifice for sins.
 - b. Hebrews 10:12b – *He sat down...* Since Christ **sat** down, we recognize that He finished His work forever. Nothing more is needed for resolution of the sin issue.

- c. Hebrews 10:12c – He is now ...*at the right hand of God*. Since He completed His work, Christ now sits in the **preferential** seat of heaven.
- 1) Since He sat down at the right hand of God, we understand that His work is not only completed but also **accepted**.
 - 2) This fact also explains our acceptance in Him (Eph. 1:6 KJV). Christ's sacrifice made us fully **presentable** to God. Colossians 2:10
- d. Hebrews 10:13 – *Waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet*. Christ is at God's right hand anticipating the day when He will have personally **subjugated** all His enemies and made them a footstool.
1 Corinthians 15:24-28
3. Hebrews 10:14-18 – Christ's sacrifice was **efficacious** in the extreme.
- a. Hebrews 10:14 – *For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified*. By means of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice, God now has set us apart forever as His special people in Christ (sanctified us) and eternally counts us to be perfect.
Wow!
- 1) Hebrews 10:14a – *For by one offering He has perfected for all time...* The author stated **emphatically** that due to the work of Christ on Calvary for our sins, our salvation is secured forever.
 - 2) Hebrews 10:14b – *He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified*. The one offering of Christ perfected us **forever**. We can never be lost. Once again, we see He has made us eternally secure.
- b. Hebrews 10:15-17 – How do we **know** for sure that we have been perfected forever through the sacrifice of Christ? The Holy Spirit prophetically confirmed this would happen.
- 1) Hebrews 10:15 – *And the Holy Spirit also **testifies** to us; for after saying...* The Holy Spirit confirmed in Jeremiah 31:33-34 that Messiah would not only confirm the New Covenant with Israel but would go on and abolish sin forever.
 - 2) Hebrews 10:16 – First the Holy Spirit promised in Jeremiah 31:33 to make the New Covenant with **Israel**, promising to put His teachings in their minds and write them on their hearts.
 - 3) Hebrews 10:17 – Then He foretold the **ultimate** dissolution of sin. *And their sins and lawless deeds I will remember no more*. In Jeremiah 31:34 God's promise was to deal conclusively with sin.
 - 4) The only place God dealt with sin forever was on the cross. Therefore, this verse refers to both the sins of Israel and the sins of the world. **All** sin was dealt with once and for all on the cross.

- c. Hebrews 10:18 – *Now where there is **forgiveness** of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.* We understand that where sins have indeed been forgiven there is no more need for any sin offering.
- 1) It would be **foolish** for a Hebrew believer to return to the old religious system of offering inadequate sacrifices for sins.
 - 2) Since there remains no more sacrifice for sins now that Christ completed the work, **why** return to that system?

Fourth warning: Hebrews 10:19-39 – The danger of defiance

C. Hebrews 10:19-25 – Christ’s sacrifice provides motivation

1. Hebrews 10:19-20 – How should knowledge of Christ’s sacrifice **impact** our lives?
 - a. Hebrews 10:19a – *Therefore, considering the **efficacious** nature of Christ’s sacrifice...*
 - b. Hebrews 10:19b – *Brethren...* By addressing his readers as brethren, the author acknowledged his addressees were **believers**.
 - c. Hebrews 10:19c – *Since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus.* Due to the forgiveness they received through the blood of Christ, the Hebrew believers could enter God’s presence with **confidence**. Romans 8:31-39, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 John 1:7
 - 1) In Hebrews 4:14-16 we are invited to approach the Holy Place (God’s presence) **any** time by means of prayer. Ephesians 3:11-12
 - 2) One day in the future we will be able to approach God in His **heavenly** Holy of Holies in person. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18, 5:10; Hebrews 7:19; 1 Peter 2:9-10, 3:18, Revelation 22:3-4
 - 3) Verses like these (Hebrews 10:19) are why those who teach the exclusion of unfaithful believers from the presence of **God** as a punitive judgment during the millennium or the eternal state are in error.
 - 4) Truly none of us are **worthy** or good enough to approach God, not even on our best day. None of us will ever approach God based on our goodness but only on the basis of the finished work of Christ.
 - d. Hebrews 10:20 – *By a new and living way, which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh. **Christ** opened the way for us to enter the Most Holy Place by means of His physical body that was torn in His substitutionary death for us on the cross.*
 - 1) The door Christ opened was not into the Holy Place in the earthly tabernacle. We now enter into God’s heavenly presence through the *new and **living** way Jesus’* death provided. John 2:21-22, Romans 8:3

- 2) *The new and living way* into the true Holy of Holies was through Christ's physical and spiritual death (Mark 15:34) while in His **physical** body on the cross.
1 Peter 2:24
 - 3) In the history of the church there have been those who have denied either the humanity or the deity of Christ. To deny either aspect is serious **heresy**.
John 1:14, 8:24; 1 John 2:22-23, 4:1-3; 2 John 1:7
 - 4) *...through the veil, that is, His flesh*. Christ's body was the curtain that was **torn** to open up the way for us to enter God's presence. John 10:9, 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5
 - 5) At salvation we passed from death into eternal **life** through Christ, by means of all that transpired in His sacrifice on the cross. John 5:24
2. Hebrews 10:21-25 – Therefore based on Christ's **priestly** sacrificial work, we should draw near (v22), hold fast (v23), show compassion (v24), avoid negligence (v25a), and seek to positively motivate others (v25b).
- a. Hebrews 10:21 – *And since we have a great priest over the house of God...* The **knowledge** of Christ's sacrifice (v19-20) and priesthood (v21) ought to compel us on to godly action.
 - b. Hebrews 10:22 – **Based on** the priesthood of Christ, we are now invited to enthusiastically draw near to God.
 - 1) Hebrews 10:22a – *Let us draw near with a **sincere** heart...* Knowledge of Christ's priesthood should lure us into intimate fellowship with God.
 - 2) Hebrews 10:22b – *Let us draw near ...in full assurance of faith*. Based on Christ work and person we should be drawn toward God with a great sense of **confidence**.
Romans 8:31-34
 - 3) Hebrews 10:22c – *Let us draw near ...having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience*. Knowing our sins are **forgiven** because of Christ's completed work frees us from the weight of guilt and shame so that we can draw near to God with confidence.
 - 4) Hebrews 10:22d – *Let us draw near [with] our bodies washed with pure water*. In a metaphorical sense, the priestly work of Christ cleansed us with pure water. This metaphor speaks of the **clean** standing we now have before God. John 13:10
 - c. Hebrews 10:23 – *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*. Knowledge of Christ's faithfulness should cause us to firmly grip the **hope** we profess. Ephesians 1:18
 - 1) The hope mentioned here is the same hope we have continually professed since the first day of our **salvation**. Romans 5:5, 8:23-25
 - 2) Why can we hold firmly to the hope we have always confessed? Because the God who makes promises is **trustworthy**. 1 John 3:3

- d. Hebrews 10:24 – *And let us consider how to **stimulate** one another to love and good deeds.* Because of Christ’s vigilance over us as our high priest we should likewise look for ways to help others mature in their care and concern for others.
- e. Hebrews 10:25a – *Not forsaking our own **assembling** together, as is the habit of some.* We should not fall into the trap of missing church or avoiding Christian fellowship.
- f. Hebrews 10:25b – *But **encourage** one another.* Instead of avoiding church meetings, we should assemble consistently with the idea of encouraging each other onward in the faith.
- g. Hebrews 10:25c – *And all the more as you see the **day** drawing near.* As the day of the Lord gets closer, it becomes more and more important for us to meet together for encouragement. 2 Timothy 3:1-17

D. Hebrews 10:26-31 – The author warned of the sin of abandoning Christ’s work

1. Hebrews 10:26a – *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth...* The author **sternly** warned these Hebrew Christians against willful sin.
 - a. In order to understand the background to the warning here, **consider** the following.
 - 1) In Hebrews 10:25 the author warned these believers against abandoning Christian **church** meetings, adding that some were already guilty of this error.
 - 2) A constant theme in Hebrews is that Christ and the Christian faith are **superior** to Judaistic religious practices. In order to dissuade his readers from departing from Christianity, the author already showed them they had a better priesthood and a better sacrifice.
 - 3) Most commentators agree that the Hebrew readers were tempted to return to Judaistic practices, including the **temple** sacrificial system. This error would only have been possible while the temple was still standing.
 - 4) For a rebellious believer who willfully returned to temple worship it would be a nearly impossible trap from which to **escape**. Some believers had already fallen, and others were obviously very close to this willful sin.
 - 5) Contextually, this is the issue addressed by the writer. When we understand the **serious** temptation to return to the temple sacrificial system that was threatening these Hebrew believers, we see why the writer issued such a severe warning here.
 - 6) We can make a lot of **application** to our own lives from this warning. We too might be tempted to return to some flawed system of religion out of which we were saved and then face stern discipline from the hand of our loving Father.
 - b. In order to understand the impending judgment soon to fall on God’s adversaries in Jerusalem, consider the following **details**.

- 1) The book of Hebrews was written in approximately AD 65 to Jewish believers living in Jerusalem. That was a mere two years before General Titus surrounded Jerusalem with His armies (AD 67). In **AD 70**, Titus succeeded in destroying Jerusalem.
- 2) It is important to remember that Jesus predicted Jerusalem's destruction. Just prior to His crucifixion, He gave grim **predictions** concerning Jerusalem's overthrow.
 - a) Luke 19:41-42 – *When He approached **Jerusalem**, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.*
 - b) Luke 19:43 – *For the days will come upon you **when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side,***
 - c) Luke 19:44 – *...and **they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.** (Cf. Matthew 19:39-45, 23:35 36, 24:2; Luke 21:20-24; Acts 2:40)*
- 3) These predictions are significant, since historically in AD 70 some believers who had rebelliously returned to temple sacrifices failed to **flee** Jerusalem, and therefore they lost their lives along with the unbelieving Jews.
- 4) Those believers not involved in temple sacrifices **escaped** before the fall of Jerusalem. They went toward the city of Pella east of the Jordan. Early church historians wrote about a Christian exodus from Jerusalem before the war began. 2 Thessalonians 2:14-16
 - a) Eusebius (AD 260-340) wrote: "The whole body...of the **Church** at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given...before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella."
 - b) Epiphanius (AD 310-403) wrote: "From there it took its beginning after the exodus from Jerusalem when all the **disciples** went to live in Pella because Christ had told them to leave Jerusalem ... since it would undergo a siege."
 - c) In AD 75 Jewish historian Josephus mentioned an **exodus** before the destruction of Jerusalem. He wrote, "Many of the most eminent of the Jews swam away from the city." While he did not specifically mention Christians, he did confirm an exodus.
- 5) By implication, the writer of Hebrews seemingly also **warned** Jewish believers to withdraw from Jerusalem and distance themselves from temple worship and sacrifices.
 - a) Hebrews 13:10 – ***We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.***

- b) Hebrews 13:11 – *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned **outside the camp** [outside of Jerusalem].*
 - c) Hebrews 13:12-13 – *Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, **suffered outside the gate**. So, let us **go out to Him outside the camp** [Jerusalem], bearing His reproach.*
 - d) Hebrews 13:14 – *For here **we do not have a lasting city**, but we are seeking the city which is to come.*
2. Hebrews 10:26b – *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth... If these Hebrew believers willfully decided to rebel and return to animal sacrifices after learning the truth of salvation, they would be guilty of despising the one **true** sacrifice for sins.*
- a. Contextually we see that a **return** to temple worship by these first century Hebrew believers would make them guilty of trampling the Son of God underfoot and exposing Him to an open shame. Hebrews 6:4-6
 - b. Generally speaking, when any of us sin willfully, it is synonymous to **despising** our one and only sacrifice for sins, Jesus Christ.
3. Hebrews 10:26c – *...there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. For any Hebrew believer to return to the sacrificial system was a blatant denial of the one and **only** sacrifice for sins, Jesus Christ. Truly there is no other sacrifice.*
- a. Hebrews 10:12 – *But He, **having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat** down at the right hand of God.*
 - b. Hebrews 10:17-18 – *And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, **there is no longer any offering for sin**.*
4. Hebrews 10:27 – *But a terrifying expectation of **judgment** and the fury of a fire, which will consume the adversaries.* This strong statement showed the Hebrew believers of Jerusalem, and us too, that willful rebel against God should be afraid of judgment KRISEOS.
- a. The judgment spoken of here is not the judgment of hellfire. Obviously, no believer is ever in **danger** of Hell. Romans 8:1
 - b. Could this be referring to the Judgment **Seat** of Christ?
 - 1) While there will be judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ and **fire** will consume our bad works (wood, hay and stubble), the Judgment Seat of Christ is not *the fury of a fire that will consume the adversaries*. 1 Thessalonians 1:7-9
 - 2) This judgment is **not** likely referring to the Judgment Seat of Christ.
 - c. In the context of Hebrews, there was a terrifying prospect of impending judgment and consuming fire about to destroy the rebellious and unbelieving adversaries of God, the **destruction** of Jerusalem. Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 13:34-35a, 21:20-24

- 1) For believing Hebrews to willfully sin by **returning** to temple sacrifices would be to volunteer to share in the impending judgment. This was indeed a terrifying prospect.
 - 2) To **disassociate** with other believers was a precarious first step away from Christianity and toward a return to Judaism and appropriately the terrifying prospect of participating in God's impending judgment. Hebrews 10:25
- d. By way of application, this serves as a **warning** to any believer tempted to return to a religious system he or she formerly practiced. Such a believer can expect severe discipline from his or her heavenly Father. Hebrews 12:5-11, Revelation 3:19
- 1) In Hebrews 6:6 we saw that renewal to a right way of thinking is impossible while you *...crucify to [yourself] the Son of God and put Him to open shame.*
 - 2) In application of Hebrews 10:26, we see that another outcome of disregarding Christ's sacrifice by a believer who returns to false religion might be severe judgment in the form of discipline from the hand of the Father. Hebrews 4:1
 - 3) 1 Peter 4:17 – Peter said judgment always starts with God's **household**. *For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?* Hebrews 10:30
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 11:31-32 – In a context about the Lord's Table, we read, *"But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are **disciplined** by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world."*
 - 5) 1 John 5:16 – God's judgment of a believer during his lifetime may be **severe**. *If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will for him give life... There is a **sin leading to death**; I do not say that he should make request for this.* Acts 5:1-11
 - 6) 1 Corinthians 5:12b-13 – God may use the **local** church to judge a wayward believer. *...Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.* 1 Timothy 1:19-20
5. Hebrews 10:28-29 – The author now gives several **rationales** for heeding this severe warning
- a. Hebrews 10:28 – *Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.* If people who blatantly sinned under the Law were executed with no more than two or three witnesses, do we think we can get **away** with willful sin?
 - b. Hebrews 10:29 – *How much severer punishment do you think he will **deserve**?* First century Hebrew believers who returned to Judaism were guilty of three sins deserving of God's discipline.

- 1) Hebrews 10:29a –The first sin deserving of God’s discipline was *trampling underfoot the Son of God*. To trample underfoot speaks of offensive neglect, direct rudeness or giving **insults**.
 - a) In what ways might a Hebrew Christian have committed this sin? To **return** to the old sacrificial system would have insinuated that Christ’s sacrifice was inadequate.
 - b) How might we commit a similar sin? If we return to a religious system that denies the sufficiency of Christ or His finished work, we are showing **disrespect** for our Savior’s death and exposing Him to shame by our actions.
- 2) Hebrews 10:29b – *And has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified*. Secondly, a Hebrew believer who went back to Judaism was treating the blood that made him holy before God and ratified the New Covenant, as **profane**.
- 3) Hebrews 10:29c – Thirdly they’d *...insult the Spirit of grace*. A Hebrew Christian who went back to the old system of sacrifices insulted the Holy Spirit who gives us **grace** for living. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:4, Ephesians 4:30
- c. Hebrews 10:30a – *For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.”* God’s absolute **holy** character demands the punishment of sin. Although believers do not suffer punishment for their sins like unbelievers will, God caringly disciplines His children for sin.
- d. Hebrews 10:30b – *And again, “The Lord will judge His people.”* God the Father judges His children and wisely **disciplines**. Leviticus 19:18, Romans 12:19, 1 Corinthians 11:31, James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 4:17
- e. Hebrews 10:31 – *It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. In any dispensation it is a **terrifying** thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
 - 1) Hebrews 10:31a – *It is a terrifying thing...* For those Hebrew believers who turned back to Judaism it was most certainly terrifying to be caught in destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70; a judgment meant specifically for Christ rejecting Israel.
 - 2) Hebrews 10:31b – *To fall into the hands of the living God.* To be caught in the judgment of God against nonbelievers because of foolishly regressing into sin would be terrifying and very unfortunate. 1 Peter 2:20
 - a) As children of a sinless, perfect Father, we can **expect** God’s discipline if we go astray. Hebrews 12:4-13, 1 Peter 1:16
 - b) While God’s discipline is not pleasant, it is always exactly what we **need**. Psalm 94:12-13, 119:71; 2 Samuel 7:13-14;
 - c) It may be that the Lord’s discipline would involve the **death** of one of His children, (1 Cor. 11:30, 1 John 5:15-17), but if does involve death, it would be exactly what God considers best.

- d) 1 Corinthians 11:32 – *But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the **world**.*
- 3) Hebrews 10:31c – *...to fall into the hands...* This word fall EMPIPTO carries the idea of **ill-fatedly** being cast into, or by chance becoming involved in.
- a) This expression usually has the idea of **inadvertently** falling into some problem rather than voluntarily or willfully jumping in. Matthew 12:11; Luke 6:39, 10:36; 1 Timothy 3:6-7, 6:9
- b) This verse **describes** exactly what would happen to Hebrew believers in Jerusalem if they went back to Judaistic worship.
- c) If the Hebrew believers in AD 65-70 went back to offering sacrifices, they would very soon find themselves in harm's way. God was very close to judging Jerusalem together with all those who had **rejected** Him.
- 4) Hebrews 10:31d – *Of the **Living** God...* The writer of Hebrews used this phrase to describe God. The expression found also in the Old Testament could be used in both positive and negative settings.
- a) Hebrews 3:12 and 10:31 – In the Old Testament, the phrase living God was used as a **warning** in relation to anyone who dared to defy God. 1 Samuel 17:36; 2 Kings 19:16; Isaiah 37:4, 17; Jeremiah 23:26
- b) Hebrews 9:14 and 12:22 – It was also used in the Old Testament to give **confidence** to God's people. It would remind them of God's active power to save. Deuteronomy 5:26; Joshua 3:10; Psalm 42:2, 84:2; Daniel 6:20, 26; Hosea 1:10

E. Hebrews 10:32-39 – The privilege of suffering for Christ's sacrifice

1. Hebrews 10:32-34 – In order to motivate these Hebrew Christians, the author recounted several very important **historical** realities.
- a. Hebrews 10:32a – *But **remember** the former days when, after being enlightened...* The writer reminded them of their glory days, right after hearing the gospel and believing. Ephesians 1:13, Hebrews 6:4
- b. Hebrews 10:32b – *You **endured** a great conflict of sufferings.* He reminded them how in the beginning they had suffered for their faith in Christ. 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, Revelation 2:3
- c. Hebrews 10:33a – *Partly by being made a public spectacle...* He spoke of the public **ridicule** they had faced due to their faith in Christ. John 16:1-3, 2 Timothy 3:10-12
- d. Hebrews 10:33b – *Through reproaches and tribulations...* He recounted how they had been **cruelly** treated back in the beginning days of their salvation. Mark 13:9, 1 Peter 4:12-19

- e. Hebrews 10:33c – *And partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.* Originally, they had joyfully identified with and **shared** in the burdens of persecuted believers. Philippians 1:7, Hebrews 6:10
 - f. Hebrews 10:34 – *For you showed sympathy to the prisoners.* They had empathized with those who were **imprisoned** for their faith. Acts 8:1-3, 9:1, 22:4, Hebrews 13:3
 - g. Hebrews 10:34 – *And accepted joyfully the seizure of your property...* They rejoiced when they were **evicted** from their homes and when their personal belongings were taken from them because they professed Christ. Romans 8:35-36; Hebrews 11:34-38, 13:14
 - h. Hebrews 10:34 – *Knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one...* They endured these trials because they knew they had something far **better** coming in the future. Ephesians 1:18, Colossians 1:5, Hebrews 11:16
2. Hebrews 10:35-37 – Based on the danger of **snubbing** the sacrifice of Christ, the author encouraged these Hebrew believers to stay strong in their faith in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Colossians 3:24; James 1:2-8; Revelation 3:11, 22:12
- a. Hebrews 10:35a – *Therefore, they were encouraged not [to] throw away [their] **confidence**...* After reminding the readers of their initial endurance by faith, he then told them to not suddenly discard their confident dependence on the Lord.
 - b. Hebrews 10:35b – *...which has great reward.* If we maintain our confidence in the Lord, we will be greatly rewarded. This is positive motivation to maintain our walk of **faith** and enjoy the grace of God. 1 Peter 1:6-9
 - c. Hebrews 10:36a – *For you have **need** of endurance.* These Hebrew believers needed to endure in their daily trust in God and not give up even through difficult trials. As time passes and life gets increasingly difficult, we all need encouragement to endure. 2 John 1:8
 - d. Hebrews 10:36b – *So that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was **promised**.* In verse 35 we are told that if we endure, we are promised great reward. 1 Peter 1:6-9, 2 Peter 1:11
 - e. Hebrews 10:37 – *For yet in a very little while He who is coming will **come** and will not delay.* The author reminded the Hebrew believers of the nearness of the rapture. In a very short time Christ will return, bearing rewards for service. Romans 13:11, Revelation 22:12
3. Hebrews 10:38-39 – The writer continued to **motivate** his readers to endure by faith and not regress to Judaistic practices.
- a. Hebrews 10:38a – *But My righteous one shall live by **faith**...* Quoting from Habakkuk, the author reminded his readers that justified people are called to daily live by faith, and in their context not go back to a legalistic religion they had already left behind. Habakkuk 2:3-4

- b. Hebrews 10:38b – *And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.* The writer reminded them that if a believer turns away from a life of faith, he or she is not pleasing God. God delights in our **trust** of Him. Exodus 4:1-14, Hebrews 11:6
- 1) Living under persecution in close proximity to the **temple**, these Hebrew believers were often enticed to shrink back.
 - 2) Therefore, the author encouraged them **onward**.
- c. Hebrews 10:39a – *But we are not of those who shrink back to **destruction**.* The author encouraged his readers that he did not believe they were among those who were going to shrink back and face the impending destruction soon to fall on God's enemies.
- d. Hebrews 10:39b – *But of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.* Speaking optimistically of **success** in their practical sanctification, the author had confidence these believers would not shrink back to destruction but would persevere in practical faith.
- e. Hebrews 10:39c – He is not speaking in this context of the preserving of the soul from **hell**. He is talking about preserving the soul in daily Christian conduct. Peter spoke of Lot, a man the Lord preserved in a tough situation.
- 1) 2 Peter 2:7-8 – *And if He rescued righteous **Lot**, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),*
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:9-10 – *Then the Lord knows how to **rescue** the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.*

VIII. Hebrews 11:1-40 – Practical Daily Faith Illustrated

A. Hebrews 11:1-3 – After quoting Habakkuk 2:4, the author began to explain faith

1. Hebrews 11:1 – **Faith** defined
 - a. Hebrews 11:1a – *Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for...*
 - 1) Faith and hope are two nonphysical **realities**. Most of what we hold to be true in Christianity is not viewable with our eyes but is a trustworthy expectation (hope) based exclusively on our understanding of the Word of God.
 - 2) The author described faith as *the assurance* (being 100% convinced) that our hopes will be **fulfilled**.
 - a) *Assurance* in this verse is HUIPOSTASIS. It is a compound word made of HUIPO under and HUISTEMI stance, or posture. *Assurance* means that which underpins, **substantiates**, or supports.
 - b) *Hope* ELPIZO means **guaranteed anticipation**. *Hope* is not an **uncertain yearning** as the word means in some languages.

- 3) Faith is the intangible confidence that the things we anticipate will be realized. When we are **confident** that God's Word is true, we have faith.
- b. Hebrews 11:1b – ...*the conviction of things not seen*. Faith is described as the persuasion that the things from God's Word that we have not yet seen are indeed **real**.
2 Corinthians 4:18, 5:7
 - 1) We do not have to see God, angels, New Jerusalem, Satan, or a myriad of other things the **Bible** describes, to know they are true.
 - 2) Faith is the conviction that the **unseen** things taught in the Bible are true.
 - a) The word *conviction* ELEGCHOS means proof or **evidence**, and therefore could be translated *firm persuasion*.
 - b) *Of things not seen...* means things not yet observed. It does **not** mean things that are nonexistent that we somehow make real by positive thinking.
 - c) Hebrews 11:7 uses this same word and tense when it says, "...by faith **Noah**, being warned by God about **things not yet seen** [rain, flood] in reverence prepared an ark..."
 - d) Noah did not make the flood a reality by his positive thinking or visualization. Based on the **reliability** of God's revelation to him, Noah counted what he had never personally observed as true.
2. Hebrews 11:2 – Faith's approval
 - a. Hebrews 11:2a – *For by it* [faith] **the men of old gained approval**. Faith in God is what brought the Old Testament saints God's approval.
 - 1) *Men of old* here is a plural, masculine noun PRESBUTEROS and can mean either elders or the ancients. Although the masculine noun is used, it included both men and **women**, as this chapter will testify.
 - 2) To correctly interpret this chapter, we understand that the author referred primarily to Old Testament **saints**.
 - b. Hebrews 11:2b – *For by it* [faith] **the men of old gained approval**. Faith in God brought the Old Testament saints God's commendations.
 - 1) It is important to note that the author did not say these ancients were commended for their works or even their **obedience**. He said they gained God's approval by their trust in God.
 - 2) Faith brings God's approval because faith has its focus on God. Your faith pleases God because you are not looking to yourself but instead to Him. If you want to please God learn to actively trust Him. Romans 9:33b, Hebrews 11:6
3. Hebrews 11:3 – After defining faith in verse one, the author illustrated his definition in a **practical** way.

- a. Hebrews 11:3a – *By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God...* Since none of us were around in the **beginning**, it is purely by faith in the written Word of God that we believe God created the world by speaking it into existence.
- 1) This verse shows us how **...faith is the...conviction of things not seen**. We were not alive in the beginning to witness and confirm these events, but we firmly believe they are true based on what we **know** about God from His Word.
 - 2) Our faith is not based on feelings, visible proofs, or personal experiences. We simply believe the written Word resting in God's **character** and reliability. Psalm 9:10
 - 3) John 20:29 – *Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? **Blessed** are they who did not see, and yet believed."*
- b. Hebrews 11:3b – *...so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.* This verse states that everything that exists was made from things that are **invisible**.
- 1) How do we know this statement is **true**?
 - a) It is **not** because science has confirmed it, but because God's Word says it.
 - b) Believing or disbelieving what the Bible says about life and the beginning of the universe shapes the **paradigm** out of which every person lives.
 - 2) Because faith is confidence in things not seen, it is **foolish** and unreliable in the eyes of the world. To the unbelieving, faith is the crutch weak and ignorant Christians limp on through life.
 - 3) Probably for this reason the author goes on to give his readers a series of historical examples that prove faith is not foolish but perfectly reliable and majorly **honoring** to God.
 - 4) The people of faith in the upcoming verses prove to you and to anyone with an open heart that faith is the victory. People of faith are **heroes**, not fools.

B. Hebrews 11:4-38 – The author examined many people known for their faith

1. Hebrews 11:4-6 – Beginning in Genesis the author showed that God's *righteous ones* [pleased Him] *by faith*. It is important to understand that historically the one and only avenue to a life pleasing to God has **always** been *by faith*. Habakkuk 2:4, Hebrew 10:38
 - a. Hebrews 11:4 – Abel was a believer who approached God by faith as was confirmed by his appropriate **offering**.
 - 1) Hebrews 11:4a – *By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain...* It was his faith in God that made Abel and his sacrifice satisfactory. Conversely Cain and his offering were **rejected** because of Cain's lack of faith.
 - a) Genesis 4:6-7 – *Then the LORD said to Cain, "...If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up?..."*
 - b) Jude 1:11 – *Woe to them! For they have gone **the way of Cain...***

- c) 1 John 3:12 – *Not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did [Cain] slay [Abel]? **Because his deeds were evil and his brother's were righteous.***
- 2) Hebrews 11:4b – *...through which [Abel] obtained the testimony that he was **righteous**.*
- a) Abel was not declared righteous based on his works; rather his works gave **evidence** to the fact that he was righteous.
- b) God **declared** Abel righteous because of his faith in Him, not because of his works, sacrifices, or good deeds. Ephesians 2:8-9
- 3) Hebrews 11:4c – *God testifying about his **gifts**...* When God approved Abel's offering, He gave testimony that Abel was righteous. God never accepts the offering of the unjust. John 9:31
- 4) Hebrews 11:4d – *And through faith, though he is dead, he still **speaks**.* Even though Abel was killed long ago, even today we continue to learn from his faith as recorded for us in Scripture. 2 Timothy 3:16
- b. Hebrews 11:5 – *By faith Enoch...* The author presented Enoch as the **second** example of a person who lived by faith. Enoch was born seven generations after Adam. Jude 1:14
- 1) Hebrews 11:5a – *By faith Enoch was **taken up**...* It is interesting to note that Enoch was carried up into heaven and not down into Sheol, as was usually the case in the Old Testament. Genesis 37:35, 42:38; Job 7:9; Proverbs 5:5; Amos 9:2
- 2) Hebrews 11:5b – *...so that he would not see death...* It was because of his faith in God that Enoch **escaped** death.
- 3) Hebrews 11:5c – *...and he was not found because God took him up...* No one could **find** Enoch because God had suddenly snatched him away into heaven.
- 4) Hebrews 11:5d – *...for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.* Before God took him into heaven, Enoch had become **known** as a man who pleased God. Jude 1:14-15
- a) The Scripture gives witness that **Enoch** was a man who daily walked with God by faith. Both Genesis 5:22 and Genesis 5:24 declare that *Enoch walked with God*.
- b) In light of the author's statements about Enoch and how he pleased God, we might ask, "Is it possible to please God without faith?" Hebrews 11:6 will conclusively **answer** that question.
- c. Hebrews 11:6 – To distrust a **reliable** person who loves you is calling that person a liar and rejecting his/her love.
- 1) Hebrews 11:6a – *And without faith it is impossible to please Him...* Our faith, or confidence, in God pleases and **honors** Him more than anything else.
- a) We please God by believing what He says. There is no one like God. He is above all. He is omniscient. He has all power. He **always** does what He says He will do.

- b) When we disbelieve God, we call Him a **liar**, we dishonor His perfect and awe-inspiring character, and we bring destruction to ourselves.
 - c) Adam and Eve believed Satan instead of God. They dishonored the God they knew, who had given them life and every good thing, and instead they believed Satan. This was a slap in God's face and also brought **death** to them.
 - d) We should note an important detail in this verse. It is faith **not** obedience that pleases God. Why did the author make this important distinction?
 - (i) The only kind of **obedience** that pleases God is obedience that springs from dependence on God (faith). Without faith in God our obedience is improperly motivated. John 15:5b, Philippians 4:13
 - (ii) Faith comes first then obedience, never the other way around. The Bible teacher who puts obedience before faith encourages self-focus and self-effort, which leads to **legalism** and spiritual failure.
 - e) In this chapter we are going to see **amazing** exploits and implicit obedience, but we must not miss the fact that these actions came from men and women who first and foremost lived by faith in God.
- 2) Hebrews 11:6b – *...for he who comes to God must believe that He is...* Quite logically, for you to be able to approach God you must first believe He really does **exist**.
 - 3) Hebrews 11:6c – *...and that He is a **rewarder** of those who seek Him.* When you look to God because you trust Him, He greatly aids you. Even if it seems contrary to fact, God will never let you down if you trust Him. Psalm 25:1-3, Romans 9:33b, Hebrews 10:36
 - a) The Old Testament saints in Hebrews 11 were **blessed** and fruitful because they believed God. Jeremiah 17:7-8
 - b) The author stated these truths for the Hebrew believers who were tempted to not walk by faith. We are always acceptable in God's sight because of our position in Christ, but we please Him **practically** when we trust Him throughout each day.
2. Hebrews 11:7 – The author advanced to speak of **Noah**, another Old Testament believer who walked by faith.
 - a. Hebrews 11:7a – *By faith Noah...* Noah was **unique**. In a time when the entire world had disregarded God, Noah maintained an unwavering confidence in Him and His ominous warning. Like Enoch, Noah was also known for his walk with God. Genesis 6:9
 - b. Hebrews 11:7b – *...being warned by God about things not yet seen...* Noah believed God's astonishing warning about an impending worldwide **flood**. This was something no one had ever seen before. The Bible indicates that it had never even rained. Genesis 2:6

- c. Hebrews 11:7c – *...in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...* Because of his belief in God’s Word, Noah labored for many years to assemble the **ark** that eventually saved him and his family. Could Noah have been the target of jokes or even persecution?
- d. Hebrews 11:7d – *...by which he condemned the world...* Noah’s belief in God’s prediction on the one hand motivated him to prepare the ark that eventually saved him and his family but on the other resulted in the condemnation of the **world**.
- 1) Through Noah’s preaching and ark building **every** person had the same knowledge of God’s prediction. 2 Peter 2:5
 - 2) The voluminous physical presence of the ark not only brought Noah’s family physical salvation from drowning but also brought the just condemnation of everyone else. No one had an **excuse** for not believing. Romans 1:18-21
 - 3) Noah’s faith in God’s prophetic word and consequent preparation made the unbelieving people of the world without excuse. No one could plead ignorance. The **faith** of Noah through the ark brought condemnation to all unbelievers. Romans 2:1-3
- e. Hebrews 11:7e – *...and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.* By his faith, Noah not only condemned the world but more notably he became God’s **heir** by means of the righteousness God imputes to the person who believes in Him. Romans 4:13
3. Hebrews 11:8-10 – The author wrote of Abraham, the man known as the **father** of all who have faith. Romans 4:11, 16-17
- a. Hebrews 11:8a – *By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed...* When Abraham heard God’s call to leave Ur of the Chaldeans, he **obeyed** by faith. By faith Abraham left behind everything that gave him security and stability.
 - b. Hebrews 11:8b – *...by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance...* In an act of complete faith, Abraham **traveled** into the unknown, toward the place he would allegedly inherit.
 - c. Hebrews 11:8c – *...and he went out, not knowing where he was going.* It was Abraham’s faith in God that caused him to **launch** out. He truly had no idea where God was taking him. In light of the dangerous world of his day, Abraham took a daring risk when He trusted God.
 - d. Hebrews 11:9a – *By faith he lived as an **alien** in the land of promise, as in a foreign land...* In a show of complete trust in the sovereign protection of God, instead of settling in a city when he reached the land of Canaan, Abraham willingly moved about as a nomad.
 - e. Hebrews 11:9b – *...dwelling in tents...* As proof of his trust in God, Abraham willingly lived in **tents** while all the nations around him lived in massively walled cities. Hebrews 11:13

- f. Hebrews 11:9c – *...with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise...* Isaac and Jacob, heirs of God’s promise to Abraham, took the same **risks**. They also trusted God’s promise and lived in tents as Abraham did.
- 1) By faith they all, like **strangers** and sojourners, moved here and there throughout the land of Canaan. Genesis 23:4, 1 Chronicles 29:15
 - 2) The promise of God was their **fortress**. Genesis 12:1-3, 15:1
- g. Hebrews 11:10 – *for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.* The reason Abraham was okay with living like a nomadic wanderer was because he was actually looking for a heavenly **city** complete with rock-solid foundations.
- 1) That city would be a **strong** place where he could permanently live.
 - 2) Since this thinking of Abraham’s, i.e., that he was looking for a heavenly city, was not spelled out clearly in the Old Testament **writings**, how did the writer of Hebrews come to this conclusion? Hebrews 11:16, 12:22, 13:4
 - 3) Without the Old Testament explicitly stating that Abraham was looking for a city, Abraham’s faith in action clearly showed that he was not worried about not having an enduring **home**. In fact, Abraham referred to himself as a sojourner. Genesis 23:4, 47:9
 - 4) Therefore, the author of Hebrews confirmed Abraham was looking for the city that was planned and **built** by God. He was looking for the New Jerusalem to come. Revelation 21:14, 19
4. Hebrews 11:11-12 – Faith in the life of Abraham and Sarah in relation to the birth of **Isaac**
- a. Hebrews 11:11a – *By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive...* What about Sarah? What did she learn about trusting God? After she conceived, **Sarah** expressed faith that it was God who gave her the blessings of bearing a child. Genesis 21:6-7
 - b. Hebrews 11:11b – *...even beyond the proper time of life...* The Lord gave Sarah the ability to **conceive** a child long after the time women experience menopause.
 - c. Hebrews 11:11c – *...since she considered Him faithful who had promised.* Understanding human impossibilities, Genesis 21:6-7 quotes Sarah rejoicing and giving God credit for Isaac’s birth. **God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.**
 - 1) Sarah’s faith was seen when she gave God **credit** for making her laugh with joy.
 - 2) Her testimony of rejoicing stands as **proof** she trusted in God.
 - d. Hebrews 11:12a – *Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as **dead** at that, as many descendants as...* When Abraham was far too old to have children, God gave him a son from whom would come countless descendants. Genesis 18:11, Romans 4:19

- e. Hebrews 11:12b – Since it became humanly impossible to count all Abraham’s **offspring**, the author used two Old Testament metaphors to describe their number.
Genesis 15:5, 22:17, 32:12
- 1) *As many descendants as the stars of heaven in number...* Abraham’s offspring are as uncountable as the **stars** in the night sky; there are so many millions of them.
 - 2) *And [as] innumerable as the **sand** which is by the seashore.* They have multiplied to the point of being as innumerable as the grains of sand on a beach.
5. Hebrews 11:13-16 – The writer scanned the lives of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. These patriarchs of Israel did not doubt the promises even though they did not see them fulfilled in **time**.
- a. Hebrews 11:13a – *All these died in faith, without receiving the promises...* The patriarchs of Israel died without receiving the promises of God concerning the land, descendants and blessings. Amazingly, even in death they did not **doubt** God or His promises.
 - b. Hebrews 11:13b – *...but having seen them...* Through **eyes** of faith the patriarchs were able to envision the eventual fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Matthew 13:17, John 8:56
 - c. Hebrews 11:13c – *...having welcomed them from a **distance**...* Even though they died without obtaining the promises, by faith they rejoiced concerning their eventual fulfillment.
 - d. Hebrews 11:13d – *and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.* How did the author know the **patriarchs** had faith in regard to the promises? Their faith is seen when they nonchalantly stated they were nothing more than pilgrims here on earth.
 - 1) Genesis 23:4 – Abraham’s confession: *“I am a **stranger** [alien] and a sojourner [foreign resident] among you; give me a burial site among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”*
 - 2) Genesis 28:4 – Isaac’s confession as he blessed Jacob: *May He also give you the **blessing** of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings [the place where you are a stranger], which God gave to Abraham.*
 - 3) Genesis 47:9 – Jacob’s confession: *So, **Jacob** said to Pharaoh, “The years of my sojourning [pilgrimage] are one hundred and thirty...”* Genesis 31:42
 - e. Hebrews 11:14 – *For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.* Believers who live as though earth is only their **temporary** place of residence show they understand that their true and eternal home is in heaven.
Philippians 3:20
 - 1) Clearly the patriarchs believed in the eventual **literal** fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. Matthew 8:11, Luke 13:28-30

- 2) These fathers of the Jewish nation also believed in a literal **bodily** resurrection as these verses show and as Jesus later confirmed in Matthew 8:11 and 22:31-32.
- f. Hebrews 11:15a – *And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out... whether Haran or Ur of the Chaldeans, they **could** have returned.* Since they did not return, it was obvious to the author they were not looking for an earthly home.
- g. Hebrews 11:15b – *If they had been looking for the refuge of an earthly dwelling ...they would have had opportunity to **return**.* Genesis 24:6-7
- 1) If they had been worried about physical **security** or prosperity, they could easily have returned to their former lives and country.
 - 2) Instead their faith in God’s promises kept them from **longing** for what they had left behind.
 - 3) Their faith removed their eyes from the rigors of a day-to-day sojourn in the land of Canaan and placed them on the **eternal**. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- h. Hebrews 11:16a – *But as it is, they desire a **better** country, that is, a heavenly one.* The faith of these Old Testament saints propelled them to look ahead to a much better place, to a heavenly land. They did not crave the transitory joys of this world.
- i. Hebrews 11:16b – *Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God... Since their confidence was in God’s promise, He was **delighted** to be known as their God.* Acts 7:32
- j. Hebrews 11:16c – *For He **has** prepared a city for them...* Not only has God prepared a lasting city for the patriarchs, he has also prepared a dwelling place for us. We too will live with Him forever. John 14:1-3, Galatians 4:25-26, Philippians 3:20, Hebrews 12:22-23, Rev. 22:14
6. Hebrews 11:17-22 – In order to further appreciate the faith of the patriarchs, the author featured a few significant events from their lives.
- a. Hebrews 11:17a – *By faith Abraham, when he was tested offered up Isaac...* Abraham’s trust in God can be readily **seen** when he willingly placed his beloved son Isaac on an altar in sacrifice to God.
 - b. Hebrews 11:17b – *...and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.* Knowing full well God’s promises **depended** on Isaac’s life and wellbeing, Abraham willingly offered Isaac.
 - c. Hebrews 11:18 – *...it was he to whom it was said, “In **Isaac** your descendants shall be called.”* Abraham remembered God’s promise to multiply his descendants through Isaac.
 - d. Hebrews 11:19a – *Why was Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac? Because ...he considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead.* Abraham believed God could **resurrect** the dead.

- e. Hebrews 11:19b – *...from which he also received him back as a type. When Abraham raised the knife, he was actually going to **kill** Isaac. Therefore, in a sense God did bring Isaac back from the dead. Figuratively, Isaac was resurrected.*
- f. Hebrews 11:20 – *Isaac also believed God. **By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.***
- 1) In his old age, Isaac conferred blessings on both Jacob and Esau. Even though he lived a long time after blessing them, he never took back his **prophetic** statements concerning them. Genesis 27:27-29, 37-40
 - 2) When Isaac blessed his two sons, he spoke of **future** events with the absolute confidence they would happen exactly as he said. Recorded history confirms he was right. Hebrews 11:1
- g. Hebrews 11:21 – *By faith Jacob. The Bible shows that **even** Jacob the old trickster learned to lean in trust on the Lord.*
- 1) Hebrews 11:21b – *...as he was dying, [he] blessed each of the sons of Joseph. When Jacob was very old, he blessed the two sons of Joseph. He spoke with confidence (faith) concerning what their tribes would eventually **inherit**.* Genesis 48:1-22
 - 2) Hebrews 11:21c – *...and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.* Because of weakness due to age, Jacob braced himself on his walking **staff** as he worshiped God. This record shows us the maturity of his faith. Genesis 47:29-31
7. Hebrews 11:22 – *The author spoke of Joseph’s faith.*
- a. Hebrews 11:22a – *By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel... Even after Joseph had been in Egypt many years and had become a great man in that land, he showed his faith in God’s promises when he predicted Israel would **escape**.*
 - b. Hebrews 11:22b – *and gave orders concerning his bones.* Joseph gave clear instructions concerning his **bones** because he believed God would keep his promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham’s descendants. Genesis 15:13-16
 - c. When the Israelites returned to Canaan, Joseph wanted them to **bury** his bones there. That is eventually what happened. Exodus 13:19, Joshua 24:32
8. Hebrews 11:23-27 – *Even while in **captivity** in Egypt, some of the Israelites were relentless in their faith, not succumbing to fear.*
- a. Hebrews 11:23 – *Moses’ **parents** lived by faith. **By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.***
 - 1) Moses’ parents did not let fear of government **paralyze** them. 2 Timothy 1:7
 - 2) After Moses birth, when His parents saw he was a lovely child, they did their best to **hide** him for three months.

- b. Hebrews 11:24 – In time Moses became a **grandson** to Pharaoh. Remarkably *...by faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter.* Moses' trust in God caused him to reject his distinguished position and instead identify with Israel.
- c. Hebrews 11:25 – Moses chose...*rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.* Being part of Pharaoh's house, Moses could have enjoyed the luxury of sin, but his faith in God made him choose to identify with the **slave** nation Israel.
- d. Hebrews 11:26a – *Moses consider[ed] the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.* By faith Moses counted **persecution** together with God's people (from whom would come Messiah) far more valuable than all the gold of Egypt.
- e. Hebrews 11:26b – *...for he was looking to the reward.* His faith caused him to look beyond the wealth he was forfeiting in Egypt to future reward. Philippians 3:12-14
- f. Hebrews 11:27a – *By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.* The first time Moses left Egypt he was running for his life in fear of Pharaoh. The author is not referring to that occasion in this statement. Exodus 2:14-15
- 1) When God called Moses at the burning **bush** to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses did not believe God very well, but by the time all the plagues were over he had a more mature faith in God and took the Israelites out of Egypt. Exodus 4:19
 - 2) By the age of 80 Moses had learned to **trust** God. He trusted God to lead Israel. He did not fear Pharaoh or the Egyptians any longer.
 - 3) Exodus 5:1 – Without fear Moses confronted Pharaoh. *And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My **people** go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.'"*
 - 4) Exodus 14:13 – Moses fearlessly left Egypt. *...Moses said to the people, "Do not **fear!** Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.* Exodus 14:10-14
- g. Hebrews 11:27b – *...for he endured, as seeing Him who is **unseen**.* This probably refers to the fact that Moses said to Pharaoh, "Let my people go," no less than 10 times in Exodus. That is perseverance and a solid confidence in God. Exodus 5:1; 7:14, 16; 8:1, 20-21; 9:1,13; 10:3-4
9. Hebrews 11:28-29 – Moses and Israel's faith in their **exodus** from Egypt.
- a. Hebrews 11:28a – *By faith he kept the **Passover**.* Believing the warnings of God, Moses and all Israel performed the first Passover.
 - b. Hebrews 11:28b – *...and the sprinkling of the blood...* On that evening, in an obedience that comes from faith, they splattered the doorposts of their homes with the **blood** from the lambs they sacrificed and ate. Romans 1:5

- c. Hebrews 11:28c – *...so that he who destroyed the **firstborn** would not touch them.* The death angel passed over every home where he saw the blood on the doorposts. The Passover sacrifice protected Israel's firstborn, but all the firstborn of Egypt died.
- d. Hebrews 11:29a – *By faith [Israel] passed through the Red **Sea**.*
- 1) Weak in their faith, the Israelites **did** as Moses commanded and began walking through the Red Sea. Exodus 14:1-30
 - 2) Exodus 14:31 – *And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their **trust** in him and in Moses his servant.*
- e. Hebrews 11:29b – *The Israelites crossed the Red Sea...as though they were passing through dry land.* In an amazing moment of faith, between towering walls of water, all Israel **walked** through the sea on dry land. Exodus 14:22, Psalm 78:13, 1 Corinthians 10:1
- f. Hebrews 11:29c – *And the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned...* When Egypt chased after Israel, God closed the waters on them, and they all **drowned**.
- g. Here are some interesting thoughts to ponder.
- 1) It is revealing that the author did not continue to comment on the faith of the generation of Israel that left Egypt. After their amazing faith in the Passover and their faith to walk through the Red Sea, they repetitively **doubted** God.
 - 2) Hebrews 3:10-11 summarizes God's reactions to the Israelites of that time saying, *"Therefore I was **angry** with this generation, and said, 'they always go astray in their heart, and they did not know My ways' as I swore in My wrath, 'they shall not enter My rest.'"*
 - 3) That generation of Israelites all **died** in the desert without ever entering and enjoying the rest-life God had planned for them.
10. Hebrews 11:30-31 – **Faith** shown by Israel in the conquest of Jericho.
- a. Hebrews 11:30a – *By faith the walls of **Jericho** fell down...* The author fast-forwarded forty years to Joshua and the next generation of Israel. They indeed trusted God and went in to possess the land of Canaan.
 - b. Hebrews 11:30b – *In their first **battle**, God destroyed the walls of Jericho after they had been encircled for seven days by Israel's army.*
- 1) Obviously, the odd **military** action of simply marching around the walls of Jericho day after day took daily faith. To the onlooker, this method of attack would have seemed foolish and unreasonable.
 - 2) God and His promised **victory** were not a letdown to Israel. On the seventh day God knocked the walls down flat. Psalm 25:2

- c. Hebrews 11:31a – *By faith **Rahab** the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient...* Rahab the harlot was saved by faith. She did not perish with the unbelieving people of Jericho.
- d. Hebrews 11:31b – *...after she had welcomed the **spies** in peace.* Because of her faith in the God of Israel, Rahab hid Israel's spies. They in turn promised that she and her family would be spared in the conquest of the city. Joshua 2:12-21, 6:22-25
- 1) Later Rahab married an Israelite and became part of Christ's **lineage** (Mat. 1:5). James used Rahab as an example of faith in action (Jam. 2:25).
 - 2) Long before Israel arrived in Canaan, Rahab had already become a **believer** in Yahweh. *When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer... for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth...* Joshua 2:11
11. Hebrews 11:32-38 – The **world** is not worthy of God's people when they decide to walk by faith.
- a. Hebrews 11:32 – *And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets.* For time's sake the author did not go on to write in detail about other Old Testament **examples** of faith.
- 1) He could have used Israel's ancient **judges** like *Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah* to exemplify faith.
 - 2) He could likewise have spoken about the faith of Israel's **kings**, like *David*. We know that by trusting the Lord David defeated Goliath and won many other victories.
 - 3) The author could also have written about the faith of the Old Testament **prophets** like *Samuel* and others.
- b. Hebrews 11:33 – The **exploits** of those who trusted in almighty God.
- 1) Hebrews 11:33a – *...by faith **conquered** kingdoms...* The writer could also have given the examples of those who trusted God in the conquering of kingdoms like the judge Jephthah in Judges 11:1-40 or king Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:27-30.
 - 2) Hebrews 11:33b – *...by faith ...performed **acts** of righteousness...* He could have written about the faith of King Solomon who asked God for wisdom to govern and went on to give amazing justice. 2 Chronicles 1:7-13, 1 Kings 3:23-28
 - 3) Hebrews 11:33c – *...by faith ... obtained **promises**.* He could have spoken of the faith of Joseph who by faith attained the promises given to him through dreams. Genesis 37:5-11, 42:9, 50:25
 - 4) Hebrews 11:33d – *...by faith ...shut the mouths of lions.* He could have spoken of the prophet **Daniel** who by faith witnessed firsthand the mouths' of hungry lions stopped. Daniel 6:21-22
- c. Hebrews 11:34 – The author could have **told** of the mighty faith of those who did the following exploits:

- 1) Hebrews 11:34a – ...**quenched** the power of fire... He could have spoken of the faith of those who endured raging fires. Daniel 3:16-18, 24-30
 - 2) Hebrews 11:34b – ...**escaped the edge of the sword**... He could have talked about the faith of those who escaped the wrath of the sword. Exodus 15:1, Psalm 32:7
 - 3) Hebrews 11:34c – ...**from weakness were made strong**... He could have spoken of the faith of the feeble who were made strong. 2 Chronicles 14:9-15
 - 4) Hebrews 11:34d – ...**became mighty in war**, [and] **put foreign armies to flight**... He could have mentioned the faith of those who inspired valor among warriors and even sent armies running away in fear. 1 Samuel 14:16-23, Psalm 44:1-8
- d. Hebrews 11:35-38 – The author could also have gone into deeper detail about those who endured great **suffering** because of their faith in God.
- 1) Hebrews 11:35a – *Women received back their dead by **resurrection***... The author could have spoken of the women who by faith received their loved ones back from the dead. 1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 8:5
 - 2) Hebrews 11:35b – ...*and others were **tortured**, not accepting their release*. The author could have written of the faith that enabled saints to endure torture rather than demanding relief. Exodus 2:24-25, Judges 16:28-31, 2 Chronicles 36:16, Nehemiah 4:1-3
 - 3) Hebrews 11:35c – ...*so that they might obtain a **better** resurrection*.
 - a) Those who endured great persecution did so because of their **hope** of a future resurrection.
 - b) Some were provisionally resurrected in time but all believers in the future will be resurrected to a better resurrection – to live with **God** forever in heaven. Daniel 3:17-18, Esther 4:16, Job 19:23-29
 - 4) Hebrews 11:36a – *And others experienced mockings and scourgings*... By faith, and in hope, many willingly suffered **ridicule** and even beatings. Exodus 2:23-25, 3:7-9, 5:14
 - 5) Hebrews 11:36b – ... *yes, also **chains** and imprisonment*. Others endured incarceration because of their faith. Jeremiah 38:6
 - 6) Hebrews 11:37a – Some ...*were **stoned***... and yet endured it because of faith in God. 2 Chronicles 24:20-21
 - 7) Hebrews 11:37b – Some ...*were **sawn in two***... By faith some believers even endured being cut in two with saws. Although the Bible does not specifically mention it, the Persians who oppressed Israel practiced this form of execution. 1 Kings 18:4, Mark 6:28
 - 8) Hebrews 11:37b – Some ...*were **tempted***... Believers like Joseph in Egypt by faith did not give in to the temptation to sin. Genesis 39:6-9

- 9) Hebrews 11:37b – Some *...were put to death with the **sword**...* Some believers were put to death by the sword. Even so, their faith sustained them all the way to the end. 1 Kings 19:10
- 10) Hebrews 11:37b – Some even *...went about in sheepskins, in goatskin.* Some believers were dirt-**poor** and had to be clothed only in sheepskins and goatskins, but yet their confidence in God kept them going. 1 Kings 18:13, Jeremiah 31:2, Mark 1:6
- 11) Hebrews 11:37b – *...being destitute, afflicted, **ill-treated**.* Faith in God made others endure affliction and persecution. Judges 2:18, Psalm 106:42-46, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9
- 12) Hebrews 11:38a – *...men of whom the world was not **worthy**...* The faith of these believers made them extraordinary, out-of-this-world. They lived as citizens of heaven in a manner worthy of the Lord. Ephesians 4:1, Colossians 1:10
- 13) Hebrews 11:38b – *...wandering in deserts and mountains and **caves** and holes in the ground.* The faith of these believers sustained them through perilous migrations and suffering as tramps. Judges 6:2; 1 Kings 18:4, 19:1-10

C. Hebrews 11:39-40 – The author showed that faith brings God’s approval

1. Hebrews 11:39a – *And all these, having gained **approval** through their faith...*
 - a. Even though **human** society never appreciated the individuals cited in this chapter, by their faith they won God’s approval. Hebrews 11:6
 - b. Their unwavering confidence in God **propelled** them on to glory. Ephesians 1:18
2. Hebrews 11:39b – *...**did not receive** what was promised*
 - a. Even though God commended them for their great faith, they never received what God had promised during their **lifetime**. The promise spoken of here was the promised Messiah who came many years after these all died.
 - b. The fact that they did not receive God’s promise during their lifetime did not **dissuade** them from walking by faith.
3. Hebrews 11:39c – They *...did not receive **what was promised**.* The word “promise” in Hebrews is used very **broadly**. Care must be taken to correctly determine the meaning of its use by noting each context within the book. It is not a case of one meaning fits all.
 - a. In Hebrews promise often refers to the promises of the **Abrahamic** covenant. Hebrews 6:13, 15; 7:6; 11:17
 - b. In Hebrews 11:11 promise refers to the specific promise of a **child** to Abraham and Sarah.
 - c. Promise sometimes either refers to the temporal dwelling place of Israel, called the **Promised** Land (Heb. 11:8-9), or to the eternal dwelling place of the saints in the heavenly city of New Jerusalem. Hebrews 11:13-16
 - d. Promise can refer to the blessing associated with the **New** Covenant. Hebrews 8:6

- e. Promise might refer to the passing down of the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant to its **heirs**. Hebrews 6:17
 - f. Promise can refer to the present spiritual **rest** believers can enjoy while here on earth (Heb. 4:1) or to the eternal rest promised for our enjoyment later. Hebrews 10:23
 - g. Promise might refer to the future **inheritance** we will receive. Hebrews 6:12, 9:15, 10:36
 - h. Promise might refer to blessings already **obtained**. Hebrews 11:33
 - i. Promise might also refer to the promised **Messiah** and His work of salvation. Hebrews 11:39
 - j. Promise can even be **negative**. Like the promise of future judgment poised to fall upon this world. Hebrews 12:26
4. Hebrews 11:39d – What is the word *promise* referring to here?
- a. The author may have used the term *promise* so often (six times in this chapter) because faith and promises always go hand in hand. One thing is true across the board; faith always has something **concrete** on which to rest.
 - b. Faith is not some generic optimism or an aura of good will; faith is confidence in God's real, literal, and sure promises. Hebrews 11:1a
5. Hebrews 11:40 – The author **finished** with the statement that...*God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.*
- a. Hebrews 11:40a – *God had provided something better for us...* The word provided PROBLEPO means to make provision for that which is forthcoming. God foresaw our needed salvation and made provision by sending Jesus to die for us.
 - b. Hebrews 11:40b – If *God had **provided** something better for us* than what the saints mentioned in this chapter received, what was it?
 - 1) This statement of *something better for us* refers to the fact that **Messiah** came during the lifetime of the Hebrew readers. We must connect the promise of verse 39 to statements of verse 40.
 - 2) We have observed that the term **better** is a theme in Hebrews, and these Hebrew believers had received something better than the Old Testament saints since Christ's came during their lifetime.
 - 3) The Old Testament saints in chapter **eleven** all heard of Christ's coming, but the Hebrews saw Him come. That was entirely better.
 - c. Hebrews 11:40c – ...*so that **apart** from us they* [the Old Testament saints mentioned in this chapter] *would not be made perfect.*
 - 1) *Be made perfect* does **not** refer to some sort of sinless perfection.
 - 2) Hebrews 10:2 uses the phrase made perfect to refer to the complete removal of sin and guilt. Here it refers to the successful removal of our sins by **God**.

- 3) Now that **Christ** has come, all of us, including the Old Testament saints, can together *be made perfect*.

Fifth warning: Hebrews 12:1-29 – The danger of desertion

IX. Hebrews 12:1-29 – The Race of Faith

A. Hebrews 12:1-3 – The author likened the Christian life to running a race

1. Hebrews 12:1 – The author mentioned cheering **fans** and aspiring athletes.
 - a. Hebrews 12:1a – *Therefore...* This word therefore TOIGAROUN is a conjunction occurring only **twice** in scripture.
 - 1) This conjunction demands that as you proceed you keep in **mind** what was just said.
 - 2) As they continued to read the contents of Chapter 12, the author wanted his readers to keep in mind the **heroes** of faith from Chapter 11.
 - b. Hebrews 12:1b – Every race has spectators. *...since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us...* In making application to his readers, the author referred to the heroes of faith in the previous chapter who did not give up even under great adversity, persecution or even death.
 - 1) The testimony of the **resolve** of these ancient men and women of faith should be a motivation to us to not draw back from a walk of faith.
 - 2) The journey of faith of these ancient men and women should stimulate us to put **aside** anything that keeps us from actively trusting God.
 - c. Hebrews 12:1c – Preparation is required for every race. *...let us also lay aside every encumbrance...* The word *encumbrance* ONKON speaks of bulk or **weight**. Through intense training and by eating a proper diet, an Olympic athlete sought to shed all excess weight.
 - 1) The goal of the Christian life is not just good living for the sake of good living. The author desired for his readers to run the race by active faith, just as the saints of old.
 - 2) Anything that stops us from actively trusting God must go. What **hinders** you from living a life of active faith?
 - d. Hebrews 12:1d – *...and the sin that easily entangles us... Entangles...* speaks of impeding or debilitating. In the same way an athlete would not wear cumbersome clothing, we should put to the side any **sin** - especially the sin of doubting God - that would hamper our walk of faith. 1 Corinthians 9:24, Hebrews 10:38
 - e. Hebrews 12:1e – The author compared living by faith to **running** a race. *...and let us run...the race....* He had given examples of this in Hebrews 11.
 - 1) The absence of living by faith is exactly what happened to the **Exodus** generation. It is also what was threatening the progress of the Hebrew believers.

- 2) Were these Hebrew believers going to **give** up on a life of faith and return to the familiar, yet dead, religious system of their fathers?
 - 3) This applies to us also. In our practical daily living, it is the sin of **unbelief**, or doubting God, that halts all progress.
- f. Hebrews 12:1f –The author encouraged the Hebrew believers to run the race with **patience**. Let us *...run with endurance the race...*
- 1) To endure is the ability to **continue** under great difficulty without quitting. Endurance is not about trusting God in one trial only, but about walking by faith through the length of the journey, one trial after another, without wavering. Colossians 1:11
 - 2) In his training, the ambitious athlete is willing to **endure** injury, muscular pain, mental stress, deferred desires, postponed relationships, restrictive diets, harsh coaches and even disrespectful fans.
 - 3) Believers likewise **endure** many obstacles in the race of faith. Things like deceptive teaching, external trials, personal temptations, and persecution are a sampling of things we might face as we run the race of faith. Romans 5:3-4, James 1:12
- g. Hebrews 12:1g – Let us run *...the race that is set before us*. The word race AGON in Greek speaks of a competition, **struggle** or even a battle. In English the word agony is derived from this word. The race set before us is to be run by repeated steps of faith. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25
2. Hebrews 12:2 – We also have a former **champion** to follow, a finish line, and an anticipation of victory.
- a. Hebrews 12:2a – **Fixing** our eyes... *Fixing* APHORAIO literally means looking away from all else. It comes from APO meaning away from and HORAIO meaning see. Here it literally means to look away from all else and to gaze only upon Christ.
 - 1) The first thing we are to do as we run a race is to look **away** from all distractions. In the race of faith that is set before us, we are to first look away from all else and then focus on Christ alone.
 - 2) Because Peter ceased to do this when he walked on water, he **sank** beneath the surface. He should have looked away from all else, including the wind and waves, and focused solely on Christ. Of course, we would likely have done the same. Matthew 14:22-33
 - b. Hebrews 12:2b – What motivates us in the race? *Fixing our eyes on Jesus...*
 - 1) We are not only supposed to intentionally look away from all distractions, but we are to purposefully fix our **gaze** on Jesus who is at the finish line summoning us forward.
 - 2) Why look to Jesus and not to someone else?

- a) As God incarnate and our Savior, Jesus stands **above** all the heroes of the faith from Hebrews 11. He is the proper motivation for our walk of faith.
 - b) Although Jesus is **God**, rather than hold on to His divine position in heaven, Jesus took the ultimate step of faith and came to earth as a human baby with the purpose of giving His life in shameful death as a ransom for us.
 - c) Jesus Christ lived a life of faith in God the Father. By faith He did the Father's **will** as He lived by means of the Holy Spirit, resisted sin, applied scripture, and finished the work God had for Him. John 5:19-20; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10, 31
 - d) In like manner, we are also to run the race by **dependence** on the Father, by means of the Spirit, and in accordance with the Word of God.
- c. Hebrews 12:2c – Christ is not the author and perfecter of “**our**” faith, as some translations put it. He is ...*the author and perfecter of faith*.
- 1) Jesus Christ is the *author and perfecter* of how to live a life by faith as described in Hebrews 11. Christ is the **supreme** and eternal example of a life lived by trusting in God.
 - 2) Jesus Christ trusted the Father perfectly **every** day of His earthly life. Hebrews 2:13a
 - 3) Even though He was disregarded, mocked, insulted, attacked and eventually killed by unbelievers, He endured it all by **faith** in His Father. Isaiah 53:7, 1 Peter 2:23
 - 4) Jesus is said to be the *author* ARCHEGOS meaning the founder or **originator** of how to successfully live by faith. He wrote the book, so to speak, on the actual life of faith.
 - a) The writer of Hebrews used this term **author** ARCHEGOS to describe Jesus as the prime example of the perfect life of faith.
 - b) As good as all the examples of the men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 are, not **one** of them was perfect in their example of faith. None of them could author a book on faith. Jesus, on the other hand, was perfectly suited to author the book of faith.
 - 5) Here Jesus is also declared to be the perfecter TELEIOTES of faith, meaning He is the **completer** of a life lived by unflawed faith.
 - a) Jesus is the person who brings the **example** of a life of faith in God to a perfect conclusion. John 8:16, 14:10-11, Luke 23:46
 - b) Jesus walked perfectly by faith all the way through to the bitter **end**. No one else, not even those found in Hebrews 11, lived a life of perfect faith from beginning to end. Hebrews 2:10, 13:20
 - 6) So **why** should we look to Jesus as we live by faith? What Jesus accomplished makes Him ideally qualified to coach us in the race of faith all the way to the end. Don't take your **eyes** off Him!

- d. Hebrews 12:2d – Jesus *...who for the **joy** set before Him...* With amazing optimism based on His faith in God, Jesus endured the sufferings of life and of death on the cross for us.
- 1) Jesus knew that His death would bring **life** to many. Isaiah 53:11, 2 Corinthians 12:15, Colossians 1:24, Philippians 2:17
 - 2) Jesus knew that after He died, He would be **glorified**. John 17:5, Hebrews 13:20
- e. Hebrews 12:2e – *...endured the cross, despising the shame...* Although Jesus hated the **shame** of the cross, His utter trust in the Father enabled Him to face the scorn of a criminal's death and finish His work of dying for our sin. Isaiah 53:5; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 13:13; 1 Peter 2:24
- f. Hebrews 12:2f – Finally after He died and rose again, He *...sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*. Christ finished the race. After all His suffering, Jesus once again experienced the **joy** and gladness of God's presence. Hebrews 1:3
- 1) Clearly Jesus kept His eyes on His Father who was at the finish line of His race. Jesus was assured that after conquering sin and death He was going to **return** to the Father. John 13:1, 3-4; 16:33; Hebrews 11:1
 - 2) Jesus' faith in His Father obviously **motivated** Him through the sufferings of the cross. Hebrews 2:10
 - 3) Now Jesus is seated at the right of the throne of God, showing He victoriously finished His race. Jesus was **victorious** in His life of faith on earth. John 16:33, 1 Peter 5:9
3. Hebrews 12:3 – The author gave his readers instructions on effectively facing the adversity every Christian **athlete** is sure to incur in the marathon of faith.
- a. Hebrews 12:3a – *For consider Him...* The word for refers to the previous verses concerning Jesus' motivation through His trials.
 - b. Hebrews 12:3b – *For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself...* We are to **ponder** the example of Jesus who suffered terrible cruelty and hatred from the hands of sinners.
 - 1) This statement clues us in to the fact that the author knew these Hebrew believers also suffered **cruel** persecution. That is likely why they were tempted to give up.
 - 2) They needed to be reminded that Jesus their Champion knew what it was like to **trust** God (His Father) in the face of severe persecution. Mark 14:32-36, Hebrews 5:7-9
 - 3) Contemplating the example of Jesus' sufferings would embolden them not to take the **easy** road back to Judaism.
 - c. Hebrews 12:3c – Remember this... *so that you will not grow weary and lose heart*. In difficult situations it is very easy to be disheartened and tempted to give up.
 - 1) Persecution was difficult for these Hebrew believers just as it is for **us** today.

- 2) Looking toward the end **goal** motivated Jesus just as looking unto Christ should motivate us.
- 3) If we look to Jesus as both our goal and **example**, we will not easily be tempted to grow weary or lose heart.

B. Hebrews 12:4-11 – God’s discipline in the contest of faith

1. Hebrews 12:4 – *You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.* Resisting, shedding blood, and striving are three factors common to nearly every **contest** or competition.
 - a. The author reminded his readers that in their conflict against sin they had not yet **paid** the ultimate sacrifice (death). Hebrews 10:32-33
 - b. As bad as things may have seemed to these Hebrew believers, Jesus suffered to an even greater degree in the **battle** against sin. He never gave up. They could follow His example. Philippians 2:8
 - c. This is yet another textual evidence that these Hebrew readers were battling the urge to quit and return to the **old** religious system.
2. Hebrews 12:5 – The author reminded his readers that God’s discipline is **biblical**, as they would clearly have known from their studies of Old Testament.
 - a. Hebrews 12:5a – *...and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons.* The author wondered if they, as God’s children, had completely forgotten God’s fatherly **advice** that called out to them from the pages of the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 8:5
 - b. Hebrews 12:5b – *My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord...* In the Old Testament scriptures (Job 5:17, Pro 3:11) God encouraged His people not to be **dismissive** concerning His discipline.
 - 1) When God disciplines His children, they should not get **discouraged** or give up.
 - 2) The word *discipline*, used **eight** times in this section, is derived from the word PAIS, meaning child.
 - a) The word *discipline* PAIDEUO in Greek was a far more colorful word than it is in English. The concept was deeply rooted in the **culture** of the day.
 - b) *Child* PAIS in Greek described a child (primarily boys) under supervision and undergoing development training in order to ultimately become an adult. In the English New Testament, the word is often translated **servant**.
 - c) *Discipline* PAIDEUO (derived from PAIS child) described this process of child rearing or child-**training**.

- d) In the Greek world, a child PAIS was often put under a guardian slave PAIDAGOGOS who was in charge of his conduct and education. This guardian was more than a schoolteacher; he was a strict disciplinarian, **trainer** and instructor.
- 3) The concept of discipline therefore is a **broad** term including everything related to the training and instruction of children. In many languages, discipline has only a negative connotation, but discipline here has both positive and negative undertones.
- c. Hebrews 12:5c – Do not ...*faint when you are reprovved by Him*. The letter to the Hebrews exposed many of their errors, which may have been terribly embarrassing. The author did not want them to become despondent under God's **reproof**.
- 1) To *reprove* ELEGCHO is to produce solid evidence which clearly exposes wrongdoing. The author warned against the temptation to give up when to our embarrassment God exposes our **error**.
 - 2) To **faint** EKLULO comes from the concept of loosening tension, like when a bowstring is unhitched. This kind of emotional collapse can happen when we are confronted with error in our lives. The author told his readers to not allow themselves this reaction.
3. Hebrews 12:6 – We should understand that discipline is the product of God's unfailing **love**, not an indication that He dislikes us.
- a. Hebrews 12:6a – *For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines...* The Lord disciplines, or chastens, His **beloved** sons and daughters. This is a sign to us that He loves us. Thankfully, God loves us enough to correct and train us. Proverbs 3:12
 - b. Hebrews 12:6b – *...and He scourges (uses the rod) every son whom He receives*. In a manner of speaking, God uses the **rod** on every son or daughter He welcomes into His family. Proverbs 23:13
 - 1) The word scourge MASTIGOO literally means flog, whip, or lash (see John 19:1). Of course, this **term** is used metaphorically in this case since God does not literally come down and thrash us.
 - 2) This term *scourge* seems **harsh** to most of us. However, without getting out of control, God corrects all His children by means of painful discipline whenever and however He deems it to be necessary. 2 Samuel 7:14
4. Hebrews 12:7-8 – The author wanted his readers to know that God's discipline is living proof He claims us as His sons and daughters. Sadly, God's love is the very thing we often **doubt** when God disciplines us.
- a. Hebrews 12:7a – *It is for discipline that you endure...* This phrase is better understood as, "Endure the circumstances of life as if they were discipline (**training**)." That's how we are called to look at life's daily challenges.

- b. Hebrews 12:7b – *God deals with you as with sons...* When you pass through the difficulties of life, count it as child training. It is very obvious that God is treating you as His **dear** son or daughter by personally coaching you. Proverbs 13:24
 - c. Hebrews 12:7c – *...for what son is there whom his father does not discipline.* Do you know of a child whose parent does not train, **correct** and instruct him or her? If a child is not trained and corrected, it becomes questionable if he or she is loved. Proverbs 13:24, 29:15
 - d. Hebrews 12:8a – *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers.* This phrase teaches that God trains **each** and every one of His children.
 - e. Hebrews 12:8b – *But if you are without discipline...then you are illegitimate children and not sons.* Although we may want to discipline the neighbor's children, we don't because they do not **belong** to us. If God does not correct someone, it is likely that person is not His child.
5. Hebrews 12:9-11 – We should know that God's discipline is always for our **good**. He delights in training us up as His very own dear children. Romans 8:28
- a. Hebrews 12:9a – *Furthermore, we had **earthly** fathers to discipline us, and we respected them...* Do you recall how it was when you were a child?
 - 1) Most of you had **parents** who loved you enough to show you right from wrong. Ephesians 6:1-2a
 - 2) As you age you will likely grow in **respect** for your imperfect parents and for their efforts to rear you. You will often have fond memories of even the difficult times of chastening especially when the motivation was to correct you appropriately.
 - b. Hebrews 12:9b – *...shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?* If we flourished under our flawed earthly parents, we should all the more flourish under the **Father** of our human spirits (God). 2 Timothy 1:7
 - 1) Most of us prospered under the training of our **earthly** parents.
 - 2) Likewise, if we will now be subject to the Lord, the One who gave us our **spiritual** life, we will experience abundant life. Romans 8:10-11
 - c. Hebrews 12:10a – *For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them...* Our limited human parents corrected and trained us as they **thought** best during the brief years of our childhood. Logically they were not always right in what they did.
 - d. Hebrews 12:10b – *... but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.* On the other hand, God corrects us during our entire lifetime for our **eternal** benefit. Through the discipline He gives, God works His holiness into our daily lives. James 1:2-4
 - e. Hebrews 12:11a – *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful.* No child training seems pleasant. Discipline sometimes brings temporary **sorrow** in the present.

- 1) The training an athlete goes through in order to win is not pleasant, but **painful**.
 - 2) But just like an athlete is willing to suffer because his eyes are fixed on the prize, during all our painful training we must keep our eyes **fixed** on Jesus.
- f. Hebrews 12:11b – *...yet to those who have been **trained** by [discipline].* The word trained GUMNAZO carries the idea of training for competition.
- 1) *Train* GUMNAZO is the word from which we get the English word gymnasium; it speaks of getting a good **workout** and breaking a sweat. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 - 2) Once more the author used the metaphor of **sports**. He brought the theme back to that of running the race of faith mentioned earlier in this chapter. 1 Timothy 4:7-8
- g. Hebrews 12:11c – Discipline results in peaceful, holy living. *Afterwards it yields the peaceful **fruit** of righteousness.*
- 1) *Afterwards it yields the...fruit of righteousness.* As God’s children, discipline plays an integral role in our future glorification (1 Cor. 9:24-27), but here, more importantly it speaks of righteousness in our **present** condition. Romans 6:22, 2 Corinthians 4:17
 - 2) Through discipline we **learn** to walk righteously; we learn to go God’s way rather than our own or the world’s way. Psalm 32:9, 119:67; Hebrews 5:8; Romans 8:28-29
 - 3) *Afterwards it yields the **peaceful** fruit of righteousness.* The virtue produced through discipline brings you a peaceful life. Isaiah 32:17, Psalm 119:165, Romans 14:17, James 3:17-18

C. Hebrews 12:12-13 – Running the race through pain and injury

1. Hebrews 12:12 – *Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble...* The author instructed his readers as one might **coach** an athlete.
 - a. When you run long and hard your hands hang and your knees **ache**. It takes a lot of strength-training to keep this from happening.
 - b. The author could see the Hebrew believers losing heart in the marathon of faith. They were under extreme **pressure** to give in to legalistic religion and return to Judaism. They needed a voice of encouragement to persevere.
 - c. The danger of collapsing back into Judaistic temple worship was real. You might be tempted to go backward in your walk of faith, to return to old, and maybe easier, ways, but listen to the author and endure in your marathon. Revelation 3:18
2. Hebrews 12:13a – *And make straight paths for your feet...* The author instructed the Hebrew believers to **remove** anything that obstructed their progress.
 - a. To *make **straight** paths* highlights the great race of faith. If they would walk warily, staying clear of legalistic temple worship, they would not easily be injured or detained in the race of faith. Galatians 2:14

- b. The author wanted **level** ground for their feet; he wanted them to avoid any route that would cause them to sin, give up, or stagnate. Proverbs 4:26, Hebrews 13:13
- 3. Hebrews 12:13b – *...so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.* Any time we run; we face possible **injury**.
 - a. Level paths would sidestep spiritual injury and give the opportunity to recuperate strength and **progress**.
 - b. Isaiah 40:29-30 – *Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but **those who hope in the Lord** will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.*

D. Hebrews 12:14-17 – Running the race for the good of others

- 1. Hebrews 12:14 – On the heels of his command to make straight paths, the author addressed areas related to the Hebrew believers’ **practical** sanctification.
 - a. Hebrews 12:14a – *Make every effort to live in peace with **everyone**.* His first command was to do everything possible to be at peace with others, saved and unsaved alike. Psalm 34:14, Romans 12:18, 14:19
 - 1) Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... (Gal. 5:22-23) If all of these are evident in our lives, we will find ourselves living in peace with all men. We cannot manufacture these virtues; they are the fruit of the **Spirit**.
 - 2) The only way to live at peace with others is to walk dependently upon God the Holy Spirit (i.e., to walk by faith in God’s enabling **grace**.) John 15:5, Galatians 2:20-21
 - b. Hebrews 12:14b – *...and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.* The author also commanded his readers to pursue **holy** living in their daily lives. It is a fact that *without holiness no one will see the Lord*, but what does the author mean by this statement?
 - 1) The author was **not** speaking of a requirement to be holy in our daily conduct in order to be able to one-day see the Lord in heaven. We were declared righteous (Heb. 10:10, 14) the moment we believed, and that gave us everything needed to see the Lord.
 - 2) The context of this verse is the believer’s conduct in **relation** to unbelievers.
 - 3) The author was referring to others seeing the Lord in our lives as we live in practical holiness. We live in a way that others can catch a glimpse of the righteousness of the Lord **through** our holy living. Matthew 5:16, Philippians 2:15, 1 Peter 2:12
- 2. Hebrews 12:15 – The author warned against missing out on **grace**.
 - a. Hebrews 12:15a – *See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God...* The author desired that his readers make every effort to guarantee no one would **fail** to enjoy the wonderful benefits of the God’s grace in their lives. Philippians 3:9, Titus 2:11 14, 2 Peter 3:18

- 1) God's grace is God's enabling **power** to run the race; to not faint, but to rather grow through discipline; and to live a holy life. John 15:5, Galatians 2:21, 1 Corinthians 15:10
 - 2) God wants every believer to come to understand all the **riches** he has in Christ. Ephesians 3:8
 - 3) So many believers are starving while sitting at a table full of food. To **hinder** a brother or sister from enjoying the full grace of God is the greatest tragedy possible. Colossians 1:28, 2:1-3
- b. Hebrews 12:15b – See to it ...*that no **root** of bitterness springing up causes trouble*. If you do not tap into the rich stem of God's grace as your source for life you will inevitably see a root of bitterness grow up instead. John 15:5
- 1) Bitterness is the mortal **enemy** of grace. The two cannot occupy the same space. It is one or the other.
 - 2) Bitterness is not a tree, but a root. A root grows under the ground in the dark, cold places of the earth. Since a root of bitterness is usually **hidden**, it becomes an insidious troublemaker.
 - 3) The junkyard of lives-gone-bad is replete with **bitter** believers.
- c. Hebrews 12:15c – ...*and by it many be defiled*. Bitterness is a toxic root that will not only poison you; it will **pollute** everyone around you.
- d. Rather than defiling other believers with your bitterness, try to make sure no one misses out on God's **grace**!
3. Hebrews 12:15 – The author warned against immorality and godlessness. He gave a culturally charged **example** his Hebrew readers would be familiar with and one they would definitely never think of imitating.
- a. Hebrews 12:16a – ...*that there be no immoral ...person like Esau...* The author strongly warned his readers to not follow the immoral, **godless** example of Esau. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11
 - 1) The author told this Hebrew audience not to be immoral (PRONOS - a fornicator) like Esau was. Although **Esau's** immorality is not mentioned in the Old Testament, it is clearly added here.
 - 2) We know from scripture that the first two **wives** Esau haplessly chose from among the Canaanites grieved Esau's parents. Genesis 26:34-35, 27:46
 - 3) If Esau hung around the Canaanites, he very likely **copied** their ways, the very thing God later warned the Israelites against doing. Ezekiel 16:47
 - b. Hebrews 12:16b – *that there be no ...godless person like Esau...* Esau was called a godless person because he refused to acknowledge **God** in his life.

- c. Hebrews 12:16c – *...like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.* Esau gave up his rights to inherit as the firstborn son in exchange for the **momentary** pleasure of bowl of soup. Esau regarded as petty the greatest family honor in the ancient world.
Genesis 25:34
- d. Hebrews 12:17a – *For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected...* We know that even after Esau scorned his birthright inheritance, he still wanted to **inherit** the Abrahamic blessing but was unable to do so.
- e. Hebrews 12:17b – *...for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.* This statement is confusing at first **glance**.
 - 1) *For he found no place for repentance* is not saying that Esau was unable to repent, but that his dad, **Isaac**, would not repent (change his mind). Scripture confirms this.
 - 2) Genesis 27:33 – *Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, “Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? **Yes, and he shall be blessed.**”*
 - 3) Even though Esau sought to change Isaac’s mind through bitter weeping, Isaac would not do so. Isaac did bless Esau (Heb. 11:20) but not with the blessing of **Abraham**. Genesis 27:34-40

E. Hebrews 12:18-24 – Running the race with correct incentives

- 1. Hebrews 12:18-21 – To deter regression into Judaistic legalism, the writer reminded his readers how their ancestors had approached God in great fear and trembling. That was a dreadful way to come near to God.
 - a. Hebrews 12:18 – *For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and **gloom** and whirlwind...* We did not approach God through such a dreadful means.
 - 1) We, on the other hand, approached God with **boldness** because of Jesus Christ; this is the opposite of Israel’s terrifying experience in the wilderness.
 - 2) As we will see in verse 22-24, Israel approached God through the tangible, visible mountain, as opposed to our intangible or **unseen** faith-approach to God.
Deuteronomy 4:11-12
 - 3) When they approached God, it was at Mount Sinai while it burned with fire. It was through darkness and **gloom** and even a storm that they came near. This is distinct to how we came to Christ.
 - b. Hebrews 12:19a – *And to the blast of a trumpet...* As they stood before God, they recoiled at the piercing **blast** of a brutally loud trumpet. Exodus 19:16, 19
 - c. Hebrews 12:19b – *And the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them...* When the Israelites heard God, they **begged** Moses that God would not keep talking to them. Exodus 20:18-19, Deuteronomy 18:16

- d. Hebrews 12:20 – Israel ...*could not bear the command, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned.”* Israel could not stand the warning that if anyone set foot on the mountain he must be killed, whether person or animal. It was altogether too **dreadful**.
- e. Hebrews 12:21 – *And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I am full of fear and trembling.”* Even **Moses** shook with fear at the sight of God’s presence.
2. Hebrews 12:22-24 – To encourage spiritual progress, the author gave ten contrasts to show that the way we approach God is **superior** to the way Israel approached Him. These contrasts all speak of the advantage of grace over law.
- a. Hebrews 12:22a – *But you have come to Mount Zion...*
- 1) Instead of coming to God in fear as Israel did at Mount Sinai, through thick smoke, fire and trembling, we come directly to Mount **Zion**, which figuratively represents God’s dwelling place.
 - 2) We come directly to God’s **throne** with confidence to receive mercy and grace. Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 4:16
- b. Hebrews 12:22b – *But you have come ...to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem...* In contrast to Israel, Church-Age believers have come to pertain to the heavenly city of New Jerusalem. This too gives us a superior sense of **belonging**. Galatians 4:25-26
- 1) As with Abraham, our citizenship in New Jerusalem makes our time here on earth nothing more than a passing sojourn. We are merely in **transit**. Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:10, 16; 1 Peter 2:11
 - 2) It is important to reemphasize that the author was not speaking of earthly Mount Zion or earthly Jerusalem; he was speaking of the **heavenly** city yet to come.
 - 3) It is the heavenly city to which **Church**-Age believers have come and where they will live forever with the Lord. Hebrews 13:14; Revelation 21:1-5, 10-27, 22:1-5
- c. Hebrews 12:22 – *But you have come ...and to myriads of angels.* In the book of Hebrews, **angels** are depicted as helpers of the saints (Heb. 1:14) and messengers of God (Heb. 1:7). This mention of angels is not meant to strike fear but to elicit joy due to our privilege. Hebrews 13:2
- d. Hebrews 12:23 – *But you have come ...to the general assembly...* We are now a part of the universal congress of all the saints. General assembly PANEGURIS comes from PAN all and AGORA public forum or square. The church is now included in God’s **family**. Ephesians 2:19
- e. Hebrews 12:23 – *But you have come ...to the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven...* Unique to those of us who have believed since the cross and resurrection of Christ, we are part of the **church** of God’s firstborn, Jesus Christ. Matthew 16:18

- f. Hebrews 12:23 – *But you have come ...to God...* Rather than approaching God through the veil of the tabernacle like ancient Israel did, through Christ we have the superior privilege of coming **directly** to the one and only God of the universe.
- 1) 1 Timothy 1:17 – *Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the **only** God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:16 – *He alone is immortal and dwells in unapproachable light. No one has ever seen Him, nor can anyone **see** Him. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*
- g. Hebrews 12:23 – *But you have come ...to God, **the Judge of all**...* After death, all people will stand before God as their **Judge**. Hebrews 9:27
- 1) Psalm 96:13 – *Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will **judge** the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.* Psalm 75:7
 - 2) Thank God our sins were judged on the cross in Christ. John 5:24 says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and **does not come into judgment**, but has passed out of death into life.”*
- h. Hebrews 12:23 – *But you have come ...to the spirits of the righteous made perfect...* This is likely a reference to Old Testament saints, namely those mentioned in chapter **11**.
- 1) Since the **spirits** of the Old Testament saints were already made perfect in heaven, this would contradict the idea of soul sleep.
 - 2) Although the Old Testament saints were justified by faith, they were not made perfect until Christ came and **died**.
 - 3) Now that the *spirits* of Old Testament saints are perfected in heaven, they are in turn **waiting** until the resurrection of their earthly bodies. Daniel 12:2
- i. Hebrews 12:24a – *But you have come ...to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant ...* The author reminded his readers that Jesus provided for the future eternal blessing of national **Israel** by means of the New Covenant. Hebrews 8:6, 8, 13; 9:15
- 1) We have come to the man Christ Jesus who mediated the **New** Covenant, which will bring to Israel, and indirectly to the whole world, immeasurable goodness. Romans 11:25-27
 - 2) Romans 11:15 – *For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? While the New Covenant is **specifically** with national Israel, the whole world will benefit from the splendor of its future enactment.*
- j. Hebrews 12:24b – *We have come ...to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.* Christ’s sprinkled **blood** denoted gracious forgiveness, whereas Abel’s blood cried for vengeance.

F. Hebrews 12:25-29 – The readers must finish the race by heeding God’s Word

1. Hebrews 12:25a – The fifth warning of Hebrews begins with these words: “*See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking.*” We must ask, “Who is **speaking**?”
 - a. The answer to this question is found in the previous verse. It is *Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which **speaks** better than the blood of Abel.*
 - b. Christ, the author and finisher of faith willingly suffered the scorn of the cross. He spoke with Israel in the wilderness and they trembled at His word. We too have come to Him and **He** has spoken!
2. Hebrews 12:25b – The author gave a strong imperative when he said, “*See to it.*” The word “*see*” BLEPO means to look at carefully, to give careful heed to, or to continuously watch. The command is to pay **careful** attention the One whose blood...*speaks better than the blood of Abel.*
 - a. We may think that since today Christ does not disconcertingly speak to us through a trumpet in blazing fire, darkness, gloom, and a whirlwind, we can **ignore** His words.
 - b. This final warning is against having that kind of attitude. **Listen** to Christ. Jeremiah 11:10, Mark 9:7
3. Hebrews 12:25c – The author said see to it ...*that you do not refuse Him meaning Christ.*
 - a. *Refuse* PARATEOMAI communicates the idea of **protest** or making an excuse.
 - b. The author commanded the Hebrew believers to not be guilty of intentionally creating an **excuse** and refusing to listen to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ezekiel 5:6, Zechariah 7:11
4. Hebrews 12:25d – *Him who is speaking...* Grammatically the word speaking is in the present tense, showing that the author perceived they were on the verge of refusing to listen to the Lord Jesus. This would have a **disastrous** outcome for them spiritually.
5. Hebrews 12:25e – *For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth...* Back on Mount Sinai when God spoke in person to Israel, those who refused to obey His command were threatened with immediate physical **death**. Hebrews 12:18, 20
 - a. Any Israelite at Mount Sinai who dared touch the mountain was required to **die** physically.
 - b. There would be no mercy shown for disregarding the One who spoke to them with an audible **voice**. Exodus 19:12-13, 21-25; 34:3
6. Hebrews 12:25f – *...much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.* Just as the Israelites at Mount Sinai took God’s warning literally, the Hebrew readers should have taken this warning **literally**. Christ had spoken. Luke 19:41-44; Hebrews 1:2, 2:1-3, 3:7, 3:16
 - a. Escape EKPHEUGO means to quickly dodge danger or difficulty. The danger at Sinai was sudden **physical** death. Exodus 19:21-25

- b. From this verse we discover that the Hebrew readers also faced the divine judgment of sudden **physical** death if they did not listen to Him who warns from heaven. Acts 5:1-11, 1 Corinthians 11:30-32, Hebrews 10:28-29, 1 John 5:16
- 1) A mere 5-6 year later, in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, those Hebrew believers who went back to **temple** worship and refused to listen to the Lord's warning suffered sudden death. Daniel 9:26, Luke 19:41-44
 - 2) Likewise, there is the serious danger for any believer to suffer a sin-unto-death type of discipline for ignoring **Christ** and His Word. Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 5:5, 1 Timothy 1:19-20
- c. This passage is not referring to a future, eschatological judgment. If that were the case, we would be in danger of sudden death in **eternity** for having failed to heed this warning in time. Of course, that will not happen and that is not the warning of this passage.
7. Hebrews 12:26-27 – To help the Hebrew readers take this warning literally, the author told about a yet future event when God's voice from heaven will be audible. At that time, everything in all creation will be **shaken**.
- a. Hebrews 12:26a – *And His voice shook the earth then...* At the time of the giving of the Law at Sinai, God's voice **shook** the earth.
 - b. Hebrews 12:26b – *but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."* We have the promise that the next time God **speaks**, He will not only shake the earth, but also the heavens.
 - 1) **When** will this event occur?
 - a) Although something of this nature will occur during the Tribulation, that is not likely what the **author** is referencing here. Revelation 6:14, 16:18-21
 - b) After the millennium, God will shake and remove both the heavens and the earth. This will occur in conjunction with the Great **White** Throne Judgment. Psalm 102:26; Isaiah 65:17; Haggai 2:6-72; Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 20:11, 21:1
 - c) The Lord promised that this speaking and shaking event will happen only once. *...yet once more*. This will include the removal of both the heavens and the earth in preparation for the new heavens and the **new** earth.
 - d) The word *once* is HAPAX and is often translated with the phrase *once for **all***. 1 Peter 3:18, Jude 1:3
 - 2) When God shook the earth back at Sinai, He did not shake it in judgment against Israel but in display of His power and presence. Notice that the **event** spoken of here is not given as part of a judgment (against wayward believers) either.
 - c. Hebrews 12:27a – *This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of **created** things...*

- 1) In saying, “*Yet once more,*” the author was pointing out that everything created will be removed METATHESIS with **finality**.
 - 2) The word *removed* METATHESIS can mean either taken or changed. This term was used in Hebrews 12 to describe the taking away of Enoch. Enoch was completely **extracted**; nothing related to his being remained. Hebrew 11:5, 13:14; Revelation 21:14
- d. Hebrews 12:27b – *...so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain*. All that will be left are the things that can **never** be removed, shaken or destroyed.
- 1) Anything that can be shaken will be taken **away** before the eternal state. Matthew 24:35
 - 2) This is because God will bring in the things that cannot be removed - the things that are **eternal**. Hebrews 11:20
8. Hebrews 12:28-29 – The author reminded his readers of their **certain** participation, for all eternity, in the coming Kingdom.
- a. Hebrews 12:28a – *Therefore, since we receive a kingdom...* The author did not exclude anyone; he included **all** his readers in this statement.
 - b. Hebrews 12:28b – *...a kingdom which cannot be shaken...* Since in the future we receive an eternal kingdom that can never be rattled or shaken in any way, our attitude in service now should be radically changed. The author pointed out four areas of personal **impact**.
 - c. Hebrews 12:28c – *...let us show gratitude...* is literally **let us show grace** CHARIS. Knowing we get to participate in a government that will never be replaced should motivate us to be thankful and gracious. We show the grace we know.
 - d. Hebrews 12:28d – *...by which we may offer to God an acceptable service*. Our promised participation in God’s eternal kingdom should elicit willing service.
 - e. Hebrews 12:28e – *...an acceptable service*. Knowing what’s coming should enable us to give *acceptable* (EUARESTOS well-pleasing) **service** (LATREUO worship) to God. John 13:1-4, Romans 12:1-2
 - f. Hebrews 12:28f – *...acceptable service with reverence...* The word reverence means holy caution. Since we are going to receive a kingdom that is eternal and cannot be shaken, our service should be done in **reverent** and cautious behavior. Hebrews 5:7, 1 Peter 1:17
 - g. Hebrews 12:28g – *acceptable service with ...awe...* Since we are going to receive a kingdom that is eternal and cannot be shaken, we should serve with **awe** DEILOS timid respect. Hebrews 13:15
 - h. Hebrews 12:29 – Why should we serve God with grace and an attitude of reverence and awe? *For our God is a consuming fire*. Since our God is a *consuming fire* above all others, we should be the first to reverence **HIM**.

- 1) The knowledge of God's awesome person was reason enough to listen to His words in Hebrews 12:25. God was soon to consume Jerusalem in **fiery** judgment. Any Hebrews who returned to Judaism faced God fiery judgment via Rome. Luke 21:20-24
- 2) This verse is not referring to an event in eternity after the rapture. In eternity no believer in Christ will face **danger** of God's consuming fiery judgment. We will have immortal bodies having been changed in the rapture. 1 Corinthians 15:42-43, 52-54
- 3) On the cross, God's Son was judged on our behalf for our sins so that now we are safe and secure. We **will** receive a kingdom, which cannot be shaken. Lamentations 3:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21

X. Hebrews 13:1-25 – Instructions on How to Love, Live, and Finish Well

A. Hebrews 13:1-6 – The author instructed his audience on how to love well

1. Hebrews 13:1-3 – The author instructed his readers against **self**-absorbed living. We all need this reminder!
 - a. Hebrews 13:1 – Let love of the brethren continue. The instruction here is to **allow** or let love for one another in the family of God become a way of life. We need to have a deep concern for the family of God. 1 Peter 2:17, 4:8-10
 - 1) The word for *love* PHILADELPHIA is derived from PHILOS a dearly loved one and ADELPHOS a brother. It is often translated brotherly love. This word describes the compassionate concern generally characteristic of **siblings** in a healthy family.
 - 2) The verb translated *continue* MENO is the same verb Christ used to describe *abiding in Him* in John 15. As believers we are asked to **remain** in a posture of profound love for one another.
 - 3) If we transported ourselves back to the streets of Jerusalem, we might notice that persecution was making these Jewish converts retract and grow **cold** in their fellowship with each other.
 - 4) Difficult times are not the time to pull into a **shell**. Instead we are called to come together. Romans 12:10, 2 Peter 1:7
 - b. Hebrews 13:2 – After promoting brotherly **love** within the family of God, the author similarly encouraged kindness toward outsiders. Job 31:32, Matthew 25:35, Luke 14:12-14
 - 1) Hebrews 13:2a – *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers...* Since we are all given to extremes, the readers might have been tempted to conclude we need to show love only to the **family** of God and overlook kindness to strangers. Luke 10:27-29
 - a) The word **neglect** EPILANTHANO is a verb that includes anything from absentmindedness to a refusal to remember. Hebrews 6:10, 13:16

- b) Believers should be known for their love expressed in kindness towards **strangers**. Luke 10:25-37, 1 Timothy 5:10
 - c) This command was not new to the readers of Hebrews, since in the Old Testament the Children of Israel were commanded to be hospitable to strangers because they also once suffered as foreigners in **Egypt**. Leviticus 19:34, Deuteronomy 10:18-19
- 2) Hebrews 13:2b – *...for by this some have entertained **angels** without knowing it...* This statement has mystified readers but take note of these **vivid** examples from the Old Testament.
- a) Abraham entertained angels in Genesis 18:1-22, and Lot had them in his **home** in Genesis 19:1-3.
 - b) We also know that Gideon, in Judges 6, entertained the **Angel** of the Lord to his personal benefit and for the deliverance of Israel.
 - c) In these examples, it was not instantly apparent that those being entertained were angels (God's messengers). This fact was only realized later.
 - d) We should remember that it was the strangers (angels) who saved Lot's **life**. Genesis 19:1-26
 - e) Whenever God gives opportunity, we should willingly step out of our comfort **zone** and entertain strangers. 3 John 1:5-8
- c. Hebrews 13:3 – The author urged his readers to show compassion for their persecuted fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 1) Hebrews 13:3a – *Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them...* Here the writer urged the readers to recall with **empathy** those who were suffering as prisoners for the faith. Philippians 1:14, Colossians 4:18
- a) *Remember the prisoners* (literally the chained) as if suffering **together** with them was a command in this verse. Acts 12:1-19
 - b) When you are able, you should **risk** visiting fellow believers imprisoned for the Gospel even if it might result in your suffering with them.
 - c) The readers were not to merely say a brief prayer, but instead they were to dedicate **time** to intercession. 2 Timothy 1:16-18
 - d) We often treat suffering saints casually, with an out-of-sight out-of-mind attitude. This was **not** acceptable for the readers nor should it be for us. Philemon 1:13, Hebrews 10:34
- 2) Hebrews 13:3b – *...and [remember] those who are ill-treated...* The author also added a reminder to keep mistreated and rejected Christians in **prayer**. Matthew 5:12, John 15:20
- a) In many countries, Christians enjoy freedom of worship and do not **suffer** physical anguish for their faith.

- b) Those who live in peaceful countries easily forget those around the world who are persecuted because of the **Gospel**.
- 3) Hebrews 13:3c – Why should we empathize with the persecuted? ...*since you yourselves also are in the **body***.
 - a) *Since you yourselves also are in the body*, could be translated “Since **you** yourselves also are in [a] body.”
 - b) The author was likely saying, “Care for those who suffer, since you also possess a weak and mortal body and would want special **care** and concern under similar circumstances.” Hebrews 10:34
 - c) Although many interpreters argue that the author was saying, “Since we are all part of one body (the church), when one hurts, we all hurt.” That, of course, is also **true**. Romans 12:14, 17-21; 1 Corinthians 1:25-27; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10
- 2. Hebrews 13:4 – The author instructed his readers against sexual **immorality**. Marriage should be honored by believers.
 - a. Hebrews 13:4a – *Marriage is to be held in **honor** among all...* Marriage is precious to the Lord.
 - 1) We live in a world where the biblical instruction on marriage is disregarded. Sadly, even churches are redefining marriage in ways contrary to the **Word** of God. Genesis 2:18-25, Mark 10:2-12, Ephesians 5:28-31
 - 2) The world considers marriage to be optional, or even unnecessary, but this should never be the thinking of believers. God’s children are to see marriage and the family as the wholesome and holy **plan** of God. Genesis 4:19, Proverbs 2:17
 - 3) The word honor TIMIOS is the word precious in Greek (2 Pet. 1:4). Since precious TIMIOS is the first word in this Greek sentence, the author clearly intended to emphasize it. The writer exclaims, “**PRECIOUS** is marriage!”
 - b. Hebrews 13:4b – *...and the marriage bed is to be undefiled...* The bed is to be guarded and kept pure by both husband and wife; it is to be kept free of anything defiling or **impure**. Philippians 2:15
 - 1) The statement “*marriage bed*” is a euphemism for the act of marriage. In pagan societies, immorality was, and is, an unspoken norm, but in Christian marriages it is deplorable. Colossians 3:5-6
 - 2) God calls Christians to absolute purity. We are to maintain marriages that are free of **any** type of sexual misconduct.
 - 3) In saying, “*The marriage bed is ...undefiled,*” the author at the **same** time sanctified sex within marriage and forbade sex outside of marriage.
 - 4) The writer of Hebrews was stating that a Christian couple must resolutely **guard** and sanctify the physical relation within the confines of their marriage. Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

- c. Hebrews 13:4c – *...for fornicators and adulterers God will judge...* Extramarital sexual relations are not permissible. God judges unfaithfulness to the marriage **vow**.
2 Samuel 12:13
- 1) Throughout the New Testament fornicators and adulterers are cited as separate **terms**, showing they are not synonymous words. Matthew 5:32, 15:19; Mark 7:21; Galatians 5:19; Revelation 18:3
 - 2) Adultery specifically has to do with unfaithfulness within a marriage, but fornication is a broader term understood to include **all** areas of sexual misconduct. Proverbs 6:32, Job 24:15
 - 3) This scripture demonstrates that even though extramarital relations and sexual sins are often shrouded in secrecy, God **knows** and will ultimately judge such sin. Genesis 39:9; Psalm 51:4; Proverbs 6:29, 32; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8
3. Hebrews 13:5-6 – The author charged his readers not to love the things of this **world**.
- a. Hebrews 13:5a – *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money...* God’s children are not to lust after monetary wealth. The love of money is at the heart of many **evil** things. 1 Timothy 6:5-11
 - b. Hebrews 13:5b – *...being content with what you have...* The author urged his readers to be **content** with their current possessions. Psalm 37:25
 - 1) One of the most important **mindsets** a believer can have is contentment with God’s provisions. Philippians 3:8, 4:11-13
 - 2) The world system has made greed into a virtue and materialism has become an ideal in many cultures. Contrary to our human nature, the Word of God teaches contentment with what we already **own**. 2 Corinthians 8:9, 9:8
 - c. Hebrews 13:5c – *Why not lust after money? Why be content with our possessions? ...for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”* Psalm 27:1-5, Luke 12:15-21
 - 1) The Greek sentence uses the OU ME negation meaning “never, no not ever” twice in this verse to state as profoundly as possible that God will NEVER under any circumstances **desert** us; He will always be with us! John 14:18
 - 2) Throughout **eternity** God will remain with us. John 14:16
 - 3) If God is always with us, we will never be in **need** of anything. He is far beyond sufficient for all our needs, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual. Psalm 23, 46:1-3; Ephesians 1:7-8; Philippians 4:11-13, 19; 2 Peter 1:3
 - 4) Earthly riches and wealth are **empty** and short-lived. Ecclesiastes 5:10 says, *“He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its **income**.”*

- d. Hebrews 13:6a – So that we confidently say, “*the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid.*” Because Christ Jesus will never leave or forsake us, we can say with all confidence at all times, “*The Lord is my **helper.***” Jesus truly is our Good Shepherd. Exodus 3:12a, Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, 2 Peter 2:25
- e. Hebrews 13:6b – *What will man do to me?*” Well that’s an excellent question. **What** can any person do to hurt us? Psalm 56:4, 11; 118:6; Luke 12:4-7
- 1) In Romans 8:31-38, Paul reminded us that since God is for us no one can successfully oppose us. He also said in that passage that **nothing** can separate us from the love of Christ.
 - 2) In Luke 12:4-7, Jesus told his hearers not to fear those who kill the body but cannot do anything against the **soul**. Although men may be able to hurt us here on this earth, no man can take from us our eternal life or reward.
 - 3) So, we have every reason to be content with what we possess and be relaxed in the eternal care of the Shepherd of our **souls**, Jesus Christ.

B. Hebrews 13:7-17 – The author instructed his audience on how to live well

1. Hebrews 13:7-9 – The readers were instructed to remember the teachings and conduct of their spiritual **mentors**.
 - a. Hebrews 13:7a – *Remember those who led you...* The Hebrew believers were to be mindful of their **former** leaders.
 - 1) The word *remember* MNEMONEUO means hold in memory or be deliberately mindful. Never **forget** these people.
 - 2) The phrase *those who led* HÉGEOMAI is a participle used three times in this chapter to label those who had exercised spiritual **authority** among the Hebrew readers. Hebrews 13:17, 24
 - 3) Those who had originally **led** these Jewish believers included the apostles and prophets. By this time, many of them had already laid their lives down for the Gospel. 1 Timothy 4:16
 - 4) We should be mindful of our spiritual forerunners. We are to be **good** followers just as leaders are to be good leaders.
 - b. Hebrews 13:7b – *Remember those ...who spoke the word of God to you...* The Hebrews were told to remember in a very special way those men who personally invested the Word of God in their **lives**.
 - 1) In our world it is easy to follow teachers we hear through electronic media but whose daily lives we cannot **observe**. In many cases this is a dangerous habit. Ephesians 4:11-13, 2 Peter 2:1-3
 - 2) Dedication to surrogate teachers must not become a replacement for personal involvement in a local church under a resident spiritual mentor whose faith and conduct you can both **see** and hear. 2 Timothy 4:2-4

- c. Hebrews 13:7b – *...and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.* When spiritual mentors both teach and live out God’s Word, their **disciples** learn to live out God’s Word in the same way. Acts 20:28-31
- 1) We are to **consider** how our spiritual mentors lived out and concluded their lives before we *imitate their faith*.
 - 2) When the writer says to *imitate their **faith***, he incorporated copying both the truths they espoused and the way they lived out their lives by faith in God. 1 Timothy 5:17
 - a) Following the *faith* of others is a rich **theme** in Hebrews, as depicted in the examples of the Old Testament saints in Hebrews chapter 11 who lived by faith.
 - b) In Hebrews 12 we have the ultimate example in Christ. He entrusted himself to the Father throughout His entire lifetime. In dependent faith, we are to **look** unto Him. 1 Peter 5:1-4
 - 3) Compare this verse to the warning of Hebrews 13:9, “[to] *not be carried away by varied and **strange** teachings...*”
- d. Hebrews 13:8 – Although our mentors and spiritual leaders were admittedly not perfect, our Savior **was** the ultimate example of the perfect leader to imitate. We can unreservedly follow Him because... *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*
- 1) This is one of the many verses that attest to the deity of Christ. Since the only One who never changes is God, Jesus Christ must be God because scripture says of Him that He is the **same** yesterday, today, and forever. Psalm 90:2
 - 2) It is good for us to better understand Christ’s unchanging nature. As God, Christ never changed even when He became a man. His divine nature was the same back then as it is today and as it will always be throughout the endless **ages** to come.
 - a) Jesus Christ is immutable. He is always truthful, always sovereign. His holiness, righteousness and justice do not change. His love is relentless. His omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence are **constant** and unchanging.
 - b) Can you trust Him? Yes, you can. He is just as dependable today as He ever was. Jesus Christ continues to be the Savior, the Good Shepherd, our High Priest, and the Author and Finisher of our **faith**.
 - 3) Since He is *the **author** and finisher of faith*, we can unreservedly follow His leadership. Hebrews 12:2
 - a) We take great **comfort** in this rock-solid fact. Christ will not fluctuate, being one way today and another tomorrow.
 - b) Since He is always the **same**, Jesus is trustworthy. He remains identical to how he was in the gospels.
 - c) This is good news, because being unchanging, Jesus will never change His mind about you. He loves you with an everlasting, unchanging and intimate **love**.

- e. Hebrews 13:9a – *Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings...* If Christ were here in person, He still would not accept legalism and man’s religion. Christ still rejects **false** teaching and so should you. Colossians 2:7
- 1) *Do not be carried away...* Any “**new**” twist in teaching ought to be treated with suspicion. God’s truth was etched in stone in the pages of the New Testament and therefore it defies alteration. Ephesians 4:14, 1 John 4:1, Jude 3-4
 - 2) The phrase *carried away* PARAPHERO is a present tense command for us to be vigilant to not be towed off. The present tense gives the idea of stopping this right now, implying that the author felt they were in **eminent** danger of deception. Jude 1:12
- f. Hebrews 13:9b – *...by varied and strange teachings...* For the last two thousand years the church has weathered storm after storm of heresy. Strange doctrines have continually assaulted the church. To be spared, we must **know** the truth well while at the same time being watchful.
- 1) *Varied* POIKILOS speaks of extreme diversity, like multicolored or multifaceted objects. *Varied* colorfully and fittingly describes how false doctrine comes in a **wide** range of extremes.
 - 2) *Strange* XENOS describes unheard-of or foreign teachings. If someone comes to you with some new variation or strange teaching, it is perfectly legitimate to **suspect** and even reject it.
- g. Hebrews 13:9c – *for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace...* Since only the true grace of God gives strength and stability to our hearts, it is very good to let **grace** strengthen us. 1 Peter 5:12b
- 1) At the time of the writing of Hebrews, some false teachings alleged that food associated with the **altar** in Jerusalem was what established and confirmed the heart.
 - 2) Only the *grace* of God establishes a believer’s heart. In Greek thinking, the word *heart* KARDIA broadly described our **total** intellect (mind, will and emotions) rather than the center of emotions as in many languages today.
 - 3) False teaching always focuses the attack on grace and its true meaning. Don’t be confused. Grace is an unearned gift, freely given to an undeserving sinner. It is never in any way, shape or form a reward for works performed. Legalism destroys, but grace **builds**.
- h. Hebrews 13:9d – *...for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods...* The author warned against requiring Church Age believers to follow **dietary** laws from the Old Testament. Leviticus 11:1-3, 9, 13, 20, 24; Mark 7:7
- 1) Anything that would take you away from the grace of God is a false teaching that should be rejected. The **attack** against grace was strong back then just as it is today. Romans 11:6, 2 Corinthians 11:3

- 2) Sadly, from the very beginning false teachings associating **diet** with spirituality have infiltrated the church. Matthew 15:9; Romans 14:17; Colossians 2:16-17, 20-23; 1 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 9:9-10
 - i. Hebrews 13:9e – *...through which those who were so occupied were not benefited*. This statement aptly describes the dead works of legalistic Judaism. No person has ever been benefitted by legalism’s endless **list** of does and don’ts. Matthew 15:17 20, Hebrews 6:1
2. Hebrews 13:10-14 – The Hebrew readers were advised to flee both spiritually and literally from Jerusalem and the associated system of ritualistic legalism. Even now, in a spiritual sense, we should **flee** every form of legalism.
 - a. Hebrews 13:10a – *We have an altar*. In order to dislodge the Hebrew readers away from Judaism the author reminded them of the superiority of Christianity’s **altar** over Judaism’s altar.
 - b. Hebrews 13:10b – *We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no rights to eat*. The first century Hebrew believers were no longer to follow the man-made regulations of Judaism particularly the **dietary** restrictions. Mark 7:19, Romans 14:20
 - 1) Because of differences Jewish unbelievers persecuted the Hebrew Christians deeming them extreme and dangerous **heretics**. Over time this intimidated the believers. Acts 22:4-5
 - 2) In order to **calm** their minds, the author showed that Christianity is not an alien religion. Christianity came from Jerusalem but went out being rejected by the Jewish people. Christianity has an altar but not found inside of the temple or Jerusalem. John 1:11
 - 3) Leaving behind the **legalism** of Judaism would have been distressing to battle-weary Hebrews believers so the author once again reminded them of the superiority of Christianity.
 - c. Hebrews 13:10c – *We have an altar from which they have no rights to eat*. Speaking against a **return** to dietary restrictions and ritualistic religion, the author again compared Christianity with Judaism.
 - 1) It would be foolish to cave to the temptation to return to the Old Testament system in order to receive spiritual nourishment when we have a superior **altar** from which we are spiritually sustained.
 - 2) In this context as we see, the superior altar does not refer to the *throne of grace*; or the heavenly altar of incense (Rev. 6:9; 8:3,5; 9:13), rather it refers specifically to the **cross** of Christ. Matthew 16:24, Galatians 6:14
 - a) For every believer, the cross of Christ became our **altar**. It was the cross that brought us life and even continues to bring us true and continual nourishment. Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24; Galatians 6:12, 14
 - b) Due to Israel’s rejection of Messiah, we have come to have an altar from which the Levitical priests could not **approach** or benefit.

- d. Hebrews 13:11 – Under the Old Testament sacrificial system, the high priest had to take animal blood into the Holy Place for the sins of the people, but the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. The author will now build on the concept of “*outside the camp.*”
- 1) Hebrews 13:11a – *For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place... The fact that the author uses present tense verbs (is brought into, are burned outside) shows that the temple was still in daily use when Hebrews was written.*
 - 2) Hebrews 13:11b – *Every year the blood was brought into the Holy of Holies ...by the high priest as an offering for sin.*
 - a) Under the Levitical priesthood, once a year the high priest brought the **blood** of sacrificed animals into the Most Holy Place as an offering for sin. Leviticus 16:15
 - b) The priests did not eat these particular animals. The carcasses were taken outside the camp of Israel and burned. Only the blood was brought in and offered before **God**. The blood signified both the life and the death of the sacrificed victims.
 - 3) Hebrews 13:11c – *The bodies of the animals were ...burned outside the camp. The phrase outside the camp is used again in verse 13. Leviticus 16:27*
 - a) *Outside the camp referred to a location outside of the dwellings of Israel, and in this context, it referred specifically to being outside Jerusalem.*
 - b) *In verse 12 we see a similar phrase: outside the gate, which also referred to being outside Jerusalem.*
 - c) *What was the significance of these outside versus inside statements?*
 - (i) *In light of the pending doom of Jerusalem, the author warned his readers, both spiritually and literally, to get out of Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-44, Hebrews 13:14-15*
 - (ii) *In Luke 21:20-24 Jesus predicted the literal destruction of Jerusalem (*Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the gentiles*) and in Luke 23:28-31 its pending destruction is seen in the phrase, “**Weep** daughters of Jerusalem.”*
- e. Hebrews 13:12-13 – *Therefore Jesus also, ...suffered outside the gate. In order to make His sheep sanctified (which could not be accomplished by Israel’s failed system), Jesus suffered on Golgotha outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem. John 19:17*
- 1) Hebrews 13:12a – *Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered... In order to sanctify the people (make His people special), Jesus suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem.*
 - a) *By suffering outside the gate, Christ set His people apart from and also rejected Judaism’s religious legalism.*

- b) This fact should have encouraged the Hebrew readers to courageously **flee** the bankrupt religious system of Judaism.
- 2) Hebrews 13:12b – *Therefore Jesus also, ...suffered outside the gate.* Although Judaism rejected anything **foreign**, Christianity was not actually a foreign religion.
- a) In order to calm the minds of his readers, the author showed that Christianity come **out** from Jerusalem, with Christ having been rejected by the Jewish majority.
- b) Christianity had its **start** inside the camp, but later went outside the gate when Jesus was rejected by the leaders of the nation and crucified on the cross.
John 1:11
- 3) Hebrews 13:13 – *So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, **bearing** His reproach.*
- a) This statement to leave the camp is timeless to anyone **trapped** in a legalistic religion based on the Old Covenant.
- (i) Even today many Jewish believers, sometimes called messianic Jews, have in many cases returned to a ritualized form of **religion**. Galatians 3:10, Colossians 2:20-23
- (ii) This verse implies that the readers were to **leave** far behind that failed religious system, something many Hebrew Christians living in Jerusalem at that time were reluctant to do. Ephesians 2:19
- b) However, with Rome threatening to destroy the city, not only spiritual but also **literal** obedience to this command was imperative.
- c) Hebrew believers who returned to Jerusalem or to temple worship made a grave **mistake**.
- f. Hebrews 13:14a – *For here we do not have a lasting city...* The readers were to reject earthly Jerusalem and its associated religion. This was not the enduring **city**. They needed break away from Jerusalem and go forth bearing the reproaches of Christ.
John 14:1-3, Galatians 4:25-26
- g. Hebrews 13:14b – *Our eternal home is the heavenly Jerusalem. ...but we are seeking the city, which is to come.* Since we are associated with Jesus, who is not associated with Jerusalem, we realize that our future is not **here**. Hebrews 11:10, 16, 12:22; Revelation 3:12
3. Hebrews 13:15-16 – If the Hebrews left behind Jerusalem, the temple and the sacrificial system, would they no longer have a priesthood or priestly obligations? Do we as Christians have priestly **duties** and sacrifices?
- a. Hebrews 13:15 – Yes, we do. As priests, we are to offer sacrifices of **praise** to God. The author took time to develop a proper view of this priestly sacrificial work. Let's benefit from his instruction.

- 1) Hebrews 13:15a – **Through Him** [through Christ Jesus] *then, let us ... offer up ... praise to God...* It is through Jesus Christ that we give the sacrifice of praise to our God. Christ has honored us with the privilege and permission to approach God in praise. 1 Peter 4:11
 - 2) Hebrews 13:15b – *Through Him then, let us continually* (DIA PANTOS - through all) *offer up a sacrifice of praise...* We are to give to God praise *continually*, or in all situations. The sacrifice of praise is to be an all-occasion exercise. Job 1:21, Psalm 34:1
 - 3) Hebrews 13:15c – *...let us ...offer up a sacrifice of praise to God...* All sacrifices call for an investment and are assumed to be costly.
 - a) Biblical praise is not something you do when the sound and lights peak or when the **mood** is right. 1 Chronicles 21:24, Psalm 50:14
 - b) Romans 12:1 gives the right understanding when Paul said, *“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”*
 - 4) Hebrews 13:15d – *...that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.* Biblical praise is a declaration of God’s worth welling up from simple faith in Him and His Word. True praise confesses God’s worth and is a sacrifice not a show. Psalm 89:1
 - 5) Hebrews 13:15e – *...that give thanks to His name.* Finally, praise is gratitude for all the blessed advantages we have as children of God. Praise is gratefulness for God’s person and essence. Psalm 9:2, 50:23; Ephesians 1:3; 1 John 3:1
- b. Hebrews 13:16 – It is interesting that immediately after teaching about sacrificing praise to God the author spoke of sacrificing for **others**. The worship and praise of God should naturally translate into service for others. True worship is not a feeling you experience.
- 1) Hebrews 13:16a – *And do not neglect doing good...* Neglect is failure to be proactive. We are commanded here to proactively do good to others. Doing good to others is a sacrifice to God. John 13:35, 2 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 John 3:17
 - 2) Hebrews 13:16b – *And do not neglect doing good and sharing...* The word share KOINONIAS was an early Christian buzzword for fellowship or sharing in common. If you are blessed with food or money, you are to caringly sacrifice by sharing generously.
 - 3) Hebrews 13:16c – *...for with such sacrifices God is pleased.* Sharing and doing good things for others are sacrifices that are indeed a sweet **savor** to our worthy God. Galatians 6:10
4. Hebrews 13:17 – In verses 7-9, the readers were instructed to remember the teachings of their former leaders and to recall the testimony of how they finished. Now they were told to obey their **current** leaders.

- a. Hebrews 13:17a – *Obey your leaders...* The readers were told to obey their spiritual leaders. The word *obey* PEITHO in Greek was not normally translated obey in the New Testament. More often it was translated **persuade** or convince.
- 1) Here the Greek verb tense for *obey* (present tense, middle voice, imperative mood) communicates the idea of letting yourself have confidence or faith in your leaders. Without this necessary attitude of **trust**, you cannot properly obey a leader.
 - 2) Obviously, this implies that your leaders are spiritual men (Heb. 13:7), because otherwise you'd put yourself in danger to obey them. Hopefully your leaders are faithfully teaching you and also living out the Word of God so that you can securely **obey** their leadership.
- b. Hebrews 13:17b – *Obey your leaders and submit to them* – The Word of God gives limitations to the power a leader has to tell us what to do and how to live. New Testament leaders are shepherds not bosses. Shepherds protect and **lead** but are not micromanagers.
- 1) Leaders could read this scripture as authorization to force subjection on their followers, but this was not written to leaders so they could demand submission. Instead this was written to the flock, instructing them to **submit**.
 - 2) A spiritual leader would teach submission to the Lord as of first importance and only then encourage submission from His disciples in biblically legitimate **areas**.
- c. Hebrews 13:17c – *...for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account...* Why submit to and obey a spiritual authority? Because biblically leaders will give **account** to the Lord for your life. That's a solemn responsibility. Acts 20:28, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- d. Hebrews 13:17d – *By doing this, you will be letting them carry out their duties joyfully...* Make the **job** of your spiritual leaders as painless as possible.
- e. Hebrews 13:17e – *...and not with grief...* Don't make their ministry grievous.
- 1) Not only is it good for you when you willingly follow your leaders, it also makes their lives and **service** way less stressful.
 - 2) Many ministers have become completely burned out because of resistance from those they are responsible for in the **Lord**.
- f. Hebrews 13:17f – *...for that would be harmful for you...* If you are rebellious, beware because your spiritual authorities are over you in the Lord. To rebel is dangerous for you because God is likely to side with them in a **conflict**. 1 Corinthians 3:17, 16:15b-16

C. Hebrews 13:18-25 – The author instructed his audience on how to finish well

1. Hebrews 13:18-19 – *Pray for us...* Pray is a present tense imperative. The command was to pray for the writer and his companions **now**. Even though we are uncertain who authored the book, the readers knew him well and could therefore pray zealously for him in the following areas.

- a. Hebrews 13:18a – Pray for us ...*for we are sure that we have a good conscience...* His prayer request was backed by the fact he and his fellow servants maintained a **clear** conscience.
- 1) **Sin** is the number one clean conscience destroyer. As far as he could see, the author had retained integrity. 1 Corinthians 4:1-5
 - 2) Though he and his companions did not have a bad conscience, he understood his frailty and went on to say in the next clause that he wanted prayer to be honorable in his **conduct**.
- b. Hebrews 13:18b – Pray for us ...*desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things...* The writer not only wanted to live honorably before the Lord but also before the **world**. Why?
- 1) We should be aware that those who lead us in the Lord are in an immense battle for our **souls**. 1 Timothy 3:2, 7
 - 2) Whether we realize it or not, spiritual leaders wear a **target**. They are under pressure from demonic foes, the negativity of the world system, rebellious believers, and even their own fleshly temptations. 1 Timothy 5:17-20
 - 3) Spiritual warfare can lead to discouragement and even failure. As a priority, you should support your spiritual leaders with **constant** intercession. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- c. Hebrews 13:19 – The author asked for even **more** prayer. *And I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you the sooner.*
- 1) The author urged his Hebrew readers to be even more consistent in prayer for his **release** so he could be restored to them sooner.
 - a) We deduce from this verse that the author was incarcerated as he wrote this **epistle** (see also verse 23).
 - b) He reasoned that his restoration would be for their **benefit**.
 - 2) The author believed that through prayer he could be released and restored to more quickly. Do we have this kind of confidence in God? Do we believe that through more fervent **prayer** he might respond more quickly? James 5:16b
2. Hebrews 13:20-21 – In a benediction, the author asked God’s blessings on his readers. Jewish people **love** receiving blessings, so this section would have been very meaningful to the Hebrew Christians. Here is one of the most wonderful blessings recorded in all of scripture. Numbers 6:22-27
- a. Hebrews 13:20 – *Now the God...* The blessing starts with declarations about our great God. The author will highlight **four** characteristics unique to Him.
- 1) Hebrews 13:20a – *Now the God of peace...* The author wished that God, the Creator of peace, would bless his readers. Probably the single greatest blessing anyone can receive is **peace**. Romans 15:13

- a) Peace is characteristic of God's essence. He is eternally serene, **unhurried** and unshakable. Romans 15:33, 16:20; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16
- b) In vain the world begs for peace from governments and religions. True peace emanates solely from Jesus Christ. He **alone** is the great Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6; John 14:27, 16:33
- 2) Hebrews 13:20b – *Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead...* In his blessing, the author mentioned a second distinctive quality of God: His power to **raise** the dead as demonstrated in Christ. Acts 2:24, 32; 10:40; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:20
- a) Romans 1:4 – *Who was declared the Son of God **with power by the resurrection from the dead**, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- b) Ephesians 1:19-20 – *And what is the surpassing greatness of **His power** toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the **strength of His might**, which He brought about in Christ, **when He raised Him from the dead...***
- 3) Hebrews 13:20c – *...the great Shepherd of the sheep ...even Jesus our Lord.* Next the author spotlighted God's protection. The mention of the great Shepherd focuses us on the **love** of God. Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, 27-30; 1 Peter 2:25
- 4) Hebrews 13:20d – *...through the blood of the eternal covenant...* In the benediction, the author pointed to redemption, mentioning the blood of Christ and the Eternal **Covenant**. Romans 3:25, Colossians 1:20, 1 Timothy 1:15a, 1 Peter 1:19, Revelation 5:9
- a) Mentioned only once in the New Testament, we do not have a **concise** definition of the *eternal covenant*. Some believe this covenant refers to the New Covenant, but that conclusion is not absolute.
- b) This may refer to a covenant made between the Father and the Son in eternity **past** in which the Father promised to raise the Son from death if He, as a man, would die for the sins of the world. Acts 2:23, 2 Timothy 1:9-10, 1 Peter 2:24
- (i) This *eternal covenant* may explain why Christ was considered **crucified**, even before the foundation of the world. 1 Peter 1:20, Revelation 13:8
- (ii) Christ should never have been able to come back from the dead after having died bearing the sins of the world. Never once do scriptures teach that Christ raised **himself** from the dead. John 1:29, Romans 1:4, Ephesians 1:19-20
- (iii) This Eternal Covenant may also explain why the Bible speaks of the exertion of incredible **power** in relation to the resurrection of Christ. Acts 2:24, 32, 10:40; Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:20
- c) Before you disagree with our conclusions on the *eternal covenant*, **consider** the following in relation to why we make this deduction.

- (i) First, we make this deduction from a simple reading of the text. The **text** leads one to conclude that the resurrection of Christ depended on this eternal covenant.
 - (ii) Let's read it again. *The God of peace who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep **through** [EN – within the confines of] the blood of the **eternal covenant**.*
 - (iii) As mentioned in this verse, Christ's resurrection depended on the *eternal covenant*. Without the *eternal covenant* Christ had no **hope** of resurrection.
 - (iv) On the contrary, the New Covenant **depended on the death of Christ**. Without the death of Christ there would be no establishment of the New Covenant. Luke 22:20, Hebrews 9:15
- b. Hebrews 13:21a – Verse 20 starts with the phrase, “*May the God of peace*” and ends with “*...equip you in every good thing to do His will.*” Titus 3:8
- 1) This blessing in essence was a prayer for the equipping of the Hebrew saints to do **good** deeds in line with the will of God.
 - 2) Between “*May the God of peace*” and “*equip you...*” is the phrase “*who brought **up** from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep*”. Apart from the resurrection, we could not be equipped for every good work.
 - a) First of all, because of the resurrection, spiritually we have been raised up to newness of **life**. Romans 6:4
 - b) Second, the **power** of the resurrection is available to us for living life. Ephesians 1:18-20
 - 3) By now we are all aware that even though good works do not save us we are saved to **do** good works (Eph. 2:10). That goal has weighed heavily on the heart of the writer throughout the entire book of Hebrews.
 - 4) To *equip* means to make one fully prepared to function properly. What do you need in order to serve well? Only God can provide the **capability** to do good works and that is precisely what the author prayed for them. 2 Corinthians 3:5 6, Ephesians 4:12
- c. Hebrews 13:21b – The author prayed that God would be *...working in us that which is pleasing in His **sight***. This prayer is clearly within the will of God.
- 1) Being the good Father that He is, it stands to reason that God would want to **work** in us to changes that will bring Him joy.
 - 2) As with all fathers, our Heavenly Father has **goals** in his child training with us. He wants you to succeed and in doing so you'll bring Him joy as you walk and live here below.

- d. Hebrews 13:21c – ...*working in us that which is pleasing in His sight...* Here we see the wisdom of God. Rather than working ON us to get mere external conformity, He works IN us to create an internal transformation that translates into external changes pleasing to Him.
- e. Hebrews 13:21d – ...*working in us that which is pleasing in His sight...* Notice the author included himself when he said *working in us*.
- f. Hebrews 13:21e – ...*working in us ...through Jesus Christ*. God does the internal transformation by means of Jesus Christ. John 15:5, Philippians 4:13, 1 Timothy 1:12
3. Hebrews 13:22 – A command to endure
- a. Hebrews 13:22a – *But I urge you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation...* In a desire to dispel discouragement, the writer asked his readers to patiently put up with his word of exhortation.
- 1) Note the phrase *I urge you* PARAKALEO. *Urge* could be used for imploring an exhausted athlete to finish.
 - 2) Note the word *brethren* ADELPHOS. This was a sweet family term describing love between fellow Christians; it encompassed both male and female. Hebrews 2:11
- b. Hebrews 13:22b – ...*bear with this word of exhortation...* The word bear ANECHO is a present tense command to endure or put up with. In this context it meant putting up with the author's written instructions.
- 1) In case his readers thought his letter was forceful and uncaring, the author wanted them to know that his motive in writing the book of Hebrews was love and concern for their spiritual well-being.
 - 2) In calling the book of Hebrews a *word of exhortation*, the author was referring to his letter as a sermon, not a hatchet job. Acts 13:15
 - 3) Even now, our perspective should be humility and openness in regard to the spiritual instruction of this letter. God inspired all of His Word for our benefit and never to destroy us. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - 4) The Word of God is sometimes difficult, and even convicting, but we should take the time to humbly receive its doctrine so we can grow in the grace and knowledge of our God and Savior. 2 Peter 3:18
- c. Hebrews 13:22c – ...*for I have written to you briefly*. Apparently, the author could have written a whole lot more.
4. Hebrews 13:23 – Some encouraging news
- a. Hebrews 13:23a – *Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released...* At the time of the writing of Hebrews, Timothy had recently been released from prison.
- 1) The text does not tell us why Timothy was incarcerated.

- 2) Although this statement does not identify the author, it does tell us that he personally knew Timothy. Because of this verse, some have surmised that the author of Hebrews was Paul, but that conclusion is weak. **Many** people were acquainted with Timothy.
- b. Hebrews 13:23b – *...with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.* The author was very possibly planning a **trip** to Jerusalem. He stated that if Timothy showed up on time, he would bring him when he went to visit his Hebrew audience (in Jerusalem).
5. Hebrews 13:24 – Special greetings
- a. Hebrews 13:24a – *Greet all of your leaders and all the saints.* The author sent greetings to all the leaders, and to the believers in general, of the church. Even though local churches are a brotherhood, God has set **apart** leaders to guide and shepherd the flock.
- b. Hebrews 13:24b – *Those from Italy greet you.* Though unclear, the author may have been somewhere in **Italy**.
6. Hebrews 13:25 – *Grace be with you all.* Once again, the author wished for his readers **grace** for their daily lives. Hebrews 2:9; 4:16; 10:29; 12:15, 28; 13:9b
- a. What a perfect statement with which to close out the book of Hebrews. This book clearly shows that the legalistic system of religion based on the Levitical priesthood was futile; it was certainly not what God intended for believers in Christ. Grace was, and is, **all** we need.
- b. We live and serve God by grace alone. The Christian life cannot be lived apart from grace; so, don't **try** to do so. Don't leave grace and return to legalistic religion.
- c. **Grace** be with you all!

Supremacy of CHRIST

Sufficiency of
FAITH

Hebrews 1:1-3 Christ's Superiority to the Prophets	Hebrews 2:5-18 Christ's Superiority in His Humanity	Hebrews 5:1-10 Christ's Superior High Priesthood Introduced	Hebrews 7:1-28 Christ's Superior High Priesthood Expanded	Hebrews 11:1-38 The Hall of Faith
Hebrews 1:4-14 Christ's Superiority to the Angels	Hebrews 3:1-6 Christ's Superiority to Moses		Heb. 8:1-10:18 Christ's Superior Service and Sacrifice	Hebrews 12:1-24 The Race of Faith

Warning Passages Against Apostasy

Hebrews 2:1-4 The Danger of Drifting	Hebrews 3:7-4:16 The Danger of Doubt	Hebrews 5:11-6:20 The Danger of Dullness	Hebrews 10:19-39 The Danger of Defiance	Hebrews 12:25-29 The Danger of Desertion
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Wrap-up

Hebrews 13:1-6 How to Love Well	Hebrews 13:7-17 How to Live Well	Hebrews 13:18-25 How to Finish Well
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