

Hebrews

A Word of Exhortation to Faltering Saints

By Dr. Alan Patterson



INTRODUCTORY FACTS ABOUT HEBREWS

I. Authorship and attestation

A. External evidence

1. The external evidence clearly attests to the early existence of the Epistle, but there is little evidence about authorship.
2. Some claim that Paul wrote it.
 - a. According to Eusebius, Clement of Alexandria held that Paul wrote Hebrews in Hebrew and that Luke translated it into Greek.
 - b. Origen repeatedly cites it as having been written by Paul. But he does admit that “men of old time have handed it down as Paul’s. But who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly.”
 - c. Eusebius himself held that it was originally written in Hebrew and that Clement of Rome had translated it.
 - d. From Athanasius onward the Greek writers universally ascribed it to Paul. Jerome and Augustine adopted the opinion of the East (that it was written by Paul), and after that the authority of the Epistle was established.
3. Other suggestions.
 - a. Tertullian thought Barnabas wrote it.
 - b. Irenaeus and Hippolytus were acquainted with it but held that it was not written by Paul.

B. Internal evidence

1. Reasons why Pauline authorship is dubious.
 - a. The writer does not mention his name, whereas Paul always does in the recognized Pauline Epistles.
 - b. Hebrews 2:3 seems to make the author dependent for his message upon those who heard the Lord, whereas Paul claims he received the gospel directly (see Gal. 1:11-24).
 - c. The writer quotes the LXX exclusively (possible exception is 10:30 which may follow Romans 12:19, where Paul quotes the Hebrew and not the LXX), whereas Paul quoted from both the LXX and the Hebrew.
 - d. The style and vocabulary of Hebrews is dissimilar to Paul’s and is therefore against Pauline authorship.
 - e. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and so it would have been unusual for him to write to Jews only.
 - f. The doctrine of justification, a favorite of Paul’s, is hardly mentioned.
 - g. The statement about Timothy’s release (13:23) may point to a time after Paul’s death, for we do not know of an imprisonment for Timothy during Paul’s life.
2. “If the authorship of this epistle is uncertain, its inspiration is indisputable.” (TE, p. 359)

C. Other views about authorship.

1. Calvin and Delitzsch = author was *Luke* (they base this on literary affinity).
2. Zahn, Godet = author was *Barnabas* (he was a Levite and thus interested in the Jewish Christians).
3. Luther, Alford, Moulton, and A. T. Robertson = author was *Apollos*
 - a. He had a close acquaintance with Paul.
 - b. He had a connection with Alexandria.
 - c. He had a good knowledge of the OT Scriptures.
 - d. He had contacts with Timothy.
 - e. He was eloquent.
 - f. He had influence in many churches.
4. Ramsay = author was *Philip* (Ramsay maintains the epistle has a Caesarean origin).
5. Tertullian = author was *Barnabas*, because he was a Jew (a Levite).

II. Place and occasion of writing

A. Probably written from Rome because of the statement, “They of Italy salute you” (13:24).

B. Occasion

1. The Jewish Christians had become “dull of hearing” (5:11), “sluggish” in conduct (6:12), weak in faith (thus need for chapter 11), and near apostasy (6:1-8 and 10:23-39).

2. To answer the need, the writer sent this “word of exhortation” (13:22), urging them to remember the superior excellence of Jesus Christ and to hold firmly to their confession of faith and trust in Him.

III. Recipients

- A. Westcott says about the “Hebrews”: “The arguments and reflections in their whole form and spirit, even more than in the special details, are addressed to ‘Hebrews,’ men, that is, whose hearts were filled with the thoughts, the hopes, the consolations, of the Old Covenant.” See, e.g., 7:11 and 8:4.
- B. This view that the recipients are converted Jews is sustained by the fact that there is no reference to Gentiles or to Gentile controversies in the Epistle. Nothing is said about circumcision, abstinence from things sacrificed to idols, or to the equality of Jew and Gentile in the Church.
- C. These Hebrews are either those in Jerusalem and vicinity or those in Rome.

IV. Date of Writing

- A. Probably somewhere between 67 and 69 A.D.
- B. Date established in part by the idea that the sacrificial system was still going on just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In other words, Hebrews was likely written before that destruction.
- C. Date was after one generation of Christians, for one generation had already passed away (2:3; 13:7).
- D. Date has to allow time for great changes in religious feeling (10:32) and for decline in religious maturity (5:11ff).
- E. Date was probably after Paul’s death. “If we are right in surmising that the imprisonment and release of Timothy followed on his complying with Paul’s request for him to come to Rome (2 Tim. 4:9-13, 21), then the epistle was probably written after Paul’s death.” (THI)

V. Purpose and plan

- A. To establish the supremacy of Christ and Christianity (1:1-10:18).
- B. As required by acceptance of Christ’s superiority over all to warn the readers not to turn back from Him (6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:14-19).
- C. To encourage the readers to renewed effort (6:1, 9-12; 10:19-39; 12:12-17).
- D. To exhort the readers to make a complete break with Judaism (12:18-13:17).

VI. Theme

- A. The key word in the book is “**better**.”
 1. Christ **better** than angels (1:4).
 2. **Better things** that accompany salvation (rather than apostasy) (6:9).
 3. Abraham blessed by the **better** Melchizedek (7:7).
 4. A **better hope** than what the law could provide (7:19).
 5. Jesus is the surety (guarantor) of a **better testament** (7:22).
 6. Jesus is the mediator of a better **covenant** which is based upon **better promises** (8:6).
 7. Heavenly things are sanctified with Jesus’ **better sacrifices** (9:23).
 8. Persecuted Christians endured because they believed in a “**better** and enduring **substance**” (10:34).
 9. Old Testament believers such as Abraham and Sarah desired a “**better country**” (11:16).
 10. Old Testament believers accepted even torture because they expect a **better resurrection** (11:35).
 11. God has provided a **better thing** for both Old and New Testament believers (11:40).
 12. Jesus’ blood speaks **better things** than that of Abel (12:24).
- B. The key grammar is the Greek hortatory subjunctive which is translated “let us.”
 1. The writer himself establishes exhortation as his purpose in writing, for he calls the epistle “*this word of exhortation*” [του λόγου της παρακλήσεως] (13:22).
 2. The exhortations in the Epistle.
 - a. Let us fear coming short of entering His rest (4:1).
 - b. Let us therefore give diligence to enter His rest lest we fall in disobedience (4:11).
 - c. Let us hold fast our confession (4:14).
 - d. Let us boldly draw near to God and the throne of grace (4:16).

- e. Let us press on unto maturity (6:1).
- f. Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith (10:22).
- g. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (10:23).
- h. Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works (10:24).
- i. Let us lay aside every besetting sin (12:1).
- j. Let us run the race with endurance (12:1).
- k. Let us show gratitude and serve God acceptably with reverence and awe (12:28).
- l. Let us go forth unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach (13:13).
- m. Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise (13:15).

C. Summary:

1. Using the key word and the key grammar the theme of the book can be stated thus: ***“Let us remember that Christ is better than (the fulfillment of) all aspects of Judaism and let us therefore hold fast our confession of Him.”***
2. The analytical outline that follows is based on the key word “better.”
 - a. A Better Messenger (1:1-3:6)
 - b. A Better Rest (3:7-4:13)
 - c. A Better Priest (4:14-8:5)
 - d. A Better Covenant (8:6-9:28)
 - e. A Better Sacrifice (10:1-39)
 - f. A Better Way of Living: By Faith (11:1-40)
 - g. A Better Country/Kingdom (12:1-29)
 - h. The Best Practice: Obedience [to various commands] (13:1-25)

Analytical Outline of Hebrews

I. A Better Messenger (1:1-3:6)

A. *Better than angels (1:1-2:18)*

1. Because of His work (1:1-2)
 - a. His work as God's final spokesman (1).
 - b. His work as Creator (2).
2. Because of His nature (3)
3. Because of His relationship with the Father (3c-6)
 - a. He is at the seat of authority on the Father's right hand (3c).
 - b. He has received a "more excellent name" (4).
 - c. He is God's unique Son (5-6).
4. Because of His scripturally-proven deity (7-14)
 - a. Angels worship Him (6-7).
 - b. He is called God (8).
 - c. He is perfectly righteous, hating iniquity and loving righteousness (9a).
 - d. He is anointed and exalted above all others (9b).
 - e. He is the creator of the earth and heavens (10).
 - f. He is eternal and immutable (11-12).
 - g. He is the sovereign over all His enemies (13-14).
5. Because of the seriousness of neglecting His Word (2:1-4)

Reasons for "paying much closer attention to it."

 - a. The Son of God's final and perfect revelation (2:1).
 - b. We are prone to drift away from God's Word (2:1).
 - c. The penalty of disobeying is severe (2:2).
 - d. There is no hope for those who "neglect" God's word and salvation (2:3).
6. Because of His sovereignty over creation (2:5-9)
7. Because of His special relationship to believers (2:10-18)
 - a. He is the Captain of our salvation (2:10).
 - b. He is our Father, we are His sons, His children (2:10, 13).
 - c. He is our brother (2:11-16).
 - d. He is our sympathizing High Priest (2:17-18).

B. *Better than Moses (3:1-6)*

1. Comparison of Jesus and Moses (3:1-2)
 - a. The command to compare: "consider"
 - b. The calling of Jesus and Moses:
 - (1) Jesus:
 - (a) He is the "Apostle" [One sent on a mission = to save us] of our confession.
 - (b) He is the "High Priest" [One making sacrifice for our sins] of our confession.
 - (2) Moses: the leader of Israel, God's "house"
 - c. The consistency of both: "faithful" to the One who appointed them.
2. Contrast of Jesus and Moses (3:3-6)
 - a. Jesus is the creator, Moses is simply part of God's people ["house"] (3-4).
 - b. Jesus is the Son of God, Moses is only a servant (5-6).

II. A Better Rest (3:7-4:13)

A. *The better rest rejected (3:7-19)*

1. Indications of a rejecting heart ["an evil heart of unbelief"] (3:7-12)
 - a. Decisions that harden (7-8).
 - b. Doubting ["testing"] God (9a).
 - c. Ingratitude (9b).
 - d. Continued rebellion ["always go astray"] (10a, b).
 - e. Failure to learn God's way (10c).
 - f. Unbelief (11-12).
 - g. Falling away from God (12).
2. Exhortations for avoiding apostasy (3:13-19)
 - a. Warn and encourage one (13).

- b. Firmly hold to confidence in Christ (14).
 - c. Keep a warm, uncomplaining heart toward God and His Word (15-16).
 - d. Believe and obey God's Word (17-19).
- B. *The better rest received ["entered"] (4:1-13)*
- 1. All must enter God's rest by faith (4:1-3a).
 - 2. Some have not entered God's rest because of disobedience (4:3b-8).
 - 3. All must be diligent to enter God's rest lest they follow Israel's evil example (4:9-13).

III. A Better High Priest (4:14-8:5)

- A. *He sympathizes with our infirmities (4:14-16).*
- B. *He is perfectly qualified to be High Priest (5:1-10).*
- 1. The qualifications of a high priest (5:1-4)
 - a. He must be a man ["taken from among men"] (1-3).
 - b. He must be called and appointed by God to the high-priesthood (4).
 - 2. Christ's perfect fulfillment of the qualifications (5:5-10)
 - a. He was designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5-6, 10)
 - b. He had "flesh," experienced suffering, and learned obedience (7-9).
- C. *He has entered the holy place and calls us to have assurance of salvation (5:11-6:20).*
- 1. A call to spiritual growth (5:11-14)
 - a. The proof of their immaturity:
 - (1) They were dull of hearing.
 - (2) They could not digest solid spiritual food.
 - b. The reason for their immaturity: lack of spiritual exercise
 - 2. A warning about falling away (6:1-8)
 - a. The duty of Christian progress (1-3)
 - b. The danger of falling away (4-8)
 - Characteristics of apostates:
 - (1) They have known the truth about Jesus ["enlightened"].
 - (2) They have experienced God's grace ["tasted the heavenly gift"].
 - (3) They have experienced the Holy Spirit's work in their heart ["partakers of the Holy Spirit"].
 - (4) They have experienced the blessing of God's Word ["tasted the good word of God"].
 - (5) They have seen God's power in miracles ["the powers of the age to come"].
 - (6) They irrevocably forsake Christ ["have fallen away"].
 - (a) They cannot repent (6:6).
 - (b) They crucify Jesus again (6:6).
 - (c) They put Jesus to public shame (6:6).
 - (d) They receive God's curse (6:7-8).
 - 3. A call to diligence and hope (6:9-20)
 - a. The call to diligence (9-12)
 - (1) The call is to true Christians (9).
 - (2) The call is to those already serving the Lord (10).
 - (3) The call is to continue diligently until the end (11).
 - (4) The call is to believe God's promises and wait patiently for their fulfillment (12).
 - b. The sure hope (13-20)
 - (1) It is based on God's promise and oath (13-17).
 - (2) It provides a "refuge" for the Christian (18).
 - (3) It provides an "anchor" for the Christian (19).
 - (4) It provides an entrance to God's presence for the Christian (19-25).
- D. *He is a high priest like Melchizedek (7:1-28).*
- 1. The greatness of Melchizedek when compared with Abraham (7:1-10)
 - a. He was both a king and a priest (7:1).
 - b. He bestowed his blessing upon Abraham (7:1, 6b-7).
 - c. He received tithes from Abraham (7:2a, 4-6, 8-10).
 - d. He is a type of Christ in his seeming eternity (7:3).
 - 2. The greatness of Melchizedek when compared with Aaron and the Levitical priesthood (7:11-28)
 - a. His priesthood can perfect sinners (7:11-14).
 - b. His priesthood is based not on written laws but on eternal power demonstrated by eternal life (7:15-17).

- c. His priesthood enables us to “draw near to God” (7:18-19).
- d. His priesthood is established upon God’s oath (7:20-22).
- e. His priesthood is unchangeable; it is not subject to the changes of death (7:23-24).
- f. His priesthood provides full salvation (7:25-28).

Some thoughts on salvation from v. 25:

- (1) The basis of salvation: our High Priest’s perfect sacrifice
- (2) The meaning of salvation: continual and eternal deliverance from sin
- (3) The duration of salvation: forever
- (4) The completeness of salvation: “to the uttermost”
- (5) The recipients of salvation: those who draw near to God by faith
- (6) The method of salvation: “by Him” = through Christ
- (7) The maintenance of salvation: Jesus’ intercession for us

E. He is the High Priest of the True Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies in heaven (8:1-5).

- 1. Jesus’ ministry in the True Tabernacle (8:1-2)
- 2. The necessity of the True Tabernacle (8:3-5)
 - a. Jesus needed a better place to perform His High-priestly work (8:3).
 - b. The place could not be earth (8:4).
 - c. The place had to be heaven (8:5).

IV. A Better Covenant (8:6-9:28)

A. The Prophecy of the Better Covenant (8:6-13)

- 1. The foundation of the covenant: better promises (8:6)
 - a. Absolute not conditional
 - b. Eternal not temporal
 - c. Internal not external
- 2. The need for the covenant: the inadequacy of the first covenant (8:7-9)
 - a. The logical argument (8:7)
 - b. The prophetic argument (8:8-9)
- 3. The promises of the covenant (8:10-13)
 - a. He will give us a delight in the law and the ability to obey it (10b).
 - b. We will know God personally and experientially (10-11).
 - c. We will receive absolute forgiveness of all sin (12).

B. The Sanctuary and Offerings of the Old Covenant (9:1-10)

- 1. The sanctuary and its furniture (9:1-5)
- 2. The service and offerings of the Tabernacle (9:6-10)
 - a. The service of the regular priests (6)
 - b. The service of the high priest (7)
 - c. The meaning of the priest’s service (8-10)

C. The Sanctuary and Offering of the New Covenant (9:11-28)

- 1. Christ entered the sanctuary through His own blood (9:11-22).
 - a. The sanctuary is the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” (9:11).
 - b. Through His blood he obtained eternal redemption (9:12-14).
 - c. Christ died as the “mediator of the new covenant” making the new covenant valid (9:15-17).
 - d. Without that shedding of blood there could have been “no forgiveness” (9:18-22).
- 2. Christ offered Himself to bear the sins of many as a better sacrifice (9:23-28).
 - a. His sacrifice was better (9:23).
 - b. His sacrifice was better because it was done in the heavenly holy place (9:24).
 - c. His sacrifice was better because it was done once for all (9:25-26).
 - d. His sacrifice was better because it provided not only a present salvation but a future salvation (9:27-28).

V. A Better Sacrifice (10:1-39)

A. His sacrifice makes us perfect (10:1-4).

- 1. OT sacrifices were the shadow, Jesus’ was the substance (10:1).
- 2. OT sacrifices were repeated, Jesus’ was once for all and provided true remission (10:2).
- 3. OT sacrifices left a consciousness of sin, Jesus’ provided cleansing of the conscience (10:3).
- 4. OT sacrifices reminded of sin, Jesus’ truly removed sin (10:4).

- B. *His sacrifice was His body (10:5-10a).*
- C. *His sacrifice was in obedience to God's will (10:5-10a).*
- D. *His sacrifice perfects us once for all, forever (10b-18).*
 - 1. By it He sanctifies us (10b).
 - 2. By it He takes away our sins (11-12).
 - 3. By it He won victory over all His enemies (13).
 - 4. By it He completes us (14).
 - 5. By it He forgives and forgets our sins (15-18).
- E. *His sacrifice requires us to be faithful (10:19-25).*
 - 1. To draw near (19-22)
 - 2. To hold fast our profession (23)
 - 3. To encourage one another (24-25a)
 - 4. To attend the meetings of the church (25b)
- F. *His sacrifice can be rejected (10:26-32).*
 - 1. To continue sinning is to reject Jesus' sacrifice (10:26).
 - 2. To reject Jesus' sacrifice is to bring God's judgment (10:27-28).
 - 3. To reject Jesus' sacrifice is a threefold sin (10:29).
 - a. It is to trample under foot the Son of God.
 - b. It is to regard the blood of the covenant as an unclean thing.
 - c. It is to insult the Spirit of grace.
 - 4. To reject Christ's sacrifice is to bring God's vengeance (10:30-31).
- G. *His sacrifice gives the patience and faith to endure trials (10:33-39).*
 - 1. The trials explained (10:32-34)
 - a. Public reproach (32-34a)
 - b. Confiscation of property (34b)
 - 2. The patience and faith exhibited (10:35-39)
 - a. The exhortation to do so (10:35-36)
 - b. The example from Habakkuk (10:37-38)
 - c. The example of the writer and readers (10:39)

VI. The Better Way – Living by Faith (11:1-40)

(contrast with those in chapter 10 who had no faith)

- A. *The characteristics of faith (11:1-3)*
 - 1. Faith gives us firm confidence that the things we are hoping for are real (11:1).
 - 2. Faith convinces us that the unseen things are true (11:1).
 - 3. Faith brings God's approval and blessing (11:2).
 - 4. Faith explains creation (11:3).
- B. *The faith of believers before the flood (11:4-7)*
 - 1. Abel: the one whose testimony lives on (11:4)
 - 2. Enoch: the one who pleased God (11:5-6)
 - 3. Noah: the one who obeyed God's warning (11:7)
- C. *The faith of the patriarchs (11:8-22)*
 - 1. Abraham: the obedient pilgrim (11:8-10)
 - 2. Sarah: the one made strong in weakness (11:11-12)
 - 3. The patriarchs' faith described (11:13-16)
 - a. Their faith was permanent.
 - b. Their faith showed their priority.
 - c. Their faith showed their heart's desire.
 - 4. Abraham and the supreme test of faith (11:17-19)
 - a. The test of his faith: God required him to offer Isaac.
 - b. The encouragements to his faith: God's promises and Isaac's own faith.
 - c. The exercise of his faith: He offered Isaac.
 - d. The blessing of his faith: God's provision and opportunity to praise God.
 - 5. Three examples of faith concerning the future (11:20-22)
 - a. Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau (11:20).
 - b. Jacob blessed both of Joseph's sons (11:21).
 - c. Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones (11:22).
- D. *The faith of Moses and His family (11:23-29)*

1. The faith of his parents (11:23)
2. Moses' faith (11:24-29)
 - a. Faith's REFUSAL (11:24)
 - b. Faith's CHOICE (11:25)
 - c. Faith's REWARD (11:26)
 - d. Faith's ENDURANCE (11:27)
 - e. Faith's PROTECTION (11:28-29)
- E. *The faith of Joshua and Rahab (11:30-31)*
 1. Two acts of faith: city encircled, the spies welcomed.
 2. Two results of faith: the walls fell, Rahab's family saved.
 3. Two results of disobedience: every person in Jericho killed; every animal also killed.
 4. Two lessons of faith:
 - a. Faith = obedience
 - b. Faith is unbiased; it transforms any repentant and believing sinner.
- F. *The faith of those living in the kingdom (11:32-38)*
A summary of their acts of faith:
 1. Some were victorious through miraculous help from God (11:32-35a).
 2. Some were victorious through suffering and even death (11:35b-38).
- G. *Conclusion (11:39-40)*
 1. The testimony of the OT believers: they firmly believed the promise though they did not receive it.
 2. The hope of OT believers: to be perfected with us.

VII. A Better Kingdom (12:1-29; *28)

- A. *Consider the King of the kingdom (12:1-3).*
 1. By considering Him we follow the example of OT saints (12:1a).
 2. By considering Him we overcome our sin (12:1b).
 3. By considering Him we can run the race (12:1c).
 4. By considering Him we can overcome spiritual weariness (12:2-3).
- B. *Prepare for the kingdom (12:4-17).*
 1. By accepting God's discipline (12:4-13)
 - a. Do not despise it, for it shows God's love (12:4-6).
 - b. Endure it for it confirms that you are God's child (12:7-8).
 - c. Submit to it for it produces good fruit – life, holiness, peace, righteousness (12:9-11).
 - d. Help others to submit to it by your encouragement and example (12:12-13).
 2. By pursuing peace and sanctification (12:14-17)
 - a. What we must do: pursue peace and holiness (12:14).
 - b. What we must not do: what we must look out for (12:15-17).
 - (1) Make sure no one in our assembly is unsaved.
 - (2) Make sure there is no one in our assembly who is a “bitter root” who will infect and ruin others.
 - (3) Make sure no one is a fornicator.
 - (4) Make sure no one is profane, making light of infinitely valuable spiritual privileges.
- C. *Enjoy the blessings of the kingdom (12:18-24).*
 1. Contrast Mount Sinai's threatenings (12:18-24).
 2. Delight in Mount Zion's privileges (12:22-24).
- D. *Serve in the kingdom (12:25-29).*
 1. Warning to those who refuse to serve (12:25-27)
 - a. The speaker of the warning: God, through His Son.
 - b. The need for the warning: some in the past refused to serve.
 - c. The seriousness of the warning: no unbeliever will escape God's judgment (“shaking”).
 2. Exhortation to those serving:
 - a. Serve because of gratitude.
 - b. Serve with reverence (seriousness).
 - c. Serve with awe (realizing the dangers).

VIII. The Best Practice: Obedience [to various commands] (13:1-25)

- A. *Show proper love (13:1-4).*
 1. Love for the brethren (13:1)

2. Love for strangers [hospitality] (13:2)
 3. Love for prisoners and the ill-treated [visit them] (13:3)
 4. Love in marriage (13:4)
- B. Be content with the Lord (13:5-6).*
1. The enemy of contentment: the love of money.
 2. The meaning of contentment: satisfaction with what you have.
 3. The reason for contentment: the Lord's promise to never forsake us.
 4. The affirmation of contentment: "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid."
- C. Honor spiritual leaders (13:7).*
1. Honor by remembering them.
 2. Honor by imitating their way of living.
- D. Establish yourself on Christ and sound doctrine (13:8-9).*
1. Jesus never changes, therefore, establish yourself upon Him as the only foundation.
 2. Truth about Jesus never changes, therefore, establish yourself on the foundation of sound doctrine.
- E. Offer spiritual sacrifices to Christ (13:10-16).*
1. The sacrifice of bearing Jesus' reproach (13:10-14)
 2. The sacrifice of praise (13:15)
 - a. Praise God through Jesus.
 - b. Praise God continually.
 - c. Praise God as though offering a sacrifice (We are all priests!).
 - d. Praise God vocally.
 - e. Praise God by giving thanks.
 - f. Praise God by honoring His name.
 3. The sacrifice of sharing with other (13:16)
- F. Obey spiritual leaders (13:17).*
- G. Pray for others (13:18-21).*
1. Pray for them to live honorably in every way (13:18).
 2. Pray for their safety (13:19).
 3. Pray for the Lord to equip them and use them for His glory (13:20-21).
- H. Accept the exhortations of this book (13:22).*
- I. Final information and greetings (13:23-25)*

Analytical Outline of Hebrews with Notes

I. A BETTER MESSENGER (1:1-3:6)

A. Better than angels (1:1-2:18)

1. Because of His work (1:1-2)

- a. His work as God's final spokesman (1).
 - 1) Contrast preparatory nature of the Old Testament with the finality of the revelation in Christ.
 - 2) That means there will be no more revelation.
 - 3) The "many parts" of the preparatory training included different periods such as the patriarchs, Moses, the theocracy, the kingdom, the captivity, and the religious hierarchy.
 - 4) The "many ways" included "face to face," visions, Urim and Thummim, and dreams.
 - 5) God spoke not only through the prophets, but "in" them, in vital union with them, giving them inspiration and accuracy. [WE]
 - 6) Prophets included in the broadest sense even Abraham (Gen. 20:7), Moses (Deut. 34:10), David (Acts 2:30) and all those inspired by God (Psalm 105:15).
 - 7) The Son is greater than the prophets as well as greater than angels.
 - 8) Contrast the revelation of the Son with the revelation of the prophets.
 - (i) Son not spokesman only but a Son.
 - (ii) Son not many but one.
 - (iii) Son gave not fragmentary revelation but there was a unity of substance and form in the Son's revelation.
 - (iv) Son's revelation was not preparatory but was final.
- b. His work as Creator (2).
 - 1) The Creator is the "son" of God.
 - (i) The absence of the definite article (lit. = "in a son") stresses the nature and filial relationship of the Son rather than His personality.
 - (ii) Neither prophets nor angels have the sonship relationship with the Father.
 - (iii) Thus the OT prophets had neither the authority nor the dignity of the One who is a Son. [PEH]
 - 2) The Creator is the only son and thus the sole "heir of all things."
 - (i) The dominion promised to Adam but lost by Adam has been gained by Christ.
 - (ii) The Son was dynamically active in the creation of all things related to time, space, and the material world.
 - (iii) As Creator the Son existed prior to the angels, the prophets, and the entire world. He is eternally preexistent.

2. Because of His nature (1:3)

- a. The Son is *the radiance of His glory*.
 - 1) He is the manifestation of all of the divine attributes in their perfection.
 - 2) What He is had to manifest itself. It could not be hidden.
 - 3) "**Being**" – "affirms the permanence of the divine essence of the Son" [WE]
 - 4) "**Radiance**" is not passive reflection but effulgence. "The inscrutable glory of God streams forth in the Son who is the effulgence of that glory. 'Glory is not merely the shining forth of one of the divine attributes but the shining forth of all of them.'" [LE] (Col. 1:15; John 12:45)
 - 5) "As we cannot see the sun without the light and the radiance which it sends forth, so God is hidden from us without the Son." [LE]
 - (i) *Therefore, see the necessity of missions.
 - (ii) No one can know God without knowing the Son.
- b. The Son is *the exact representation of His nature*.
 - 1) The Son then is the expression of the very essence of God. [WE]
 - 2) The Son, in contrast to men and even angels manifests the essential characteristics of God.
 - 3) Not that the Son has received His character from the Father, but that he is in reality and essence ["nature" = **υποστασις** = essence] God very God. Seeing the Son is seeing the Father (John 14:9).

- 4) What we see in the Son's being and character is what God is.
 - c. The Son *upholds all things by the word of His power*.
 - 1) His Word is His will and it always stands fast (Col. 1:17).
 - 2) The same utterance (**ρημα**) that called the world into being now sustains it.
 - 3) Not only does he sustain the universe moment by moment but He is maintaining its coherence and guiding and propelling it all toward a definite end. (VI)
 - 4) Because of what He is He does.
 - 5) *Because Christ is the great organizer of the universe, let Him organize and control your life.
 - d. The Son *made purification of sins*.
 - 1) The middle voice of the verb indicates the Son's personal involvement in the completed atonement. It also shows that the action came back upon Him = His sacrificial death.
 - 2) The result was a perfect and complete ("having made" – perfect tense) removal of the sins of sinners who trust in Him.
 - 3) This statement introduces the idea that the Son is also our High Priest.
3. Because of His relationship with the Father (1:3c-5)
- a. He is at the seat of authority on the Father's right hand (3c).
 - 1) This proves the completeness, finality, and acceptance of the Son's work of purification, "from the cross to the crown, from earth's footstool to heaven's throne." [PEH]
 - 2) "Sat down" "expresses the solemn taking of the seat of authority and not merely the act of sitting" and "marks the fulfillment of Psalm 110:1." [WE]
 - 3) See Christ then as *Prophet* ("He spoke"), *Priest* ("purged our sins"), and *King* ("right hand of the majesty on high").
 - b. He has received a **more excellent name** (4).
 - 1) Name is character and Jesus' character surpasses that of even the highest angels, who are the highest rank of God's ministers.
 - 2) About angels
 - (i) Heaven is their native home (Mt. 24:36).
 - (ii) They are mighty in strength and obey and perform His word (Ps. 103:20).
 - (iii) They serve God Himself (Daniel 7:10).
 - (iv) They are holy (Mark 8:38).
 - (v) They appear like lightning and with garments as white as snow (Mt. 28:3).
 - (vi) They execute judgment (Mt. 25:31ff).
 - (vii) The law was given through their mediation (Dt. 33:2; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19).
 - (viii) Yet, Christ is infinitely greater than they! Therefore, worship Him (Rev. 22:8-9).
 - 3) "If Christ then be more excellent than the most excellent, He must needs be the most excellent of all." (Pink = P)
 - 4) Christ is **on** the throne, angels are **round about** the throne (Rev. 5:11).
 - c. He is God's unique Son (5). Quotes 1 and 2 (writer begins a series of 7 OT quotations here)
 - 1) Note the rhetorical question.
 - (i) The writer wants them to think. *Use such questions in your teaching.
 - (ii) The writer expects them to be familiar with the entire contents of Scripture.
 - 2) Nowhere in Scripture does God call an individual angel His son.
 - (i) Called "sons of God" in Job 38:7 but refers to their creation, not an eternal relationship with God.
 - (ii) In same way Adam called a "son of God" (Luke 3:38).
 - 3) Quote 1 = THOU ART MY SON TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE
 - (i) The "today" was the day of resurrection.
 - (ii) See Psalms 2:7 and Acts 13:32-33.
 - 4) Names and titles in Hebrews: Jesus, Christ, Lord, Son, Captain of our salvation, and the Author and Finisher of our faith.
 - 5) Quote 2 = I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM, AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME?
 - (i) First fulfilled in Solomon but clearly refers to one after Solomon for His is a "kingdom forever" (v. 8).
 - (ii) Jesus fulfills the word for He is both the Son of God and the Son of David (Rom. 1:3).
 - (iii) Jesus called Him Father, obeyed Him as Father, and committed His spirit into the Father's hands.
 - d. Learn:

- 1) Angels are our helpers and God's servants – thank God for His watch care.
 - 2) The Lord expects us to know the Word.
 - 3) Without careful searching and learning we will not understand the depth of our salvation or the many aspects and attributes of our Savior.
4. Because of His scripturally-proven deity (1:6-14) -- Note the 7 OT quotations (1 and 2 were in v. 5; most of the rest of the chapter is quotation from the OT)
- a. Angels worship Him (6-7).
 - 1) Quote 3 = “AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM (LXX of Psalm 97:7 and Deut. 32:43)
 - (i) These exact words are not found in the Hebrew text but are in the Septuagint version of Deut. 32:43 and Psalm 97:7
 - (ii) The worship that in Deuteronomy is given to the LORD is here given to the Son, thus showing His full deity.
 - (iii) The angels are to worship the “firstborn,” that is the One who is before all as the eternally preexistent Son and as the One who is the firstborn and thus the rightful heir of all things.
 - 2) Quote 4 = WHO MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE (Psalm 104:4)
 - (i) The context of Psalm 104 includes an emphasis on creation (vv. 2, 5).
 - (ii) Note some contrasts of angels with the Son.
 1. Angels are “made” [created] beings; the Son is eternal.
 2. Angels are servants; Christ is a Son.
 3. Angels are spirits; Christ is the incarnate (having flesh) Son of God.
 - b. He is called God (8).
 - 1) Quote 5 = THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER: A SCEPTER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF THY KINGDOM. THOU HAST LOVE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED INIQUITY; THEREFORE GOD, EVEN THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY FELLOWS (Psalm 45:6-7)
 - 2) This is a contrast (“but”) – the writer was talking about angels but in contrast to them we have the Son is God very God, and is called so.
 - 3) Learn about the Son as King:
 - (i) He has a throne, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
 1. Rev. 22:1 speaks of the throne of God and of the Lamb. No wonder angels told to worship Him.
 2. He has a kingdom and we are His subjects, responsible to obey in all things. Why would we not obey such a King?
 - (ii) He is God (see also Is. 9:6; Jer. 23:5).
 - (iii) His throne is eternal.
 1. See also Isaiah 9:7.
 2. Find comfort in His sovereign rule over your life.
 - c. He is perfectly righteous, hating iniquity and loving righteousness (9a).
 - 1) He rules righteously.
 - 2) He is fair, showing no partiality to the rich or the poor.
 - 3) He will accept no bribes.
 - 4) He has authority to rule – “scepter”.
 - 5) He rules righteously because His character is righteous, hating evil and loving good.
 - (i) Note that His righteousness was tested, for He loved good and hated evil while on the earth.
 - (ii) Because of His proven righteousness with His sinless life He was “anointed with oil above His fellows.”
 - d. He is anointed and exalted above all others (9b).
 - 1) The “anointed one” is the “Messiah.”

- 2) The verse before shows Christ's deity and this verse shows His dependence upon the Father, Who is called "Thy God." Jesus is the perfect God-man.
 - 3) "Oil of gladness" shows the blessed reward and joy of completing His earthly mission. Joy and glory follow the cross for us as well.
 - 4) The anointing speaks of a victory over all that is sad and evil and probably refers to His return to glory after His death, burial and resurrection.
 - 5) The Messiah comes to replace mourning with gladness (Is. 61:3).
 - 6) The Messiah is anointed "above His fellows" [companions – NASB].
 - (i) Fellows may be angels as those who also have fellowship with God.
 - (ii) Fellows may be Christians (see 3:1 and 3:14 where same Greek word, μετοχος is used).
 - (iii) Fellows may be other kings – Christ's anointing infinitely greater and more significant than theirs.
 - (iv) Learn: "fellows" suggests that we too will one day be eternally rewarded for a life of obedient service to God.
- e. He is the creator of the earth and heavens (10).
- 1) Quote 6 = THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS: 11 THEY SHALL PERISH; BUT THOU REMAINEST; AND THEY ALL SHALL WAX OLD AS DOTH A GARMENT; 12 AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL. (Psalm 102:25-27)
 - 2) About Christ and the universe:
 - (i) He founded the earth and made the heavens with His hands.
 - (ii) The present universe is running down and will eventually be changed (totally remade – 2 Pet. 3:12-13)
 - (iii) Christ totally controls creation, for He can "fold it up" at His will.
 - 3) Note that the writer applies to Christ what the Psalmist applied to the LORD (Yahweh), again showing the deity of Christ.
- f. He is eternal and immutable (11-12).
- 1) The world is in flux even now, but one day there will be a greater change, but Christ does not change.
 - 2) The final cosmic shaking is yet future (Heb. 12:26-27), when the unshakeable kingdom of God will remain.
 - 3) Learn: Are you looking for stability? For someone trustworthy? For someone dependable? Jesus is the answer, for He is always the "same."
 - (i) "The Lord's our Rock, in Him we hide, a shelter in the time of storm."
 - (ii) "All may change, but Jesus never, Glory to His Name!"
- g. He is the sovereign over all His enemies (13-14).
- 1) Quote 7 = SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL (Psalm 110:1)
 - 2) Psalm 110 is the most quoted of all Psalms.
 - (i) It is quoted or alluded to in these references: 1:3; 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:3, 11, 17, 21; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2.
 - (ii) It provides "scriptural authentication of the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ, not only as Son and Lord but also as High Priest and Redeemer" (PEH).
 - (iii) Jesus Himself used it to prove that He is both David's son and rightful heir and David's Lord (Matthew 22:41-46).
 - 3) These words suggest that there are still enemies to be subdued and that the time will come when the triumph of Christ over them will be final and complete.
 - (i) 2:8 states that all things are not yet subject to Him.
 - (ii) But 10:13 shows that Christ is confidently expecting the time when His enemies will be made His footstool.
 1. See also 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

2. The last enemy is death (1 Cor. 15:26).
 3. Jesus will then reign forever from His throne (Rev. 7:17; 11:15; 22:16).
 - (iii) “Footstool” suggests:
 1. Absolute defeat.
 2. Absolute domination of enemies.
 3. The opposite of the postmillennial teaching of a gradual Christianization of the world – rather Christ will with flaming fire take vengeance on His enemies.
 - 4) Recall the main point being made – Christ is better than angels.
 - (i) No angel has ever been told such words.
 - (ii) Christ is the King but angels are servants, not only to God but even to us, the “heirs of salvation.”
 - (iii) Christ is the God-man but angels are only spirits.
 - (iv) Angels are mighty but they are the subjects. Christ is the “Mighty God.”
 - (v) Learn:
 1. How blessed we are! We not only will inherit the eternal blessings of salvation, but we right now are being served by these glorious beings called angels. God has sent them for that very purpose.
 - a. *“The angel of the Lord campeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them”* (Psalm 34:7).
 - b. An angel delivered Lot (Gen. 19:15-16), an angel shut the mouth of the lions (Daniel 6:22), and one took the beggar to heaven (Luke 16:22).
 2. Let us thank God for this evidence of his love and protection.
 3. Praise Christ for His:
 - a. Stability
 - b. Security
 - c. Salvation
 5. Because of the seriousness of neglecting His Word (2:1-4).
- a. Introduction Reasons Why We Must Pay Closer Attention to What We Have Heard
- 1) **Pay much closer attention:**
 - (i) Listen to with all the attention.
 - (ii) Listen to it until convinced that it is truth.
 - (iii) Listen to it until we are ready to die for it.
 - (iv) Listen to it as one ready to obey it.
 - (v) Thought – thoughtfully study it.
 - (vi) Effort – carefully strive to obey it.
 - (vii) These are the means of strengthening the ropes by which you are moored to Christ.
 - 2) Eternal issues are at stake when we hear the Gospel.
 - 3) The writer is trying to impress the need for seriousness.
 - 4) Remember, this book is called a “word of exhortation” (13:22) and this is one of those exhortations.
- b. *Reasons for paying closer attention*
- 1) *Because of the recollection of the greatness of Christ and His final and perfect revelation as seen in 1:1-14 -- the “therefore” (2:1) points us back to this first reason.*
 - (i) Chapter 1 tells us that God has spoken to us finally by His Son.
 - (ii) That Son is God; He is infinitely superior to angels.
 - (iii) If a king spoke people would listen. If an angel spoke people would listen. But the Maker and Sustainer of the Universe has both spoken and lived and we MUST hear Him. This is our logical duty.
 - 2) *Because we have a tendency to drift away from it (2:1).*
 - (i) The verb was used by Plato to refer to something slipping from memory.
 - (ii) The point is that without strenuous effort we will drift away.

- (iii) The verb is passive and suggests that we will drift even if we do nothing.
 - (iv) Some causes of drifting
 - 1. Doing nothing
 - 2. Trials
 - 3. Dullness (5:11)
 - 4. Indifference (6:11-12)
 - 5. Besetting sins (12:1)
 - 6. Forgetfulness (12:5)
 - (v) If we do not try to remember we will forget.
 - (vi) We cannot use the excuse that we are weak.
 - 1. That is true; and precisely because it is true we must be all the more diligent.
 - 2. Living the Christian life requires effort. Without effort you will drift. Illustrate: I was in a small canoe on a lake and taking it easy, not realizing that the wind and the waves were moving me far from where I thought I was.
- 3) *Because the penalty for disobeying God's Word is severe (2:2).*
- (i) The Law was a gracious gift of God to men. This book always regards the Law as a great blessing to the people, for it showed them God's will.
 - (ii) The Law was "holy, just and good" (Rom. 7:12).
 - (iii) The Law was given by God to Moses through angels.
 - 1. Deut. 33:2, "He came from the midst of ten thousand holy ones."
 - 2. Psalms 68:17, "the chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them as at Sinai, in holiness."
 - 3. Acts 7:53, "you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."
 - 4. Gal. 3:19, "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made."
 - 5. In other words, the law had not come directly from God but came through angels to Moses, and by his "hand" it was given to the people.
 - (iv) The law was **unalterable**; it was binding; it could not be changed or challenged.
 - (v) Anyone who challenged the Law was justly punished.
 - 1. There were penalties for **transgression** [doing what the Law forbids] and for **disobedience** [refusing to do what it commands].
 - 2. Examples: Nadab and Abihu Aaron's first two sons died for offering strange fire (Lev. 10:1); the whole history of Israel and their judgments for apostasy.
- 4) *Because of the danger of neglecting so great a salvation (2:3).*
- (i) He is not warning them about rejecting the Gospel. He is warning them about neglecting the Gospel. He is warning about indifference and apathy.
 - (ii) Neglect's result is the same as rejection.
 - (iii) The use of the word "neglect" [αμελεω]. (with 2:3 only 4 NT references)
 - 1. Mt. 22:5, "but they **paid no attention** and went their way."
 - 2. 1 Tim. 4:14, "Do not **neglect** the spiritual gift within you."
 - 3. Heb. 8:9, "for they did not continue in My covenant, and I **did not care** for them, says the Lord."
 - (iv) This salvation is "so great" because it was mediated through Jesus Himself.
 - 1. Those who neglect God's saving grace through Jesus make light of it.
 - 2. They are saying that they have more important things to do than to listen to Christ's message.
 - (v) Those who neglect this message have no hope of escaping.
 - 1. People in our day have more responsibility to hear God's message, for it is clearer and more available.
 - 2. Jesus has both lived and preached. Therefore it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah (Mt. 11:20-24).
 - (vi) Christ, **the Lord**, was the first to preach this message (2:3b).
 - 1. Mark 1:14, "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God."
 - 2. Many **heard** the Lord themselves and related what they had heard to these Hebrew

Christians. In this way the Gospel message too was **confirmed** [verb form of “unalterable” in v. 2].

(vii) God also was **bearing witness** to the truth of the message by granting **signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will (2:4)**.

1. About these signs and miracles and divers miracles:

- a. A “sign” points beyond itself to the fact that the mighty hand of God is working.
- b. A “wonder” is a supernatural event which excites awe and amazement.
- c. A “miracle” [lit. power] emphasizes the power and ability of God to do what man cannot.
- d. There was a diversity of [**various**] these powerful manifestations of God’s working.

2. About these **gifts of the Holy Spirit**.

- a. Certain gifts such as tongues and prophecy were not needed after the New Testament was completed.
 - i. See 1 Cor. 13:8 where Paul says that prophecy and tongues and knowledge will one day cease to operate among God’s people.
 - ii. *prophecy* = receiving revelation from God and communicating it to man.
 - iii. *tongues* = communicating special revelation to men in their own language.
 - iv. *knowledge* = having a precise understanding of the special revelation and the ability to communicate it effectively to others.
- b. In the NT the mention of these gifts fades away until they are mentioned here in retrospective.
- c. In the centuries right after the early church: “when we study the vast amount of Christian literature in the early centuries of the Christian church, we find that not once did men allude to or even hint at the gift of tongues” (Dr. David Beale in “Tongues Untied.”)
- d. So to seek those gifts is to seek to return to the church in its infancy; but now that revelation has been completed, the church is even more blessed. We have the “more sure word of prophecy” and no longer need the confirming gifts.
- e. These gifts helped confirm that a message was truly from the Lord.
- f. They were God’s way of authenticating a ministry. They were God’s “testimony” that the preaching and the preacher were from God.
- g. Of course, the greatest proof of the gospel message is the changed lives of those who believe it.
 - i. Those who heard Christ (v. 3) had full assurance regarding the truth of the Gospel.
 - ii. Still, as further proof, God bore testimony that it was true by granting these miracles and gifts.

c. Learn:

- 1) The Word ought to become more precious to the Christian as he grows older.
- 2) The Word is vitally important and must not be neglected for several reasons.
 - (i) OT days portrayed the punishment for disobedience and neglect.
 - (ii) It was spoken by Jesus, who is the Lord and who spoke like no other man has ever spoken.
 - (iii) It was confirmed by those who heard and by attendant miracles and gifts.
 - (iv) Thus the Lord gives us a firm foundation for relying on the Word.
 - (v) To neglect God’s revelation is to neglect God’s salvation!

6. Because of His sovereignty over creation (2:5-9)

- a. In this section we learn that Christ is superior to angels even in His incarnation, for the promise of sovereignty over creation was fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of man.
- b. The promise was made to man (2:5-8).
 - 1) **For**, to continue the theme that Christ is greater than angels, the writer states that **the world** [**οἰκουμένη**] = the **inhabited world; suggests order and organization** **to come**, that is, the kingdom of God which had already come in its beginning, was not **subjected to angels (5)**.
 - (i) Note: some thought angels did have charge over portions of mankind (e.g. LXX of Deut. 32:8 suggests they had control of the nations while Israel was God’s portion; also Jewish book of Enoch; also Dan. 10:13, 20; 12:1).
 - (ii) As we will see later, that sovereignty was realized by Christ, but that does not mean that man will never enjoy that dominion.

- (iii) But even now, Jesus has “*gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him*” (1 Pet. 3:22).
 - 2) Man does not yet have sovereignty (8b).
 - 3) Christ gained that sovereignty after suffering death (9).
 - (i) “**We see**” – look beyond things as they appear now and look at heavenly realities (11:1). See Jesus in His glory.
 - (ii) “**Jesus**” – shows His humanity, the connection with us so He could redeem us. The verse goes on to speak of His incarnation and death. See also 3:1; 6:20; 7:23; 10:19; 12:2, 24; 13:12.
 - (iii) “**a little lower**” (v. 7, 9).
 - 1. For a little while.
 - 2. A little lower in present privilege.
 - 3. v. 7 - Angels are now heavenly beings and man is only an earthly being, but in Christ man will be exalted above angels.
 - 4. v. 9 - In his identification with man, Jesus became identified with man and thus with man’s weakness.
 - (iv) “**for the suffering of death**”
 - (v) “**having been crowned with glory**” (perfect tense means that state of exaltation continues).
 - 1. Calvary was the road to glory.
 - 2. If Christ called what He suffered for us “glory,” how much more ought we to call what we suffer for Him our glory.
 - 3. For Christians too the order is suffering then glory.
 - a. Acts 14:22; 2 Thess. 1:4ff
 - b. We glory in the cross (Gal. 6:14).
 - c. We are to rejoice in suffering for Him (Acts 5:41; 13:52; Romans 5:3; 2 Cor. 6:10; 12:9ff; Col. 1:11, 24; 1 Thess. 1:6; James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:6, 4:13; Heb. 10:34).
 - (vi) “**he by the grace of God should taste death for every man**”
 - 1. The purpose of His incarnation = to taste death.
 - 2. To taste = to experience in all its fullness and bitterness. Being sinless, He perfectly realized death’s awfulness.
 - 3. By grace = His initiative in our salvation. 1 John 4:20, *not that we loved Him but He first loved us*.
 - 4. Christ’s death then was ...
 - a. *Purposeful* – to defeat death (2:5-8) and to gain the sovereignty that man lost (2:14-15).
 - b. *Painful* – full of suffering
 - c. *Preliminary* – to glory
 - d. *Pitiful* – gracious to us sinners.
 - e. *Perfect* – He “tasted” death in all of its power and horror.
 - f. *Personal* – substitutionary for every person; this verse militates against the limited atonement position.
7. Because of His special relationship to believers (2:10-18)
- a. He is the **Captain** of our salvation (2:10).
 - 1) “Captain” = **αρχηγος**
 - (i) “Prince of life” (Acts 3:15)
 - (ii) “Prince” (Acts 5:31)
 - (iii) “Author of our salvation” (Heb. 12:2)
 - 2) Suggests then one who is a leader.
 - 3) Suggests also one who is a founder, author, “source” of salvation.
 - 4) Note that this suffering was perfectly fitting (it “became” Him) for our Captain.
 - (i) It was fitting because it was part of his becoming like us.
 - (ii) His suffering was not simply death but every human difficulty and trial (“all things” – v. 17).
 - 5) Note that this prince and source of all good to us was “made perfect through suffering.”
 - (i) He did NOT need to be perfected regarding holiness.
 - (ii) He did need to show that He was fully man and thus subject to all our trials and sufferings.
 - (iii) His suffering was essential to prove His sinlessness (4:15)
 - (iv) This means that he was made completely effective in His role as ...

1. Redeemer of the lost.
 2. Helper of the helpless.
 3. Spotless Lamb of God.
- b. He is our **Father**, we are His sons, His children (2:10, 13).
- 1) He has authority over us.
 - 2) He has a loving relationship to us.
 - 3) He has a providing relationship to us.
- c. He is our **brother** (2:11-16). This is the major theme of the last half chapter 2.
- 1) He calls us brothers. *Firstborn among many brethren* (Rom. 8:29).
 - 2) Verse 11 teaches that He has made us like Himself – holy.
 - (i) He sanctified us (Heb. 10:10, 14; 13:12).
 - (ii) Without this holiness we cannot see Him (12:14).
 - 3) Verse 12 is quoted from Psalms 22:12.
 - 4) Verse 13a is quoted from Isaiah 8:17 – He himself trusts in God as Isaiah did, and this shows His humanity.
 - 5) Verse 13b is quoted from Isaiah 8:18 – refers to Isaiah’s children there; children have the same nature as their father.
 - 6) Verses 14-15 teach that Jesus gained victory through death.
 - (i) The necessity of Jesus’ death (14a)
 1. Not because of His deity, though He is God.
 2. Rather because of our need for forgiveness of sin and deliverance from death, the penalty for sin.
 3. Therefore, Jesus “humbled Himself” in order to redeem those under the condemnation of the Law (Gal. 4:4-5).
 4. He suffered for our sins so that we would not have to.
 - (ii) The victory of Jesus’ death (14b).
 1. The power of death before Jesus’ death.
 - a. Then the devil had the power of death – he is the author of sin and as sin’s instigator he brought death upon all men.
 - b. The devil uses the fear of death as a tool to enslave men. He tells them that self-preservation is more important than truth.
 - c. The devil places no value on human life, being a “murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44), and he incites murderers to do their evil.
 2. The power of death after Jesus’ death.
 - a. Jesus “rendered” Satan’s power “powerless.”
 - b. On the cross Jesus broke Satan’s power forever. On the cross Jesus “judged” Satan (John 16:11).
 - c. Satan is like a serpent whose head has been severed from the body. The body will writhe for a while but it will die (cf. Gen. 3:15).
 - (iii) The Deliverance of Jesus’ death (15)
 1. Deliverance from the fear of death.
 - a. People fear death because of its uncertainty.
 - b. People fear death because it seems to be final.
 - c. Illustration of the fear of death – in Japanese the word for “four” and the word for “death” are pronounced exactly the same. Therefore, the Japanese will often not use the number 4 in parking lots and in apartment numbering.
 - d. Illustration: people spend thousands of dollars on elaborate medical treatment because they want to live and not die.
 - e. God Himself has given us life and the desire to live.
 2. Deliverance from the fear of judgment.
 - a. Unbelievers should fear death, because they will face God in judgment.
 - b. Believers should not fear death because they have eternal life and will not face God in judgment – “no condemnation” (Rom. 8:1).
 - i. Sometimes Paul looked forward to death (2 Cor. 5:8).

- ii. He knew that the moment his body died his soul would be at home with God in heaven. Recall the criminal on the cross beside Jesus, who trusted Jesus while hanging there. Jesus told him, “Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.”
 - iii. This knowledge enables the believer to face death without slavish fear.
 - 3. Jesus is a Liberator.
 - a. He liberates us from sin and its penalty.
 - b. Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble, and freedom to vote are great things but the greatest by far is freedom from sin.
 - c. Jesus promises liberty to those who come to Him for it (John 8:34-36).
 - 4. Learn:
 - a. The scars of the brave soldier are no disgrace to him but are rather His honor. In the same way, the death of Jesus is no disgrace. It was God’s method of providing a way of salvation for miserable sinners.
 - b. John Owen wrote a book that summarizes the death of Christ – *The Death of Death by the Death of Jesus on the Cross*.
 - c. Jesus is the great liberator, but freedom is not cheap, it cost the death of Christ. Never forget that and never take His death lightly.
- d. He is our *sympathizing High Priest* (2:17-18).
 - 1) Two phrases point to the appropriateness of Jesus having a human nature and being like us.
 - (i) “**Wherefore**” --
 - (ii) “**It behoved him**” – It was not just appropriate; it was necessary for Christ to be like us.
 - 2) “**Made like unto His brethren**”
 - (i) In order to redeem us Jesus had to identify with us completely, only apart from sin.
 - (ii) Therefore, His was a true incarnation. “There was a fitness that nothing should be wanting in him in reference to the innocent propensities and sympathies of human nature.” (BA)
 - (iii) This means that He has experienced in reality all of the human feelings and sensibilities. The word along with **κατα πάντα** (“in every respect”) “emphasizes the completeness of this *assimilation* removing all doubt regarding the sense of **ομοιωθῆναι**, which might otherwise suggest a likeness that is only external or apparent.” (Teodorico, quoted in Hughes, p. 119). “This likeness is nothing less than complete identification: assimilation, not simulation.” (PEH, p. 119).
 - 3) “**A merciful and faithful high priest**”
 - (i) A characteristic of the high priest was that he knew his people through his own experience as a fellow human.
 - 1. The high priest had to be one of the people.
 - 2. “Representation requires identification” (PEH, p. 120).
 - 3. For Jesus to be our high priest, He had to become a man.
 - (ii) The title and function of a high priest is here mentioned for the first time in this epistle. This is a major theme throughout.
 - (iii) “**Merciful**” with reference to human need and motivated by mercy. “Faithful” to perform what God required.
 - 1. “Having put his hand to the plough, he did not turn back (Luke 9:62). He fulfilled all that he had promised. Temptation and torment did not turn him aside from his gracious purpose (Mt. 4:1ff; 16:21ff). Faithful to the very end, he drained the bitter cup of suffering to its last dregs for our redemption (Mk. 14:36).... Our hell he made his, that his heaven might be ours.” (PEH, p. 120)
 - 2. His faithfulness was specifically in “things pertaining to God,” which in this case related to “making propitiation for the sins of the people.”
 - 4) “**To make propitiation for the sins of the people.**”
 - (i) Propitiation refers to changing the Father’s disposition of judgment toward the sins of the people.
 - (ii) God is always angry against sin, but He now considers our sins punished fully and thus is kindly disposed toward us.
 - (iii) “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” and for us making the sinless Christ to suffer for our sin that we might have Christ’s righteousness (2 Cor. 5:18-21).
 - (iv) This theme reoccurs throughout the epistle (4:15; 7:26ff; 9:7ff; 10:1ff).
 - (v) “In the cross we see that love and justice meet and are satisfied.” (PEH, p. 122)

- 5) **“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (18)**
- (i) About Jesus’ “being tempted.”
1. The proofs of genuine humanity are these two things: suffering, and temptation.
 2. “To be tempted is to be put to the test. To give in to temptation is to fall into sin.” (PEH, p. 123)
 3. What about the argument that because He is sinless, Jesus did not know the power of temptation?
 - a. No, on the contrary only the one who has resisted the temptation can know its full strength.
 - b. Illustration: you can only understand how heavy something is if you have lifted it.
 - c. What good would Jesus be able to do if he had fallen? He would be like the rest of us. “It is precisely because we have been defeated that we need the assistance of him who is the victor.” (PEH, p. 124)
- (ii) About Jesus’ “**succour**.”
1. The help is twofold:
 - a. *Forgiveness of sins* which is the cancellation of past defeats.
 - b. *Power to fight and overcome temptation.*
 2. Think about how much help someone can be to you who has experienced what you have experienced.
 3. Illustrate: those who have had cancer seem to gravitate to each other.
 4. Tempted believers need three things:
 - a. Strength to withstand their temptations.
 - b. Consolations to support their spirits under them.
 - c. Seasonable deliverance from them. Unto these is the succour afforded by our High Priest suited; and it is variously administered to them.
 - i. “By his word or promises
 - ii. By his Spirit
By communicating to them *supplies of grace* or spiritual strength
By *strong consolation*
By *rebuking their tempters and temptations*;
 - iii. By his providence disposing of all things to their good and advantage in the issue.”
 - iv. “Those who are peculiarly tempted and severely tried, have an especial interest in, and claim upon Christ. They, particularly, may go with boldness to the throne of grace, where they shall assuredly obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Were the rest of the Scripture silent on this subject, this verse might be an ample support for every tempted soul.” (John Owen quoted by Adam Clarke)

B. Better than Moses (3:1-6)

1. Comparison of Jesus and Moses (3:1-2)
 - a. The command to compare: “consider”
 - 1) **“Wherefore”** -- because Christ was glorified through sufferings and thus drew near to fallen man, let man consider carefully this Jesus in both His humanity and deity.
 - 2) **“holy brethren”**
 - (i) Believers are brothers not because of their relationship to one another but because of their relationship to Him.
 - (ii) This is no superficial designation.
 1. These people share a common character; they are all holy.
 2. Christ has made them holy (2:11).
 3. He has made them different, separate from sin (2:17 -- he offered the perfect sacrifice to satisfy God’s demands and appease God’s wrath, this is “propitiation”).
 - 3) **“partakers of a heavenly calling”**
 - (i) They share a common calling.
 - (ii) This calling is to live with an emphasis on eternal truths, not worldly affairs.
 - 4) **“Consider Jesus, the Apostle and His Priest of our confession”**
 - (i) The word “**κατανοεω**” means to pay attention to, to observe continuously, to regard thoughtfully

1. 10:24, “let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.”
2. Luke 12:24, “consider the ravens;” v. 27, “consider the lilies”
- (ii) Jesus combines the two offices of Moses (spokesman) and Aaron (high priest).
 1. Apostle = the one sent by God (cf. Gal. 4:4)
 2. High Priest = the one offering sacrifice
- (iii) Our confession [ομολογια] =
 1. What we say about Christ.
 2. Literally is, we “say the same thing” about Him that God says.
- (iv) Learn: We need to learn what the Bible teaches about Christ and make that our unflinching creed.
- 5) Compare Jesus and Moses.
 - (i) The calling of Jesus and Moses:
 1. Jesus
 - a. He is the “Apostle” [One sent on a mission = to save us] of our confession.
 - b. He is the “High Priest” [One making sacrifice for our sins] of our confession.
 - c. Moses was never either one of those.
 2. Moses: the leader of Israel, God’s “house”
 - (ii) The consistency of both: “faithful” to the One who appointed them (2).
 1. The most necessary characteristic of an ambassador with a message is faithfulness (1 Cor. 4:2).
 2. God praised Moses highly for his faithfulness in meeting his responsibilities over the children of Israel (his house). See Numbers 12:7-8, “not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and beholds the form of the LORD. Why then are you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?”
 3. Jesus was reliable, trustworthy to do everything that He was sent, appointed to do.
 4. So the writer will argue: considering Moses’ ‘faithfulness’ and Jesus’ ‘faithfulness,’ shall we then be unfaithful to our confession of Him?
 5. There is nothing else really required of us beyond faithfulness to the Lord.
 - a. But this faithfulness requires faith and courage:
 - i. Recall that the context of Numbers 12 was that time when Moses’ own brother and sister spoke against him.
 - ii. All we see is that Moses prayed for them when they were judged and then went about his business as usual.
 - b. Challenge:
 - i. Are we faithful even when criticized?
 - ii. We must be faithful to the place of God’s appointment and to our appointed task.
 - iii. Whatever that task is we know that God “sent” us to do it and we must magnify that ministry, no matter how seemingly small.
2. Contrast of Jesus and Moses (3:3-6)
 - a. Jesus is the Creator, whereas Moses is simply part of God’s people [“house”] (3:3-4).
 - 1) Jesus has more glory than Moses; more honor than the house.
 - (i) He is crowned with glory and honor (2:9).
 - (ii) The reason is simple and irrefutable: Christ is the builder of the house whereas Moses was only a part of the house.
 - 2) See Christ’s equality with the Father.
 - (i) In v. 2 the house is God’s; in v. 6 it is Christ’s.
 - (ii) In v. 3 the builder is Christ; in v. 4 the builder is God.
 - b. Jesus is the Son of God, whereas Moses is only a servant (3:5-6).
 - 1) Moses’ ministry, great as it was, was limited (5).
 - (i) Limited in honor:
 1. He was great but he was still a servant.
 2. This word [θεραπων] does not refer to the slave, but to the servant who gladly and of his own accord works for his master.
 - (ii) Limited in duration: he was a spokesman, giving testimony of those things which were to be spoken later.

1. Being a servant he did not abide forever.
2. His testimony looked beyond his ministry to that of the coming Messiah.
3. Moses' ministry was preparatory.
4. Moses was a servant (5), Christ is the Son (6).
- 2) Christ's ministry has blessings and fruit realized now (6).
 - (i) We are Christ's house. (Gal. 6:10, "the household of faith")
 - (ii) He has made us all that we are.
 - (iii) He has authority over us.
 - (iv) He has a responsibility over us; we in turn are responsible to Him.
 - (v) He was faithful. Are we faithful to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end?
 1. The reality of our salvation is at issue: "if" [εαν = expects that we will hold fast]
 2. Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope:
 - a. Confidence = boldness [παρρησιαν]. See 4:16; 10:19, 35.
 - b. Rejoicing = boast, one's highest and richest possession.
 - c. Hold it firm unto the end.
- 3) Learn:
 - (i) The test of genuineness is continuing.
 1. "Continuance in the Christian faith is the test of reality" (BR).
 2. The corollary of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is that teaching that the saints are the ones who persevere to the end.
 - (ii) These admonitions show the seriousness of the Christian's calling. If one's life does not match his profession he should examine himself to see if he is a Christian (2 Cor. 13:5).
 - (iii) On the other hand, the Christian's security depends ultimately on Christ and his merits (John 5:24; 6:37; 10:27-29; Acts 2:47; Rom. 11:6f; 1 Cor. 1:26ff; 2 Cor. 5:18ff; Eph. 2:8-10).
 - (iv) When our confidence in belief wavers, so will our boldness in witness.
 1. The word confidence means outspokenness and is often associated with confidence in witness and preaching.
 2. Some illustrative texts:
 - a. Mark 8:32, "he was **stating** the matter *plainly*."
 - b. John 10:24, "If you are the Christ, **tell** us *plainly*."
 - c. Acts 2:29, "Brethren I may *confidently* **say** to you regarding the patriarch David"
 - d. Acts 4:13, "Now as they observed the *confidence* of Peter and John"
 - e. Acts 4:29, "grant that Thy bond-servants may **speak** Thy word with all *confidence*."
 - f. Acts 4:31, "began to **speak** the word of God with *boldness*"
 - g. Eph. 6:19, "to **make known** with *boldness* the mystery of the gospel"

II. A BETTER REST (3:7-4:13)

A. The better rest rejected (3:7-19)

1. Introduction:
 - a. The Israelites are our examples here.
 - 1) And they were an evil example.
 - 2) They knew what they were doing: they were apostates -- knowing the right way, they rejected it.
 - 3) Their root sin was blatant unbelief (12, 18, 19).
 - 4) This passage then is intended as a warning that we avoid having this evil heart of unbelief (v. 12).
 - 5) Verse 12 is the theme of this section: "*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you and evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*"
 - b. Much of this section is quoted from Psalm 95:7-11
 - 1) Psalm 95:7-11, "*For he [is] our God; and we [are] the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, [and] as [in] the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with [this] generation, and said, It [is] a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*"
 - 2) Verses 3:7b-11 are quoted from Psalm 95:7-11.
 - (i) The OT verses are particularly appropriate to Christians, the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand (Ps. 95:7a).

- (ii) Cf. *“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)*
- c. The writer follows up now on his admonition to hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end (v. 6). He will now give us the results of failure to heed the admonition.
 - 1) What if we do not hold fast?
 - 2) What is the prospect for us?
 - 3) What will we be like?
 - d. Failure to hold fast results from only one thing: the evil heart of unbelief.
 - 1) As we have learned before, the test of faith is continuance.
 - 2) The believing heart will continue; it may have its dark days, but it will ultimately continue trusting Christ.
 - e. Note: This warning is particularly appropriate for US.
 - 1) The words are directly from the Holy Spirit (v. 7).
 - 2) The words are for TODAY (v. 7).
 - 3) Learn again the eternal value of all parts of God’s Word -- Man has not changed, and the principles by which God deals with man have not changed.
2. Indications of a rejecting heart [“*an evil heart of unbelief*”] (3:8-12)
- a. *Decisions that harden* (8).
 - 1) This is a determined hardening (8).
 - (i) Notice the responsibility for the hardening.
 1. This is the choice of the listener to God’s Word.
 2. These choices take place in the heart.
 3. These choices often take place when we are hearing the Word of God.
 4. Instead of careful listening there is rejection.
 - (ii) There is a process of hardening: sin if not repented of.
 - (i) No confession of sin and no repentance.
 - (ii) Provocation and temptation refer to their grumbling and complaining at Rephidim when they did not have water (Ex. 17:1-7).
 1. The first instance was in the beginning of their wilderness wanderings.
 - a. Ex. 17:2, “Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?”
 - b. Ex. 17:7, “And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?”
 2. The other instance was near the end of their wanderings (Num. 14:1-13).
 - a. Ex. 14:2, “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, ‘Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would God we had died in this wilderness!’”
 - b. 14:11, “And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?”
 3. This suggests that the hardening got worse and worse. The problem lasted for 40 years.
 - b. *Doubting* [“*testing*”] God (9a).
 - 1) An evil heart of unbelief questions God rather than submitting to Him.
 - 2) They **tempted** (tested) **and proved** God (v. 9) [NASB--they tried Me by testing Me].
 - (i) They doubted God so they challenged Him to show them visibly what He would do for them.
 - (ii) They put not themselves, but God on trial.
 - (iii) They said in effect, “show us what you can do and we will believe.”
 - (iv) Note: those kinds of people will not believe even if they see.
 - 3) Learn:
 - (i) Beware of doubting God and His goodness.
 - (ii) Doubt yourself; doubt your understanding, but do not doubt God and put Him to the test.
 - (iii) Do not make demands of God, saying you will be satisfied only if he does what you demand.

c. *Ingratitude (9b).*

- 1) Though they had experienced God's **works forty years (9b)**, they still complained rather than gave thanks.
- 2) There is nothing more evil than a person with no gratitude.
- 3) Consider the pattern:
 - (i) God had delivered them out of "*the iron furnace.*" Deut. 4:20, "*But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, [even] out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as [ye are] this day.*"
 - (ii) When in Egypt they complained bitterly of the hard bondage: Ex. 2:23-24, "*And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.*"
 - (iii) But even when delivered they said it was better for them to go back to bondage.
 - (iv) The problem was ingratitude.
- 4) Learn:
 - (i) Watch out for an ungrateful heart.
 - (ii) Never forget the bondage you were saved from.
 - (iii) Offer daily the sacrifice of praise.
 - (iv) Gratitude is not automatic but requires effort. Even in the wilderness they **SAW** God's blessings daily in the provision of water and food and clothing and in protection from their enemies.
 1. But seeing the blessings was no aid to their faith.
 2. It should have made them grateful, but they did not profit from the blessing.

d. *Complaining and grumbling*

- 1) This is the corollary to and evidence of ingratitude.
- 2) Where there is no gratitude there will always be complaining.
- 3) The text here suggests this point although it does not use the word.
- 4) A look at the OT texts will show their complaining spirit.
 - (i) The place Rephidim was changed to be called "Massah and Meribah" (Ex. 17:7).
 - (ii) **Massah** = testing and **Meribah** = quarreling, or strife
- 5) Complaining amounts to striving with or fighting with God and in this case with God's servant.
- 6) "*And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses.*" (Exodus 17:3)

e. *Continued rebellion ["always go astray"] (10a, b).*

- 1) They repeated their rebellion over and over: "*they do alway err in their heart*" (v. 10) [NASB — "*they always go astray in their heart*"]
- 2) The Lord is merciful and long-suffering; their evil was not a one-time thing.
- 3) They did not deal with their sin when it happened, but kept repeating it.

f. *Failure to learn God's way (10c-11).*

- 1) They did not try to learn how to please God: **they have not known my ways (10b)**.
 - (i) "*Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked [him] with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity*" (Ps. 106:43).
 - (ii) "*And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do*" (Ex. 18:20).
 - (iii) These texts show that they did not learn His Word either, for "way" in Ex. 18:20 and Ps. 95:10 is the same [Hebrew = *derek*].
- 2) God's "way" is what He has mapped out for us to follow.

g. *Unbelief (12).*

- 1) The writer concludes this section with an exhortation not to allow this evil heart of unbelief. Recall that the entire letter is a "word of exhortation" (13:22).
- 2) He exhorts them lovingly, as "brethren" to "show that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love." (BA)
- 3) Unbelief was the first sin and is the root of them all.

- (i) Therefore, beware above all to never allow such a heart in yourself.
 - (ii) Note: a regenerate person can have some of this kind of unbelief at times.
 - (iii) The writer makes clear that this is an “evil” thing. The heart that harbors the doubt is itself an “evil heart.”
 - h. *Falling away from God (12).*
 - 1) Specifically the text refers to the “living God,” and thus heightens the heinousness of the sin of unbelief.
 - 2) The unbelieving person is departing from his only hope of life. As Peter said, “*To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*”
 - 3) This is apostasy and nothing is more serious than apostasy.
 - 4) “All apostasy first exists in the heart, and then is manifested in the life. They who indulge in unbelief in any form, or in regard to any subject, should remember that this is the great source of all alienation from God, and that if indulged it will lead to complete apostasy. They who wish to live a life of piety should keep the heart right, he that lives “by the faith of the Son of God” is safe; and none is safe but he.” (BA)
 - i. Learn:
 - 1) The result of having an evil heart of unbelief is a departure from the living God. Many will say they do not want that; but this consequence is inevitable.
 - 2) We must not ...
 - (i) Allow sin to continue.
 - (ii) Question or doubt God.
 - (iii) Grumble or complain.
 - 3) We must develop a thankful spirit.
 - 4) We must learn God’s ways.
 - 5) An evil heart can be avoided; we must choose ...
 - (i) Gratitude rather than grumbling.
 - (ii) The Word rather than the world.
 - (iii) Confession rather than concession.
 - (iv) Assent rather than apostasy.
3. Exhortations for avoiding apostasy (3:13-19)
- a. Introduction
 - 1) 3:13-19 Continues the theme of God’s Rest Rejected
 - 2) In the previous verses we learned the grave danger of having an **evil heart of unbelief**.
 - (i) The danger is nothing less than apostasy [**αφίστημι: departing from the living God (12)**].
 - (ii) Apostasy is a real danger: there are people who have “stood away” from what they once held firmly.
 - (iii) So what should we do to avoid apostasy?
 - b. We must exhort and encourage one another (13).
 - 1) We have a mutual responsibility: “*So we, [being] many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*” (*Romans 12:5*) See Barnes for next 5 points.
 - (i) “Intimate friends in the church should exhort and counsel one another; should admonish each other of their faults; and should aid one another in the divine life.
 - (ii) Parents should do the same thing to their children. They are placed particularly under their watch and care. A pastor cannot often see the members of his flock in private; and a parent may greatly aid him in his work by watching over the members of their families who are connected with the church.
 - (iii) Sabbath school teachers may aid much in this duty. They are to be assistants to parents and to pastors. They often have under their care youthful members of the churches. They have an opportunity of knowing their state of mind, their temptations, and their dangers, better than the pastor can have. It should be theirs, therefore, to exhort them to a holy life.
 - (iv) The aged should exhort the young. Every aged Christian may thus do much for the promotion of religion. His experience is the property of the church; and he is bound so to employ it, as to be useful in aiding the feeble, reclaiming the wandering, recovering the backslider, and

- directing the inquiring. There is a vast amount of *spiritual capital* of this kind in the church that is unemployed, and that might be made eminently useful in helping others to heaven.
- (v) Church members should exhort one another. There may not be the intimacy of personal friendship among all the members of a large church, but still the connexion between them should be regarded as sufficiently tender and confidential to make it proper for any one to admonish a brother who goes astray.”
- 2) This responsibility is a **daily** one.
- (i) The NT assumes that believers will see one another often.
1. It points out the importance of the church.
 2. We cannot exhort people that we never see; we cannot exhort one another daily if we see one another once a week.
 3. Of course, this fellowship and exhortation could also be private, done in homes.
 4. The believer’s life ought to be centered on the teaching, the fellowship, and the service of his church.
- 3) The responsibility is that of encouraging, exhorting (urging to a course of action) and comforting. The word “**παρακαλεω**” [translated “exhort” in KJV and “encourage” in NASB] includes these three meanings.
- (i) **Comfort** (to give help and soothing words to those suffering grief or fear or distress; to help them to the point that they get relief and ease).
1. *Matthew 5:4*, “Blessed [are] they that mourn: for they shall be **comforted**.”
 2. *John 14:16*, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever.”
 3. *2 Corinthians 1:4*, “Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to **comfort** them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”
 4. *2 Cor. 7:6*, “Nevertheless God, that **comforteth** those that are cast down, **comforted** us by the coming of Titus.”
- (ii) **Encourage** (to inspire with courage and confidence; to help bring about what is good)
1. *1 Th. 3:2*, “and we sent Timothy, our brother and God’s fellow-worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and **encourage** you as to your faith.” (NASB).
 2. *Romans 15:4*, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the **encouragement** of the Scriptures we might have hope” (NASB).
- (iii) **Exhort** (to urge by strong argument or appeal).
1. *Acts 2:40*, “And with many other words did he testify and **exhort**, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”
 2. *2 Tim. 4:2*, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, **exhort** with all longsuffering and doctrine.”
 3. *Titus 1:9*, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to **exhort** and to convince the gainsayers.”
- 4) We are to do this **while it is called Today**.
- (i) There is a period of grace that God grants to men.
- (ii) This period is the “today.”
1. For most it seems that the Lord is merciful and makes that period one’s life on earth, but the wording suggests a crisis; for those who have known and then turn away that period is shorter.
 2. For the Israelites in the desert that “today” ended when God swore His oath that none of them would enter the Promised Land.
 3. Let the readers not provoke the Lord to repeat that oath in their case (LE).
- 5) The responsibility is mutual, but the danger relates to the individual: **lest any of you**.
- (i) Therefore, let every one of us be on our guard.
- (ii) Throughout this chapter we see the concern of the writer that the readers, who are believers, not fall away. The danger is real and personal.
- 6) The danger is the enemy; the enemy is sin and its power to deceive [**the deceitfulness of sin**].
- (i) How does sin deceive?
1. It exaggerates the pleasure of evil doing.
 2. It belittles the pleasure of doing right.
 3. It denies the judgment of God.
 4. In this case the reference is to “the sin.”

- a. This is probably a reference to the sin of turning away from Christ.
 - b. Sin deceives many into believing they would be better off avoiding the offense of the cross than they would be offending the LORD of the universe.
- (ii) The result of the deception is that the heart is **hardened**. Sin first deceives then hardens.
- 7) Conclusion: We must be on our guard among ourselves to encourage one another and to try to comfort one another in the faith. The apostasy of one hurts all.
- c. We must firmly hold to confidence in Christ (14).
 - 1) This confidence we have had since first trusting in Christ.
 - (i) It is the **beginning of our confidence** [our first confidence].
 - (ii) At that time we became **partakers of Christ**.
 - 1. We show that we “have become partakers of Christ” (perfect tense of become and much better than KJV ‘made partakers’) by our holding firmly to Him by faith.
 - 2. This confidence [**υποστασις**] is the very opposite of apostasy [**αποστασις**] see the play on words.
 - 2) The meaning is simply that we must continue holding firmly our faith in Christ and His Word.
 - 3) We are to make our end match our beginning in the faith.
 - 4) Learn:
 - (i) Assurance is important -- if something is biblically based, let us cling to it tenaciously.
 - (ii) Assurance is for those who are also diligently using the means of grace. The text makes unity with Christ the result of holding firmly to our confident assurance.
- d. Keep a warm, uncomplaining heart toward God and His Word (15-16).
 - 1) Wax will not harden if it is kept warm; similarly our hearts will not become hard if we keep them warm toward the Lord.
 - (i) We must beware of indifference and disinterest in the things of the Lord.
 - (ii) We must keep up our prayer life, our Bible reading, our serving the Lord.
 - 2) Note: the warning is to those, who like the Israelites, had **heard**.
 - (i) Having **heard** they **did provoke** (16).
 - (ii) In spite of all that the Lord had told them, they rebelled.
 - 3) We must beware of rebellion.
 - (i) The Israelites provoked the Lord with their rebellion and complaining.
 - (ii) So many rebelled that the writer can say “**all**” **that came out of Egypt by Moses**.
 - (iii) Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Caleb were the lone exceptions out of hundreds of thousands. (see Numbers 14:29 and Numbers 26:64-65 and Jude 1:5).
 - (iv) We will keep our hearts tender by obedience. See next point.
- e. Believe and obey God’s Word (3:17-19).
 - 1) This section opens with 3 Questions.
 - (i) With whom was God grieved? (17a)
 - (ii) Was it not with those who sinned? (17b)
 - (iii) Was it not to those who did not believe that He swore they would not enter the Promised land? (18)
 - 2) Recall Moses’ lament in *Psalms 90:5-9*: “*Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are [as] asleep: in the morning [they are] like grass [which] groweth up. / In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. / For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. / Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret [sins] in the light of thy countenance. / For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale [that is told].*”
 - 3) God’s grace had made a way of blessing.
 - (i) God wanted them to enter that way, but their unbelief made this entrance impossible.
 - (ii) Man is responsible to believe God.
 - 4) Note again that believing means obeying. Disobedience is parallel with unbelief.
 - (i) v. 18 = **were disobedient** [**απειθεω**--NASB]
 - (ii) v. 19 = **unbelief** [**απιστιαν**]
- f. Learn from Chapter 3
 - 1) Apostasy is an ever-present danger.
 - 2) To avoid it we need to ...
 - (i) Know the danger. Do not assume you are immune to the danger.

- (ii) Be on the lookout for its signs in ourselves and others.
- 3) The signs of apostasy are:
 - (i) *Unfaithfulness* (vv. 2, 5, 6, 14), not holding fast
 - (ii) *Hardness and coldness of heart* (vv. 8, 15)
 - (iii) *Putting God to the test*; provoking Him with rebellion
 - (iv) *Unbelief* (vv. 12, 19)
 - (v) *Disobedience* (vv. 10, 18)

B. The better rest received [“entered”] (4:1-13)

1. All must enter God’s rest by faith (4:1-3a)
 - a. Beware of failure to do so (4:1).
 - 1) The point of this verse is that we must beware of any apparent [**seem**] failure to enter into God’s rest.
 - (i) We must beware of giving any evidence that we have fallen away.
 - (ii) It only takes one step to get started in the wrong direction.
 - (iii) This is a call then for carefulness in the Christian life.
 - 2) The matter at issue is the most important the individual will face; therefore, he must fear failure.
 - 3) In particular, the Christian must fear sin, and the worst sin is unbelief, for it shuts God out of the life.
 - 4) We are to believe firmly, but we are not to be proud about our faith.
 - (i) *Rom. 11:20*, “Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear.”
 - (ii) *1 Peter 1:17*, “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning [here] in fear.”
 - (iii) *Heb. 12:28*, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
 - 5) To “come short” means to fail because of some lack of effort or ability; it means to fail to qualify or measure up.
 - (i) Perfect tense teaches an “abiding failure” (WE).
 - (ii) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (*Romans 3:23*).
 - b. Learn from the OT that faith must be mixed with the hearing of the Word (4:2).
 - 1) The good news of God’s eternal rest was preached unto them as well as unto us.
 - 2) Even Abraham had the gospel preached to him.

Gal. 3:8, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, [saying], In thee shall all nations be blessed.”
 - 3) The OT saints knew that God’s rest was more than Canaan.
 - 4) *Hebrews 11:10*, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.”
 - 5) But the promise of entrance was not unconditional.
 - (i) *Ex. 23:20-22*, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name [is] in him. But **if thou shalt indeed obey his voice**, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.”
 - (ii) *Num. 14:22-23*, “Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it.”
 - 6) Why did they not enter in? Because their response to God’s message was not to believe it but to doubt.
 - 7) Note three things:
 - (i) The message
 - (ii) The hearing
 - (iii) The reception by faith—gives meaning to the message and the hearing.

- (iv) Apply: do we believe what we read?
 - c. Summary (4:3a)
 - (i) He did not really doubt the faith of the readers in general.
 - (ii) Those who believe do indeed enter God's rest.
2. Some have not entered God's rest because of disobedience, but on the other hand true believers experience the rest of God (4:3b-9).
- a. God's "rest" from creation symbolized the true rest that awaits believers (4:3b-4).
 - 1) Verse 3 gives this contrast between the true believer and his experience of true rest and the unbeliever who is assured that he will not experience God's rest.
 - 2) Verse 4 quotes Genesis 2:2 to refer to God's completing His work in 6 days so that on the seventh He rested.
 - (i) "When it is said that 'God did rest,' of course it does not mean that he was wearied with his toil, but merely that he ceased from the stupendous work of creation. He no more put forth creative energy, but calmly contemplated his own works in their beauty and grandeur (Gen. 1:31)."
 - (ii) "In carrying forward the great affairs of the universe, he always has been actively employed (John 5:17), but he is not employed in the work of creation, properly so called. That is done; and the sublime cessation from that constitutes the 'rest of God.'" (BA)
 - 3) What is God's rest like?
 - (i) It comes after the "works are finished" (as God's were from the creation – "foundation" – of the world). That is, it comes to the believer after his life of working for the Lord here on earth.
 - (ii) It is the repose from all disturbance that is just like what God now enjoys in heaven.
 - 1. "This gives the highest possible idea of the dignity and desirableness of that "rest" to which we look forward—for it is to be such as God enjoys, and is to elevate us more and more to him."
 - 2. "What more exalted idea can there be of happiness than to participate in the calmness, the peace, the repose, the freedom from raging passions, from wearisome toil, and from agitating cares, which God enjoys?"
 - 3. Who, torn with conflicting passions here, wearied with toil, and distracted with care, ought not to feel it a privilege to look forward to that rest?" (BA)
 - b. God's rest is also mentioned in Psalms 95:11 (see 4:5), a time much later than Moses or Joshua.
 - 1) This verse teaches that God bars some (from other texts we learn that these are unbelievers, the disobedient) from entering His promised rest.
 - 2) By implication this verse too suggests that others will be allowed to enter.
 - 3) Note that the believer's entrance into heavenly rest is symbolized in various ways in these verses =
 - (i) God's own rest after creation.
 - (ii) Israel's entrance into the Promised Land.
 - c. God's rest is available ("**remains**") for some, but not for others (4:6-7).
 - 1) It is available to those who (by implication in the parallel with "**disobedience**") obey/believe God's promises (4:6a).
 - 2) The standard by which God has always allowed entrance into His "**rest**" (kingdom) is faith in the "good news" (message of salvation from prophets, angels, His Son) (4:6b-7).
 - (i) Why did those of Moses' day fail to enter? Because of "disobedience" – "*those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience.*"
 - (ii) The same promise was repeated in David's day (4:7).
 - 1. God is still speaking to each generation saying "*Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.*"
 - 2. The problem has always been unbelief, but it is described in different ways.
 - a. Here = to not listen and to harden the heart.
 - b. Earlier
 - i. To come short of entering His rest (4:1).
 - ii. To not have faith mixed with the hearing (4:2).
 - iii. To disobey (4:6).
- (iii) Note that the message of salvation has always been the preaching of "good news" (**ευαγγελιζομαι**).

- d. God's rest is much more than simply entering the physical land of Canaan (4:8).
 - 1) What Joshua offered to the people was first the physical entrance into Canaan.
 - 2) But the rest that Joshua could offer was only a token of the true rest that all of God's people will enter.
 - 3) We know that the rest Joshua led them into was not the true, final rest, for long after Joshua's time God still spoke of a rest that awaits the people of God.
 - e. The conclusion then is that there still **"remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God"** (4:9).
 - 1) "The rest spoken of by God is one which is spiritual and future; the keeping of an eternal Sabbath, a holy, blessed rest in heaven."
 - 2) "The rest promised to the faithful and obedient in the Old Testament, was not merely a temporary rest on the Sabbath, or in Canaan, but a spiritual, eternal rest in heaven; of which the rest of the Sabbath and the rest of Canaan were emblems." (Family New Testament Notes)
 - 3) "The two ideas of 'rest' combined, give the perfect view of the heavenly Sabbath.
 - (i) Rest from weariness, sorrow, and sin;
 - (ii) And rest in the completion of God's new creation (Rev. 21:5). The whole renovated creation shall share in it; nothing will there be to break the Sabbath of eternity; and the Triune God shall rejoice in the work of His hands (Zep. 3:17)." (JFB)
 - 4) Compare the present Sabbath with the eternal Sabbath:
 - (i) "The Sabbath is holy; so is heaven.
 - (ii) It is a period of worship; so is heaven.
 - (iii) It is for praise, and for the contemplation of heavenly truth; so is heaven.
 - (iv) The Sabbath is appointed that we may lay aside worldly cares and anxieties for a little season here; heaven, that we may lay, them aside for ever." (BA)
 - 5) Learn:
 - (i) God demands faith in His promises. Without faith, hearing the Word profits us nothing.
 - (ii) Life here is a time of working; life in heaven is a time of repose, of calm and peace, of eternal rest to both body and soul.
 - (iii) Both we and all the believers before us are still looking for that day of eternal rest. The implication is that we will all be brought in together to that heavenly rest.
 - (iv) Let us enjoy our present Sabbaths and look with great anticipation to the perfection of those Sabbaths in heaven with holiness, worship, praise, and peace.
3. All must be diligent to enter God's rest lest they follow Israel's evil example (4:9-13).
 - a. We who by faith trust Christ enter into God's "sabbath rest." (4:9)
 - 1) This word (σαββατισμος) is used only here in the NT.
 - 2) It suggests the sabbath rest of God, when He ceased from His work of creation.
 - b. It means that we too have found rest for our souls (4:10).
 - (i) We have peace in our hearts, knowing that we have found the truth and forgiveness of sins.
 - (ii) We are not striving to be saved; rather, we are trusting confidently and calmly in Christ.
 - (iii) In other words, we have **ceased from our own works, just as God did from His**.
 - (iv) We are in harmony with God's will.
 - c. The conclusion of this section is: **"Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief [disobedience--NASB]"** (4:11).
 - 1) The rest is real; but the danger of not entering is also very real.
 - 2) Every man must *be diligent to believe*.
 - (i) We do not often associate diligence with faith.
 - (ii) The prize is great but so is the peril, so we must actively exert ourselves in seeking to enter in.
 - (iii) Those who are not diligent will not stand, but will have an eternally fatal fall.
 - (iv) The Israelites fell spiritually and their unbelief resulted in **disobedience**.
 - 3) This is the second admonition, "let us".
 - (i) "Let us fear" (v. 1).
 - (ii) "Let us be diligent to enter" (11).
 - 4) We are saved by grace; without grace we can do nothing. But we must use God's appointed means of hearing and receiving.

- (i) Faith comes from hearing the Word.
 - (ii) We must attend diligently to the Word.
 - (iii) We must not grow cold or slack, and we must not give way to doubt.
 - (iv) We know the diligence is related to hearing and receiving the Word because of vv. 12-13, and because “disobedience” implies insubordination to a spoken command, a Word of God.
- d. Obeying or disobeying the Word of God is not a light matter (4:12-13).
- 1) The writer is saying, “Let there be no illusion in you, my readers, regarding this Word of God and what it says about Jesus” (LE).
 - 2) A description of the Word of God:
 - (i) **quick and powerful** (living and active--*energias*)
 - 1. As the Word of **the living God** (3:12), it too is living.
 - 2. The Word is not the written page, but a living thing, in union with the living God.
 - 3. The Word is not insensible to what is done with it.
 - 4. It gives life to those who believe it.
 - 5. It reacts in opposition to those who reject it.
 - 6. It does His will perfectly and perpetually.
 - 7. Is. 55:11, “*So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.*”
 - 8. See the energy of the Word in ...
 - a. **Creation:** Heb. 11:3, “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*”
 - b. **Sustaining the universe:** Heb. 1:3, “*... upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*”
 - c. **Regenerating the soul:** 1 Peter 1:23, “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*”
 - (ii) **sharper than any two-edged sword**
 - 1. More powerful and more sharp than any man-made instrument.
 - 2. It penetrates quickly and effectually.
 - 3. It penetrated the inmost part of man and either changes the sinner into a new man or condemns him, showing him his guilt [**double edged**—and thus never fails to do one or the other].
 - 4. How does it show its power both positively and negatively?
 - a. Changes the sinner into a new man -- “*The words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life (John 6:63).*”
 - i. Peter’s sermon pricked some and they were led to salvation.
 - ii. Acts 2:37, “*Now when they heard [this], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?*”
 - iii. But not long afterward his words to the Sanhedrin pricked but led to rejection and plans to kill Peter. Acts 5:33, “*When they heard [that], they were cut [to the heart], and took counsel to slay them.*”
 - b. Condemns him, showing all his guilt. “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).*”
 - 5. Texts about the Word as a sword.
 - a. Is. 49:2, “*And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword.*”
 - b. Rev. 1:16, “*And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.*”
 - c. Rev. 19:15, “*And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations...*”
 - (iii) **piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow**
 - 1. How sharp is the Word?

- a. It can penetrate to the deepest places in the heart.
- b. It dissects a person's most hidden desires, interests and affections.
- c. It can show the distinction between his "soulish" desires and his spiritual desires.
 - i. The soul is that part of man which stirs into action the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."
 - ii. The unregenerate man is called the "natural man" [ψυχικός], the "soulish" man (1 Cor. 2:14). He is entirely controlled by his soul--his lusts, his emotions. He sows to the flesh.
 - iii. The spiritual man is a Christian. He is primarily controlled by his spirit. He sows to the spirit.
 - iv. In other words, the Word of God shows which is stronger: our desire for the things of the flesh and the world or our desire for communion with God.
- 2. The "piercing" is "to" the extent of dividing between things almost indivisible.
 - a. The point is also the power of the Word for this work.
 - b. It can do the impossible.

(iv) **and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**

- 1. The word is the "critic" [κριτικός] of man's thoughts, plans, intentions.
 - a. It judges righteously, not by looking on the outward appearance, but by looking at the thoughts of the heart.
 - b. The world may think our work and our achievements are great, but the Word goes deeper to show the real attitude of the spirit, to show the real motives, the real movement to or away from God.
- 2. "**thoughts**" = reflections, meditations
 - a. "*And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*" (Mt. 9:4) Cf. 12:25 {3 NT refs.}
 - b. Suggests his plans and designs – Acts 17:29, "... we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."
- 3. "**intents**" = knowledge, insight
 - a. 1 Pet. 4:1, "*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.*"
 - b. As one thinks (the first word) he comes up with these "intents," this insight.
- 4. What could be more inaccessible than the deep thoughts of man's heart?
 - a. Yet the Word of God has no trouble not only knowing what is there but passing judgment on what it finds.
 - b. It turns the sinner inside out and lets him see what is in his heart.
- 5. Trace the use of the word heart through the epistle:
 - a. 3:8, 15, 4:7 do not harden your hearts
 - b. 3:10 they always go astray in their heart
 - c. 3:12 lest there be in any of you an evil unbelieving heart
 - d. 8:10, 10:16 I will write my laws upon their hearts
 - e. 10:22 draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith
 - f. 13:9 it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace
- 6. What the Word says about the thoughts and intents of the heart is infallible. It is an impartial, fair, perfectly accurate judge.
- 7. Why do many people dislike the Word?
 - a. They do not like to know what is in their heart. See John 3:20-21, "*For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*"
 - b. This explains why many people believe they are okay, that their heart is not so bad; they have never had it examined by God's Word.
 - c. Illustrate: the other day a fifteen-year old sumo wrestler died of heart failure. He had been checked medically and the check had shown nothing abnormal about his heart. The medical check was not perfect.
- 8. Transition: God's Word is not like that; when it investigates it finds every irregularity, every sinful desire and thought.

- (v) **Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do**
 - 1. The Word is personified: We are before its eyes; we “have to do with it.”
 - 2. This personification too shows that God cannot be separated from His Word.
 - 3. See *Rev. 2:23*, “... and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”
 - 4. Another wording = “there is no creature hidden from His sight” (NASB).
 - a. “Creature” refers to all of God’s creation, not just man.
 - b. There are no secrets to God.
 - c. This in itself shows the mighty power of God’s Word.
 - 5. The positive statement of the same truth: “all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of Him” (NASB).
 - 6. Learn: to know man’s heart must know God’s Word.

III. A BETTER HIGH PRIEST (4:14-8:5)

Section Three: A Better High Priest (4:14-8:5) Preview Outline of section Three

- A. He sympathizes with our infirmities but without sin (4:14-16)
- B. He is perfectly qualified to be High Priest (5:1-10)
 - 1. The qualifications of a high priest (5:1-4)
 - 2. Christ’s perfect fulfillment of the qualifications (5:5-10)
- C. He has entered the Holy Place and calls us to have full assurance of hope (5:11-6:20)
 - 1. A call to spiritual growth (5:11-14)
 - 2. A warning about falling away (6:1-8)
 - 3. A call to diligence and hope (6:9-20)
- D. He is a High Priest like Melchizedek (7:1-28)
 - 1. Melchizedek’s perfection (7:1-4)
 - 2. Aaron’s imperfection (7:5-28)
- E. He is High Priest of the True Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies in heaven (8:1-5).

A. He sympathizes with our infirmities (4:14-16)

- 1. Introduction:
 - a. After the statements about the piercing and knowing quality of God’s Word we stand trembling, conscious of our inability to stand uncondemned before God. After those fearful words, we are reminded that we nonetheless are to have confidence before God; not confidence in ourselves, but in our High Priest who stands in our place and answers for us.
 - b. The writer is drawing two conclusions in these next verses.
 - 1) Jesus, unlike the OT priests, is not dead but has passed alive into the heavens.
 - 2) Jesus, like the OT priests, was tempted and tested as a man.
- 2. A description of Jesus as High Priest (4:14-15)
 - a. He is **great**.
 - 1) This word emphasizes His dignity, and is not directly or solely related to His being High Priest. He is also called the “great Shepherd of the Sheep” (13:21).
 - 2) The word emphasizes His superiority, His incomparability in relation to human priests.
 - 3) It is like saying He is the greatest of all priests.
 - b. He is **passed into the heavens** [better = passed through the **heavens**].
 - 1) Not merely ascended up to heaven, but transcended the limitations of space (WE).
 - 2) He is above space and time considerations.
 - c. He is **Jesus, the Son of God**.
 - 1) The only mediator between God and man is Jesus Himself.
 - 2) He is the God-man (Jesus, Son of God). This assures us of both His sympathy and His power.
 - 3) The Jesus, born as babe and who lived on the earth is the One who passed into glory. Resurrection and redemption are for the body and the soul.
 - 4) Belief in this truth enables us to overcome: *1 John 5:5*, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”
 - d. With such a High Priest what should we do?
 - 1) **Let us hold fast our profession** [confession--NASB].
 - 2) Lit. “let us hold fast the confession.”

- (i) The writer always insists on a public confession of faith, on a clear declaration of belief, openly before men.
 - (ii) A confession is a conviction about truth in the heart and outwardly professed before men.
 - (iii) Belief in the heart must be joined with witness by the lips.
 - 1. Rom. 10:9f
 - 2. 2 Cor. 4:13 (Psalm 116:10) believe therefore speak
- e. He sympathizes with all our needs. (4:15)
 - 1) The writer calls for effort, and now gives an encouragement for it.
 - 2) Our High Priest “has been there.”
 - 3) He is “not unable,” but is rather able to sympathize with us.
 - (i) Able to be touched with the feeling = sympathize = **συμπαθεω**
 - (ii) Only other use is Heb. 10:34, “*For ye had compassion of me in my bonds.*”
 - 4) He sympathizes with our **infirmities** = **ασθενειαις** = (various meanings)
 - (i) Physical weariness and sickness -- Luke 5:15, “*But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.*”
 - (ii) Disappointment
 - (iii) Feeling of desertion and loneliness and the timidity that comes -- 1 Cor. 2:3, “*And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.*”
 - (iv) Shrinking from pain
 - (v) The frailty of being human -- 2 Cor. 13:4, “*For though he was crucified through [under the conditions of] weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.*” On the cross, Jesus suffered in our place and seemed helpless, but the resurrection vindicated Him.
 - (vi) Sin that sometimes results from these things.
 - 5) But contrast Jesus: **in all points tempted like as are we yet without sin.**
 - (i) Satan tempted Jesus early with promises of glory and dominion.
 - (ii) In the garden, just before death Jesus was also tempted to draw back.
 - (iii) Even on the cross, he was tempted by the taunts, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”
 - (iv) Note: if He had sinned then ...
 - 1. He would have been no better than other high priests who had to make atonement for themselves.
 - 2. He would not have been the Lamb without blemish and without spot.
 - 6) Learn:
 - (i) Never think that our Great High Priest is remote from our experiences. He knows and He sympathizes. He suffers when His people suffer: Acts 9:4, “*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*”
 - (ii) Jesus was not passive but active in resisting temptation. With His help we too must and can resist temptation.
- f. The exhortation based on the truth of Jesus as our Great High Priest (4:16) = Come to the throne of grace
 - 1) Notice how to come:
 - (i) **Boldly**
 - 1. Without fear or timidity (Acts 4:29, 31; Eph. 6:19).
 - 2. Frankly, speaking openly what is in our heart.
 - 3. Without concealment and without a sense of shame.
 - 4. These people were thinking of drawing back (10:35); the writer tells them rather to draw near with confidence (Heb. 10:19, 35).
 - 5. What a marvelous thing salvation is, that sinful creatures like us can and should draw near unto a holy God with boldness!
 - 6. In OT days, the common Israelite stood afar off and could not even touch the mountain when Moses was receiving the 10 Commandments. Heb. 12:20, “*For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.*”
 - 7. Now it is different; we can draw near with full assurance of God’s acceptance. Heb. 10:22, “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*”
 - 8. Such boldness and openness will rule out hypocrisy:

- a. God knows sham prayers and they are an abomination to Him.
 - b. We must pray from the heart, not the head.
- (ii) *Humbly*
 1. Implied but not stated in this text.
 2. Because our heavenly Father sits on a Heavenly throne and we must always approach Him respectfully.
 3. "Our Father which art in heaven" -- the beginning of the Lord's prayer reminds us that He is Lord and we infinitely lower than He.
 4. There is no place for pride in the presence of the King.
 5. Let us remember that He is holy and we sinful and let us worship Him with utmost humility.
 6. *Ecc. 5:2, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter [any] thing before God: for God [is] in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."*
- 2) Notice where to come: **a throne of grace**
 - (i) Kings sit on a throne:
 1. Some kings are unjust and cruel.
 2. Some kings are kind and just.
 3. Our king is kind and just: He sits upon a throne of grace.
 4. One day the unsaved will stand before the great white throne of judgment and they will be sentenced to an eternity in hell; but Christians do not fear that throne for they will not stand before it.
 - (ii) Kings have authority and power to grant the requests of their subjects.
 1. Our King has all power to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can think or ask.
 2. *Eph. 3:20, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."*
- 3) Notice why should come:
 - (i) *God invites us.*
 - (ii) *God will listen graciously*, for it is a throne of grace, not of judgment.
 1. Thus He will overlook the imperfections of our prayers.
 2. Some will not pray for fear that they will not pray aright.
 3. Do not let that hinder you; Pray! You have come to a throne of GRACE.
 - (iii) *God will interpret the desires of your heart* even if you cannot accurately phrase it.
 1. *Rom. 8:26, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*
 2. So pray! Even if not as fervent or as humble as it should be, Pray!
 - (iv) *God will deal mercifully with past failure.*
 - (v) *God will fit the mercy and grace to the present situation/need.*
 1. We need mercy for past failure.
 2. We need grace for present and future difficulties.
 3. We know that God's grace and mercy will always fit the situation; it will be appropriate and sufficient for the need.
 - a. We are not to wait until that time to draw near; we are to be in the habit of drawing near [verb is present tense].
 - b. Other references to this word = 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6; 12:18, 22.
 - c. If we do this God will supply us with special grace when needed.
 - (vi) Learn:
 1. Our high priest is great: let us be courageous.
 2. Our high priest is sympathetic: let us have confidence in His mercy and grace.

B. He is perfectly qualified to be High Priest (5:1-10)

1. The qualifications of a high priest (5:1-4)
 - a. He must be a man [**taken from among men**] (1-3).
 - 1) For example, no angel could represent man before God.
 - 2) That the high priest had to be a man continues theme of end of chapter four, that Jesus was human and could thus sympathize with us.

- 3) As a man he is qualified to “act on behalf of men” [**ordained for men**] See *Ex. 28:1*, “*And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office, [even] Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.*”
 - 4) The high priest’s responsibilities:
 - (i) To serve as man’s representative before God = to serve as a mediator [**in things pertaining to God**]. (5:1)
 - (ii) In particular to **offer both gifts and sacrifices**
 1. **gifts** = probably inanimate sacrifices like the meal offering; also suggests the truth that all sacrifices were first brought as gifts.
 2. **sacrifices** = probably animal sacrifices [this distinction generally true when both words used together but “gifts” can refer to all the sacrifices (see e.g. 8:4)]
 3. These offerings had to do specifically with **sins**.
 4. They were offered to appease God and to cover sin.
 5. They taught the worshiper and the priest to look for the spotless Lamb of God, Jesus, who would make the perfect and final sacrifice for sins.
 - (iii) To deal with people gently, remembering his own weakness and sin (5:2-3).
 1. He does not ignore the sin, he makes atonement, but he is not harsh and severe with those who have sinned through ignorance of the wandering of the heart.
 2. People are characterized as:
 - a. **ignorant** = sins of ignorance, not knowing God’s will thoroughly. See *Lev. 4:13*, “*And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done [somewhat against] any of the commandments of the LORD [concerning things] which should not be done, and are guilty.*”
 - b. **out of the way** = wandering from the right way. They do this at times because of their “ignorance.”
 - c. Note though that there was no such mercy for those who sinned with “a high hand,” that is, with deliberate rebellion and rejection of God and His grace.
 - i. See *Num. 15:30-31*, “*But the soul that doeth [ought] presumptuously, [whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity [shall be] upon him.*”
 - ii. See also *Heb. 10:27*, “*... died without mercy*”
 3. He had to bring an offering for himself and his family (*Lev. 16:17*).
 - b. He must be called and appointed by God to the high-priesthood (5:4).
 - 1) He must be **ordained** for this work.
 - 2) He must be solemnly “appointed” to this office.
 - 3) He must receive an authoritative appointment to this work.
 - 4) Others must recognize his qualifications for it.
 - 5) He may not simply decide that he wants the position.
 - (i) That is, **no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as [was] Aaron** (4).
 - (ii) No man can decide that he will be a priest; God determined that Aaron would be high priest, his sons would be priests allowed to offer sacrifices, and that the Levites would serve in a lesser function as helpers.
 - (iii) The passive “is appointed” (v. 1) shows that there is no place for pride and ambition; the priest’s office emphasizes humility and service.
 - (iv) See another reference to “**καθίστημι**” – *Titus 1:5*, “*For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and **ordain** elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.*”
2. Christ’s perfect fulfillment of the qualifications (5:5-10)

Note that the fulfillment will be taken up in reverse order to the requirements: first Christ’s divine calling and appointment, then His humanity and sympathy.

- a. He was designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5-6, 10)
 - 1) **Christ**, the Messiah, the One anointed by God to be the Savior, did not take this honor upon Himself: He **glorified not Himself to be made an high priest**.
 - (i) Like Aaron before Him, Jesus was appointed by God for a special role.
 - (ii) Recall v. 4 about Aaron.
 - (iii) Note that God confirmed His appointment of Aaron at a time when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were revolting against Aaron. See *Num. 16:11*, “*For which cause [both] thou and all thy company [are] gathered together against the LORD: and what [is] Aaron, that ye murmur against him?*”
 - (iv) Those who sought to do priestly work without God’s calling and appointment were judged: Saul did it and lost his kingdom (1 Samuel 13).
 1. Korah and his fellow rebels did and God killed them all (Numbers 16).
 2. King Uzziah entered the temple to burn incense and God smote him with leprosy (2 Chron. 26:16-21).
 - 2) Jesus accepted the role of becoming our Substitute and Savior, knowing that it would mean not glory but humiliation.
 - 3) He emphasized in the book of John the fact that He was sent by the Father; He was not seeking to do His own will.
 - (i) *John 8:54*, “*Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God.*”
 - (ii) *John 7:18*, “*He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*”
 - 4) Two quotes from Psalms show Christ’s appointment by God the Father. The voice of God spoke and said:
 - (i) “**Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee**” [Psalm 2:7] (5:5).
 1. This shows that the One who glorified Christ was the Father in heaven.
 2. These words of the Father show His appointment and approval of the Son and His work.
 3. This same text already quoted in 1:5 to show that He is higher than angels as He reigns over all.
 4. Particularly in the resurrection did the Father set His approval on Christ. See *Acts 3:13*, “*The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let [him] go.*”
 - (ii) “**Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.**” [Psalm 110:4] (5:10)
 1. Thus as the Son of God and as an eternal priest Jesus is perfectly qualified to be our Great High Priest.
 2. He is “more qualified” than Aaron in every way.
 - a. His priesthood is “eternal.”
 - b. His priesthood is universal, belonging to the order of Melchizedek.
 3. Like Melchizedek, Jesus *combines both kingly and priestly qualifications*.
 - a. Melchizedek was King of Salem (Gen. 14:18; Heb. 7:1) *Gen. 14:18*, “*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he [was] the priest of the most high God.*”
 - b. More in chapter seven about the priestly “order of Melchizedek” but note here that it “represented a non-Jewish, a universal priesthood.” (WE)
 - 5) Summary: Jesus met the first qualification, for he was appointed by God.
- b. He had “flesh,” experienced suffering, and learned obedience (5:7-9).

Recall that He must be taken from among men: that is, He must be able to sympathize with men (vv. 7-9). See then the fulfillment in these verses of this second qualification.

- 1) During His time on earth, **in the days of His flesh**, Jesus learned through actually experiencing the depths of human weakness. (5:7)
 - (i) For example, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus suffered as much as anyone could.
 - (ii) There in the garden, He **offered up both prayers** (the cry of one in desperate need) **and supplications** (the request of one in need of protection or help in an overwhelming calamity) **with loud crying and tears** (suggesting the intensity of the suffering and showing the

genuineness of His humanity). See Luke 22:44, “*And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*”

(iii) Jewish saying:

1. Prayer made in silence
2. Crying made with raised voice
3. Tears overcome all things

(iv) Jesus’ agony was not simply that of facing death, for many brave men have done that, but it was the agony of facing infinite wrath against sin, of being separated from God for those three dark hours.

(v) Jesus knew he was going to bear the weight of all the sins of the world and to wrestle with the powers of darkness.

(vi) He prayed to the one who was **able to save Him from [lit. “out of”] death.**

1. He committed His life to the Father knowing that He would rise from the grave and thus be “saved from death.”
2. Jesus’ body did not “see corruption.” Psalm 16:10
3. This interpretation fits in with v. 5 about the Son and the resurrection implied.

(vii) Jesus suffered intense agony as He thought of the cross, but He was always obedient, always serious and reverent in doing His Father’s will: He **was heard because of His piety.**

1. Though He suffered, Jesus was obedient.
2. Though He agonized, Jesus was concerned only with doing the will of His Father. See Matthew 26:39, “*And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou [wilt].*”

2) Jesus, **although ... a Son, ... learned obedience from the things which he suffered.** (5:8)

(i) As the Son of God, as being one in essence with the Father and having that eternal relation with Him, Jesus would not on that point need to earn the right to access to God.

(ii) However, for man’s sake, as man, he won the right of access to God. He is our mediator.

(iii) This does not mean that Jesus had a tendency to disobedience, not at all!

(iv) What it does mean:

1. It means that His obedience was tested by trial and that He responded always by faith and endurance.
2. It means that He lived out His obedience daily in the midst of a wicked generation.
3. Griffith Thomas: “Innocence is life untested, but virtue is innocence tested and triumphant.”
4. In other words, Jesus “learned obedience” in that he showed His obedience by His actions.
5. Learn: We cannot know we have learned obedience until we have to submit to something difficult, to something that crosses what we would like to do.
6. He was “*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*” (Phil. 2:8).
7. Without Christ’s obedience, man, who lost his innocence by disobedience, could not be restored to fellowship with God. It took perfect obedience to restore the disobedient. Romans 5:19, “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*”

3) The result of Jesus’ obedience = **and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.** (5:9)

(i) Christ’s work is complete: having been made perfect (*became* is aorist tense).

(ii) In what sense was Jesus “made perfect”?

1. He fulfilled all the qualifications.
 - a. Called and appointed by the Father.
 - b. Became man and could therefore have understanding and sympathy for man.
 - c. Completely obeyed the will of the Father.
2. He offered the perfect sacrifice.
3. He was crowned with glory and honor after His resurrection.

(iii) Note: Who receives the salvation that Jesus offers?

1. Only those who “**obey Him.**”
2. Believing and obeying cannot be separated. Cf. 5:9 with 4:3, “*For we which have believed do enter into rest.*”

(iv) Jesus, and no one, and no other thing, is the cause [source= **αἰτιος** = 5 NT refs] of salvation.

1. Luke 23:4, "Then said Pilate to the chief priests and [to] the people, I find no **fault** in this man."
 2. 23:14, "I, having examined [him] before you, have found no **fault** in this man touching those things..."
 3. 23:22, "I have found no **cause** of death in him."
 4. Acts 19:40, "For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no **cause** whereby we may give an account of this concourse."
 5. Thus the word suggests responsibility, and in this case a good meaning like cause or source or reason.
3. Conclusion to verses 4:14-5:10 = We have seen at least four reasons why Jesus is a superior high priest to Aaron.
- a. A superior **title**: GREAT High Priest
 - b. A superior **ordination**: A man but also appointed to resurrection
 - c. A superior **sympathy**: tested thoroughly but without sin
 - d. A superior **sacrifice** (3, 9-10): not for himself but for others and thus offers "eternal salvation"

C. He has entered the holy place and calls us to have assurance of salvation (5:11-6:20)

A call to spiritual growth (5:11-14)

A warning about falling away (6:1-8)

A call to diligence and hope (6:9-20)

1. A call to spiritual growth (5:11-14)

- a. The statement of their immaturity, of their lack of spiritual growth: they are **dull of hearing** (11).
 - 1) Having mentioned Melchizedek, the writer says that **concerning him** [οὗ -- "Whom" -- may be broader in meaning than Melchizedek and may refer to Christ and his High-priestly work; in other words, the explanation about Christ's Priesthood and Sacrifice may be over their heads] **we have much to say**.
 - 2) A consideration of Melchizedek will teach us much about Christ and His work, and the writer will soon go into great detail in his explanation about this great man (7:1-10:18).
 - 3) But he anticipates that his teaching [lit. "the word"] will be **hard to explain**, for they are not eager and good learners.
 - (i) He must nevertheless give this message, this "word" to them; it is his duty and his purpose to do so, in spite of the difficulty.
 - (ii) The subject matter is not so hard, but getting it across to those who are **dull of hearing** is difficult.
 - (iii) They are not "dull" by nature but have **become** that way through laziness, sluggishness, and neglect of God's Word.
 - (iv) The opposite of "dull" is "diligent" -- **νῶθρος** is used only one other time and that is 6:12 [NASB = sluggish], which contrast with 6:11 [**diligence**]. Also used in LXX, Pr. 22:29, "It is fit that an observant man and one diligent in his business should attend on kings, and not attend on **slothful** men."
 - 4) Their problem then was a slothfulness in **hearing**.
 - (i) They were not listening to the sermons.
 - (ii) They were not coming to classes to learn the Word.
 - (iii) They did not want to exert themselves in thinking about what they were hearing.
- b. The proof of their immaturity: they needed **milk and not solid food** (12-14).
 - 1) With time babes are normally weaned from milk and begin to eat solid food. (5:12)
 - (i) They had been saved long enough [**by this time**] to have become strong Christians.
 - (ii) They should now have become **teachers** of the Word.
 - 2) The lesson to learn is this: lethargy not only hinders progress but it causes retrogression.
 - 3) They had once understood at least the **elementary principles of the Christian life, but now they have need again for some one to teach** them those principles all over again.
 - (i) These **elementary principles** are the most simple elements of something.
 - (ii) "They are the 'alphabet' of a subject." (WE)

- (iii) Thus they had forgotten the ABCs of the **oracles of God**.
 - 1. Oracles -- based on the use of the word “logion” in Acts 7:38 and Rom. 3:2, some would limit this to OT revelation.
 - 2. But 6:1 demands that we broaden it to include NT revelation about Christ.
- (iv) That is, they had forgotten the simplest truths about Christ. They needed to learn them again.
- (v) They needed **milk** again; they could not handle **solid food**.
- (vi) Note: **στερεας τροφης** refers to “firm, hard, solid, strong,” food. It is “strong” because it makes us strong.
- 4) The writer argues that their spiritual appetite and diet indicate their heart’s condition (5:13-14).
 - (i) They were **partaking only of milk**.
 - 1. The “milk” was the elementary principles.
 - 2. Milk is essential for the babe but the adult needs much more.
 - (ii) Because of a steady diet of only the simplest truths, they had **not** grown **accustomed** to stronger truth, **the word of righteousness**.
 - 1. They were not experienced in using truth to make right decisions.
 - 2. In particular, they were not thinking about and were not much interested in the basic truth about righteousness, its source and how man can have it.
 - 3. They were in danger of despising and abandoning the teaching that Christ is our righteousness and that self-righteousness and works-righteousness are worthless.
 - 4. Christ in His High-priestly work made it possible for God to justify the unjust.
 - 5. The Just One sacrificed Himself for the unjust.
- c. The reason for their immaturity = lack of spiritual exercise (5:14). If they had been **mature** they would have:
 - 1) Wanted **solid food**.
 - (i) We show our spiritual condition by the kind of preaching we like.
 - (ii) We show our spiritual condition also by the kind of Bible reading we do and the kinds of books we read.
 - 2) Been exercising themselves spiritually; been **practicing** [**γυμνασμενα** = **γυμναζω** and suggests the gymnasium] using truth in daily living.
 - (i) Every Christian, like the good athlete, must practice using what he has learned.
 - (ii) We “train” ourselves to discern good and evil by the frequent and diligent study of the Scriptures.
 - (iii) We “train” ourselves by acting on what we learn in the Scriptures.
 - 3) Been able **to discern good from evil**.
 - (i) Why is it that many so-called Christians cannot make biblical decisions?
 - (ii) They cannot discern good and evil because they are not exercising themselves in the Word.
- d. Learn:
 - 1) Spiritual maturity is not automatic like physical maturity it. It takes effort.
 - 2) Spiritual maturity can be fast but it is not sudden.
 - (i) It results from the process of learning truth and doing it.
 - (ii) The Olympic athlete must go through “heats” in order to qualify.
 - (iii) The Christian looking for a short cut to the gold medal will not qualify for God’s blessing and help.
- 2. *A warning about falling away* (6:1-8)
 - The duty of Christian progress (6:1-3)
 - The danger of falling away (6:4-8)
- a. The duty of Christian progress (6:1-3).
 - 1) “Therefore” (6:1) points to the duty of progress.
 - (i) Based on his conclusion in chapter five that some of them were spiritually immature because of indifference or neglect or laziness, he now exhorts them to correct their problem.
 - (ii) Having rebuked them for their dullness he now urges them to do something about it lest the curse rather than the blessing of God rest upon them.
 - 2) The question then is “What are they to do?”
 - (i) They are to leave **the principles of the doctrine of Christ**.

1. "Leave" here means not abandon but to go beyond: the "elementary teaching about the Christ" (NASB) is only a beginning, not a stopping place.
 2. The principles of the doctrine of Christ are the basic teachings about Christ as the Savior and the Messiah.
 3. He is saying that they should go beyond the simple Gospel messages about Christ's death and resurrection.
 4. Evangelistic messages are good but they alone do not continue to build up the saints.
- (ii) They are then to **go on unto perfection**.
1. The writer is not pharisaical, for he now includes himself with them in the challenge: let us go on unto perfection.
 2. The verb is **φερωμεθα**, which is passive: *let us be borne along*.
 - a. It is not referring so much to personal effort as to personal surrender to the Lord who will bring us to perfection.
 - b. The goal is perfection, full maturity as a Christian.
 - c. We reach the goal as we yield ourselves fully to the Lord.
 - d. Cf. Acts 27:17, "*Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven* [**εφεροντο** = were being borne along].
- 3) "What are they not to do?" -- Lay the same foundation, that is, start again from the bottom like laying a foundation for a house.
- (i) The elements of the Christian's foundational practice and belief consists of three pairs:
1. **Repentance from dead works** -- heart attitudes
 2. **Faith toward God**
 3. **The doctrine of baptisms** -- church practices
 4. **The laying on of hands**
 5. **The resurrection of the dead** -- specific beliefs
 6. **Eternal judgment**
- (ii) **Repentance from dead works**
1. Repentance and faith always go together
 2. Acts 20:21, "*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
 3. John the Baptist preached repentance as did Jesus.
 4. Repentance is a change of mind resulting in a change of direction and action.
 5. The unbeliever repents from "dead works."
 - a. They are dead works because they come from one "dead in trespasses and sins."
 - b. They are dead because they are not perfect, and are thus not pleasing to God.
 - c. All acts on man in himself, separated from God are dead works. [Jesus said, "*Apart from Me you can do nothing.*" -- John 15:5]
- (iii) **faith toward God**
1. The first step in faith is to turn away from reliance on self.
 2. "toward" is *epi*, which means upon.
 - a. It suggests the idea of resting upon a solid foundation.
 - b. Faith's foundation is Christ, the Solid Rock.
 3. Jesus said, "*Repent and believe the gospel*" (Mark 1:15).
 4. Paul preached that both Jews and Gentiles alike should "*repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*" (Acts 26:20).
- (iv) **the doctrine of baptisms**
1. The word used here, **βαπτισμων**, is in the plural and is not used anywhere else in the NT to refer to the ordinance of baptism [the word in that case is always **βαπτισμα**]
 2. Therefore, Hughes says the meaning is something like "the instructions about ablutions" (PEH).

3. But the meaning must have something to do with the ordinance of baptism.
4. It may be plural because John's baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit were also important teachings.

(v) **the laying on of hands**

1. This act signified:
 - a. At times **the reception of the Holy Spirit**.
 - i. Acts 8:17, "Then laid they [their] hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."
 - ii. Acts 19:6, "And when Paul had laid [his] hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."
 - b. **Ordination to special service**:
 - i. Acts 6:6, "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid [their] hands on them."
 - ii. Acts 13:3, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid [their] hands on them, they sent [them] away."
 - iii. 2 Tim. 1:6, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."
 - iv. 1 Tim. 5:22, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."
 - c. **Healing of the sick**:
 - i. Luke 4:40, "Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them."
 - ii. Acts 28:8, "And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him."
2. Generally, this was **symbolic of solemn blessing**.

(vi) **the resurrection of the dead**

1. This is a cornerstone of the faith (see 1 Cor. 15).
2. "This is one of the most important subjects that can come before the human mind, and one on which man has felt more perplexity than any other. The belief of the resurrection of the dead is an elementary article in the system of Christianity. It lies at the foundation of all our hopes. Christianity is designed to prepare us for a future state; and one of the first things, therefore, in the preparation, is to assure us that there is a future state, and to tell us what it is." (BA)
3. "It is, moreover, a peculiar doctrine of Christianity. The belief of the resurrection is found in no other system of religion, nor is there a ray of light shed upon the future condition of man by any other scheme of philosophy or religion." (BA)

(vii) **eternal judgment**

1. Unbelievers will also be resurrected, but to judgment, not to eternal life.
 - a. Mt. 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - b. John 5:28-29, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 2. With this judgment God will rid His kingdom of all evil and its consequences.
 3. To neglect preaching judgment is to neglect one of the fundamentals of the faith.
 4. Note: this judgment is "eternal."
 - a. It is unending punishment.
 - b. John Stott has purportedly accepted the teaching of annihilation, a teaching which directly contradicts this Scripture.
- 4) **And this will we do if God permit (6:3).**
- (i) Even the means and rate of spiritual growth are in God's hands.
 - (ii) The author expresses his determination to go on to maturity and he believes some or many of them will join him.

- (iii) In all things though he realizes his dependence upon the Lord.
- b. The danger of falling away (6:4-8).
 - 1) Introduction
 - (i) The writer is still pursuing the theme of progress.
 - (ii) He has already challenged them in vv. 1-3 with a personal call to pursuing perfection.
 - (iii) He now warns them about what can happen to those who seemed to know God but who then fell away.
 - (iv) Of all people these are most pitiful, for they will NEVER return.
 - (v) Those described here are apostates, those who “stand away” from what they once professed to be and believe.
 - (vi) This problem was not uncommon, for the writer has already mentioned it (3:12ff) and takes it up twice more (10:26ff; 12:25ff).
 - (vii) From this let us learn the danger of being at a standstill spiritually.
 - 2) Note six things about these apostates:
 - (i) They have known the truth about Jesus [**were once enlightened**].
 - 1. They were not ignorant Jews who knew little or nothing of Christianity.
 - 2. See *Heb. 10:32*, “*But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.*” These were people that the writer expected to believe to the saving of the soul; he did not expect them to draw back unto perdition (10:39).
 - 3. The “once” suggests that the experience of illumination was complete and sufficient when it occurred.
 - 4. “Enlightenment” refers to that experience of being brought out of darkness into light, of that shining of God into the sin-darkened heart (2 Cor. 4:6).
 - a. *Col. 1:13*, “*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son.*”
 - b. *1 Peter 2:9*, “*that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*”
 - (ii) They have experienced God’s grace [**tasted the heavenly gift**].
 - 1. God’s “gift” is His grace.
 - 2. They had experienced the blessing which God freely and abundantly gives in Christ.
 - 3. Calvin admits that these reprobates have had a real taste of God’s work. But he compares them to those in the parable of the sower who have only a temporary interest and joy. “But I cannot admit that all this is any reason why he should not grant the reprobate also some taste of his grace, why he should not irradiate their minds with some sparks of his light, why he should not give them some perception of his goodness, and in some sort engrave his word on their hearts. Otherwise, where would be the temporal faith mentioned by Mark 4:17? There is therefore some knowledge even in the reprobate, which afterwards vanishes away, either because it did not strike roots sufficiently deep, or because it withers, being choked up.” (CA)
 - (iii) They have experienced the Holy Spirit’s work in their heart [**partakers of the Holy Spirit**].
 - 1. The word “partaker” means “sharer.”
 - 2. It describes participation in some common blessing or privilege.
 - 3. This could mean simply that they had seen the blessed work of the Holy Spirit in their church and in their own lives, but they are still ready to turn away.
 - (iv) They have experienced the blessing of God’s Word [**“tasted the good word of God”**].
 - 1. To “taste” something means to experience it personally.
 - 2. They had experienced the power of the Word and had come to believe its message was good.
 - 3. Again, they had seen for themselves the good effects of the Word of God on themselves and others.
 - (v) They have seen God’s power in miracles [**“the powers of the age to come”**].
 - 1. They had seen the signs, wonders, and miracles mentioned in 2:4.
 - 2. “*God also bearing [them] witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*” (2:4)
 - 3. Victories over sin and joy in the Lord are only a foretaste of what the Christian will one day enjoy in heaven, in “the world to come.”
 - 4. The blessings of God now are a “down payment” of the future.
 - (vi) They irrevocably forsake Christ [**“have fallen away”**].

1. Note: points 1-5 describe all Christians; point 6 describes apostates.
 2. This point shows the person to be at heart a false believer.
 - a. It describes the apostate, the one who knowing the truth and having experienced the truth to some degree, finally and irrevocably forsakes Christ.
 - b. Maybe Judas is the best example of one who heard the Word, prayed, served Christ, but in the end proved false.
- (vii) Further description/ explanation regarding apostates.
1. They cannot repent (6:6).
 - a. The apostate's repentance is **impossible**.
 - b. God's grace will never reach them again.
 - c. They are beyond hope; they are forever lost.
 2. Their actions in regard to Christ are appalling.
 - a. They crucify Jesus again (6:6).
 - i. They think Christ's death meant nothing.
 - ii. They personally scorn Christ.
 - iii. They wish they could have been there to mock Him with the others.
 - iv. "They now show themselves in their true colors. They join the ranks of the mob that yells 'Crucify Him, crucify him!' and that wickedly derides and insults the suffering Savior; and they do this *on their own account*, that is, in their own persons and of their own volition: they are not content that others should have scorned him apart from them." (HU)
 - b. They put Jesus to public shame (6:6).
 - i. They **put [him] to an open shame**.
 - ii. They publicly despise Christ's love and sacrifice.
 - iii. Their betrayal of Christ brings much shame upon the Lord.
 - c. They receive God's curse (6:7-8).
- 3) Further thoughts and instruction regarding apostasy.
- (i) This apostasy is not a one-time sin and it is not even a horrible sin such as David's adultery and murder. Psalm 51 shows David was not an apostate.
 - (ii) It is closer to what Solomon did when he built temples for pagan gods and participated in their worship.
 1. 1 Kings 11:5, "*For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.*"
 2. 1 Kings 11:7, "*Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that [is] before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.*"
 - (iii) John speaks of a "sin unto death."
 1. 1 John 5:16, "*If any man see his brother sin a sin [which is] not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*"
 2. This one is a "professing believer" (**brother**).
 3. Evidently there is no remedy for his sin other than the judgment of death.
 - (iv) Mark speaks of a sin bringing "eternal damnation," the sin against the Holy Spirit whereby a person attributes the clear working of the Spirit to Satan and his demons.
 1. Mark 3:29, "*But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.*"
 2. Note that in this case the person rejects the truth having full knowledge of what God is doing.
 3. Like the apostate, he sins in the face of both knowledge and even experience of the truth.
 - (v) So we learn that an apostate may be one who professes to be a Christian; he may also be one who has become so hardened that he claims God's work is actually Satan's.
 - (vi) The Scriptures give examples of those who have sinned with knowledge and of those who sinned "ignorantly."
 1. The Jews had the gospel preached unto them but they rejected the light. Acts 13:46, "*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*"

2. But though Paul sinned grievously he did it ignorantly. *1 Tim. 1:13*, “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did [it] ignorantly in unbelief.”
 - (vii) Examples of apostasy.
 1. *1 John 2:19*, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would [no doubt] have continued with us: but [they went out], that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”
 2. *1 Tim. 1:19-20*, “keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.”
 - (viii) Principle: interpret the difficult passages by the clearer ones.
 1. The NT clearly teaches that one who has been truly regenerated cannot fall away.
 2. *Phil. 1:6*, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform [it] until the day of Jesus Christ.”
 3. *2 Tim. 2:19*, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
 4. *John 10:28*, “And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand.”
 - 4) The illustration of the above truths (*6:7-8*)
 - (i) God’s grace, like rain, falls on all men.
 - (ii) However, the response and effect on men varies.
 1. Some receive God’s grace and bring forth fruit. These will **receive blessing from God**.
 2. Others belittle God’s grace and bring forth evil, like the soil that brings forth **thorns and briers**. These are **near cursing** -- their eternal damnation (**burning**) is not far off.
 - 5) Learn these lessons:
 - (i) Lean hard upon the promises of God when tempted to despair.
 - (ii) Thank God for warnings such as this when you are tempted to self-confidence.
 - (iii) The verses are addressed to the entire group.
 1. Some will heed the warning, they are the true Christians.
 2. Others will ignore the warning; they will become the apostates.
 3. So, WE MUST TAKE HEED THAT GOD’S GRACE FINDS GOOD SOIL IN OUR HEARTS.
3. A call to diligence and hope (*6:9-20*)
- a. Transition: The writer has good hopes for his readers.
 - 1) In vv. 1-4 he uses the first and second person pronouns, “we” and “you.”
 - 2) In vv. 5-8 he writes impersonally, using the third-person pronoun “those.”
 - 3) Beginning in v. 9 he goes back to the pronouns “we” and “you.”
 - 4) He does not think the readers are like those described in vv. 4-8.
 - b. The call to diligence (*6:9-12*).
 - 1) The call is *to true Christians* (*6:9*).
 - (i) The writer believes them to be true Christians.
 1. “It is plain that our author does not contemplate the possibility that the work of God in the lives of those to whom he is writing may fail or be frustrated, for he expresses confidence concerning them, and that confidence is based on the assurance that God’s word and God’s work which have been powerful in their midst, cannot falter (cf. *6:9ff*, *17ff*, *10:39*).” (PEH)
 2. “What he has reason to fear is that some among them who have professed Christian faith, enjoyed Christian fellowship, and engaged in Christian witness may prove to be hypocrites and enemies of Christ and, by turning away from the light they have known, show that they do not belong to God’s people at all.” (PEH)
 - (ii) What then was the purpose for the warning of verses 1-8?

1. Simply this, the writer understood that any flourishing work can soon die, and that those who have allowed themselves to become sluggish are in danger of back-sliding or worse, apostasy.
2. All Christians, but especially those who have not matured, need regular warnings about the danger of neglect, for it leads to decline and then departure from Christ.
- (iii) The writer is **persuaded** [word “suggests a past conflict of feeling issuing in a settled judgment – (WE)] that they have true **salvation**.
- (iv) He softens his previous warning by showing them his love: **beloved**.
- (v) They are much like the church in Ephesus: while they were threatened with the removal of God’s blessing (the lampstand), they were commended for their works, their toil, their patience, and their opposition to false teachers (Rev. 2:2-6).
- 2) The call is *to those already serving the Lord* (6:10).
 - (i) This is not just a past practice; they are still ministering to the saints, that is, to one another.
 - (ii) He is not talking about them meriting God’s favor by their deeds, but he is teaching that God blesses those who serve.
 - (iii) Christians are comforted to know that “the faithful man shall abound with blessings.”
 1. God is just to reward faithful service.
 2. We reap what we sow.
 - (iv) We do not become saints through our works; we show that we truly are saints by our works, for “faith without works is dead.”
 - (v) Note: this service, like all true ministering, is **toward his name**, that is, for His sake.
 - (vi) Summary--this verse is a call to labor for the Lord:
 1. We show our salvation by such works.
 2. God has promised to bless such labor. 1 Cor. 15:58 -- Such work “in the Lord” is “not in vain.”
- 3) The call is *to continue diligently until the end* (6:11).
 - (i) “Desire” expresses an intense yearning or longing.
 - (ii) As a true shepherd, he is concerned about each one (**every one**) of them.
 - (iii) His desire is that they continue to grow, for arrested growth is a tragedy.
 - (iv) The true Christian will and must progress and persevere unto the end. Mt. 10:22, “*And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name’s sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*”
 - (v) But note that progress requires **diligence**.
 1. The writer wants them to **shew** their diligence in action.
 2. They were diligent in works of love, now he wants them to show that **same diligence** with regard to their hope.
 3. They were still serving, but their hope had grown cold and dull, and they must stir it up before their works are chilled as well.
 4. Good works will not last long where hope and assurance have faded.
 5. We need a fresh view of the coming of the Lord Jesus to strengthen our hope, to give us full assurance so that we will continue patiently **unto the end**.
- 4) The call is *to believe God’s promises and wait patiently for their fulfillment* (6:12).
 - (i) He again takes up the theme of diligence by reminding them not to be **slothful**.
 1. In at least one way they had become “slothful:” they were sluggish, “dull,” in their hearing (5:11).
 2. So they must beware of sluggishness in faith; they must learn the promises of the gospel and believe them.
 3. Others before them have set the example of faith and patience.
 - a. Abraham and the patriarchs did not receive the promised inheritance on earth but they inherited the promises when they entered heaven.
 - b. Note: God’s blessings are many for **the promises** are many [not singular].
- c. The sure hope (6:13-20).
 - 1) Our sure hope is based on God’s promise and oath (6:13-17).
 - (i) The **promise** was first given to **Abraham**. Thus the Lord singles out Abraham as an excellent example of faith for us to follow. (6:13)
 - (ii) The promise was seconded by God’s **swearing** with an oath (6:13b-14).

1. The foundation for God's oath was **Himself**, His own character.
 2. He alone is infinite and permanent and pure truth.
 3. The promise was intertwined with the oath: "*Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.*" (6:14)
 - a. The promise was that God would bless Abraham and give him a physical and spiritual posterity as great as the stars in heaven.
 - i. *Genesis 12:3, "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*
 - ii. *Gen. 22:16-18, "And said, **By myself have I sworn**, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only [son]: That **in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed** as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which [is] upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."*
 - b. Note: the addition of God's oath was not to lead Abraham from faith to doubt, for the oath came after Abraham's supreme test concerning Isaac.
 - c. The oath was more like a reassurance that God would bless Abraham: not simply I will bless you, but "Assuredly (or 'I vow that') I will bless you."
- (iii) Abraham **obtained the promise** after around 25 years of waiting for a son (6:15).
1. Because He **patiently endured** he not only received the promise, but he "obtained" it.
 - a. See *Rom 11:7, "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."*
 - b. Why did Israel not "obtain?" They had received the promise but because of their hardness of heart they did not "obtain."
 - c. The elect obtained God's promise by faith.
 - d. Thus, "to obtain" means to enjoy it as your own.
 2. His obtaining the promise could mean either God's giving Him the oath or the fulfillment of the promise in Isaac's release.
 3. Meaning of **patiently endured**
 - a. **μακροθυμίας** (noun **μακροθυμιας** in v. 12).
 - b. Suggests patience, steadfastness, endurance, and sometimes forbearance or longsuffering.
 4. Note about Abraham's children:
 - a. All who believe are his children.
 - b. "*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also (Romans 4:11).*"
 - c. Not all who think they are his children are.
 - i. *John 8:39, "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."*
 - ii. Only those who do Abraham's works are Abraham's children. See previous verse, not "you ought to do," but you would do Abraham's works.
 - d. What were Abraham's works?
 - i. He separated himself from the world. *Heb. 11:8-9, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as [in] a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."*
 - ii. He considered this world a pilgrimage and himself a stranger in it. *Heb. 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*
 - iii. He **patiently endured** the mocking and persecution of those who hated him for his godly testimony.
 - e. Transition note: so far we have seen much warning, but these next verses speak comfort to our hearts.
 - i. The Lord alarms the conscience before He speaks peace to it.

- ii. He wounds before He heals.
- (iv) God's reasons for using an oath (6:16-17).
 - 1. Men acknowledge an oath, sworn by one **greater** in power and prestige, to be immutable testimony beyond dispute (**strife**).
 - 2. Sworn testimony is accepted to be the truth (16).
 - 3. Oaths are needed because of man's untrustworthiness, because of the unreliability of his word and promises.
 - 4. God deigned to use human convention to show beyond all doubt (**more abundantly**) to Christians (**heirs of promise**) that His promise was certain of fulfillment (17).
 - a. In other words, what God has promised to Abraham he also promises to us.
 - b. *Gal. 3:29, "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*
- 2) Our sure hope provides a "refuge" for the Christian (18).
 - (i) In Christ, believing His Word, we **have strong consolation**.
 - (ii) We have entered the "refuge" by **laying hold upon the hope set before us**.
 - 1. Knowing of the hope is not enough.
 - 2. We must "lay hold upon" it for ourselves.
 - 3. Note: this suggests the OT concept of cities of refuge.
 - a. Those who entered were safe.
 - b. *Num. 35:15, "These six cities shall be a refuge, [both] for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither."*
 - c. But that refuge was only for those who intentionally killed; Jesus gives refuge to **all** who are weary and heavy-laden and who will come unto Him.
 - (iii) What is the Christian's "hope"? = Jesus Christ, His Coming
 - 1. *1 Tim. 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, [which is] our hope."*
 - 2. *Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."*
 - (iv) This hope is **set before** us in the Gospel message, for in the gospel we have also the promise of what Jesus will do for us in the future.
- 3) Our sure hope provides an **anchor** for the Christian (6:19-20).
 - (i) The anchor is the **hope**.
 - 1. It is an anchor because it is **sure**.
 - 2. It is an anchor because it is **steadfast**.
 - 3. It is an anchor because it is based on Christ's eternal sacrifice **within the veil**.
 - a. It reaches deep, into the holy of holies.
 - b. This phrase about being "within the veil" teaches that Christ offered Himself as satisfying the full requirements of God's holiness and He was accepted.
 - c. The phrase also teaches that we can enjoy heavenly realities now by faith.
 - i. "Hope, our anchor of the soul, is not satisfied with merely coming to the vestibule, that is, is not content with merely earthly and visible goods, but penetrates even to those which are within the veil, namely, to the Holy of Holies, where it lays hold on God Himself, and heavenly goods, and fastens on them." (JFB)
 - ii. "The idea here is that the hope of the Christian enters into heaven itself; it takes hold on the throne of God; it is made firm by being fastened there. It is not the hope of future riches, honours, or pleasures in this life—for such a hope would not keep the soul steady; it is the hope of immortal blessedness and purity in the world beyond." (BA)
 - 4. Thus, the anchor is Jesus (6:20).
 - a. This fits with our previous interpretation that the hope is not subjective, but objective, Jesus Himself.
 - b. He is sure, He is steadfast, and He has entered within the veil.

- c. An anchor prevents drifting and shipwreck and Jesus protects His people and keeps them from shipwreck.
 - (ii) The author of the hope is Jesus (6:20).
 - 1. As our **forerunner** He opened the way into God's presence.
 - a. He has gone before us in every temptation and every trial.
 - b. "The word **prodromov**, does not merely signify one that *goes or runs before* another, but also one who *shows the way, he who first does a particular thing*; also the *first fruits*. So in the *Septuagint*, {*Isa 28:4*}, **prodromov sukou** signifies the *first fruits of the fig tree*, or the *first ripe figs*.
 - i. From this we may at once perceive the meaning of the phrase: Jesus is the first fruits of human nature that has entered into the heavenly kingdom; the first human body that was ripe for glory, and ripe long before the rest of the children who are partakers of flesh and blood.
 - ii. And he is entered for us, as the first fruits of all who have found redemption in his blood." (AC)
 - 2. From John Owen's commentary as quoted in Pink
 - a. Jesus went before by way of *declaration*, to declare His success over all enemies and to lead captivity captive (Ps. 45:5-7; 68:18, 24-26).
 - b. By way of *preparation*: to open the way for our worship and praying and to prepare a place for us (10:19-22; John 14:2).
 - c. By way of *occupation*: to take possession and to reserve it for us (Acts 26:18; 1 Pet. 1:4).
- 4. **Conclusion** (reviewing 5:11-6:10).
 - a. We must give diligence in the Word so that we will grow and mature.
 - b. We must give diligence in the Word so that we will not fall away.
 - c. We must believe the Word and patiently wait for God's blessings.
 - d. To do otherwise is to run the real risk of apostasy and eternal damnation.

D. He is a high priest like Melchizedek (7:1-28).

- 1. Introduction:
 - a. The last words of chapter six bring us back to the topic of Melchizedek.
 - b. The writer now takes up that theme and will develop it in detail.
 - c. These verses deal generally with the concept of priesthood rather than directly with the high priesthood.
 - d. The Jews were familiar with this man though the Scriptures have little to say about him.
 - e. See *Psalms 110:4*, "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou [art] a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." The Jews admitted that this man was a type of the Messiah.
 - f. First the writer gives the historical facts about Melchizedek (which are amazingly few) and then explains the significance of this man as seen from
 - 1) His titles
 - 2) His relationship to Abraham, and
 - 3) The silence of Scripture about him.
 - g. What is **not said** shows him to be a type of Christ. Some have said Melchizedek was actually a pre-incarnate Christ; but this would make Christ a type of himself and is unlikely. It seems better to make him a Canaanite king who worshipped and loved the true God and served him as a priest.
- 2. The greatness of Melchizedek when compared with Abraham (7:1-10)
 - a. He was both a king and a priest (7:1).
 - 1) He was **king of Salem**.
 - (i) Jewish tradition makes this to be Jerusalem.
 - (ii) His kingship was only part of his work.
 - (iii) Because he was a king as well as a priest, he was greater than Aaron.
 - 2) He was also **priest of the most high God**.
 - (i) Clearly, others besides the Jews knew the true God and worshipped him.
 - (ii) He worshipped God, the Supreme One, the One over all.

- 3) This man thus combined the two functions of being king and priest, an impossibility in formal Judaism.
 - (i) Recall that Saul and Uzziah were judged immediately for attempting to serve as priests.
 - (ii) Saul -- 1 Sam. 13:12, 14, *"Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering./ But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him [to be] captain over his people, because thou hast not kept [that] which the LORD commanded thee."*
 - (iii) Uzziah -- 2 Chron. 26:19, *"Then Uzziah was wroth, and [had] a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar."*

- b. He bestowed his blessing upon Abraham (7:1, 6b-7). He **met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings**.
 - 1) Abraham had gone to rescue Lot and get back his servants who were taken by the four kings fighting against the five-king alliance including Sodom and Gomorrah.
 - 2) After defeating the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, these four kings took Lot and his possessions (Gen. 14:12).
 - 3) Abraham went to his rescue and came back victorious.
 - 4) On the way back Melchizedek met Abraham and **blessed him**.
 - 5) His superiority to Abraham is shown by the fact that he blessed Abraham; it is also shown by the fact that Abraham gave him a tithe of all (see point c).

- c. He received tithes from Abraham (7:2a, 4-6, 8-10).
 - 1) Verse 4 then commands us to consider how great this man [was], unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.
 - (i) The "spoils" were the choice part of the spoil "which was offered as a thank offering to the gods" (WE).
 - (ii) So Abraham quickly recognized Melchizedek's dignity and gladly offered the tithe of the choicest victory spoil.
 - (iii) Abraham was dignified himself, for he was **the patriarch**, the great patriarch, "our patriarch" the Jews would think.
 - (iv) He was the father of Israel, but he also stands as the father of the whole family of faith (Rom. 4:11).
 - (v) Abraham's greatness enhances the greatness of the greater Melchizedek.
 - 2) Verse 5 tells us about Abraham's descendants, the Levites, and their role in collecting tithes.
 - (i) They could not inherit territory (Deut. 10:8f, 12:12).
 - (ii) The Levites were assigned to collect the tithes [Numbers 18:21ff] for their support and then the priests proper [not those who simply served tables] received a tithe of those tithes [Numbers 18:26, 28].
 1. *"And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve [even] the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."* (Numbers 18:21)
 2. *"Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, [even] a tenth [part] of the tithe. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest. (26, 28)*
 - (iii) So this verse shows the dignity of the Levites' office while at the same time showing its limitations.
 - (iv) They were no better than their **brethren** naturally, for they and all other Israelites **come out of the loins of Abraham**.
 - 3) Verse 6 then tells us that one whose **descent** is not related to the Levites (1) **received tithes of Abraham and (2) blessed him that had the promises**.
 - (i) See again Abraham's greatness: he had the promises of temporal and eternal blessings from God.

- (ii) But see the superiority of Melchizedek also as he blessed Abraham.
- 4) Verses 9-10 argue that:
 - (i) There is strong family unity.
 - 1. Because of this unity, the Levites can be said to have **paid tithes in** [through] **Abraham**.
 - 2. Someone might say, but Abraham was not a priest and thus the comparison is unfair.
 - 3. The answer is that the Levites, being Abraham's descendants are united with him in recognizing the superiority of Melchizedek.
 - 4. If they had been there, they would have done the same thing in giving tithes to Melchizedek.
 - (ii) Melchizedek points to someone greater than himself.
 - 1. By definition Melchizedek means **king of righteousness**.
 - 2. As **king of Salem** he was also **king of peace**, for Salem means peace.
 - 3. The writer then is strongly suggesting to us that this man Melchizedek points to someone greater than himself.
 - 4. He points to the Messiah who will reign in righteousness.
 - a. *Jer. 23:6*, "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this [is] his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**."
 - b. He points to the Messiah who is the Prince of Peace.
 - c. Jesus perfectly combines both of these aspects.
 - i. He is the Lord our righteousness (*Jer. 23:6*; *1 Cor. 1:30*).
 - ii. And He is our peace (*Eph. 2:14*).
 - iii. Through Him we are made righteous and established in a relationship of peace with God.
 - iv. In Christ, righteousness and peace meet together.
 - v. "So Jesus brings righteousness and peace together in his person. As the Psalmist so magnificently indicates, in the Lord 'righteousness and peace kiss each other' (*Psalms 85:10*). Righteousness and peace are the telltale kiss of his character. He is the *King*, the sovereign, of righteousness and peace. He is the sovereign giver of kisses of peace and righteousness.... Righteousness and peace have kissed in Christ – and it is this kiss the King repeatedly bestows on his bride." (KH)
 - vi. This order is significant: we must have righteousness before we can have peace.
 - vii. Melchizedek is important as a type of Christ not only in what he was but in what he seemed to be due to the silence of Scripture.
- d. He is a type of Christ in his seeming eternity (*7:3*).
 - 1) This verse tells us what we do not know about Melchizedek.
 - 2) He was **without father, without mother, without descent**. Does this mean that this man was superhuman?
 - (i) Of course not. It simply means that we know nothing about his father or mother or ancestry. Scripture is silent on these points with regard to him.
 - (ii) This omission is especially striking in Genesis where genealogy is prominent (cf. *5:1ff*).
 - (iii) Also *Ezra 2:62-63* and *Nehemiah 7:63-65* show the absolute necessity for the Levitical priest to be able to trace his ancestry.
 - 3) He was one also **having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually**.
 - (i) Again, it is not that Melchizedek is eternally existent, but that Scripture's silence about his birth and death makes it seem thus. "The silence of the Biblical record regarding Melchizedek's days suggests a continuous priesthood for Melchizedek that foreshadows what perfectly was, and is fulfilled in Christ, who ministers continually, without interruption." (KH)
 - (ii) He stands both unique and isolated in his person and his history.
 - (iii) He is not connected with any family line and his life has no recorded beginning or ending.
 - (iv) "The typical significance of Melchizedek lies in the timeless nature of his office as priest without successor. The motif of the 'eternity' of Melchizedek and of the priesthood he exercises constitutes the prominent theme of *7:1-10*." (LA)
 - 4) Verse 8 amplifies on this: in the Mosaic economy men who were **subject** to death received tithes.
 - (i) But in Melchizedek's case all we know about him is that he lived. No reference to his death suggests that he continues to live, though it does not prove his immortality.

- (ii) Thus **Psalm 110:4** **witnesses** that Melchizedek typifies Christ's eternal priesthood.
 - 5) We conclude then that Melchizedek's priesthood was before, superior to, and continues after the Levitical priesthood.
 - 6) Then, the thought of eternal existence takes our minds to the truly eternal priest, the Son of God.
 - (i) In His incarnation Jesus had father and mother and birth and death, but as the Son of God He is eternally the same and His years have no end.
 - (ii) 1:12, "*And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*"
 - (iii) 13:8, "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*"
 - e. Summary of verses 1-10.
 - 1) The greatness of Melchizedek when compared with Abraham (7:1-10)
 - (i) He was both a king and a priest (7:1).
 - (ii) He bestowed his blessing upon Abraham (7:1, 6b-7).
 - (iii) He received tithes from Abraham (7:2a, 4-6, 8-10).
 - (iv) He is a type of Christ in his seeming eternity (7:3).
 - 2) Note the Holy Spirit's guiding hand in the inspiration of the Scriptures. He clearly led in the absence of information about Melchizedek.
 - 3) Learn to assess true greatness. Abraham was great, but so was Melchizedek though Scripture says much less about him.
 - 4) Family is important, but God can raise up those who love Him from among an ungodly line.
 - 5) Scripture is always focused on Christ. "The use that is made of Melchizedek in 7:1-10 is thoroughly Christological. He has an independent significance in Hebrews; he is introduced only for the sake of the Son (7:3c)."
(LA)
3. The greatness of Melchizedek when compared with Aaron and the Levitical priesthood (7:11-28)
- a. His priesthood can perfect sinners (7:11-14).
 - 1) Aaron's order of priesthood was imperfect (11).
 - (i) This imperfection was hinted at by the existence of another priestly order in Melchizedek.
 - (ii) This imperfection was confirmed when God made another priest after the order of Melchizedek and **not called after the order of Aaron**.
 - (iii) This imperfection was also confirmed by the experience of the people; the law could not perfect them.
 - 1. If the Aaronic priesthood could have brought people to the goal of **perfection** then no other priesthood [no **further need** for **another priest**] would have been needed.
 - 2. The word "further" [**ετι**] suggests that the lack of perfection was felt after the Levitical priesthood had been established.
 - 3. David had said as much when he said that the Son of God was made after the order of Melchizedek (**Psalm 110:4**).
 - a. Though living under the Mosaic economy, David knew that a greater priesthood was required for bringing sinners to perfection.
 - b. With all who were godly he had learned that flawless law-keeping was impossible for man; man needed a flawless Law-Keeper in his stead.
 - (iv) Of course, the Aaronic priesthood is intimately connected with the law (**for under it the people received the law**).
 - 1. Because the people were continuously breaking the law, there had to be a priestly system to offer sacrifices continually.
 - 2. The Law required a priesthood; the priests were to teach the Law.
 - 3. The law and the priesthood were the two pillars of life under the revelation given to Moses.
 - 2) Because of the relationship between the law and the priesthood, the change from an Aaronic priesthood also required [**made of necessity**] a **change of the law**. (7:12)
 - (i) The old system had two problems:
 - 1. Not only the people but the priests themselves had to offer sacrifices for sins.
 - 2. The priests, being sinners themselves, could never offer a perfect sacrifice. 7:22, "*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.*"

- a. The sacrifices themselves, the bulls and goats, were not aware of what they were doing.
 - b. They were uncomprehending and unwilling and thus could not serve as a true substitute for the human sinner.
3. Summary: Under such a system, the heart and conscience could not be cleansed of sin; it could never “*make the comers thereunto perfect*” (10:1).
- (ii) Thus the change of the priesthood consisted in this:
 1. The priest Himself was perfect and not in need of redemption.
 2. The sacrifice was the priest Himself; knowing full well what He was doing, He “despised the shame” of it and “endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2).
 - a. The writer in this book emphasizes the perfection of that sacrifice (e.g. vv. 23-28).
 - b. The “change of the law” =
 - i. The principle of “*justification by faith apart from the works of the law*” (Romans 3:27).
 - ii. The Law was given to show us our sin and our need of Christ. It was “added” to serve as a “*schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*” (Gal. 3:24).
- 3) The Priest after the order of Melchizedek came from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi (13-14).
 - (i) The Priest being spoken of clearly is Jesus. The words of Psalm 110 are fulfilled in Jesus.
 - (ii) He **pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar** (13).
 1. **Pertaineth** means “partook of” and “points to the voluntary assumption of humanity by our Lord” (WE).
 2. Same word in 2:14, “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same...*”
 3. He chose not to participate in the privileges of the Levitical line.
 - (iii) Rather He chose to identify Himself with the kingly tribe of **Judah** (14).
 1. Jesus’ roots are **evident**; they are a matter of history and well-known fact.
 - a. Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6.
 - b. Throne of David, the leading king from the tribe of Judah (Isaiah 9:6-7; Romans 1:3; see also Matthew 1:3ff).
 - c. Jesus is called the Lion out of the tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5).
 2. Note: He is called **our Lord**.
 - a. See Rev. 11:15 where the Father is called “our Lord” – “*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*”
 - b. Thus we have a title of deity for Christ in the midst of this context that focuses on His humanity.
- 4) Learn from verses 11-14:
 - (i) Let us rejoice in our “perfection.”
 1. The Lord is gradually but surely bringing us to that goal.
 2. He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of Christ.
 3. He is controlling our lives to bring that about.
 4. It is certain.
 - (ii) Let us rejoice in “our Lord.”
 1. He is both God and man and fully able to feel with us and meet all our needs.
 2. Let us then submit to Him as Lord, as Master.
- b. His priesthood is based not on written laws but on eternal power demonstrated by eternal life (7:15-17).
 - 1) Again note in talking about Melchizedek, we are talking about the antitype, Christ Himself (15).
 - (i) There **ariseth another priest after the similitude of Melchizedek**.
 - (ii) Melchizedek was not Christ; he symbolized Christ.
 - (iii) The two are “similar” [**similitude**].
 1. Melchizedek is “like” Christ.
 2. There is a resemblance in some ways.
 - 2) The difference between the order of Melchizedek and Christ and that of Aaron and Levi is that Christ’s priesthood is not according to any legal requirements concerning bodily descent (7:16a).

- (i) **[not after the law of a carnal commandment]**; NASB-- “*not on the basis of a law of physical requirement*”].
 - (ii) As already shown, Christ is not physically related to the tribe of Levi; rather He is from the tribe of Judah.
 - (iii) This law was “carnal” too in that it dealt with the outside of the man [no physical defects, no marriage with some kinds of women] but it did not deal with the heart of the priest; thus, evil men like Caiphas and Annas could become High Priests.
 - 3) Christ’s qualification as priest depends not on His ancestry but on His character and power, **according to the power of an indestructible [endless--KJV] life** (7:16b).
 - (i) Note: the KJV “endless” misses the point of this life in Christ being indestructible.
 - (ii) Jesus died bodily, but it was impossible for death to hold Him for He is by nature ever living.
 - 1. He offered Himself by the “eternal Spirit” (9:14).
 - 2. *John 11:25-26, “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”*
 - 3. Life was indissoluble with Christ.
 - 4. Therefore, He could be at once both the sacrifice and the priest.
 - 4) Where the priest lives forever, there can be no change of the priesthood (7:17).
 - (i) As Psalms 110 clearly states, Jesus is “**a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.**”
 - (ii) In this situation there could be no need for a law regarding priestly succession.
- c. His priesthood enables us to “draw near to God” (7:18-19).
- 1) The **former commandment** relating to the Aaronic priesthood has been set aside [disannulled].
 - (i) Set aside = “became cancelled” [**αθετησις ... γινεται**]
 - (ii) “**αθετησις**” used only here and in 9:26, “*to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*”
 - (iii) Deissmann says it was a word familiar in legal usage in the sense of annulment or cancellation.
 - 2) Why was the legislation regarding the Levitical priesthood cancelled? Because of its **weakness** and **unprofitableness** and uselessness.
 - (i) In other words the Law could not make men holy.
 - (ii) The Law itself was good but it has no power to change man’s heart; it only showed man what was in his heart.
 - (iii) Thus it was useless in cleansing the conscience and in enabling men to draw near to God.
 - 3) So the Law could not perfect man, it **made nothing perfect**, but it did show man His need and suggests that there was a **better hope**.
 - (i) The point then again is to encourage these believers to use their privilege, to boldly come to God.
 - (ii) Note: hope was not lacking during the former dispensation; now Christ’s death and resurrection have provided a better hope, for it is eternally secure.
 - (iii) Remember that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for.”
 - (iv) We too, like the OT saints, do not see our hope yet, but with them we will one day made perfect.
 - (v) Let us boldly use our blessing of drawing near to God!
 - (vi) Let us, like Enoch before us, “walk with God” in close and sweet communion.
- d. His priesthood is established upon God’s oath (7:20-22).
- 1) We have already seen the importance of God’s oath.
 - (i) Oaths are rare, and therefore are especially important when given.
 - (ii) Recall God’s oath to Abraham which confirmed the promise:
 - 1. 6:17, “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel [*the unchangeable character of His purpose*], confirmed [it] by an oath.”
 - 2. Thus again God’s Word is doubly sure. He said it and He swore His intention to fulfill it.
 - 3. Remember that God’s oaths are not because He is fickle but because man seems to need reassurance, being himself a fickle creature.
 - 4. God’s word and oath imply a “purpose of love not to be disturbed by man’s unworthiness.” (WE)

- 2) The contrast is simple:
 - (i) Jesus was made a priest “not without oath” (20).
 - (ii) In contrast, the Levitical priests were “made without an oath” (21).
 - (iii) The proof for this is again the statement of *Psalm 110:4*, “*The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou [art] a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*”
 - 3) God’s words are not treated as dead but as alive and as still speaking to us.
 - 4) About God’s “repentance.”
 - (i) *Rom. 11:29*, “*For the gifts and calling of God [are] without repentance.*”
 - (ii) *Num. 23:19*, “*God [is] not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do [it]? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?*”
 - (iii) *1 Sam. 15:29*, “*And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he [is] not a man, that he should repent.*”
 - (iv) So the “necessities of human thought require that sometimes, through man’s failure or change, God, who is unchangeable, should be said to repent.”
 - 5) So, because of the oath and Jesus’ own perfections He has become the **surety** [guarantor] of the **better covenant** (22).
 - (i) This word “surety” found only here in the NT.
 - (ii) The word teaches that Jesus Himself is the guarantee that God’s promises will not be annulled.
 - (iii) The promise of eternal life and forgiveness are as sure as Jesus’ existence.
 - (iv) This solid guarantee is why the covenant is called the “eternal covenant” (13:20). It will change or end when He who is the same yesterday, today, and forever” changes or ends.
 - (v) Note: the verse identifies the guarantor by placing the name **Jesus** emphatically at the end.
 - (vi) As the God-man, now entered as our forerunner into the Holy of Holies, Jesus will make sure that everything He has promised us we will receive.
- e. His priesthood is unchangeable; it is not subject to the changes of death (7:23-24).
- 1) The Levitical priests were **many**; death required regular reinforcements.
 - 2) Note the contrast:

(i) Under the old covenant	many
(ii) Under the new	One
(iii) Under the old covenant	death of the priests
(iv) Under the new covenant	“continueth ever” —lives forever
 - 3) Again the point: since no death in the new priesthood, no change forever (24).
- f. His priesthood provides full salvation (7:25-28).
- 1) Verse 25 is one of the landmark verses in the Bible. It explains the full salvation of our High Priest.
 - (i) We will need to spend some time studying this verse.
 - (ii) In this verse we learn about Jesus and the full salvation he provides for His people.
 1. The BASIS of salvation: our High Priest’s ministry; His offering of Himself
 - a. He is **able** to save because of His perfect, final sacrifice.
 - b. Verse 25 refers back to v. 24 and the truth about Jesus’ ministry as an High Priest forever.
 - c. Who but God can forgive sins?
 - d. There is no inability with Jesus.
 - e. He is called “The Mighty God” (Is. 9:6).
 - f. The song is correct, “He is able to deliver thee.”
 - g. Our salvation depends not on dying or dead men, but on an eternal High Priest.
 2. The MEANING of salvation: continual and eternal deliverance from sin
 - a. The word “**save**” is in the present tense.
 - b. Jesus began our salvation when we believed and He “is saving” us right now in that He continually supports us in each moment of trial.
 - c. He is also using those trials to purge us.
 - d. In the future we will be forever free of sin’s power and presence.
 3. The LENGTH of salvation: forever
 - a. This truth was suggested in the previous point, but in order to make the point stronger, let us focus on another phrase [το παντελεις] in this great verse.

- b. The phrase is translated "**to the uttermost**" in the KJV.
 - c. In the next point we will learn one meaning of this word, but here let us focus on the idea as translated in the NASB, "**forever**".
 - d. In other words, since Christ has an unchangeable and everlasting priesthood His atonement for us lasts forever.
 - e. That precious blood will never lose its power!
4. The COMPLETENESS of salvation: to the uttermost
- a. This phrase has a meaning broader than that of simply time.
 - b. Yes, our salvation is forever, but it is also complete.
 - c. Nothing could be added to it and nothing could be taken away from it.
 - d. The Japanese Bible translates the phrase, "perfectly."
 - e. Our salvation is perfect:
 - i. It forgives all our sins.
 - ii. It saves the soul but also provides redemption for the body; we eagerly await our glorified bodies.
 - iii. It will bring us to perfect conformity to Christ.
 - iv. It will bring us to the place of perfect happiness.
5. The RECIPIENTS of salvation: those who draw near to God by faith
- a. The truly saved person wants to draw close to God.
 - b. We do not draw near based on our merit, but because of the work of our "Forerunner" Jesus (6:20).
 - c. See John 17:9 for the special objects of Jesus' intercession, "*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*"
6. The METHOD of salvation: [by him] = through Christ; through faith in His one-time offering
- a. Anyone who climbs up some other way is a thief and a robber.
 - b. "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).
7. The MAINTENANCE of salvation: Jesus' intercession for us
- a. Note: some people in the early church days thought angels could intercede for the saints.
 - i. Col. 2:18, "*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*"
 - b. But we must not make that mistake; as we learned earlier, the only Mediator is Jesus.
 - c. Nothing else, and no one else can help us.
 - i. No one else hears our prayers and prays for us before the Father.
 - (a) 1 Tim. 2:5, "*For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*"
 - (b) Rom. 8:34, "*Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*"
 - (c) 1 John 2:1ff
 - ii. Relying upon angels or saints is futile, but worse it shows a lack of trust and confidence in Christ's ability as our Intercessor. Further it is honoring the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).
 - d. As our Intercessor He does not continually offer His sacrifice but rather continually thinks of our needs and assures our protection and blessing.
 - i. Part of the high priest's function was to bless the people.
 - ii. Lev. 9:22, "*And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings.*"
 - e. Aspects of Jesus' intercession:
 - i. He appears before God as the sacrifice for our sins and as our High Priest, on the ground of whose work we receive the remission of our sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and all needed good.
 - ii. He defends us against the charges of Satan.
 - iii. He sanctifies our prayers and our service, rendering them acceptable to God because of His own merits.

- f. Note about the idea of Jesus' praying for us:
 - i. He denies there is such a need (John 16:25-26).
 - ii. He Himself is over God's kingdom and all authority has been given to Him (Mt. 28:18-20; John 5:22-23).
 - iii. He does not need to persuade the Father to be gracious to us since all of His saving work resulted from the Father's grace.
 - iv. Conclusion: "No man may know how he intercedes. This is a matter between him and the Father. Yet we rightly put away all thought of humbly pleading, all thought of lowering himself in the act. Although he is exalted at God's right hand, Jesus, the Son of God incarnate, is still our Priest, living ever, active in the presence of God for us." (LE)
- 2) The moral qualifications of our High Priest (26).
- (i) The high priest's ministry is no better than the man.
 1. The previous high priests were not only mortal, but they were stained morally.
 2. They could no more purify others than you could wipe a mirror clean with your finger; the streaks of imperfection remain.
 - (ii) But, Jesus is different; He is ...
 1. **holy**:
 - a. He is the Holy One (Psalms 16:10; quoted in Acts 2:27; 13:35).
 - b. He is without any trace of pollution [Trench says "**ἁγιος**" is the opposite of polluted].
 - c. Held up to the light of moral perfection, Jesus is crystal clear.
 2. **harmless** [**ἄκακος**]
 - a. He is without evil or anything bad.
 - b. He is "innocent" (NASB).
 - c. He has no wrong motives and no false words and no evil imaginations.
 - d. No one could justly accuse Him of wrong words or wrong actions.
 3. **undefiled**:
 - a. Even though living in a corrupt world, He was never defiled.
 - b. He is the Lamb of God, "without blemish and without spot."
 - c. He never gave in to temptation. See 4:15.
 4. **separate from sinners** – May mean either ...
 - a. Removed from where sinners are by His Ascension. This explanation connects the phrase with the next one.
 - b. Pure and not a sinner Himself.
 - i. He is not among the number of sinners.
 - ii. Born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, He did not inherit Adam's fallen nature.
 5. **made higher than the heavens**
 - a. He has been exalted beyond the "limitations of sense" (WE)
 - b. The extent and height of the glory far surpasses all possibilities of human description.
 - c. Thus, for example He is not limited by time; the power of His atoning work is the same today as it was for Paul and Peter and James and John.
 - d. These words describe Jesus in His perfection and exaltation and the words seem to have no relationship to sinful men.
 - e. However, the truth is, "such an high priest" is exactly what we need -- He **became us** [**was fitting**].
 - i. Jesus not only offered a perfect sacrifice; but He was the perfect High Priest for our need.
 - ii. We have already learned that the Aaronic priesthood could not make us perfect.
 - iii. God's way is always perfect.
 - iv. May we never question Him; rather let us thank Him for "**such an High Priest**"!
- 3) A review of the work and appointment of our High Priest (7:27-28)
- (i) It was unlike the work of the OT high priests; Jesus' work was done once and for all (27).
 1. They offered daily: He offered once.

- a. The writer seems here to be thinking both of the daily offerings of the priests and that great yearly day of atonement when the high priest offered both for himself and then for the sins of the people.
- b. References to even the high priest offering daily: Ex. 29:38, 44; Lev. 6:19-22 (see LXX)
2. They offered **first for their own sins**; he offered **Himself** precisely because He was free from sin. Lev. 16:6, “*And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which [is] for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.*”
3. They offered up **sacrifices**: He offered up **Himself**.
4. The point that Jesus is both Priest and Sacrifice is stated clearly here. -- Eph. 5:2, “*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*”
5. This contrasts with both the Melchizedek and the Aaronic priesthoods.
- (ii) Notice the contrasts of this verse (7:28) as well.
 1. Contrast between their appointment by **law** and Jesus by **God’s oath**
 2. Contrast of time -- for the oath came **since [after] the law**.
 3. Contrast between many **men** and the one **Son**. The word “Son” shows Jesus’ deity, His relationship to the Father even while High Priest and the sacrifice for our sins.
 4. Contrast between the men with their **weakness** and the Son who is **consecrated** [perfected]; that is, a contrast between humanity and divinity.
 - a. Note: Jesus was “weak” in that he suffered hunger and fatigue, but against temptation, sin, and even death He was strong.
 - b. He was never defeated by temptation, he did not give in to suffering but endured to the end, and in His resurrection He proves Himself the Sovereign over death.
 - c. Thus we have a summation of the epistle’s theme to this point: the Aaronic priesthood was insufficient, but Jesus’ work as our High Priest is eternally sufficient.

E. He is the High Priest of the True Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies in heaven (8:1-5)

1. Jesus’ ministry in the True Tabernacle (8:1-2)
 - a. This is the sum: The next few verses summarize this section of Hebrews about Christ as High Priest; simply put, He is the High Priest upon the Universal Throne.
 - b. In other words, what follows is the “main point” of this section.
 - c. The “main points” then are these:
 - 1) We “have” a High Priest.
 - (i) This is not speculation, but reality.
 - (ii) There is a perfect High Priest, and He is ours.
 - 2) He has the dignity, the **majesty**, of a king, the King of the universe, as he sits “**on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens.**”
 - (i) He then is at once both priest and king.
 - (ii) He will make us both kings and priests in his future kingdom.
 - (iii) Rev. 1:6, “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*”
 - 3) He is seated on His throne **in the heavens**.
 - (i) No Jewish priest ever performed his ministry seated.
 - (ii) This phrase “in the heavens” points to the next phrase in 8:2.
 - 4) He is a **minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle**.
 - (i) His “ministry” [minister = **λειτουργος**] is not that of offering sacrifice but that of interceding for us.
 - (ii) He performs this ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, the heavenly tabernacle.
 - (iii) **Sanctuary** is literally, “the holy things,” but is often used to refer to the holy of holies in the wilderness (9:8, 12) and no doubt here refers to the holy of holies in heaven.
 1. It is the **true tabernacle** [tent] because ...
 - a. It is not made with human hands.
 - b. It is not on earth but forever in heaven.
 2. 9:24, “*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, [which are] the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*”

2. The necessity of the True Tabernacle (8:3-5)

- a. Jesus needed a better place to perform His High-priestly work (8:3).
 - 1) In order to function as a priest Jesus had to have an offering. “*For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore [it is] **of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.***” (Hebrews 8:3)
 - 2) In order to function as a priest Jesus had to have an appropriate place to make His offering. This is not stated but it is implied.
 - 3) We might think he would offer in the tabernacle as Aaron did. But this is not the case as the next verse teaches.
 - 4) Note:
 - (i) The word “offer” is used in a rare construction, but it is in the aorist tense, teaching that the offering was once for all.
 - (ii) In addition the singular “something” also points to only one offering.
 - b. The place could not be on earth (8:4).
 - 1) The book of Hebrews was most likely written in the late 60s AD, a few years before Roman armies destroyed the temple.
 - 2) Therefore, these people were wondering if Jesus’ ministry would take place in the Jerusalem temple. They had not seen the heavenly tabernacle.
 - 3) However, the point of this verse is that the earthly temple could not be the place for Jesus’ priestly ministry.
 - (i) There could not be two priesthoods on earth.
 - (ii) Jesus does not have that qualification: those men **offer gifts according to the Law** and Jesus is not a Levite.
 - (iii) 7:14, “*For [it is] evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.*”
 - (iv) So this verse too speaks of a glorified Christ; One no longer on earth, but One Who has entered the eternal holy-of-holies.
 - c. The place had to be heaven (8:5).
 - 1) The existing temple, like the tabernacle of Moses’ and Aaron’s day was simply “**an example [sketch, model, pattern, copy] and shadow of heavenly things.**”
 - 2) The Mosaic system pointed to something beyond itself; it was not sufficient in itself.
 - 3) In fact, it was simply a shadow, a symbol of something far greater. Col. 2:17, “*Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.*”
- ## 3. Conclusion
- a. This concludes the section on our Great High Priest.
 - b. We have learned about His ...
 - 1) *Qualifications*: sinless, without blemish and spot
 - 2) *Offering*: Himself
 - 3) *Place of ministry*: the true tabernacle in heaven.
 - 4) *Continued ministry*: interceding for us.
 - c. How sad it is when the Jews refuse to leave the shadows. There is something much better: 10:1, “For the law having a shadow of **good things to come.**”
 - d. Therefore, let us continually come unto God the Father by Him!

IV. A BETTER COVENANT (8:6-9:28)

A. The Prophecy of the Better Covenant (8:6-13)

1. The foundation of the covenant: better promises (8:6)
 - a. Introduction:
 - 1) We will look at these in detail beginning in v. 10.
 - 2) Another point made in this verse is that not only is the new covenant better than the old, but Christ’s **ministry is more excellent** than the Levitical ministry.
 - 3) The Mosaic covenant focused on law; the new covenant focuses on **promises**.
 - 4) What assurance or guarantee do we have that we will receive these promises?
 - 5) We have the assurance of Jesus who is the **mediator of the better covenant**.
 - (i) As the mediator between God and man He “*gave Himself a ransom for all*” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

- (ii) Our receiving the promises is as sure as His having shed His blood for us.
- (iii) Furthermore, the better covenant “has been given legal force” [KJV = “established”,
νενομοθετηται = Greek]

b. About the covenant

- 1) The word for covenant [διαθηκη] does NOT mean an agreement between equals [that word would be συθηκη].
- 2) The word refers to a sovereign covenant, when one party with full power determines all the terms of the “arrangement,” which the other party may accept or reject, but cannot alter.
- 3) The result is that we can now have fellowship with God. We will see that this is precisely one of the “better promises.”
- 4) The covenant is better because:
 - (i) *Absolute* not conditional
 - (ii) *Universal* not local
 - (iii) *Eternal* not temporal
 - (iv) *Individual* not national
 - (v) *Internal* not external (from Griffith Thomas)

2. The need for the covenant: the inadequacy of the first covenant (8:7-9)

a. The logical argument: if the first had been adequate, there would have been no need for the second covenant (8:7).

- 1) Gal. 3:21, “[Is] the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”
- 2) 7:18, “For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”
- 3) Again the problem is not the old covenant or old promises, they were good in their place, but they could not perfect the heart of man.
- 4) The new covenant, as we will see, can do exactly that.

b. The prophetic argument: God did find fault with the first and prophesied a second (8:8-9).

- 1) 8b-12 is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34 and at a time when Israel was being judged and taken into captivity. The future did not look bright; but in those dark days of national disaster and despair, God spoke of a time of great blessing.
- 2) 8:8, “**For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.**”
 - (i) God will take the initiative: He will “effect” [NASB] a new covenant.
 1. The fact that a new covenant would replace the old one is not the writer’s idea, but the words of God Himself [**saith the Lord**], and made in Jeremiah’s day.
 2. God knew that the Mosaic law could not bring life and Paul tells in Gal. 3:19a how long the law would be in force [not indefinitely]: “Wherefore then [serveth] the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...”
 - (ii) The new covenant has to do first with the Jews: **the house of Israel and the house of Judah**; there will be no division in the Millennial kingdom.
 - (iii) But it is not limited to them, as Paul says, “For if the casting away of them [be] the reconciling of the world, what [shall] the receiving [of them be], but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15)
 - (iv) The new covenant was established when Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood. Luke 22:20, “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup [is] the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”
- 3) 8:9, “**Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.**”
 - (i) The old covenant is here explained:
 1. It was God’s deliverance of them from Egypt and the promise of a better land.
 2. The covenant is of a different type from the old one; the blessings of the old one were lost because Israel continually disobeyed: they **continued not in the covenant**.
 - (ii) The continual problem then was that they did not have fellowship with God: He **regarded them not** [Amplified = “I withdrew my favor and disregarded them”]

1. God could not bless those who blatantly neglected the terms of the covenant.
2. Even at the time of the writing this epistle, Israel was on the verge of having her temple and nation destroyed again.
3. The promises of the covenant (8:10-13)
 - a. Introduction: The quotation that began in v. 8 from Jeremiah 31 continues with a reiteration that the new covenant is **with the house of Israel** (10).
 - 1) These words first apply to the nation of Israel.
 - (i) Now they are for the most part Christ-rejecters; they are spiritually blinded.
 - (ii) However, as Romans 11 says, God has not cast them off forever.
 - (iii) In the future, they will turn to God. These verses describe that time.
 - 2) Do these words have any application to us? Is the New Covenant also for the church? Let us have the Bible answer that.
 - (i) First, think about your Bible and its divisions.
 1. We have the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament.”
 2. That the New Testament begins with Jesus’ birth and then goes on to describe the beginning of the Christian church suggests that we too enjoy the blessings of the new covenant.
 - (ii) Luke 22:20, “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup [is] the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.’” Cf. 1 Cor. 11:25
 1. These verses teach that the blessings of the new covenant began with Jesus’ shedding His blood.
 2. The new covenant began at Calvary. Heb 12:24 teaches exactly that: “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than [that of] Abel.”
 - (iii) 2 Cor. 3:6, “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”
 1. Note: the message of the gospel is the message of the new covenant.
 2. Paul and all preachers since him have preached the new covenant.
 3. Note: the old covenant could not save; rather it “killed.”
 4. Remember, we learned that the old covenant could not perfect sinners; it only showed them their violations.
 - b. The promises proper (10-12):
 - 1) He will give us a delight in the law and the ability to obey it (10b). “***I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.***”
 - (i) The law of God is not bad; the problem was we could not obey it.
 - (ii) Under the new covenant God will change our hearts so that we delight in the law and by the Holy Spirit’s help we can obey it.
 - (iii) Ezekiel mentioned this in 36:26-27, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them].”
 - (iv) Peter says that we receive the divine nature in 2 Peter 1:4, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
 - 2) We will know God personally and experimentally (8:10-11).
 - (i) We will be His special people: “and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people (10b).”
 1. Ezek. 37:27, “My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”
 2. 1 Pet. 2:9, “But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”
 3. See Eph. 1:14 for only other use of the word “peculiar people” [περιποιησις, “possession, property”] “Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- (ii) All will know Him: *“And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: **for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest (11).**”*
 - 1. The highest privilege of our salvation is knowing the Lord, and getting to know Him better each day.
 - a. *Phil. 3:10*, *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”*
 - b. *1 John 2:20*, *“But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.”*
 - 2. This phrase in particular reminds us that the promises also relate to ours and Israel’s future when it will be true that *“the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God.” (Revelation 21:3)*
 - 3. *Hab. 2:14*, *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”*
- 3) We will receive absolute forgiveness of all sin (8:12). **“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”**
 - (i) God initiated the covenant: its basis is not our performance but God’s grace, God’s forgiveness.
 - (ii) Therefore, there will be no failure this time.
 - (iii) God Himself says, **“I will be merciful** to their unrighteousness.
 - (iv) The OT sacrifices brought a “remembrance” of sin, not a “remission.”
- c. Conclusion (8:13)
 - 1) That God talked of a “new covenant” implies that the old covenant would become obsolete (13).
 - 2) Note: this epistle was written just a few years before the Jewish temple and its service were destroyed in 70 AD.
 - 3) In contrast, the covenant now is “new,” not new in time but new in quality [καινος].
 - 4) It can never **decay** or **wax old** or **vanish away**.
 - 5) It is a BETTER COVENANT!

B. The Sanctuary and Offerings of the Old Covenant (9:1-10)

- 1. The sanctuary and its furniture (9:1-5)
 - a. The tabernacle, **the worldly sanctuary** [called so because it belonged to earth, it was material and visible], had its furniture, and this furniture was set up according to God’s **ordinances of divine service** [regulations of divine worship] (9:1).
 - 1) Though the first covenant and its service were destined to pass away, it nevertheless had a beauty and greatness about it.
 - 2) It was God’s will for a time, for the regulations regarding it were God’s commands.
 - b. The **sanctuary {holy place}** [**the first: the outer one** in NASB], as contrasted with the holy of holies, within the tabernacle had three things (9:2):
 - 1) **The candlestick [lampstand]** with its upright shaft and three arms branching out on each side, thus making it able to bear seven lamps in all.
 - (i) It was adorned with these shapes: almond blossoms, pomegranates, and lilies.
 - (ii) Its fuel was olive oil.
 - 2) **The table** was for the 12 loaves of bread, one for each tribe; they were changed every Sabbath and eaten by the priests.
 - 3) **The shewbread** baked of unleavened flour and thus produced 12 thin flat cakes, and not large round “loaves.”
 - 4) It also contained the altar of incense but that is not mentioned here (cf. v. 4).
 - 5) Also not stated here is that the priests were allowed into this part.
 - c. **And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all (9:3).**
 - 1) The “holy of holies” was behind the **second veil**; the first curtain would have been the one for entering the tabernacle.
 - 2) This veil represented the barrier between God and man.
 - (i) Only the high priest could pass behind this veil, and that only once a year.

- (ii) From this barrier the Israelites learned that the first covenant could not provide permanent access to God.
- (iii) At the death on the cross, this veil in the temple was rent: *Mt. 27:51*, “*And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.*”
- d. Verse 4 tells what was in the Holy of Holies
 - 1) **Which had the golden censer**
 - (i) Problem: the word “**θυμιατεριον**” has two distinct meanings (1) altar of incense [used thus in LXX in *2 Chr. 26:19*; *Exodus 8:11*] and (2) censer or shovel
 - 1. *Lev. 6:12* mentions the censer, but it was not gold and was most certainly bronze.
 - 2. It was a minor tool and may have been left in the holy of holies.
 - 3. On the other hand, the altar of incense was very close to the mercy seat but was on the other side of the veil in the holy place.
 - a. *Ex. 30:6*, “*And thou shalt put it before the vail that [is] by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that [is] over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.*”
 - b. Thus though it was not in the holy of holies, it was considered connected with the mercy seat theologically.
 - c. This altar of incense was used once a year when incense was burned before God as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies.
 - (ii) In other words, the solution seems to be that although the altar of incense was not in the holy of holies, it was considered as part of the necessary furniture for the great transactions carried out there. The altar of incense was necessary for the proper approach to the Holy of Holies.
 - 2) **and the ark of the covenant** [a chest about 4 ft. long and 2 ft. broad and high]
 - (i) **overlaid round about with gold,**
 - (ii) **wherein [was] ...**
 - 1. **the golden pot that had manna** [*Ex. 16:32-34*].
 - a. *Ex. 16:33*, “*And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.*”
 - b. Note: not called golden in the Hebrew but called golden by LXX.
 - 2. **and Aaron’s rod that budded** [*Num. 17:1-11*] *Num. 17:8*, “*And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. 10, “And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.”*
 - 3. **and the tables of the covenant** [*Ex. 25:16f*; *Deut. 9:9*; *10:5*]
 - a. *Deut. 10:5*, “*And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.*”
 - b. When the ark of the covenant was moved to the Temple it contained only the tables of the Law. *1 Kings 8:9*, “[*There was*] *nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made [a covenant] with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.*”
 - e. Verse 5 speaks of the cherubim over the mercy seat -- And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat (9:5)
 - 1) The mercy seat was a panel or slab of pure gold that fit exactly over the ark.
 - 2) The two cherubim, also made of gold, faced each other and were attached to the mercy seat.
 - 3) Note: neither the mercy seat nor the cherubim represented God.
 - (i) The empty space between them was where God’s glory dwelled and this represented God.
 - (ii) They are called **cherubim of glory** because from between them God revealed His glory.
 - (iii) *Ex. 25:22*, “*And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which [are] upon the ark of the testimony, of all [things] which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*”
 - 4) The writer says he will not take the time now to dwell in detail about the typical meaning of these things, though that meaning is clearly there [**of which we cannot now speak particularly, v. 5**].
 - f. Learn from these five verses (9:1-5):
 - 1) God wants His people to remember these things:
 - (i) His provisions; especially the abnormal ones like the manna in the wilderness.
 - (ii) His choices: we ought to recognize those whom the Lord has put over us. Aaron’s rod budded to show that God had chosen him as the leader.

- (iii) His commands: the tables of the law were His words of command for all men in all ages.
- 2) Those things are a good summary of the Christian life. If we will remember God's blessings, accept His sovereign choices, which are His will for us, and learn and do His Word, we will be happy and we will make Him happy.

2. The service and offerings of the Tabernacle (9:6-10)

- a. The service of the regular priests (9:6).
 - 1) The daily service of the priests included:
 - (i) Lighting the lamps every evening and trimming them in the morning (Ex. 27:20-21; 30:7ff).
 - (ii) Renewing the twelve loaves of bread every Sabbath (Lev. 24:5ff).
 - (iii) Burning incense on the golden altar at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice (Ex. 30:7-8).
 - (iv) See 1 Chronicles 23:24-32 for a summary of these duties.
 - 2) This "first tabernacle," the holy place, was where man worshipped God; the Holy of Holies symbolized the presence of God Himself.
- b. The service of the high priest (9:7).
 - 1) This service was in "the second," that is, in the holy of holies.
 - 2) He went once a year, that is one day a year, on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:12-16).
 - 3) He actually entered the holy place at least twice, once with the blood of the sin offering [a bullock] for himself, and once for the people [a goat].
 - 4) Note: in particular the offering was for the "**sins** [lit. = *ignorances*] **of the people**," that is, for unintentional sins done without clear knowledge that the action was wrong.
 - 5) God makes a big distinction between those who want to obey but nevertheless fail through ignorance and weakness, and between those who deliberately rebel. See for deliberate disobedience Heb. 10:26, "*For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.*"
 - 6) Note about the day of atonement:
 - (i) Only the high priest
 - (ii) Only this day during the year
 - (iii) Only by the authority of another life, represented by the blood. He had no inherent authority to enter, being himself a sinner. cf. 10:19, "*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*"
- c. The meaning [**the Holy Ghost this signifying**] of the priests' and high priest's service (9:8-10).
 - 1) The fact that entrance to the holy of holies was greatly restricted shows that the holy of holies was **not yet made manifest while that first tabernacle was still standing**.
 - (i) It was not at that time open to all.
 - (ii) Note that the directions given to Moses were through the **Holy Ghost** and that they had meaning.
 - (iii) However, the "not yet" suggests the hope that a day was coming when all could have access to fellowship with God.
 - 2) The tabernacle was a **figure** [symbol] **for the time then present**.
 - (i) The tabernacle symbolized the death of Jesus and the access to God that His blood would provide.
 - (ii) The old covenant was annulled when Christ died and the veil was rent in two.
 - 3) The tabernacle and its service were only a symbol, because imperfect.
 - (i) Its **gifts and sacrifices could not make the worshiper perfect in conscience** (NASB). cf. 9:14, "*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*"
 - (ii) The problem:
 - 1. The offerings and other activities [**divers washings and carnal ordinances** = *various washings and regulations for the body*] dealt only with man's exterior.
 - a. E.g., the regulations for the body would include the commands about what kinds of animals could be eaten.
 - b. For the various washings see Lev. 11:28, 40; 14:1ff; 15:1ff; 16:4, 28; Num. 8:5ff; 19:7ff, 14ff, etc.
 - 2. There were many of these offerings and regulations, suggesting that no one of them was perfect.

3. These regulations were only for a limited time: **until the time of reformation**, the time of putting everything “orthodox” [διορθωσεως].
- 4) Learn:
 - (i) The believers of the OT understood that offerings and even the Promised Land were only symbols. God has something much better, and they by faith waited for it.
 1. *John 8:56*, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw [it], and was glad.”
 2. *Heb. 11:10*, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker [is] God.”
 3. *Heb. 11:13*, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”
 - (ii) Therefore, let us too wait by faith for the true Promised Land.

C. The Sanctuary and Offering of the New Covenant (9:11-28)

1. Christ entered the sanctuary through His own blood (9:11-22)
 - a. The sanctuary is the “**greater and more perfect tabernacle**” (9:11).
 - 1) The sanctuary is called the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” and is heavenly, “**not of this building**” [creation] (9:11).
 - (i) In the new covenant “**good things**” have come [Japanese translation uses past tense as do some manuscripts].
 - (ii) The tabernacle is in heaven; it is not made by hand of materials that we know from this created world.
 - b. Through His blood he obtained eternal redemption (9:12-14).
 - 1) His offering was not that of **goats** [for the people] **and calves** [the bullock for the high-priest himself] but was that of **His own blood** (12a).
 - (i) Jesus’ blood suggests both a life offered and a death suffered.
 - (ii) He did not enter many times, but **once** (12b).
 - 2) The result of His offering was **eternal redemption** (12c).
 - (i) Animal sacrifices could only cover sin; Jesus’ blood took it away (*John 1:29*).
 - (ii) Illustrate: I used white out to cover over some writing one of my children did in my Bible. The writing is covered up but I can still see the indentations on the paper and the writing is still there under the whiteout.
 - (iii) Note:
 1. Our redemption is not based on our works, but on Jesus’ One Work on the cross.
 2. Those whom Jesus saves He will keep forever.
 3. Our redemption was not easy: it cost Jesus effort to “obtain” [lit. “find”] it. He did the work, we receive the benefit.
 - 3) Christ’s blood is infinitely superior to the blood of bulls and of goats (13-14).
 - (i) The blood of these animals and the **ashes of a heifer could only purify the flesh** (13a).
 1. When the worshipper obeyed the requirements, the priest pronounced him clean and able again to worship. *Numbers 19:9*, “And a man [that is] clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay [them] up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it [is] a purification for sin.”
 2. This matter of killing the red heifer and then burning it along with cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet was in order to make a “water of separation” that could be used to purify those who had touched a dead body (*Numbers 19*).
 - (ii) In contrast, Christ’s blood purified the inner man, the **conscience** (13b).
 - (iii) The result that will be seen: we will be **serving the living God** (14).
 - (iv) Note about Christ’s sacrifice:
 1. All of the Trinity were involved:
 - a. **Blood of Christ**
 - b. **Through the eternal Spirit**

- c. **To God** the Father (13b) [the Father accepted the sacrifice because it was **without blemish**.
2. Survey the use of the word “eternal” in the epistle.
 - a. 5:9, “*And being made perfect, he became the author of **eternal salvation** unto all them that obey him.*”
 - b. 6:2, “*Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of **eternal judgment**.*”
 - c. 9:12, “*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained **eternal redemption** [for us].*”
 - d. 9:14 = **eternal Spirit**
 - e. 9:15, “*... they which are called might receive the promise of **eternal inheritance**.*”
 - f. 13:20, “*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the **everlasting covenant**.*”
- c. Christ died as the “mediator of the new covenant” making the new covenant valid (9:15-17).
 - 1) What are the benefits that come to believers **by means of [Christ’s] death**?
 - (i) **Redemption** from the **transgressions** under the first covenant (15a)
 1. Under the first covenant we were slaves, unable to obey the law fully and thus condemned as transgressors.
 2. The OT saints received temporal blessings (rain, food, etc.) for their obedience but their hope for forgiveness of sins was future.
 3. Through Christ’s redemption, they too receive forgiveness and all the other promises of God.
 4. “Here there is a definite statement that the real value in the typical sacrifices under the Old Testament system was in the realization in the death of Christ. It is Christ’s death that gives worth to the types that pointed to him. So then the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the basis of the salvation of all who are saved before the Cross and since.” (RWP)
 - (ii) The promise of eternal inheritance (15b)
 1. See also 11:39, “*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.*”
 2. Note: God has determined that there will be an innumerable multitude to receive this inheritance, for these **have been called**, and those whom God calls He justifies, sanctifies and glorifies (Rom. 8:30).
 - 2) In these verses the covenant is explained as a testament (9:16-17).
 - (i) In a testament [will] one person decides all the terms; the benefits come to others only when the testator dies.
 - (ii) “Plainly, the death is supposed to be past (aorist, ‘**made**’); and the fact of the death is brought (Greek) before court to give effect to the will. These requisites of a will, or testament, concur here: (1) a testator; (2) heirs; (3) goods; (4) the death of the testator; (5) the fact of the death brought forward in court.” (JFB)
- d. Without that shedding of blood there could have been “no forgiveness” (9:18-22).
 - 1) Even the first testament required the shedding of blood (9:18).
 - (i) Do these Jewish believers have trouble believing that the Messiah had to shed his blood?
 - (ii) Let them remember that the first covenant required the shedding of blood.
 - (iii) From the beginning the old covenant required bloody sacrifices: the old covenant was **inaugurated** [KJV -- *dedicated*] with instruction about these sacrifices (Ex. 24:3-8).
 1. Note: NASB “inaugurated” is much better than dedicated for the Greek word **εγκαίνισμα**; used in LXX to mean *make new*, or to *start something new* [Is. 16:11; 1 Sam. 11:14; Ps. 51:10].
 2. Only other NT usage of this verb is Heb. 10:20, “*By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*”
 3. Note: a normal testament is in effect when the person dies [not necessarily a bloody death], but this verse explicitly says that the testament was in effect **ONLY AFTER A DEATH OF BLOOD SHEDDING**.
 4. *Some people have taught that blood means death, but this verse teaches that we must insist on the importance of Christ’s shedding of blood and not simply on His death.

- 2) Proof for the statement of v. 18: *what Moses actually did to inaugurate the old covenant (9:19)*.
 - (i) After Moses preached the law [spoken every precept] to the people he used the blood of calves and of goats and sprinkled both the book, and all the people. 9:19, “*For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people.*”
 - (ii) Note: not all of these details are mentioned in Exodus 24:1-8
 1. Calves = oxen in Ex., but the Hebrew word is broad.
 2. Goats not mentioned in Exodus but Westcott says they were still using the patriarchal method of sacrifice as the Levitical ordinances not yet given (Ex. 28).
 3. For patriarchal method: Gen. 15:9, “*And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.*”
 4. Sprinkling of the book not mentioned in Exodus but as “*almost all things were cleansed by the blood*” (v. 22) and this book was written by man, cleansing it by blood would have been proper.
 - (iii) About the sprinkling
 1. **with water**: indicates that the blood was diluted to make it last longer
 2. The **hyssop** was probably tied to a cedar wood stick with the **scarlet wool**.
 3. This instrument became the tool for sprinkling the blood as it was dipped in the blood.
 - (iv) About sprinkling THE PEOPLE.
 1. Moses sprinkled not only the book but also THE PEOPLE.
 2. Ex. 24:8, “*And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.*”
 3. Only one other reference in OT to people being sprinkled with blood = when Aaron and his sons were consecrated. Ex. 29:21, “*And thou shalt take of the blood that [is] upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle [it] upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons’ garments with him.*”
- 3) What Moses said on that day: **This [is] the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you (9:20)**.
 - (i) Recall what Jesus said, “*And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*”
 - (ii) Similarity in wording suggests that Jesus was thinking of the old covenant when He made the new one.
 - (iii) The meaning is: this blood shows the power and success of God’s purpose for you.
- 4) What Moses also did later = **sprinkled both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry (9:21)**
 - (i) Of course, the tabernacle did not exist when Moses first proclaimed the law.
 - (ii) In Exodus 40 we read that the tabernacle and its vessels were anointed with oil, but no mention of blood. 40:9, “*And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that [is] therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy.*”
 - (iii) However, Josephus retells Ex. 40: “the same (namely purify) he did to the Tabernacle and the vessels thereto belonging, both with oil first incensed, as I said, and with the blood of bulls and or rams, slain day by day one according to its kind.”
 - (iv) Hebrews tells us it was done and Jewish tradition also mentions the fact of a cleansing by blood.
- 5) The truth taught: All these sprinklings point to the truth that **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (22)**.
 - (i) This requirement was just as true then, **by the law**, [according to the law] as it is now, that **almost all things are purged [cleansed] with blood**.
 - (ii) This is the heart of the gospel message: the only thing that can cleanse our hearts is the blood of Christ.
 - (iii) Those who believe in His blood receive eternal forgiveness for sins. Rev. 1:5, “*And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*”
 - (iv) Note what the blood of Christ does for us.

1. Made nigh to God by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13)
2. Conscience cleansed by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14)
3. Given free access to God (Hebrews 10:19)
4. Continuously cleansed by the blood (1 John 1:7)
5. Redeemed by the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18)
- (v) “**remission**” = “the sending away” [only here in Bible]
 1. As far as the east is from the west (Psalms 103:12).
 2. To the bottom of the sea (Micah 7:19) “*He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*”
 3. Blotting out from the memory Is. 43:25, “*I, [even] I, [am] he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*”

2. Christ offered Himself to bear the sins of many as a better sacrifice (9:23-28).

- a. Introductory statement to this section: **Christ’s sacrifice was BETTER** (9:23). “[*It was*] therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

- 1) The “patterns of things” = the copies, the things of the Tabernacle and the other aspects of Levitical sacrifice.
- 2) “**With these**” refers to the animal sacrifices.
- 3) The “**heavenly things**” may be all of the universe, for through Christ’s redemption the universe will be created anew. It may simply show that Christ’s sacrifice was required before man could enter that heavenly realm.

- b. *Christ’s sacrifice was better because it was DONE IN THE HEAVENLY HOLY PLACE* (24).

- 1) Christ entered **not** into **a holy place made with hands but into heaven itself**. In some sense His sacrifice was presented to the Father.
- 2) **Now** Christ continually **appears in the presence of God for us**.
- 3) Arise, My Soul Arise!

He ever lives above for me to intercede
 His all-redeeming love, His precious blood to plead
 His blood atoned for all our race, and sprinkles now the throne of grace.
 Five bleeding wounds he bears received on Calvary
 They pour effectual prayers, they strongly plead for me;
 Forgive him, O forgive they cry, nor let that ransomed sinner die.
 The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One;
 He cannot turn away the presence of His Son.
 His Spirit answers to the blood, and tells me I am born of God.
- 4) Note: His being there is not for Himself, but for us! If He ascended only for Himself we are hopeless, but He appears before the face of God for ME and YOU.

- c. *His sacrifice was better because it was DONE ONCE FOR ALL* (9:25-26).

- 1) Verse 25, “*Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others.*”
 - (i) The OT priest had to offer blood not his own; Jesus offered Himself.
 - (ii) The very sacrifice [himself] demanded that it could not be offered more than once.
- 2) Verse 26, “*For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*”
 - (i) Note about the perfection of Jesus’ offering:
 1. It was perfect in sympathy: He **suffered**
 2. It was perfect in quality: **himself** (without sin)
 3. It was perfect in timing: **in the end of the world** NASB = **at the consummation**
 - a. Gal. 4:4, “*the fullness of time*”

- b. Thus, we who live since the cross are those “upon whom the end of the age has come” (*1 Cor. 10:11*).
 - 4. It was perfect *in effect*: **put away sin**
 - a. Cf. same word (**αθετησις**) in *7:18*, “For there is verily a **disannulling** of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”
 - b. Cf. the verb (**αθετεω**) in *10:28*, “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.”
 - c. In other words, Jesus disregards the sin of those who trust in Him.
 - d. Therefore, sin is not to have power over the Christian.
- d. *His sacrifice was better because IT PROVIDED NOT ONLY A PRESENT SALVATION BUT A FUTURE SALVATION (9:27-28).*
 - 1) All men need this hope of salvation, for all will die.
 - (i) All men would die apart from God, for He is the giver and Sustainer of life. Even Adam and Eve had no life until God gave them life.
 - (ii) Only God has immortality in Himself. *1 Tim. 6:16*, “Who only hath immortality ...”
 - 2) But beyond their mortality, men are “**appointed to die**.”
 - (i) “Death is the result of appointment (*Gen. 3:19*).
 - 1. It is not the effect of chance, or hap-hazard.
 - 2. It is not a ‘debt of nature.’
 - 3. It is not the condition to which man was subject by the laws of his creation.
 - 4. It is not to be accounted for by the mere principles of physiology. God could as well have made the heart to play for ever as for fifty years. Death is no more the regular result of physical laws than the guillotine and the gallows are.
 - 5. It is, in all cases, the result of intelligent appointment, and for an adequate cause.” (BA)
 - (ii) All die because all are sinners; the “*wages of sin is death*.”
 - (iii) Furthermore, death does not end all.
 - (iv) After death **comes judgment**.
 - 3) How does Christ’s example compare with man’s?
 - (i) He too died. As man dies “once,” so Jesus offered Himself “once.”
 - (ii) But He is not judged; rather He comes to “judge.”
 - 1. Those who are waiting for Him by faith will receive salvation.
 - 2. By implication, those who are not waiting for Him will receive eternal judgment.
 - 4) Note about Christ’s three “appearances” in these verses (Greek words are different).
 - (i) *9:24* -- He appears before God to intercede.
 - (ii) *9:26* -- He appeared on earth to live as man without sin and to die on the cross.
 - (iii) *9:28* -- He will appear again at His Second Coming.
 - 1. Note that this coming is **without reference to sin** (NASB). He dealt with sin on the cross at His First Coming and that will never be repeated (recall because perfectly done).
 - 2. Note that the Second Coming specifically relates to salvation.
 - 3. But it is not a salvation for all, but for **those who eagerly await Him** (NASB).
 - a. Paul uses this same word in *Philippians 3:20* in reference to waiting for the coming of Christ as Savior (RWP).
 - b. Virtually all of the references using this verb speak of our eager anticipation of Jesus’ coming or some aspect of blessing associated with it.
 - i. *Rom. 8:19* waiting for our being revealed to be the sons of God
 - ii. *Rom. 8:23* waiting for our full adoption as sons
 - iii. *Rom. 8:25* waiting for an unseen, but sure hope of salvation
 - iv. *2 Cor. 1:7* waiting for the revelation of Jesus
 - v. *Gal. 5:5* waiting for the hope of righteousness
 - vi. *Phil. 3:20* waiting for our Savior from heaven, whence is our citizenship
 - vii. *Heb. 9:28* waiting for Him who will consummate our salvation
 - 5) Learn:
 - (i) Death is once and is final, so judgment is once and is final in that it will not be changed. Therefore, man must prepare for death and consequent judgment.
 - (ii) Our hope is Jesus’ appearance, before God to continually intercede on the basis of His perfect appearance on earth, and His coming again. Therefore, we must always be ready and waiting for the Blessed Hope!

- (iii) Our future salvation, that is, the consummation of our salvation has many wonderful aspects to it as seen from the use of the word “*look unto*” (eagerly wait – NASB).
 - 1. *Shown to the world that we are indeed true sons of God.*
 - a. “Here Christians have some evidence of their adoption. But they are in a world of sin; they are exposed to trials; they are subject to many calamities; and though they have evidence here that they are the sons of God, yet they wait for that period when they shall be fully delivered from all these trials, and be admitted to the enjoyment of all the privileges of the children of the Most High.
 - b. The time when this shall take place will be at the day of judgment, when they shall be fully acknowledged, in the presence of an assembled universe, as his children.” (BA)
 - 2. *Receive the full inheritance of all things, including a glorified body.*
 - 3. *Receive the full enjoyment of living righteously with the righteous.*

V. A BETTER SACRIFICE (10:1-39)

A. His sacrifice makes us perfect (10:1-4).

- 1. Not sinless perfection; but the perfection of Christ; when God sees those who believe in Christ He sees Christ and His perfect righteousness.
- 2. Contrast Christ’s sacrifice with OT sacrifices. (Thoughts from Griffith Thomas)
 - a. They were the **shadow**, His was the substance [**form**] (10:1).
 - b. They were repeated; His was once for all and provided true remission (10:2).
 - c. They left a consciousness of sin, His provided cleansing of the conscience (10:3).
 - d. They reminded of sin, His truly removed sin (10:4).
 - 1) The word “**remembrance**” is the same one used in *1 Cor. 11:24, 25*: “*This do in remembrance of me.*”
 - 2) So the OT believers remembered their sins; we are to remember Christ and His forgiveness.

B. His sacrifice was His body (10:5-10a).

- 1. Note: “**when He comes into the world**” assumes Christ’s preexistence.
- 2. The writer quotes the third of three important OT passages -- (Psalm 110; Jeremiah 31; now Psalm 40:5-8).
- 3. By using his body man obeys God, and for Christ to obey God perfectly He had to have a body.
- 4. Not with animal **sacrifices** or **offerings** (5) of the fruits of the earth--all of which are outside of man--but with His own will and body Jesus obeyed the Father.
- 5. Clearly Jesus was the God-man.
 - a. He was fully man, for He had a body.
 - b. He was fully God, for He is eternal.

C. His sacrifice was in obedience to God’s will (10:5-10a).

- 1. The point is not that the OT sacrifices were worthless; the point is that God wants worship from the heart and will. He wants man to decide to obey.
- 2. Jesus’ purpose in coming was to “**do Thy will O God**” (7).
- 3. He never questioned the will of God; it was always His joy to do God the Father’s will.
- 4. Note: Jesus understood that the standard for the will of God is the **roll of the book**. We know we are doing the will of God when we do what is written in the book.
- 5. Note: often in the NT the will of God is connected with the redemption of man. This shows God’s love for man and His desire to do him good.
 - a. *John 4:34*, “*Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.*”
 - b. *Eph. 1:5*, “*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*”
 - c. *Eph. 1:9*, “*Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.*”
 - d. *1 Tim. 2:4*, “*Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*”
- 6. With His sacrifice Jesus did two things:
 - a. He took away the sacrificial system: **the first** (9). It was no longer needed.

- b. He fulfilled [**established**] the will of God: **the second (9)**.
- 7. Learn:
 - a. Our sins are forgiven; if we have repented of them we are not to remember them. God doesn't.
 - b. God desires our obedience, not our sacrifice. "*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD [as great] delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey [is] better than sacrifice, [and] to hearken than the fat of rams (1 Samuel 15:22).*"
 - c. The standard for our obedience is the BOOK.

D. His sacrifice perfects us once for all, forever (10b-18).

- 1. By it He sanctifies us (10b).
 - a. The word sanctify in this case is in the perfect tense.
 - b. He has made us holy forever.
 - c. This verse too shows the eternal salvation that the believer receives.
 - d. Just as sure as Jesus' sacrifice is my ultimate purity.
 - 1) God does not say that he hopes I will be pure in the future, He says it is already done!
 - 2) This gives us hope for all those who put faith in Christ to pray confidently for their spiritual growth.
- 2. By it He takes away our sins (11-12).
 - a. **Every priest** before Christ stood **daily offering time after time the same sacrifices**: nevertheless with all this repetition those sacrifices **can never take away sins (11)**.
 - 1) The word "take away" suggests to remove something that is around one [**περιαιρεω**].
 - 2) Man is wrapped in his sins as a man wraps himself in his robe and this shroud must be stripped off for the man to be free.
 - 3) *2 Cor. 3:16, "Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away."*
 - b. But Jesus **offered one sacrifice for sins for all time (12)**.
 - 1) How do we know His work was complete?
 - 2) We know it because He "**sat down**" in contrast to the other priests who "stood daily" [because of work still to be done].
 - 3) *Deut. 10:8, "At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day."*
 - c. We know it because God the Father accepted it: He sits **at the right hand of God**.
- 3. By it He won victory over all His enemies (13).
 - a. His sacrifice is an eternal victory over all enemies [sin, Satan, death, those who reject Him].
 - b. Based on this "stunning presentation" of convincing the Jews of the superiority of Christ's sacrifice, Lenski says that he believes Apollos wrote the book (*Acts 18:28, he mightily convinced the Jews*).
 - c. The waiting is not because of a lack of power, but purely because of His grace.
 - d. The victory has been won; the time for Him to gather all the spoils is near. *John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*
 - e. Again the writer has quoted the OT, and again from *Psalms 110:1, "A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."*
- 4. By it He completes us (14).
 - a. This point is related to point one, for the ones perfected are the ones "**being sanctified**."
 - b. In this case Christians are designated by what God is presently doing: daily sanctifying us.
 - c. By His offering Christ brings us to the goal: perfection.
 - d. He perfects us in every way:
 - 1) Our purity
 - 2) Our service
 - 3) Our love
 - 4) Our joy
 - 5) Our understanding
 - 6) Our acceptance with God the Father
 - e. The previous sacrificial system could never perfect anyone (10:1).

- f. But we are complete in Christ: Col. 2:10, “*And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.*”
- 5. By it He forgives and forgets our sins (15-18).
 - a. These verses give us the testimony of the **Holy Spirit** Himself (15).
 - b. NOTE: How does the Holy Spirit testify to us? THROUGH THE WRITTEN WORD!
 - c. The quote of v. 16 about the New Covenant (from Jeremiah 31:33-34: note only a part is used) is to get to the second part about **THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS WHICH He WILL REMEMBER NO MORE (17)**.
 - d. Those verses show that he forgets our sins; verse 18 shows that He forgives our sins. Verse 18, “*Now where remission of these [is, there is] no more offering for sin.*”
 - e. Because of that once-for-all offering
 - 1) We are made holy.
 - 2) Our sins are removed – we are liberated.
 - 3) We have victory over sin and death.
 - 4) We are complete.
 - 5) Our sins are forgotten.

E. His sacrifice requires us to be faithful (10:19-25).

- 1. Introduction
 - a. Notice the grammar: exhortation, “*let us.*”
 - b. Note also that the teaching is followed by an exhortation to use the truth in everyday living.
- 2. *Let us be faithful to draw near [21] (10:19-22).*
 - a. Above all else the Christian must first draw nigh to God.
 - b. Recall the order: first humility and worship, then service.
 - c. Drawing near is logical:
 - 1) Because we can enter boldly into God’s presence by the blood of Jesus, we ought to (19).
 - (i) Because of that better sacrifice, that is, that blood, we can enter boldly.
 - (ii) While admitting our sins and our infirmities, we may still be bold to approach God.
 - (iii) Heb. 4:15-16: He sympathizes with our weaknesses and invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace.
 - 2) Because he opened a new and living way to God by the sacrifice of His flesh, we ought to go that way (20).
 - (i) Jesus is the Way (John 14:6); this way will always be fresh, always new, it cannot grow old like the first covenant (8:13).
 - (ii) His flesh is also called the veil:
 - 1. This means that like the veil His flesh was rent.
 - 2. Also His death removed the barrier to God’s fellowship.
 - 3) Because we have Jesus as our Great High Priest we ought to go through Him to God (21).
 - d. How do we draw near? (22)
 - 1) With a sincere heart: without hypocrisy.
 - (i) The world’s idolatry requires nothing of the heart -- just wash your hands and throw money.
 - (ii) God requires clean hands and a pure heart.
 - (iii) We cannot draw near to God if we are asking blessings from Him while we disobey His commands.
 - (iv) This heart is not divided: more than anything else it wants to worship God.
 - (v) You will never be able to draw close to God if you have not first dedicated yourself to Him.
 - 2) With a full assurance of faith
 - (i) Not doubting His promises.
 - (ii) True faith leads to assurance.
 - (iii) Fully trusting in Him, not one’s own wisdom.
 - 3) With our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience.
 - (i) This is the “sincere” heart mentioned above.
 - (ii) No heart can be honest until it is purged of its filth.
 - 4) With our bodies washed with pure water: suggests purity and maybe obedience.

- (i) This is not simply water baptism; although the idea of baptism does suggest the necessity of obedience.
 - (ii) *Ezekiel 36:25*, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”
- 3. *Let us be faithful to hold fast our profession (10:23).*
 - a. Recall that this is the theme of our epistle.
 - 1) *3:6*, “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”
 - 2) *3:14*, “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”
 - 3) *4:14*, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession.”
 - 4) *10:23*, “Let us hold fast the profession of [our] faith without wavering; (for he [is] faithful that promised).”
 - b. Some of our people now need to hear this; they are not holding fast to their profession.
 - c. The words literally = “*the confession of our hope*”
 - 1) Hope gives a definite shape to our faith.
 - 2) I have faith that God is preparing a place for me in heaven; I have hope that it will include beautiful scenery of mountains and meadows and trees.
 - 3) Note also: the hope must be “confessed” to others; what kind of hope is it if others do not need it?
 - (i) People “hear” a confession.
 - (ii) *1 Tim. 6:12*, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”
 - 4) The despondent person needs hope: the one about to cast off his profession needs hope.
 - 5) This verse provides that hope, for the promises we believe are not man’s or government’s or a politician’s, but the promises of God: He who promised is faithful.
 - (i) Many of our problems result from our lack of unwavering trust in the character of God.
 - (ii) Has He promised? Then He MUST do it!
- 4. *Let us be faithful to encourage one another (10:24-25a).*
 - a. Our focus is not ourselves, but one another.
 - 1) Earlier we were urged to “consider” [κατανοεω] the “Apostle and High Priest of our profession” (3:1).
 - 2) Now we are urged to think about [κατανοεω] each other.
 - 3) We are to ask, “What can I do to encourage that brother or sister?”
 - b. What are our mutual responsibilities?
 - 1) Introduction: We are to “**provoke**” [into a paroxysm] each other.
 - (i) Usually the word has a bad meaning, such as exasperation or provocation.
 - (ii) *Acts 15:39*, “And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus.”
 - 2) *Love*
 - 3) *Good works* -- Works that attract others by their goodness.
 - 4) *Faithful attendance*. One of the most important ways to encourage is to attend the meetings of the church faithfully (25).
- 5. *Let us be faithful to attend the meetings of the church (10:25b).*
 - a. The word used here [ἐπισυναγωγή] strongly suggests again that these were Jewish Christians.
 - b. The context implies that assembling for the right reason is an act of love toward the other believers.
 - 1) The one who forsakes this is not thinking of the other believers but is acting selfishly.
 - 2) Their selfishness produced division.
 - 3) Some had fallen into the habit of making light of the assembly.
 - 4) The NT knows nothing of a Christian who does not meet with the saints [NOTE: “*Saints*” always plural.]
 - c. Some of those good works are done through the various ministries of the church.
 - 1) Maybe the churches were small and the buildings unimpressive [often just a room in a home].

- 2) They were not to let them bother them.
- d. Note: if we do not gather together it is impossible to be “encouraging one another.”
- e. The day of the Lord’s return is close; therefore we must be especially careful to be doing right.
- f. Learn:
 - 1) Fellowship stimulates love.
 - 2) The one who does not love his Christian brother enough to gather with him does not really love Christ either and is in danger of total apostasy (next verses).

F. His sacrifice can be rejected (26-32). Introduction: The section is about the danger of apostasy. We must understand that to leave the assembly of believers is to leave all hope; it is to reject the only “sacrifice for sins.”

1. To continue sinning is to reject Jesus’ sacrifice for sins (26).
 - a. The people referred to here have “**received the knowledge of the truth.**”
 - 1). They had learned many of the teachings of the Bible.
 - 2). But they had no fellowship with Christ, for their heart was not believing but rebellious.
 - b. But they have made a choice: they have willfully rejected Christ’ s offer of forgiveness and eternal life.
 - 1). They have decided that continuing in sin is more desirable than repenting and believing the truth.
 - c. It may well be that the writer considers their forsaking the assembling of believers is their primary sin.
 - 1). Gathering with believers is not optional; the one who forsakes this is willfully sinning.
 - 2). He is like the drowning man who refuses the help of a boat that has come to rescue him. The boat is his only hope and the ones on the boat want to save him, but he rejects their kindness.
2. To reject Jesus’ sacrifice is to bring God’ s judgment (27-28).
 - a. Nothing “remains” for that person but a **terrifying expectation of God’ s judgment.**
 - 1). The sinner may scoff at God’ s judgment now, but the day will come when it will terrify him.
 - 2). That judgment will be like a “**fury of fire**” that **devours** all of God’ s **adversaries** (27).
 - b. God gives every man two alternatives:
 - 1). Repent from sin and believe the truth.
 - 2). Continue in sin and face God’ s judgment. *John 3:36, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*
 - c. The judgment described:
 - 1). **The fury of fire** which **consumes the adversaries** (27).
 - 2). Death without mercy (28).
 - a). It was “a corporeal death; there was no atonement nor sacrifice for him, nor pity to be shown him, *Deut. 13:8 19:13.*” (GI)
 - b). If the judgment was without mercy in Moses’ day, how much more guilty are those who refuse God’ s grace through Jesus Christ?
3. To reject Christ’s sacrifice is (29):
 - a. To **trample under foot the Son of God.**
 - 1). Recall the swine trampling on the pearls. *Matthew 7:6, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”*
 - 2). These apostates are not walking on some gift from God; they are trampling on God Himself!
 - b. To **regard the blood of the covenant as an unclean thing.**
 - 1). Not only do they reject Christ’ s atonement, but they actually think the whole idea of His dying on the cross is **unholy** [unclean=common “**κοινον**”].
 - 2). This precious blood that can cleanse the soul [**by which he was sanctified**] the apostate considers as worthless.
 - c. To insult the Spirit of grace.
 - 1). **Ενυβρισας** [from **υβρις** = “hubris” = pride and hapax legomenon]
 - 2). Cf. *Romans 1:30, “Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.”*
 - 3). *1 Timothy 1:13, “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did [it] ignorantly in unbelief.”*
 - 4). Thus, this apostate is arrogant in his attitude toward God; he would “injure” God’ s Spirit if he could.

4. To reject Christ's sacrifice is to bring God's vengeance (30-31).
 - a. Two quotations from *Deuteronomy 32:35, 36*: "**To Me [belongeth] vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in [due] time: for the day of their calamity [is] at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the LORD shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that [their] power is gone, and [there is] none shut up, or left.**" Cf. *Psalms 135:14*, "For the LORD will judge His people, and He will repent Himself concerning His servants."
 - b. The latter reference about the Lord's judging His people is particularly appropriate here. Let not the Jews think they can reject Christ and have God's favor.
 - c. The point is this: those who abuse the grace of God bring upon themselves a just penalty. The penalty will be the erupting fury of the holy and **living God**.
 - d. Recall that we just finished a section on apostasy the one who abandons God as his Savior will only meet [**fall into the hands of**] Him as the living Judge.

G. His sacrifice gives the patience and faith to endure trials (10:33-39). Introduction: The words of exhortation to remember the past suggest the great contrast between their present coldness and their former love and zeal for the Lord.

1. The trials explained (32-34)
 - a. Trials of public reproach (32-34a).
 - 1). "**But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;**"
 - 2). They bore these trials in the early days of their faith with bravery.
 - a). The trial was like a contest: **a great fight** [**αθλησιν**].
 - b). They endured as those contending for a crown.
 - 3). They needed to remember their former courage, when they faced the storm of Jewish persecution against the church.
 - 4). They had been **enlightened**: the Christian is changed from a child of darkness to a child of light.
 - a). This is a good description of salvation.
 - b). *Acts 26:18*, "To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."
 - c). *1 Peter 2:9*, "But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."
 - 5). The trials included being made **a gazing stock** [**public spectacle**].
 - a). Though these believers were not martyrs, they did share in the **reproaches** of the unbelievers.
 - *11:26*, "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."
 - *13:13*, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."
 - b). In Rome, Christians were made a show, being sent into the arena with lions and wild dogs, or being tied to stakes and smeared with burnable material and set on fire as living torches.
 - c). In Jerusalem, the Jews who confessed Christ often lost their business from other Jews. Some were put out of the family and disinherited, and many became very poor as a result.
 - d). These difficult things were the **afflictions**: they experienced the ill-will of the unsaved.
 - 6). They suffered themselves, but they also associated with other Christians suffering the same things [**became companions of them that were so used**].
 - a). Note: They were not selfish, but compassionate, for they also **had compassion on** the writer **in his bonds** (34a).
 - b). The word "companions" connotes fellowship. They literally "fellowshipped" with the other suffering believers, counting the opportunity to be with them in their persecution as one for fellowship. They considered themselves to have these things in common.
 - b. Trials of confiscation of property (34b).
 - 1). These Christians might have kept aloof when other Christians were taken off to jail.
 - 2). But they showed Christian love and sympathy (*Acts 8:3; 9:2; 26:10*).
 - a). They visited the others in prison and thus associated themselves with their cause.
 - b). This is a good test of true love and a true faith. *Matthew 25:36, 40*, "Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me./ And the King shall

answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.”

- c). It is the spirit of Christ who is able to sympathize with His people in their afflictions and trials (Hebrews 4:15).
- 3). The result was that they became the object of the hatred of the wicked. They had their homes broken into and their household goods stolen.
- 4). How could they endure this: their secret was their faith; they knew they had something much better in heaven, **a better and an enduring substance**.
 - a). Their faith had been genuine.
 - b). They had done what Jesus said in Matthew 5:11f. They had rejoiced when persecuted, knowing that their “reward in heaven was great.” As poor yet they were making many rich.
 - c). Like Paul they could say, “*as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*” (2 Corinthians 6:10).
2. The patience and faith exhibited (10:35-39)
 - a. The exhortation to exhibit patience and faith (10:35-38).
 - 1). The readers did not shrink back in the past: will they now give up against a lesser trial?
 - 2). The call to keeping their confidence (10:35).
 - a). “***Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.***”
 - b). The writer urges them to maintain their confidence. This is not confidence in self but confidence in God, assurance that God is true to His promises.
 - c). It would make no sense for them to suffer for Christ and then abandon all when about to receive the prize.
 - d). The Christian’s confidence is that he will receive a great reward.
 - Incomparable glory and joy (2 Thess. 2:14)
 - Imperishable inheritance (1 Peter 1:4)
 - 3). The specific call to endurance (36). “***For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.***”
 - a). We cannot do God’s will without continuing patiently when faced with difficulties.
 - b). Note: to give up is also to quit doing God’s will. Disobedience and apostasy go together.
 - c). Note again: the real test of faith is time.
 - The true Christian continues until the end.
 - The false disciple falls away when trials or persecutions come.
 - Many want to rejoice with Christ, but few will suffer anything for Him.
 - Many love His heavenly kingdom, but few will bear His cross.
 - Many want His comfort, but few will endure His tribulations.
 - Many praise Him when they are blessed, and curse Him when they do not prosper in this life.
 - d). Receiving the promise is conditional on continuing.
 - 4). Habakkuk’s example of persevering faith (10:37-38) “***For yet a little while, and He that shall come with come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.***”
 - a). “For yet a little while” may be taken from Isaiah 26:20, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were **for a little moment**, until the indignation be overpast.”
 - b). The call here is for Israel to wait a little while and then God will again bless them.
 - c). The next section is taken from Habakkuk 2:3, “For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, **it will not tarry.**” 2:4, “Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him: **but the just shall live by his faith.**”
 - Habakkuk lived at that time when Israel had been conquered by Babylon and her land ruined.
 - Christ’s coming for the first time may have seemed delayed, but it came; likewise His second coming is soon, though it may not seem so to the human mind.
 - d). The Christian, the one made **righteous** by God, is one who lives by faith and not by sight.
 - e). Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4 in two places to teach the truth of justification by faith.
 - Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11.

- But here he cites it to show that A CHRISTIAN IS NOT ONLY JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, BUT HE LIVES FROM THAT TIME ON BY FAITH NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
- 5). The conclusion: the writer and the hearers will continue (39).
“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”
 - a). There are two choices: destruction and salvation.
 - b). The one who draws back out of fear and unbelief goes not to safety but to perdition [destruction].
 - c). The writer is convinced that they will not do that but that they will continue believing.
 - d). WE ARE **NOT TO DRAW BACK BUT TO DRAW NEAR!**

VI. THE BETTER WAY – LIVING BY FAITH (contrast with those in chapter 10 who had no faith)

General Introduction to Chapter 11

1. Illustrate: redwoods tower over other trees because they have for centuries resisted the ravages of trials – fire, wind, floods.
2. These believers are spiritual towers who have also lived by faith in the midst of many trials and difficulties.
3. The book’s two divisions are (1) Jesus has completed everything necessary to salvation and is the better messenger and high priest; (2) application of these truths (chs. 11-13).
4. Hebrews is a letter of exhortation, to believing Jews who nevertheless were showing a tendency to turn back from the truth and living by faith in God’s Word.
5. These Christians were experiencing severe persecution (10:32-34) and therefore are exhorted not to turn back.
6. To encourage them and to challenge them to have endurance, he illustrates what it means for “the just to live by faith.”
 - a. See Habakkuk 2:4 for the statement about the just living by faith. This phrase has 3 meanings in the NT.
 - (1) Romans 1:17 = focus on “just” (justification)
 - (2) Gal. 3:11 = focus on “faith” (believing)
 - (3) Hebrews 10:34 = focus on “live” (daily life)
 - b. We can identify righteous people because they live by faith in the midst of affliction, persecution, loss of goods, difficulties, and temptations.

Special Applicational Introduction to Chapter 11

1. Two choices lie before all people: some *reject* God’s message and some by faith *accept* it.
2. The writer says in ch. 10 that the true Christian is not one who finally draws back from God, but one who believes, one who lives by faith (10:38-39). To draw back is to lose God’s pleasure and that is to lose everything.
3. Therefore, he begins now to explain and illustrate what faith means and how believers from Adam’s day have lived by it. The number is too large to recount them all.
4. Remember readers, if you desert now you go FROM these heroes TO perdition.
5. The main point is that God blesses those who live by faith, but he does not protect them from all trials.
6. The true Christian trusts not in his reason, but in God and His Word.
7. The dangers of apostasy are real. The writer gives several warnings: chs. 2; 3-4; 5-6; 10:26-31, 38; 12.
8. Apply:
 - a. Our society does not have patience or endurance. It wants immediate success. Beware of being like your society.
 - b. We want deliverance—holiness, success (converts, healing, money, recognition) NOW. But what glorifies God the most is our walking by faith.

A. The characteristics of faith (11:1-3)

1. *Faith is defined simply as believing.*
 - a. Simple definition of faith = “to believe”
 - b. **πιστος** occurs 244x in NT and 239= “faith”
 - c. **πιστευω** occurs 248x in NT and 239= “believe”
 - d. Therefore, faith = to believe, to regard something as true, and not uncertain or doubtful.

2. *Faith gives us firm confidence that the things we are hoping for are real (11:1a).*
 - a. “**substance**” (**υποστασις**) has been translated in various ways: NASB = assurance; NIV = being sure; Lenski = firm confidence; KJV = substance (meaning essence)
 - b. It can mean essence, or reality, or substantial nature. *Hebrews 1:3*, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his **person** <5287>, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
 - c. Usually it means confidence, assurance.
 - 1) *2 Corinthians 9:4* Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same **confident** <5287> boasting.”
 - 2) *2 Corinthians 11:17* That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this **confidence** <5287> of boasting.”
 - 3) *Hebrews 3:14* For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our **confidence** <5287> stedfast unto the end.”
 - 4) Though both ideas -- essence and confidence -- have merit, the best interpretation here is firm confidence.
 - d. The meaning then is this:
 - 1) The man of faith has confidence that his hopes will be realized; he has no doubt about it.
 - 2) For the man of faith, future things (the object of his hope = the return of Christ, bodily resurrection, the Millennium, the blessings of heaven) are brought near. They have become “real” to him.
 - 3) Faith thus deals with the future. Faith is the only proper way to deal with things that are future.
 - 4) The word for “confidence” suggests a solid basis (lit. = “stand upon”). For the man of faith, the biblical hope of God’s promises is like a solid rock.
 - 5) By faith we know for sure that what we read about we will actually receive, possess, and experience. Faith “substantiates” (the KJV, from the Latin) these things to the soul. See Abraham (8) and Isaac (20).
3. *Faith convinces [“evidence” – **ελεγχος**] us that the unseen things are true (1b).*
 - a. Faith deals not only with the future but WITH THE UNSEEN – invisible things, whether present or future.
 - 1) Faith makes these things more real and sure than the sight of the eyes, which can be deceived.
 - 2) Illustrate: I waved to a boy who looked like a friend’s son and he waved back, but as we got closer both of us realized the mistake.
 - b. The man of faith has been convinced and persuaded that the as yet unseen things are reality.
 - c. He knows that the most important realities are not visible:
 - 1) His soul – forgiveness, continual washing of Christ’s blood, access to God in prayer
 - 2) God Himself – Holy Spirit’s indwelling
 - 3) Evil Spirits
 - d. So the man of faith ...
 - 1) Believes in eternal life and the resurrection of the body though he is presently sick and weak and even dying.
 - 2) Believes that God accepts him as just though at the present he may be overwhelmed by untold miseries.
 - 3) Believes he is blessed by God, though at the present he may be overwhelmed by untold miseries.
 - 4) Believes that God will judge Satan and all the wicked, though evil seems to be triumphing in the world.
 - 5) Believes that what God has recorded in the OT and NT are true as though he saw them himself.
 - e. All these things are beyond the reach of our senses. Faith is based specifically on God’s Word – promises.
 - 1) Examples
 - (i) *v. 7*, “warned of God”
 - (ii) *v. 9*, “land of promise”
 - (iii) *v. 11*, “promise”
 - (iv) *v. 13*, “promised”
 - (v) *v. 17*, “promise”
 - (vi) *v. 33*, “promises”
 - 2) See *Romans 10:17* – faith by the word (**ρημα**) of God = a specific statement of God.

- 3) Apply: faith develops from hearing, remembering, and meditating on specific statements of God.
4. *Faith brings God's approval and blessing (11:2). "For by it the elders obtained a good report."*
 - a. Now the writer begins to show that faith works. These 16 men and women lived by faith in many different circumstances and in many different eras.
 - b. The "elders" are the people who lived in the olden times, the OT saints.
 - c. We know their faith was genuine because God "bore witness" [gave a good report; passive of **μαρτυρεω**] to that fact.
 - d. Note: faith is nothing new; the oldest and the best men were men of faith.
 - e. Then, as now, God approves, God gives His testimonial of, those who believe His Word.
 - f. Note that this testimonial is given for all ages to see! They still are witnesses to us.
5. *Faith explains creation (11:3).*
 - a. "**By faith**" = "by means of faith" – describes the believer's living and is repeated about 18 times in this chapter.
 - b. "**We**" – includes us. Same faith for us.
 - c. The evolutionists'--creationists' debate is fundamentally a matter of faith.
 - d. Note that we need faith to understand the Word as soon as we open it to begin in Genesis.
 - e. What does faith explain about creation?
 - 1) *The worlds were framed by God's omnipotent word.*
 - (i) Note that the men of old began at the beginning in believing the Word of God. Genesis 1 and 2 were history to them.
 - (ii) Without faith men cannot understand (they have no mind capability [**νοεω**]), how the universe originated.
 - (iii) *Note: faith is not blind, it understands, it uses the mind to accept God's revelation.
 - (iv) The word "world" (**αεον**) suggests the eras, the time-periods of the world.
 - (v) Thus, by faith we also understand that God not only created the universe but that He governs time = history. NOT CHANCE OR FATE, BUT A LOVING AND HOLY GOD CONTROLS ALL MATTER AND ALL EVENTS.
 - (vi) See the power of God's word in creation.
 1. *Psalm 33:6
 2. Isaiah 40:26
 3. John 1:3
 4. Acts 14:15
 5. *2 Peter 3:5 "by the Word of God the heavens were of old."
 6. Rev. 4:11
 - (vii) The word "framed" teaches that God had a purpose and order for His universe.
 - 2) *God created the world out of things that had not previously existed.*
 - (i) We cannot explain the creation of the world by the scientific method.
 - (ii) The energy and creation that God produced is not like anything we observe today.
 - (iii) The evolutionary explanation is absolutely unbiblical, for it always begins with some matter or power known.
 - (iv) Illustrate: Christian and Pliable. Pliable fascinated with talk of angels, crowns, and rewards. Asked Christian, "Are you really sure this is true?" Christian – "Oh, Yes, because this book was written by Him who cannot lie." Thus he based His faith on God's character.

B. The faith of believers before the flood (11:4-7)

1. Introduction
 - a. Note: We have seen the characteristics of faith; now we see the works of faith.
 - b. True faith shows up in the life, in worship, in work, in doing the will of God.
 - c. These three examples from the ancient world (2 Peter 2:5) parallel circumstances all believers face =
 - 1) Opposition for faith.
 - 2) How to worship properly.
 - 3) Possibility of passing into God's presence without death.
 - 4) Living in an age ripe for judgment.

2. ABEL: the one whose testimony lives on (11:4)

a. *The significance of Abel.*

- 1) The first whose faith is explicitly recorded, though Adam and Eve also had faith.
- 2) The first who suffered for his faith.

b. *The sacrifice of Abel.*

- 1) God's verdict is that it was "more excellent" (greater) than Cain's.
- 2) Here is what happened. *Genesis 4:3-5, "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."*
- 3) Abel and Cain had passed "time" and were mature men, making their own decisions with established character. Both make a solemn show of their worship of God.
- 4) Abel's was better because ...
 - (i) He brought of the best.
 1. He had to select the firstlings.
 2. Cain may have only brought of the harvest with no particular selection.
 3. But both did bring the offering "unto the Lord." Type of Christ – firstfruits, **Firstborn of every creature**
 - (ii) Abel brought an offering of sacrifice – representing the death of something once alive.
 1. He had killed the animal, for we read of "the fat thereof."
 2. He thus showed awareness of his own sin and of the need for the blood of an innocent victim to cover it.
 3. No doubt, he learned this from his parents.
 4. Recall the context of Hebrews =
 - a. 9:22, no forgiveness without shedding of blood.
 - b. 10:4, not any blood, but must be Christ's blood (9:28, 11-12; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
 5. See Type of Christ
 - a. Type of Christ – **The Lamb**
 - b. Type of Christ – **His Excellence** (the fat thereof)
 - (iii) Difference may not be in the offering itself but in the OFFERER.
 1. God accepts the worship only that comes from the heart. The ceremony of worship means nothing without this.
 2. Cain had a general acknowledgement of God's goodness, but Abel acknowledged his own sinfulness as well as God's goodness.

c. *The attitude of Abel.*

- 1) Contrast with Cain, who became angry with God rather than repent and do what would please God.
- 2) Abel's was the attitude of submission and wanting to please God; Cain's was that of self-will and doing worship his own way. *Jude 1:10, "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. 11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."*
- 3) Attitude of faith. What did Abel know and believe? Not sure, but knew enough to have genuine faith in God's Word. His was a right response to God, a response of faith.

d. *The attitude of God.*

- 1) God accepted Abel's sacrifice. Not because of outward advantages (Cain was the elder).
- 2) God bore witness that Abel's worship was good and acceptable.
 - (i) God declared him righteous. He obtained witness from God that he was a righteous man.
Note: salvation and justification have always been by grace through faith. *Matthew 23:35, "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood*

of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.”

- (ii) God was declaring him righteous thousands of years later. He will do the same for all of us for eternity.
- (iii) Do not forget that Cain could have repented and then God would have accepted him also. Genesis 4:7, “*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*”
 - 1. Cain knew that Abel’s sacrifice was accepted.
 - 2. Cain refused to humble himself.
 - 3. Cain grew to hate righteous Abel. *1 John 3:12*, “*Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.*”

e. *The lasting testimony to Abel’s sacrifice. “He being dead yet speaketh”*

- 1) His testimony is still speaking to God’s people. God is speaking about him in the Word.
- 2) Learn:
 - (i) Your influence for good is always greater than you realize.
 - 1. Illustrate – William Carey, who had no idea of the impact his testimony would have for centuries.
 - 2. Abel certainly never thought that his one sacrifice would be so important.
 - (ii) Everything you and I do is important.
 - (iii) The absolute necessities of acceptable worship are HEART and CONCORDANCE WITH TRUTH. Recall John 4:24.

3. ENOCH: the one who pleased God (11:5-6)

- a. OT background:
 - 1) Genesis 5:22-24, “*And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.*”
 - 2) OT describes his pleasing God as his walking with God. (LXX has *pleased God*)
- b. What is meant for Enoch to please God?
 - 1) Pleasing God meant “walking with God” (Genesis 5:22).
 - 2) Pleasing God meant walking with God in the midst of a long, busy life (Genesis 5:21-24).
 - 3) Pleasing God meant preaching God’s message (Jude 14-15).
 - 4) Pleasing God meant believing ...
 - (i) God exists as He describes Himself in the Word (11:6b).
 - (ii) God rewards those who diligently seek Him (11:6c).
- c. *Note the three indispensable things in Hebrews
 - 1) 9:22 – *shedding of blood*
 - 2) 11:6 – *faith*
 - 3) 12:14 – *holiness*

4. NOAH: the one who obeyed God’s warning (11:7)

- a. The attributes of Noah’s faith.
 - 1) He believed God’s warning.
 - 2) He preached God’s warning (2 Peter 2:5).
 - 3) He feared God’s warning.
 - 4) He obeyed God’s warning.
- b. The results of Noah’s faith.
 - 1) For himself and his family.
 - (i) His family was saved.
 - (ii) He became an heir of righteousness (Gen. 6:9; Ezekiel 14:14).
 - 2) For the world = condemnation

C. The faith of the patriarchs (11:8-22)

1. ABRAHAM: the obedient pilgrim (11:8-10)

- a. The Call for Response (11:8)
 - 1) The Lord is daily calling all of us to respond to Him.
 - 2) Abraham's call was first to salvation (Gal. 3:8).
 - 3) Abraham's call was secondly to "go out."
- b. The Evidences of Response (11:8-9)
 - 1) Obedience
 - (i) The timing of obedience – immediate obedience
 - (ii) The aspects of obedience
 - 1. Choice of the will ("obeyed").
 - 2. Action ("went out")
 - (iii) The obstacles of obedience
 - 1. 75 years old
 - 2. Separation from family and the familiar
 - 3. No godly example
 - 4. No written Word
 - 5. Unknown destination
 - 2) Patient sojourning
- c. The Attitudes of Response (11:8-10)
 - 1) Attitude of faith – simple trust; no questions (8-9).
 - 2) Attitude of eager, confident, patient waiting for the God-prepared city (9-10).
 - 3) Attitude of the pilgrim (9)
 - (i) Sojourning
 - (ii) Living in a strange country = being an alien
 - (iii) Dwelling in tents
- d. The Rewards of Response
 - 1) Joy (John 8:56)
 - 2) Reception of the fulfillment of promise (Hebrews 6:15)
 - 3) Reception of God's approval (see 11:16)

2. SARAH: the one made strong in weakness (11:11-12) Lessons from Sarah's Faith

- a. Faith can grow – note the progression/growth
 - 1) *Self-reliance* (Gen. 12:10-20; 16:1-2).
 - 2) *Self-despair* (Gen. 18:9-15).
 - 3) *Confidence in God alone* (Heb. 11:11-12; Gen. 21:2, 6)
 - 4) *Complementing partner* in doing the will of God (Heb. 11:11-12).
- b. God gives people of faith exactly what they need.
 - 1) Abraham and Sarah needed "**strength** [ability, power] **to conceive**."
 - 2) Even those physically limited can serve God.
- c. Faith brings blessings to others.
 - 1) Abraham became the father of many nations and especially the example of all believers.
 - 2) Sarah became the example for all women, and especially for all wives.
- d. Faith enables a couple to experience God's fullest blessing.
 - 1) Sarah shared Abraham's faith ("Sarah also" –KJV).
 - 2) Abraham could not have experienced the fulfillment of God's promise without Sarah's cooperation and encouragement.
- e. Faith enables the seemingly impossible.
 - 1) This was God's emphasis to Sarah – "*Is anything too difficult for the LORD?*" (Gen. 18:14)
 - 2) What "impossible" situation are you facing?

3. The **patriarchs' faith described** (11:13-16) A PRAISE SUMMARY OF PATRIARCHAL FAITH

- a. **Their faith was permanent** – it took them through death (11:13). *Hebrews 11:13, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*
 - 1) They "**died in faith**." = They persevered until the end.

- (i) True faith continues.
 - 1. 3:6, “*But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*”
 - 2. 3:14, “*For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.*”
 - 3. Recall the Israelites who wanted to go back to Egypt. Num. 14:14, “*And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*”
 - 4. When a true believer gets away from the Lord, the Lord chastens Him. (12:6, 8). Heb. 12:6, 8 “*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*” “*But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*”
 - 2) They were practicing, exercising faith when dying. They died “in accordance with” their faith.
 - (i) Faith brings help and even triumph in death.
 - (ii) This is because the believer is not thinking of his dying body but of things far off.
 - 1. Those who base their faith on what they see, continue only as long as the results are visible.
 - 2. Many people followed Jesus because of the miracles they saw and simply because of the crowds. When he began to preach about His death rather than a soon-coming glorious earthly kingdom, the crowds left Him.
- b. Their faith was a persuasion and an embracing of God’s promises.**
- 1) Persuasion. (Note: NASB uses different reading and has “saw” instead).
 - (i) They had a satisfactory acquiescence of the mind that the things God had said were true.
 - (ii) The negative of this is disobedience. Same word in John 3:36 but with the alpha privative.
 - 2) Embracing.
 - (i) The word means a greeting, a salutation.
 - 1. Mark 9:15 – the people ran to “salute” Jesus.
 - 2. Romans 16:16 – salute with holy kiss; word used many times in this chapter.
 - (ii) The word implies a delight and love in the one greeted. Thus recall that faith and obedience are inseparable.
- c. Their faith was a confession which showed their focus and priorities (Heb. 11:14-15).**
- 1) Introduction: True faith makes the things of God a priority.
 - (i) True faith does not say, I will read my Bible if I have time, it says rather “I will find time to read my Bible.”
 - (ii) True faith does not say, “I will go to church if I do not have anything else to do, but I will do the other things on another day. I will make Sunday the Lord’s day.”
 - 2) Their priority was not this world: confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.
 - (i) Recall the meaning of ...
 - 1. **Stranger** = “gaijin” (Japanese word for us, means “outside person”) one who has no possessions and no claims or relationships. He is an outsider.
 - 2. **Pilgrim** = one only passing through.
 - (ii) They did this literally and openly (boldly). A confession is an open declaration.
 - 1. ABRAHAM Gen. 23:4, “*I [am] a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.*”
 - 2. JACOB Gen. 47:9, “*And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.*”
 - 3. DAVID 1 Chron. 29:15, “*For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding*” Psalms 119:12, “*I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.*”
 - 4. All believers 1 Peter 2:11, “*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*”
 - 5. Learn:
 - a. Do we speak up for Christ with our lips?
 - b. Do we confess before others what we are?

- c. What is our attachment “to the earth”? Are we strangers in this world?
- 3) They were using their time and energy to seek a “country of their own.”
 - (i) You cannot seek something without making an effort.
 - (ii) Some people work hard, study hard, and are very diligent in many ways, but do not seek the Lord at all.
 - (iii) The Christian ought to be diligent in his effort to please the Lord.
 - 4) They were thinking not of the country from which they had come but of the one coming.
 - (i) The true Christian is not looking backward but forward.
 - (ii) There are many “**opportunities**” (temptations) to go back, but the one with faith does not want to go back. *Heb. 10:39, “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”*
 - 5) They did not “remember” their former country with desire to go back.
 - (i) Note: *love of country* (Japanese word for patriotism) is natural. That they did not have this shows the power of their faith.
 - (ii) Application: we too must choose God’s will over considerations of life, parents, wife, children, houses, possessions, and country. Illustrate: Japanese Christians during the war who compromised by bowing toward the Emperor’s palace and by sending a representative to report to the sun goddess.
- d. **Their faith showed their heart’s desire.** They “desired” a better country.
- 1) Use of the word “desire” (**ορεγομαι**).
 - (i) It means to stretch oneself out in order to touch or to grasp something.
 - (ii) Some desire silver. *1 Tim. 6:10, “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some **coveted after**, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*
 - (iii) Some desire to be bishops: *1 Timothy 3:1, “This [is] a true saying, If a man **desire** [NASB = aspires to] the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”*
 - (iv) These patriarchs and Sarah desired something “**better**” (note that “country” is implied but not in the Greek text).
 - 2) Some thoughts about desire.
 - (i) The most important test is not our effort or our diligence.
 - (ii) The most important test is our heart.
 - (iii) If our heart does not truly desire the Lord and His kingdom, then our diligence and effort will not last.
 - (iv) Even our worship can become hypocritical; we can sing, we can sit in the church service and yet be thinking about something besides the Lord.
 1. Israel kept up the form of worship when her heart was far from the Lord.
 2. *Isaiah 1:11, “To what purpose [is] the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.”*
 - a. *Matthew 15:8, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but [their] heart is far from me.”*
 - b. *Isaiah 29:13, “Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near [me] with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:”*
- e. **Their faith had great reward.**
- 1) God claimed them and called them His own.
 - (i) *John 20:17, “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to **my brethren**, and say unto them, I ascend unto **my Father, and your Father**; and to **my God, and your God**.”*
 - (ii) *Exodus 3:6-8, “Moreover he said, I am **the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7 ¶ And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of **my people** which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.”*

- (iii) 2 Cor. 6:16-18, “*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I **will be their God, and they shall be my people.*** ¹⁷ *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ **And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,** saith the Lord Almighty.”*
 - 2) God prepared for them a city.
 - (i) This city is His dwelling place, and therefore the place of His presence.
 - (ii) This statement shows that the relationship was true and real in God’s mind.
 - (iii) God did something for them based on His relationship with them.
 - f. Learn in conclusion:
 - 1) Like the nomad who can see the city in the distance but who still must travel many days before he can reach it, so is the Christian who can by faith see God’s Heavenly City, but who must still travel many days in this life before reaching it.
 - 2) The key to our faith is not our circumstances, but what we are looking for. Not what we are living in, but what we are longing for is the key to a life of faith.
 - 3) The city of God is “heavenly” and thus perfect, but real. It has foundations.
4. Abraham and the supreme test of faith (11:17-19) [see Genesis 22:1-19]
- a. The TEST of his faith.
 - 1) The test was to offer Isaac. Gen. 22:1-2, “*And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, [here] I [am]. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only [son] Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.”*
 - 2) The test was to offer his only son from his wife Sarah.
 - (i) This seemed to contradict God’s promise of giving Abraham a great and blessed posterity.
 - (ii) Gen. 21:12, “*And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for **in Isaac shall thy seed be called.***”
 - (iii) The Lord will test our faith, for the purpose of making it stronger and purer. See 1 Peter 1:6-7, “*Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: / That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”*
 - (iv) Illustrate:
 - 1. I wanted to begin a Bible school and teach, and the very thing I came to do and wanted to do, the Lord asked me to offer up.
 - 2. I remember the days of testing as I considered the prospect of not teaching and rather the idea of church planting.
 - 3. Those were days of testing, but in the end the Lord enabled me to offer that “Isaac.”
 - b. The ENCOURAGEMENTS to his faith: God’s promises and Isaac’s own faith.
 - 1) They are first and foremost the promises of God as written in His Word. In Abraham’s case, he had the spoken command of God: “Get thee up and offer Isaac.”
 - 2) Sometimes we have a companion in faith.
 - (i) Isaac was obedient at this time as well. Isaac’s submissive faith encouraged his father.
 - (ii) The Lord may give us a spouse who believes, or a son, or a daughter, or a pastor, or a friend, or a prayer warrior.
 - c. The EXERCISE of his faith
 - 1) He offered up his son.
 - (i) Abraham had the intention of offering up Isaac.
 - (ii) In God’s eyes, the offering was made, for the intention was there.
 - (iii) Note: when our heart is right, and we want to do the right thing, God accepts the will as the deed. 2 Cor. 8:12, “*For if there be first a willing mind, [it is] accepted according to that a man hath, [and] not according to that he hath not.”*
 - 2) He considered God.
 - (i) To be faithful: He knew that God would not give to take away for no reason.

- (ii) To be able: able to raise men from the dead if need be. *Gen. 22:5*, “And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.”
 - 3) Faith always includes these two things:
 - (i) To believe what God says. When tested he trusted.
 - (ii) To act on what God has said. This is why faith is so closely linked with obedience, and in fact includes obedience.
 - d. The BLESSING of his faith: God’s provision and opportunity to praise God.
 - 1) He received Isaac back: the word [κομίζω] suggests the idea of “receiving something back as a reward.” In other words, Isaac’s life was spared.
 - 2) He was able to worship God with much thanksgiving.
 - (i) The tests, when met with obedience and faith, provide abundant blessing and great joy.
 - (ii) Abraham came to understand more about God’s grace and goodness, so that he called the name of the place, “Jehovah-jireh”, the Lord will provide (*Gen. 22:14*).
 - 3) The Lord gave him back more than he offered up.
 - e. Conclusion/lessons to learn:
 - 1) We need to look beyond our experiences here and realize that all of God’s promises to us will be fulfilled when we are resurrected.
 - 2) These verses show us what faith can do, even when sorely tried. Let us ask the Lord to increase our faith.
 - 3) With this tremendous act of faith, is it any wonder that Abraham is called the “father of all them that believe” (*Rom. 4:11*)?
 - 4) Abraham’s offering points to God the Father’s love in sending Jesus to be our sacrifice.
 - (i) The “receiving back of Isaac” was a “parable”, a type of Christ’s death and resurrection.
 - (ii) As Abraham said in *Gen. 22:8*, “God will [and did] provide Himself a Lamb.” Amazing love!
 - 5) Let us not be surprised when our faith is tested. *1 Peter 4:12*, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.”
5. Three examples of faith concerning the future (*11:20-22*)
- a. Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau (*11:20*). “**By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.**”
 - 1) Isaac was 137 at this time (see Keil & Delitzsch for estimate).
 - 2) Jacob deceived him. *Gen. 27:27*, “And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son [is] as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed.”
 - 3) Thus Isaac blessed Jacob unwittingly. The blessing =
 - (i) “Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven,”
 - 1. Those countries had little rain, so even the dew was very important for plant growth.
 - a. *Deut. 33:13*, “And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD [be] his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath.”
 - b. *Deut. 33:28*, “Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob [shall be] upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.
 - c. *Hosea 14:5*, “I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.
 - d. *Zech. 8:12*, “For the seed [shall be] prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and **the heavens shall give their dew**; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these [things].”
 - 2. This meant that God would provide all of his needs abundantly. His harvests would be abundant.
 - (ii) “and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.”
 - (iii) “Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee.”
 - (iv) “be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee.”
 - (v) “cursed [be] every one that curseth thee, and blessed [be] he that blesseth thee.” (*Genesis 27:29*)
 - 4) Isaac blessed Esau.
 - (i) Not as good as the blessing for Jacob.
 - 1. For instance, Jacob would be Lord over Esau. This aspect is mentioned twice (*v. 37, v. 40*).

2. See from Esau's reaction that he knew Jacob's blessing was much better. He "*cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry*" (Gen. 27:34).
- (ii) But it was still a blessing.
 1. Some material prosperity (but not in the same area as Jacob's -- the NASB and the Hebrew say "from [at a distance] the fatness of the earth."
 - a. AV = "*And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; (Genesis 27:39).*"
 - b. NASB = "*away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling. And away from the dew of heaven from above.*"
 2. Some relief from Jacob's dominion. Gen. 27:40, "*And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.*"
- 5) When did Isaac exercise faith in this action?
 - (i) Probably when he refused to withdraw the blessing of Jacob. He realized that Jacob's supremacy was God's will.
 - (ii) Maybe he recalled what happened in Gen. 25:23, "*And the LORD said unto her, Two nations [are] in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and [the one] people shall be stronger than [the other] people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*"
- 6) Learn:
 - (i) The text emphasizes God's "blessing." Without God's blessing our lives would be miserable.
 - (ii) When God promises to bless, He keeps His promise. Jacob's blessing was related to the blessing to Abraham, and later to the prominence of the tribe of Judah.
 1. Cf. 12:3 the part about cursed be he and blessed be he who curses or blesses you.
 2. Cf. 49:8 the part about the sons of your father (mother in 27:29) bowing down to you.
 - (iii) Let us be diligent in seeking God's blessing.
 1. Jacob used wrong methods to get the blessing, but HE DID WANT THE BLESSING, whereas Esau was careless about it.
 2. Isaac "blessed" both sons, but Jacob was the one blessed by God because he sought the blessing.
 3. Esau wanted the blessing but did not want the heart required to get it.
 - (iv) Be careful to have the right attitude toward those whom God has chosen to lead and toward other sheep. Note God's attitude toward those who abuse His people: "cursed be everyone that curseth thee."
 - (v) Parents must teach their children about the Lord. Note that we have four generations of believers: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Especially, must the fathers be examples of faith!
- b. Jacob blessed both of Joseph's sons (11:21).
 - 1) The historical setting -- Gen. 48:8-22
 - (i) Jacob put his right hand on the younger Ephraim (Gen. 48:14).
 - (ii) Joseph remonstrated with him, but Jacob by faith knew that Ephraim would be greater (v. 19).
 - (iii) Joseph's resistance may have been the real test of Jacob's faith, for Joseph was second in Egypt and was Jacob's favorite son.
 - (iv) Still, unlike with Jacob and Esau, both were greatly blessed. "*And he blessed them that day, saying, 'By you Israel shall pronounce blessing saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'''" (v. 20)*
 - (v) Jacob needed his staff because he was very old and weak. He could not see (10a).
 - (vi) The OT text does not say that he worshipped but it does say that he "*bowed in worship at the head of his bed*" when he entreated Joseph not to bury him in Egypt but to bury him with Abraham and Isaac his fathers (Gen. 47:29-31).
 1. NT says "staff" instead of "bed," following the LXX understanding of the Hebrew word.
 2. Without vowel pointing the Hebrew word could mean either, and since the LXX preceded the Masoretic vowel pointing by 900 years, the LXX is considered more accurate.
 3. The chronological order is inverted but this is not unusual.
 - a. For example, 7:6 says that Melchizedek "*received tithes from Abraham and blessed him.*"
 - b. However, in Genesis the blessing came first.
 - 2) Lessons to learn from Jacob's example of faith.
 - (i) See again that God's choices are often not man's choices.

1. Younger Jacob blessed rather than Esau.
2. Younger Ephraim blessed more than older Manasseh.
3. Many that are first in this life will be last then (See Mark 10:31).
- (ii) God is gracious in his evaluation of us.
 1. Jacob was not always godly, but generally his life was one of faith.
 2. God praises him here for his faith, when we might have looked at him and criticized him for the times when he used the wrong methods rather than faith to get what he wanted.
 3. Jacob, with all of his faults, had high esteem for the promises of God. His participation in God's blessings was important to him.
 4. His faith increased over time.
 - a. When he arrived in Egypt he acted with dignity and he blessed Pharaoh (rather than vice-versa). Gen. 47:7, "*And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.*"
 - b. Gen. 48 he blessed Joseph's sons.
 - c. Gen. 49 he prophesied concerning all of his sons.
- (iii) The dying days of saints should be blessed days, days when they long for heaven and are ready to leave this world.
 1. We have three descriptions of those who consciously and gladly looked forward to heaven, and who left testimony to us of their dying faith.
 - a. *Isaac*--faith triumphing over the affections
 - b. *Jacob*--faith overcoming the interference of man
 - c. *Joseph*--faith despising the world's glory
 2. Remember, to die by faith, we must live by faith.
- (iv) Jacob's blessing showed his priorities and faith.
 1. He had no desire for the grandsons to remain in Egypt and to be a part of its opulence.
 2. Rather he wanted his grandchildren to be in the place of God's choosing, with God's people.
 3. What are our priorities for our children?
 4. He believed that those children would not be drawn to stay in Egypt. Humanly speaking, we would not expect these two Egyptian princes, born to an Egyptian woman, to leave their homeland.
- (v) We can forfeit God's blessing.
 1. By blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob gave Joseph and his family the rights of the firstborn.
 2. However, the firstborn was Reuben.
 - a. He lost his privilege because of his sin. Gen. 35:22 says that he slept with his father's concubine, Bilhah.
 - b. 1 Chron. 5:1, "*Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he [was] the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.*"
- c. Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones (11:22). Introduction: Note again the emphasis on "dying" (cf. Jacob in v. 21). What a blessing to be able to die by faith!
 - 1) The PATIENCE of Joseph's faith.
 - (i) He longed to be in the Promised land, but he "*stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years.*"
 - (ii) Yet he was willing to wait on God's timing to leave.
 - (iii) We see the patience of his faith throughout his life.
 - (iv) He was always willing to wait on the Lord. Psalms 27:14, "*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*"
 - 2) The SUBMISSION of Joseph's faith.
 - (i) When the time came to die, he submitted to God.
 - (ii) Many want to remain in this world as long as possible.
 1. He had the joy of seeing not only grandsons and great grandsons, but also great-great grandsons ("*the third generation of Ephraim's sons*"--50:23).
 2. But he was willing to leave them for a while.
 3. He did not complain.
 - 3) The BASIS of Joseph's faith
 - (i) God's spoken promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God even "swore" to them to doubly confirm His oath.

- (ii) Faith's foundation is always truth.
 - 1. If God has not spoken about it, we cannot be sure about it.
 - 2. If God has spoken, we have no reason to doubt it.
 - 3. How much more stable should our faith be, since we have the full written revelation!
- 4) The PREDICTION of Joseph's faith.
 - (i) That Israel would be afflicted.
 - 1. The term "visit" implies deliverance.
 - 2. To be delivered, they must be suffering.
 - (ii) That Israel would be delivered.
 - 1. That they would leave Egypt and return to the Promised Land.
 - 2. This occurred about 144 years later.
 - 3. We see here his concern for others even as he himself is about to die.
- 5) The APPLICATION of Joseph's faith.
 - (i) He made them swear to remove his bones to the Promised land.
 - (ii) The proof of faith is deeds not words.
 - 1. We thus see clearly by this action that he never considered Egypt his home.
 - 2. Even though he had lived there from around the age of 20 until his death at 120 (90+years total), he wanted to go "home."
- 6) The FULFILLMENT of Joseph's faith.
 - (i) He died and went on to glory (50:26).
 - 1. He was embalmed and put in a coffin.
 - 2. The Israelites did not use a coffin – that was an Egyptian custom.
 - 3. *2 Kings 13:21, "And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band [of men]; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet."*
 - 4. Death is not the end but the fulfillment of faith for the Christian.
 - (ii) His bones were later carried to the promised land. *Ex. 13:19, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."*
 - (iii) He was finally buried when his children received their inheritance in Canaan. *Joshua 24:32, "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."*
- 7) The LESSONS of Joseph's faith.
 - (i) **When we respond properly, trials are the harbingers of great blessing.**
 - 1. Joseph had severe trials, but he kept joyful faith in the Lord.
 - 2. He firmly believed what he said, "God will surely come to your aid."
 - (ii) **God blesses us greatly in this life, but we must prepare for and look forward to the future with greater zeal.** This world is a temporary abode for us.
 - (iii) **We must by faith accept the present and by faith look to the future (not the past).** By faith Joseph accepted the present (where God placed him), and by faith he looked to the future (not the past).

D. The faith of Moses and His family (11:23-29)

- 1. The faith of his parents (11:23)
 - a. Introduction: the OT context = *Exodus 2:2, "And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he [was a] goodly [child], she hid him three months."*
 - b. They showed their faith by their actions.
 - 1) Faith without works is dead.
 - 2) They used the means at their disposal while still trusting God.
 - c. They showed their faith by their lack of fear.
 - 1) Trust and fear do not go together.
 - 2) Consider some verses on trust and fear.
 - (i) *Psalms 56:4, "In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."*

- (ii) *Isaiah 41:10*, “Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”
 - (iii) *Isaiah 51:7*, “Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart [is] my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.”
 - 3) Note whom we are to fear:
 - (i) *Isaiah 8:13*, “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and [let] him [be] your fear, and [let] him [be] your dread.”
 - (ii) *Luke 12:4-5*, “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. [“but are not able to kill the soul” -- *Mt. 10:28*, “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”
 - (iii) They could have been killed themselves for disobeying Pharaoh’s command.
 - d. They based their faith on God’s blessing: the child was obviously special.
 - 1) “goodly” in *Ex. 2:2* = attractive, well-formed, maybe robust, promising
 - (i) Hebrew = “Tov”; can be moral goodness, but here seems to refer to physical beauty.
 - (ii) Rebekah’s beauty (*Gen. 24:16*)
 - (iii) David was a handsome man (*1 Sam. 16:12*, “And he sent, and brought him in. Now he [was] ruddy, [and] withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this [is] he.”)
 - 2) “proper child” in Heb. *11:23* = “**αστειος**” = strikingly fair
 - 3) Note: when the Lord blesses us, He wants us to respond with grateful action.
 - (i) Most people take God’s blessings for granted.
 - (ii) We should show our thanks by believing deeds.
 - e. Lessons to learn:
 - 1) We are not always to obey the authorities over us.
 - (i) When to obey means clear disobedience to God, we must obey God.
 - (ii) Obedience here would have meant murder.
 - 2) We are not to fear man when we are doing right.
 - 3) We are to trust God’s control of all things. The king’s command resulted in Moses’ being trained in Pharaoh’s court!
 - 4) We are to trust God to work in our children. God will bless the faith of parents regarding their children.
2. Moses’ faith (11:24-29)
- a. Faith’s REFUSAL (11:24)
 - 1) His was an informed and mature decision -- “when he had grown up”
 - 2) He knew what he was doing. He was around 40 years old now. *Acts 7:23*, “But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.”
 - 3) He knew what life as one of the richest people on earth was like. Note: When he passed through Pharaoh’s gates, he passed through splendid architecture that we today still marvel at.
 - 4) What did he turn down?
 - (i) The finest clothes
 - (ii) The best food
 - (iii) Life of ease
 - (iv) Control over men
 - (v) Being treated almost like a god
 - (vi) An inheritance of Pharaoh’s goods.
 - (vii) Security
 - 5) But he made a clear decision; he refused these things. Specifically, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.
 - 6) He made this refusal for God’s people, though they did not understand that. *Acts 7:25*, “And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him; but they did not understand.”
 - b. Faith’s CHOICE (11:25)
 - 1) His two options:
 - (i) The temporary pleasures of sin
 - 1. The stress is not on the pleasures but on the passing nature of them.

2. For Moses to have remained in Pharaoh's court would have been sin. However, God's will for Joseph had been different.
 - (ii) Fellowship with God's people
 1. One cannot do both -- cannot practice sin and be called God's child.
 2. Sometimes that means "suffering affliction" with them.
 3. In Moses' day, the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians.
 4. He left Pharaoh's palace for the huts of the slaves.
 - (iii) God's will varies for individuals. But every Christian must make choices between God and the world.
 1. The real question is, "Whom will we serve?"
 2. Joshua said that he and his house would serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).
 3. Moses said that he would choose the Lord and his people and not Pharaoh and his sinful ways.
- c. Faith's REWARD (11:26)
- 1) Why could Moses make the choice that he made? **Because of what he was looking at.**
 - (i) The text says that he was looking to the reward.
 - (ii) Other renderings = looked forward and away to (Amplified); was looking ahead to
 - (iii) Thus, to by faith "look to" the reward, one must look away from certain things and gaze intently on the desired object.
 1. To see the stars one must look away from the city lights.
 2. The lookout man on the ship must gaze intently to tell if the white in the distance is a breaker or a sun-smitten sail.
 - (iv) Like Paul, Moses was looking at eternal things.
 1. *2 Cor. 4:18, "While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*
 2. When we are looking at the Lord, we can properly appraise earthly possessions.
 3. This is what the Christian life is all about -- seeing the unseen and realizing that God is present. It is realizing that God's presence is more real than the world's visible and tangible delights.
 4. Moses knew that the world is passing away, but he that doeth the will of God abides forever (1 John 2:17).
 5. Note: Nothing can be taken away from a man that really belongs to him.
 - 2) Why could Moses make the choice that he made? **Because of what he believed.**
 - (i) Moses believed that God "rewarded" all actions.
 - (ii) The other use of the phrase reward ("recompense of the reward" in KJV)
 1. *Hebrews 2:2, "For if the reward spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense."*
 2. The word in one case refers to the "reward" of punishment and in the other of the "reward" of blessing.
 3. Why the difference? Because God "rewards" every action according to whether it is good or bad.
 - (iii) Moses believed that God would bless his obedience. He believed that blessing was infinitely better than the temporary glory of Egypt.
- d. Faith's ENDURANCE (27) *"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible."*
- 1) The meaning of endurance
 - (i) The word is **κατερεω** and comes from the word meaning strong (**κρατος**).
 - (ii) Thus it means more than simply patience, or endurance.
 - (iii) It suggests strength of purpose, or resoluteness.
 - (iv) He was strong, he was resolute, and he was determined to do God's will.
 - 2) The obstacles of endurance
 - (i) **Fear:**
 1. At one time Moses had feared Pharaoh, for Moses has killed an Egyptian. *Exodus 2:11-15, "Then Moses was afraid, and said, 'Surely this matter has become known.' When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well."*

2. Now 40 years have passed, but he has grown unfamiliar with court life, having been a shepherd for these years.
- (ii) **Time:**
 1. Some people endure for a time, but then they fall away.
 2. Moses had known for 40 years now that God would use him to deliver the Israelites. *Acts 7:23-25*, “And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him.”
 3. So for 40 years he never lost his sense of God’s calling or his resolve to obey that calling.
 4. How is our resolve? Has our zeal waned with time?
- (iii) **The king’s unbelief and wrath**
 1. At one time he had feared the king’s wrath. This time the king is even more angry.
 2. It is no easy thing to confront the scoffing monarch of a leading country. Pharaoh was a mocker: “*Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go*” (*Exodus 5:2*).
 3. Moses has learned now to obey the Lord even when facing fearful danger. As David said, “*What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee*” (*Psalms 56:3*).
- (iv) **Fear of the Israelites**
 1. Originally they believed after Moses “performed the signs in the sight of the people” (*Exodus 4:30-31*).
 2. But later, when they saw Pharaoh’s 600 chariots pursuing them, they “became very frightened” and “cried out to the Lord” (but not in faith) and complained to Moses that he had brought them out only to bury them in the wilderness (*Exodus 14:10-11*).
 3. This was the major test for Moses: his faith endured, for he said, “*Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD (14:13)*.”
- 3) The *source* of endurance
 - (i) Moses’ fortitude was not in himself.
 - (ii) Moses endured precisely because he was not looking at himself.
 - (iii) Rather he was looking at “Him who is unseen.”
 - (iv) The believer who can endure is the one who by faith knows that God is with him.
 - (v) Remember that he endured for 40 years.
 1. In the desert, far from the opulence of Egypt and Pharaoh’s court, he must have at times thought that God’s call was a dream.
 2. No doubt, he was tempted to forget the call or at least to ignore it, for visiting Egypt again would be frightening and leading the exodus would be an awful responsibility.
 - (vi) Those who can endure for a lifetime are those who love without seeing, who believe the promise though they cannot place in their hand the promised object. Remember, faith is the conviction [certainty] of things not seen.
 1. *1 Peter 1:8*, “Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”
 2. *Heb. 12:1b-2b*, “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross...”
- 4) The *challenge* of endurance
 - (i) The challenge is for us to follow the example of Moses.
 - (ii) How is our determination?
 - (iii) Are we afraid of man, of men in high authority, of the wrath of the man in highest authority?
 - (iv) Our resolve will be tested; victory comes when we look away from the danger to the Almighty One, who though invisible, is present with us in power and blessing.
- e. Faith’s PROTECTION (*11:28-29*).
 - 1) His faith protected him from the destroying angel (*11:28*).
 - (i) God’s command was to sprinkle blood on the doorposts of every home.
 1. *Exodus 12:5*, “take an unblemished sheep or goat one year old.”
 2. *12:6*, “keep it until the 14th of that month [the Israelite’s first month, see *12:2*, = Nisan = March-April] and kill it that night at midnight.”
 3. *12:7*, “Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.”
 4. The Judgment

- a. 12:12, “For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments -- I am the LORD.”
 - b. 12:29, “Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of cattle.”
 - c. 12:30, “And Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his servants and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was no home where there was not someone dead.”
5. The Protection: not spelled out but implied.
 - (ii) Without that sprinkling of blood, a home’s first-born would be killed by God’s angel.
 - (iii) With the sprinkling of blood, the home would be fully protected.
 - (iv) Those who had faith, those who believed God’s Word sprinkled the blood.
 - (v) Moses also had children; he certainly did not want his son to be killed.
 - (vi) By faith he kept the Passover -- he sprinkled the blood and ate the appointed food.
 - (vii) The unbelieving Egyptians were not protected; such woe and judgment is always the result of disregarding God’s Word.
 - 2) His faith protected him and the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptians (11:29).
 - (i) The act of faith was to believe that God would make the Red Sea like dry ground for them.
 - (ii) God did exactly that: Exodus 14:22, “And the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”
 - (iii) Note: the faith was mostly Moses’ originally, but the Israelites believed when they saw the waters parted.
 1. The verb is third person plural, suggesting that the Israelites at last believed.
 2. Exodus 14:31, “And when Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD. and they believed in the LORD and in His servant Moses.”
 3. In Exodus 15 they join with Moses in praise to God for the deliverance.
 - (iv) When the Egyptians tried to use the dried area, they were drowned. Their problem was that they had no promise from God upon which to rest their “faith.”
 - 3) Conclusion from “Faith’s Protection”
 - (i) Just as faith in the bloody sacrifice protected Moses and the Israelites, our faith in Christ’s sacrifice protects us. Let us trust in that sacrifice for our cleansing and protection from evil and the evil one.
 - (ii) What is for us the way of life, is for the unbeliever the way of death. The Gospel is a savor of life unto us, but a savor of death unto those who are perishing (2 Cor. 2:15).
 - (iii) Moses was protected here because he did not look at the hopeless situation but at the Lord.
 1. He knew he could do nothing more, but he said, “stand and see the salvation of the Lord.”
 2. Let us not look at the circumstances but at the controller of circumstances.
 3. Let us, like Israel, go forward by faith, trusting the Lord to protect us.

E. The faith of Joshua and Rahab (Heb. 11:30-31)

1. Introduction:
 - a. We have in these two verses the last examples of before the period of the judges and the monarchy.
 - b. We have the example of Joshua’s faith, and we have the example of Rahab’s faith.
 - c. If we notice carefully, we also see the opposite of faith defined for us: that is disobedience.
 - d. We have two acts of faith, but one story.
2. Two acts of faith: city encircled, the spies welcomed.
 - a. Joshua and the Israelites: *they encircled the city for seven days* (The text makes it clear that the act of faith was the encircling the city for seven days.)
 - 1) This required faith: military man would have wanted to attack soon; he would normally have felt silly walking around blowing a trumpet once a day for six days.
 - (i) God’s ways are not our ways: we must obey Him.
 - (ii) God uses the weak things to confound the wise.
 - (iii) Zechariah 4:6, “Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.”
 - 2) This required explicit faith. God had told them what to do each day, and how to do it.
 - (i) They were to march in a certain order.
 - (ii) They were to march at a certain time.

- (iii) They were to encircle the city a certain number of times (13 in all).
- (iv) They were to be silent, and they were to shout at a certain time.
- (v) They did not have to make plans; they simply were to obey God's plan.
- 3) This required patient faith.
 - (i) If any one of them got impatient, they would have been disobedient and faithless.
 - 1. The hardest thing for us to do sometimes is to wait.
 - 2. Remember though, that the last words the Lord gave his disciples before his ascension was "tarry ye at Jerusalem."
- 4) This required continuing faith.
 - (i) They had needed faith to leave Egypt and to cross the Red Sea, now they need faith to begin conquering.
 - (ii) We need faith from beginning to end in our Christian lives.
- 5) This required strong faith.
 - (i) Note: by faith we can conquer the hardest places.
 - (ii) Jericho was the leading stronghold as it guarded the entrance to Canaan.
- b. Rahab: *she welcomed the spies in peace*
 - 1) After the examples of the great Jewish patriarchs, this was a marked change.
 - 2) This person is a woman, a Gentile woman, a sinful Gentile woman. BUT SHE HAD FAITH!
 - 3) Early in the OT the Lord showed unmistakably that His salvation was for all peoples and tongues and nations.
 - 4) Note: she believed the revelation that she had from God, and that was the stories that **Canaanites were telling about God's miracles for the Israelites.** *Joshua 2:9-10, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. / For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. / And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD you God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath."*
 - 5) How do we know she had faith? BY HER WORKS.
 - (i) She showed here faith by hiding the spies.
 - (ii) She showed her faith by her love for the Lord's people.
- 3. Two results of faith: the walls fell; Rahab's family saved.
 - a. The walls of the city of Jericho fell: **military** victory
 - 1) This began Israel's conquest of the land.
 - 2) This miracle put great fear into the hearts of the Canaanites.
 - 3) Remember Moses' faith: "faith's reward." God blesses faith with a victorious life.
 - b. Rahab and her family were saved and joined the Israelites: **spiritual** victory.
 - 1) Their salvation shows God's grace.
 - 2) Any Canaanite who would believe God's promises would likewise have been saved.
 - 3) The grand result of our faith is forgiveness; eternal deliverance from the wrath that is sure to come against sin.
- 4. Two results of disobedience: every person in Jericho killed; every animal also killed.
 - a. Every person in Jericho was killed.
 - b. Every animal in Jericho was killed. *Joshua 6:21, "And they utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword."*
 - c. Summary: Jericho was under God's curse forever.
 - 1) *Joshua 6:24, "they burned the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only the silver ..."*
 - 2) *Joshua 6:26, "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the LORD is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.'"*
- 5. Two lessons of faith:
 - a. Faith = obedience; unbelief = disobedience (see [John 3:36](#)).
 - b. Faith knows no bias; it transforms any repentant and believing sinner.
 - 1) Any sinner, no matter how wicked, will be saved if he believes God's promises.
 - 2) We do not have to know a lot to believe. We must believe that portion of truth that we do know.
 - 3) Rahab is called the "harlot" four times [[Joshua 6:17](#); [6:25](#); [Hebrews 11:31](#); [James 2:25](#)] and another time Joshua doesn't name her but designates her the harlot ["go into the harlot's house" -- [Joshua 6:22](#)].
 - 4) Her past was sinful, but her future was glorious.

- (i) She was a grandmother of David the king.
- (ii) She married Salmon, and they had Boaz, who married Ruth.
- (iii) Boaz and Ruth had Jesse, who had David.
- (iv) She became one of the illustrious mothers of Israel.
- (v) Matthew 1:5, “*And to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab*”
 - Rahab - Salmon (great-great-grandparents)
 - Boaz - Ruth (great grandparents)
 - Obed (grandparents)
 - Jesse (parents)
 - David

F. The faith of those living in the kingdom (Heb. 11:32-38)

1. Introduction
 - a. If we continued to study the faith of OT saints in detail, it would take us too long.
 - 1) The time would “fail” us.
 - 2) We should be encouraged and challenged to think how many strong believers God has had.
 - 3) We are not alone in serving Him.
 - b. We can only mention a few names and then summarize what they and others did by faith.
 - 1) The names we would mention are Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel.
 - 2) The “prophets” are too numerous to mention by name, but we could talk of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, Micah and others.
 - 3) The names fall into three time divisions: the judges, the kings, and the prophets.
 - 4) Chronology is not important here: the correct order of the judges is Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samuel.
 - c. You might not think of Samson as an example of faith; but our evaluation would be wrong, for God says he did some mighty acts by faith. More about him later.
2. They conquered kingdoms
 - a. Note: Each of the “judges” mentioned conquered a different people –
 - 1) Gideon, the Midianites (Judges 6-8).
 - (i) Defeated them with 300 men!
 - (ii) Learn: God is not so interested in numbers as in the quality of faith and zeal.
 - (iii) Gideon was at first only a frightened farmer’s son; but his faith grew.
 - (iv) He was always a humble believer.
 1. After his victory, the people wanted him to rule over them.
 2. His response: “*I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you*” (Judges 8:23).
 - 2) Barak, the Canaanites (Judges 4-5)
 - (i) Against Sisera and his chariots -- infantry against a war machine.
 - (ii) Victory remembered in song (Judges 5).
 - (iii) Learn: True faith will praise God for His help and grace and victory.
 - 3) Samson, the Philistines (Judges 12-16)
 - (i) He failed often, but his faith did not fail (die).
 - (ii) Learn: our greatest victory may be to die by faith.
 - (iii) He gave his life to defeat the enemy.
 - 4) Jephthah, the Amorites and the Ammonites (Judges 11-12)
 - (i) God’s grace is not biased: Jephthah was the son of a harlot (Judges 11:1).
 - (ii) Learn:
 1. God can use anyone who will obey him.
 2. God will often reverse the fortunes of the man who believes His promises. Jephthah was originally rejected by his half-brothers (11:2), but later they asked him to rule over them (11:6).
 - b. The list of conquerors is not limited to those written here.
 - 1) There were other judges: Othniel (3:7-11), Ehud (3:15-25), and Shamgar (3:31).
 - 2) Kings, such as Saul and David were also conquerors.
3. They performed acts of righteousness. (literally as KJV = “**worked righteousness**”)
 - a. Note the connection between faith and righteousness: the one with faith will do what is righteous.
 - b. This phrase has special reference to godly rulers: they ruled righteously over their people. They did not abuse their power.

- 1) Samuel (1 Samuel 12:3-5)
 - 2) David (2 Samuel 8:15, “So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.”)
 - 3) Solomon (1 Kings 10:9, “Blessed be the LORD your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because the LORD loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness.”)
 - 4) The Messiah (Isaiah 9:7, “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”)
 - 5) Learn: righteousness is the only enduring foundation for a nation. The less righteousness, the sooner that nation falls.
4. **They obtained promises.**
- a. The object of our faith is the promises of God: we believe what God has said.
 - b. When we believe His promise, we also “obtain” it either in this life or in heaven.
 - c. Believers “obtain the promise”; unbelievers do not.
 - 1) Joshua 21:45, “Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.”
 - 2) Caleb claimed the promise forty years after it was given. (Joshua 14:12, “Now then, give me this hill country, about which the LORD spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the LORD will be with me, and I shall drive them out as the LORD has spoken.”)
 - 3) David too remembered God’s promises to Abraham. (Psalms 105:42-45, “For He remembered His holy word with Abraham His servant; and He brought forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with a joyful shout. He gave them also the lands of the nations, that they might take possession of the fruit of the peoples’ labor, so that they might keep His statutes, and observe His law, Praise the LORD!”) *God kept His promise so that they might trust His Word and do it.
 - d. Learn: God’s promises have always comforted and encouraged Christians.
 - 1) God cannot lie; we know that He will keep His promise and that we can trust Him fully.
 - 2) We can stand on the promises that cannot fail, even when the howling storms of doubt and fear assail. By the living Word of God I shall prevail, standing on the promises of God! What promises are you standing on today?
5. **They shut the mouths of lions.**
- a. Samson was the first to do this. (Judges 14:5-6, “Then Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came as far as the vineyards of Timnah; and behold, a young lion came roaring toward him. And the spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, so that he tore him as one tears a kid though he had nothing in his hand.”)
 - b. David also did it. (1 Samuel 17:36, “Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.”)
 - c. Daniel did not do it literally, but God did it for him because of his faith. (Daniel 6:22-23, “May God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime. Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.”)
 - d. The Lord did it figuratively for Paul when he delivered Paul from Nero’s and death’s clutches during his first Roman imprisonment. (2 Timothy 4:17, “But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion’s mouth.”)
 - e. The Lord does it for us, when we by faith resist the devil’s lies and temptations. 1 Peter 5:8-9, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert, your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”
 - f. Learn:
 - 1) We must not only be awake but always alert to the evils and spiritual dangers around us.
 - 2) We must never flee the devil [though we flee from evil]; rather we must stand against him by holding firmly to the truths of the gospel, the faith.
 - 3) We do not survive by our own tenacity but by our faith in what Christ has done.
 - 4) Our experience is not unique; Christians all over the world are having their faith tested.
6. **They quenched the power of fire (11:34).**

- a. Fire can refer to a severe trial.
 - 1) The Psalmist said that God had allowed them to go “through fire and water” but that in the end, the Lord “*brought them out into a place of abundance*” (*Psalms 66:12*).
 - 2) Isaiah, too, knew what it meant for God to deliver from a difficult time. *Isaiah 43:2b*, “... *when you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.*”
 - 3) Those who walk by faith will “quench the power of fire,” because God will protect them from spiritual damage.
 - 4) By faith, we also quench Satan’s fiery darts, his lies, his accusations, his deceptions.
- b. Fire can also be literal, as in the case of Daniel’s three friends: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (*Daniel 3:19-28*).
 - 1) Their faith was strong, for they did not fear man or what man could do.
 - 2) “*If it be so [that we are thrown into the furnace], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*” (*3:17-18*)
7. **They escaped the edge of the sword.**
 - a. God protected David from Saul.
 - 1) *1 Samuel 20:1*
 - 2) *Psalms 144:10*, “*It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.*”
 - b. God protected Elijah from Jezebel (*1 Kings 19:2ff*).
 - c. God protected Elisha from the king of Syria, enraged at Elisha who prophetically told the king of Israel about the Syrian’s plans (*2 Kings 6:11-23*).
 - d. Note: God does not always deliver us from the sword: Isaiah was “sawn asunder” (v. 37).
8. **From weakness they were made strong.**
 - a. This sums up what God does for all believers when we trust Him.
 - 1) Hezekiah was physically weak and by faith he was made well: he believed God’s promise of healing. *Isaiah 38:5*, “*Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your fathers David, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears, behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.’*”
 - 2) Sarah was also physically “weak” in that she was barren, but God made her strong (v. 11).
 - 3) Many other examples of the spiritually weak who were made strong:
 - (i) Israel before the Canaanites
 - (ii) Gideon before the Midianites
 - (iii) David before Saul
 - (iv) Jeremiah before the hostile Jews
 - b. Our weakness magnifies God’s strength.
 - c. When we trust ourselves we are helpless; when we trust Him we have omnipotence supporting us.
 - d. Learn:
 - 1) Have we ever felt inadequate to do something God has commanded us to do?
 - 2) That is good, for like Paul we are to glory in our infirmities, so that God can do the required work through us. *2 Cor. 12:9-10*, “*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*”
9. **They became mighty in war (11:34d).**
 - a. David – see *Psalms 18:29, 34, 37-42, 47*; v. 39, “*For Thou hast girded me with strength for battle; Thou hast subdued under me those who rose up against me.*”
 - b. Note the connection of coming after “out of weakness made strong.” This teaches that first we need an admission of needing the Lord’s help, and then we can be strong and courageous.
10. **They put foreign armies to flight (11:34e).**
 - a. Some of those who did this were Joshua, the Judges, and David.
 - b. Learn: there is opposition to truth and we will have to do spiritual battle. The word “foreign” suggests a different religion, peoples who worshipped false gods, peoples who rejected the true and living God.
 - c. Asa, when the Ethiopians came to fight the Israelites -- *2 Chronicles 14:11*, “*Then Asa called to the LORD his God, and said, ‘LORD, there is no one besides Thee to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in Thee, and in Thy name have come against this multitude. O LORD, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee.’ So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.*”
 - d. Another who did this was Jehoshaphat, when the Ammonites, Moabites, and others allied themselves against Israel.

- 1) *2 Chronicles 20:20b*, “Jehoshaphat stood and said, “listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the LORD your God, and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed.”
- 2) The result was that the consortium fought against the inhabitants of Mount Seir and then fought against each other. All Israel had to do was to collect the spoils (*vv. 24-25*).
11. **Women received back their dead by resurrection** (v. 35a).
 - a. Elijah and the woman of Zarephath (*1 Kings 17:17*)
 - b. Elisha and the Shunammite woman (*2 Kings 4:8*)
 - c. Widow of Nain (*Luke 7:11ff*)
 - d. Martha and Mary (*John 11*)
 - e. Widows of Joppa of their friend Dorcas (*Acts 9:36ff*)
12. Transition
 - a. We have seen the great victories won by faith.
 - 1) By faith God’s people of the past conquered kingdoms, stopped the mouths of lions, became strong, and even received them back by resurrection.
 - 2) These are glorious and spectacular acts of faith.
 - b. We might think, though, that those special victories are not what we are experiencing.
 - 1) The readers of Hebrews were certainly not militarily victorious; rather they were even having their houses robbed (*10:34*).
 - 2) They were suffering.
 - 3) Can we be walking by faith if we are suffering?
 - c. Yes! Sometimes the greatest act of faith is to endure suffering joyfully.
 - 1) The next verses tell us of those who by faith endured great trials.
 - 2) The trials mentioned are as severe as man can experience.
 - 3) The greatest faith of all is that which can suffer patiently for the Lord.
 - 4) The fact is that “*through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*” (*Acts 14:22*).
 - d. Note: all of the trials are solely on account of faith. They suffered because they believed in God and followed Him faithfully.
13. **Others were tortured, not accepting their release in order that they might obtain a better resurrection** (35b, c)
 - a. These triumphed through what the world would consider failure.
 - b. There are two kinds of resurrection: one is to this same world, like those mentioned above such as Lazarus and the widows’ sons; the second is to a better life, the eternal life with the Lord in heaven. This resurrection is the better of the two!
 - c. Examples:
 - 1) Jeremiah was tortured, but not to death.
 - 2) This text in Hebrews seems to refer to Eleazar, an aged scribe during the Maccabean period who chose “death with renown rather than life with pollution.”
 - 3) Also during the same time, a mother and seven brothers were tortured to death because they refused to renounce the truth and eat swine’s flesh.
 - (i) Their torture included: tearing out the tongue, scalping, mutilation, and frying over the flames (*2 Maccabees 7:4ff*).
 - (ii) This was done by Antiochus, the Seleucid (Syrian) king.
 - 4) Note: the torture envisioned here is the (*τυμπανον* = a tympanum or drum) wheel-like instrument upon which people were stretched as though they were skins and then horribly beaten with clubs or thongs.
 - (i) This corresponds to the verb here = *εντυπανισθησαν*.
 - (ii) The victim was stretched on this rack and then beaten to death.
 - 5) The choice was clear to these people: if they accepted deliverance they would be denying the truth and the Lord.
 - 6) Therefore, they chose death over apostasy! Would we?
14. **They experienced mockings, scourgings, chains and imprisonment** (36).
 - a. Jeremiah was beaten and publicly mocked.
 - 1) *Jer. 20:2*, “Pashur had Jeremiah the prophet beaten, and put him in the stocks ...”
 - 2) *Jer. 20:7c-8*, “I have become a laughingstock all day long. For each time I speak, I cry aloud; I proclaim violence and destruction, because for me the word of the LORD has resulted in reproach and derision all day long.”

- 3) *Jer. 35:15*, “then the officials were angry at Jeremiah and beat him, and they put him in jail in the house of Jonathan the scribe, which they had made into the prison. For Jeremiah had come into the dungeon, that is, the vaulted cell; and Jeremiah stayed there many days.”
- 4) *Jer. 38:5*, “Then they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchijah the king’s son, which was in the court of the guardhouse; and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. Now in the cistern there was no water but only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud.”
- b. This reminds us of what Jesus suffered for us.
15. **They were stoned (37a).**
 - a. Zechariah the priest pronounced God’s judgment upon his fellow Jews for their disobedience to God’s commands.
 - 1) In response, Joash the king, commanded him to be stoned, even though this priest was the son of the couple who had saved Joash’s life (2 Chron. 22:10-12) and raised him for six years (22:12).
 - 2) *2 Chron. 24:20-22*, “Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoida the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, ‘Thus God has said, ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.’ So they conspired against him and the command of the king [Joash] they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoida had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, ‘May the LORD see and avenge!’”
 - 3) In other words, Joash returned evil for good.
 - b. Tradition (Jerome, Tertullian, Hippolytus) has it that Jeremiah was stoned to death in Egypt by his fellow Jews.
16. **They were sawn in two.** (See extra-biblical sources [Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Jerome, Talmudic books, and the pseudepigraphic Jewish book, The Martyrdom of Isaiah] record that Isaiah was cut in two by a wooden saw.
17. **They were tempted.**
 - a. Their faith was tested to the limit.
 - b. The prospect of death makes some renounce the Lord, but most are made stronger and become martyrs for the Lord.
18. **They were put to death with the sword.**
 - a. *1 Kings 19:10*, “... the sons of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” This happened in the days of Elijah and king Ahab.
 - b. *Jeremiah 26:20, 23*, “There was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Uriah the son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim; and he prophesied against this city and against this land words similar to all those of Jeremiah. / And they brought Uriah from Egypt and led him to King Jehoiakim, who slew him with a sword, and cast his dead body into the burial place of the common people.”
 - c. Learn:
 - 1) Be careful about thinking you understand God’s will for others. Some OT saints were spectacularly delivered, but others were mistreated, humiliated, and killed.
 - 2) Do not be surprised when some people react violently against the truth. The ones killed were killed for speaking the truth about God’s judgment.
 - 3) Do not expect to be treated differently from the way our master was treated. *John 15:20*, “... a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”
19. **They accepted a life of poverty, ill-treatment, and being displaced (11:37b-38)**
 - a. Their trials
 - 1) Trial of POVERTY:
 - (i) They went about in sheepskins and goatskins.
 - (ii) They were destitute.
 - 2) Trial of AFFLICTION
 - (i) They were afflicted.
 - (ii) They were ill-treated.
 - 3) Trial of HOMELESSNESS: they were wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.
 - (i) They were hiding from their persecutors.
 - (ii) They were like lost sheep hunted by wolves.
 - (iii) *1 Kings 18:4*, “... Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.”

- b. Their worth
 - 1) Compared to them, the worldly person is worth nothing.
 - 2) Learn here the fierce hatred of the world for God and His people.
 - 3) Those who refuse the world and its lusts are rejected by the world.
 - 4) In contrast with the world's darkness, their light shines all the brighter.
 - 5) They know that the "world passes away," but "they that do the will of God abide forever."
 - 6) God sets infinite value on their souls and eternal redemption.
- 20. A summary of their acts of faith:
 - a. Some were victorious through miraculous help from God (11:32-35a).
 - b. Some were victorious through suffering and even death (11:35b-38).

G. Conclusion (11:39-40)

- 1. Their TESTIMONY
 - a. By faith they did many great acts, including quenching the power of fire and accepting a life of poverty. They did not quit because of difficulties, but by faith continued to obey the Lord.
 - b. By faith they waited for the fulfillment of God's promise. We also are awaiting the fulfillment of some of God's promises.
- 2. Their HOPE
 - a. That they would receive what God has promised.
 - 1) God had promised a Deliverer, a Messiah.
 - (i) They did not see the Messiah.
 - (ii) We know that Jesus was the fulfillment of that promise. *2 Cor. 1:20, "For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."*
 - 2) God had promised an eternal kingdom of blessedness through that Messiah.
 - b. That they would be perfected.
 - 1) They will be perfected with us.
 - 2) God's plan of salvation and its benefits is the same for them and for us.
 - 3) We too are awaiting the completion of that number who will be saved.
 - (i) OT saints, along with those saved in NT times until the Lord's Coming in glory, will be glorified together at that day.
 - (ii) We with them, are still awaiting:
 - 1. The renewal of all creation and the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:21-25).
 - 2. The new heavens and the new earth (2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:1-5).
 - 4) Note: the emphasis throughout the book is the superiority of Christ over the way of the Law.
 - (i) Christ is a better messenger (1:1-3:6).
 - (ii) Christ provides a better rest (3:7-4:13).
 - (iii) Christ is a better priest (4:14-8:5).
 - (iv) Christ fulfilled a better covenant (8:6-9:28).
 - (v) Christ became a better sacrifice (10).
 - (vi) The better way of living is by faith in Christ (11).
 - (vii) Christ provides a better kingdom (12).
 - (viii) The best practice is obedience (13).

VII.A BETTER KINGDOM (12:1-29; *28)

A. Consider the King of the kingdom (12:1-3).

- 1. Introduction
 - a. In this chapter we have the 5th and 6th warnings of the book.

1) <u>2:1-4</u>	=	Do not neglect salvation
2) <u>3:6b-4:2</u>	=	Do not follow the example of the Israelites in the wilderness
3) <u>5:11-6:8</u>	=	Do not allow spiritual stagnation which can result in apostasy
4) <u>10:26-31</u>	=	Do not despise Jesus' bloody sacrifice
5) <u>12:15-17</u>	=	Do not follow the example of Esau
6) <u>12:25-29</u>	=	Do not refuse the One who speaks from heaven
 - b. The theme of the chapter is to endure the spiritual conflict by thinking upon Christ.
- 2. By considering Him we follow the example of OT saints (12:1a).

- a. Two words give us the idea of “considering” Christ.
 - 1) The first is “to fix our eyes upon” (v. 2).
 - 2) The second is “consider” (v. 3).
 - 3) Since this thought occurs twice, it provides the theme for this section.
 - b. The OT saints are called “witnesses.”
 - 1) This does not mean they are spectators.
 - (i) The idea that the saints in heaven are watching our lives and cheering us on is not biblical.
 - (ii) Why would they want to watch us when they have heaven’s glories to contemplate?
 - (iii) Also the context suggests that we are to look at them, not them at us.
 - (iv) Also, the word elsewhere means one who bears testimony to his own experience.
 1. Verb = 7:8,17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5
 2. Noun (μαρτυριον) = 3:5 Noun (μαρτυρ) = *10:28; 12:1
 - 2) It means they are ones who bear testimony with their lives.
 - (i) And there are many of these, like a mass of clouds.
 - (ii) We are not alone. The number is increasing daily.
 - (iii) When we consider their example, we learn that they lived by faith, they lived by looking at eternal things, by looking at God, not at their circumstances.
 - (iv) When we look at the King of the Kingdom we are imitating the example of those in chapter 11.
3. By considering Him we overcome our sin (12:1b).
- a. Note: Here we have another exhortation in this book.
 - b. Sin is here termed an “encumbrance.”
 - 1) “Encumbrance” refers both to weight and to mass, to bulk. [word used only here]
 - (i) There are certain sins that are so big that they would overwhelm us.
 - (ii) We are to “lay this aside” as we would old clothes.
 - (iii) Note: Olympic runners run with few clothes. So that we can better run the race, we are to lay aside anything that slows us down.
 - 2) *Colossians 3:8, “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.”*
 - c. Sin is also a hindrance, something that “entangles” us.
 - 1) It has wrapped itself around us and clings to us (so the Japanese) and taken away our freedom.
 - 2) Because of these kinds of sins, we are limited in our service for the Lord.
 - d. Learn:
 - 1) We must think about our lives and determine to avoid any practice that hinders us spiritually.
 - (i) The practice may be good in itself, but it may hinder us.
 - (ii) If we pray honestly, the Lord will teach us what things “beset” us.
 - 2) We must deny ourselves and take up Jesus’ cross daily.
4. By considering Him we can run the race (12:1c).
- a. Here is the second exhortation in this verse: let us run the race.
 - b. The meaning of the word “**race**” = (αγων).
 - 1) The word emphasizes the strain and struggle of the race.
 - 2) The wind of the world the flesh and the devil is constantly in our faces.
 - c. The race is not easy, but we have good reasons to keep running.
 - d. How to run = “**with patience**.”
 - 1) Not with doubt, or despair.
 - 2) “**Run**” is present tense and indicates we must keep on running.
5. By considering Him we can overcome spiritual weariness (12:2-3). Recall that we are to consider “Jesus,” the Savior.
- a. Consider His work regarding our faith (12:2a).
 - 1) *He began our faith*; He is the author of faith.
 - (i) Other uses of “**αρχηγον**”:
 1. 2:10, “... in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the **author** of their salvation through sufferings.”

2. *Acts 3:15*, “but put to death the **Prince** of life, the one whom God raised from the dead.”
3. *Acts 5:31*, “He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a **Prince** and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”
- (ii) Some make the word to mean leader or captain, in the sense of example, but the parallelism with “perfecter” makes this meaning unlikely here.
 1. If that is the meaning here, then He has set the perfect example of total trust for us.
 2. He goes before us, as a brave leader goes before his soldiers, to show us how to live by faith.
 3. The OT examples were good, but let us look particularly at the leader of our faith, the Lord Jesus Himself.
- (iii) If the meaning is “author,” then it means that Jesus gave us faith to begin with, and the next phrase teaches that He will perfect it.
 1. He has begun a good work in us and He will complete it.
 2. *Phil. 1:6*, “... He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”
 3. *1 Cor. 1:8*, “who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- 2) *He will perfect our faith.*
 - (i) “**τελειωτην**” used only here.
 - (ii) Uses of the verb “**τελειω**”
 1. *2:10* = to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.
 2. *5:9* = and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation
 3. *7:19* = (for the Law made nothing perfect)
 4. *7:28* = ... but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.
 5. *9:9* = ... both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshiper perfect in conscience.
 6. *10:1* = for the law ... can never ... make perfect those who draw near.
 7. *10:14* = for by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified
 8. *11:40* = because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect
 9. *12:23* = ... and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.
 - (iii) From the use of the verb it seems clear that the idea of perfecting, of completing, of bringing to ultimate fulfillment, is implicit in the word.
 - (iv) Thus the interpretation is that He began and will perfect our faith. We need more than an example; we need His gracious working to perfect us.
 - (v) Learn:
 1. God is continually working in us both to will and to do His good pleasure.
 2. When faith seems weak, let us ask Him to strengthen it!
 - a. *Mark 9:24*, “Immediately the boy’s father cried out and began saying, ‘I do believe; help me in my unbelief.’”
 - b. *Luke 17:5*, “And the apostles said to the Lord. ‘Increase our faith.’”
- b. Consider His example (*12:2-3*).
 - 1) He looked beyond the trial to future joy. That is, He “**despised**” the trial by comparing it to His future joy.
 - (i) Trial of the cross; the trial of pain and shame.
 1. He “**endured the cross.**”
 - a. His whole life pointed to the cross.
 - b. Calvary is the reason for Bethlehem.
 - c. He set His face to go to Jerusalem, knowing fully what would happen to Him there (cf. *Isaiah 50:7*).
 - d. He could have avoided the cross and the trial; but He endured it for the joy that awaited Him.
 2. Recall the abuse:
 - a. Recall the physical abuse that He endured on the way to the cross.

- b. Recall the verbal abuse, the shame that He endured both on the way to the cross and while on the cross.
 - c. What a trial it was for the Righteous One to be treated unrighteously.
 - d. What a trial for the One who opened not His mouth, to be reviled and blasphemed.
 - 3. Above all, recall that the punishment of the cross was for the basest, vilest criminals. Roman law prohibited that one of its citizens be punished by crucifixion.
 - 4. To this day, the “preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.”
 - 5. But because Jesus suffered the most shameful punishment, we know that He can save the worst, most degraded sinner.
 - 6. The Just One died for the unjust that He might bring us to God! (1 Peter 3:18).
- (ii) Trial of hostility (12:3).
 - 1. “Hostility” includes verbal abuse (the word is *αντιλογια*), but it is broader, suggesting also all of the anger and hatred of the crowds as well as of the evil spirit world.
 - 2. All peoples, that is, the Jews and the Gentiles, “gathered together against God’s Holy Servant” (Acts 4:27).
 - 3. What a trial, for the Loving One who gave peace and rest, to face and endure the hatred and hostility of the crowds.
 - 4. What a trial for the One who wept over Jerusalem to have Jerusalem mock and jeer at Him.
- (iii) Future joy = of multitudes saved and His reign forever over these redeemed and purified souls.
 - 1. He now rejoices over every sinner who repents, over every lost sheep that returns unto the Shepherd and Bishop of its soul.
 - 2. Remember too that Jesus’ joy was to do His Father’s will.
 - 3. Note that He did experience the joy, for He was blessed for His obedience: He **sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**.
- 2) The value for us in considering Him.
 - (i) “**Consider**” suggests the idea of comparison, of “reckoning.”
 - 1. The idea is that we are to meditate on what He has done and count up all of His blessings.
 - 2. Then we are to compare them with the trial we are facing.
 - (ii) Remember that some of these readers were thinking of forsaking the Lord (2:1; 3:12, 14; 4:1, 11, 16; 6:4-6, 11; 10:23, 26ff, 35f, 39).
 - (iii) Consider His work; Consider His trials; Consider the future joy that awaits those who do not turn back.
 - (iv) Note: the key aspect of Jesus’ faith was His “endurance,” His perseverance (vv. 2, 3). *Isaiah 50:7*, “For the LORD God helps Me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”
 - (v) Are we setting our face like a flint and preserving with the confidence that we will not be ashamed?

B. Prepare for the kingdom (12:4-17).

- 1. By accepting God’s discipline (12:4-13)
 - a. Do not despise it, for it shows God’s love (12:4-6).
 - 1) Our discipline is not as severe as Christ’s sufferings (4).
 - (i) Again we see that these Christians were thinking of quitting, or giving up because of the severity of their trials.
 - (ii) The writer tells them they have not resisted sin as strongly as Jesus did. He is implying that they need to be more zealous in resisting sin.
 - (iii) None had yet become martyrs for the faith in “resisting unto blood.”
 - 2) Our discipline shows God’s love (5-6).
 - (i) Let us remember what God’s Word says to us about discipline.
 - 1. These believers seem to have forgotten God’s Word on this subject.
 - 2. God’s Word is here called an “exhortation.”
 - a. Recall that this book is a “word of exhortation.”
 - b. God challenges us and encourages us through His Word.
 - c. The word of Scripture is treated as the voice of God talking with man.

3. The quotation is from *Proverbs 3:11-12*: “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.”
- (ii) The point then is clear: when a father loves his child, he will discipline him to keep him from greater danger and trouble. Similarly, God disciplines every Christian because He loves each one.
- (iii) Note how discipline is described:
 1. Discipline (noun and verb): [**παιδεια; παιδευω**]
 - a. To the Greek this meant “education” and included instruction, correction, chastening.
 - i. *Ephesians 6:4*, “... but bring them up in the **training** and admonition of the Lord.”
 - ii. *Acts 7:22*, “And Moses was learned in all the **wisdom** of the Egyptians.”
 - iii. *2 Tim. 3:16*, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for **correction**, for instruction in righteousness.”
 - b. Verses in Proverbs which emphasize the value of this correction in the human family.
 - i. *Proverbs 13:24*, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.”
 - ii. *Proverbs 22:15*, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”
 - iii. *Proverbs 23:13*, “Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol.”
 - c. Note: These verses show God’s estimation of discipline. It is proper for a parent to use discipline which includes painful chastisement as well as patient instruction.
 2. Are reproved: [**ελεγχω**]
 - a. This word suggests not just accused, but actually guilty of the charge.
 - b. It also suggests that the one rebuked is made to see his wrong.
 - c. See its use in John’s writings:
 - i. *Rev. 3:19*, “Those whom I love, I **reprove** and discipline.”
 - ii. *John 8:46*, “Which one of you **convicts** me of sin.”
 - iii. *James 2:9*, “but if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are **convicted by the law as transgressors**.” Note the certainty of guilt.
 - d. Learn: when the Lord reproves us, He knows we need it.
 3. Scourges: [**μαστιγωω**] = to whip, flog, scourge
 - a. This is the same word Jesus used when He foretold His suffering and death (*Matthew 20:19*).
 - b. This word clearly teaches that the chastening will not be easy for us to accept.
 - c. But this is our preparation for the kingdom: ‘Accept the Lord’s chastening.’
- (iv) Note possible responses to God’s discipline:
 1. Forget its value.
 - a. These believers had forgotten the “exhortation” in the Word about the value of chastening.
 - i. The “exhortation” should be an “encouragement” [**παρακλησις** can have this meaning].
 - ii. We should receive encouragement from God’s chastening, for, remember, it shows His love.
 - iii. Knowing that God loves me encourages and comforts me.
 - b. Much of our problem is that we forget what God has said about how we should live and how He loves us and how He shows that love. God has often spoken about the blessing of chastening.
 - i. *Job 5:17*, “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.”
 - ii. *Psalms 94:12*, “Blessed is the man whom Thou dost chasten, O LORD, and dost teach out of Thy law.”
 - iii. *Revelation 3:12*, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.”
 - c. As far as I could tell in a quick look at references Jesus used the imperative form of remember only once.
 - i. Note that in this case too the topic is that of persecution, with persecution being the other side of the coin of chastening.

- ii. *John 15:20*, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.”
 2. Regard lightly:
 - a. In the OT the word means to:
 - i. Abhor, hate, reject -- *Amos 5:21*, “I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.”
 - ii. Reject -- Men have rejected the “head of the corner” (*Psalm 118:22*).
 - iii. So the meaning then for “despise” is to reject, to refuse, to dislike God’s chastening.
 - b. We despise God’s chastening when we:
 - i. Become angry or impatient with it.
 - ii. Complain.
 - iii. Do not try to learn from it and improve.
 3. Faint:
 - a. To faint means to grow so weary of the fight that we give up.
 - b. It is not wrong to grow weary in body, but we must not grow weary in soul to the point that we give up.
 - c. This is the danger when we are chastened; we might want to give up the fight against our own sin.
 - d. “**ἐκλυω**” is used 5 times in Scripture.
 - i. Two times in the gospels of the people who followed him and were hungry and he fed them with seven loaves and a few fish (*Mt. 15:32*; *Mk. 8:3*)
 - ii. One time in *Galatians, 6:9*, “we will reap if we faint not.”
 - iii. Two times in Hebrews 12 (*3, 5*).
 - (v) Note whom God disciplines:
 1. Those whom He loves.
 2. Those whom He receives.
 3. Learn: God’s discipline shows His love, it shows that He has received us (more on this idea in the next verses).
- b. Endure it for it confirms that you are God’s child (*12:7-8*).
- 1) Every true son receives his father’s discipline (*7*).
 - (i) “**It is for discipline that you endure.**”
 1. This phrase literally says, “into discipline you endure” = the result of enduring is that we receive discipline.
 2. In other words, we are to persevere through difficulty, because through it we learn.
 3. Remember:
 - a. Discipline is not simply punishment, but correction, training, moral and spiritual education.
 - b. Recall *Acts 7:22*, “And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians.”
 - c. *Acts 22:3*, “... educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers.”
 - (ii) We must also remember that He is always treating us as sons.
 1. This is another way of saying the same thing as above.
 - a. The trials God allows us to face are not to hurt us but to train us; they come not from anger but from God’s Fatherly love.
 - b. *Deut. 8:5*, “Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was discipling you just as a man disciplines his son.” (Note: refers to living in the wilderness)
 - c. *2 Samuel 7:14*, “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but thy lovingkindness shall not depart from him.” (Note: refers to David’s son)
 2. Note: this verse teaches much about proper child rearing.
 - a. Any father who does not train his children is not meeting his responsibility.
 - b. Parents must discipline their children to prepare them for adult life. (More about this idea in later verses).
 - 2) The one who does not receive discipline is not a legitimate son (**bastards**) (*8*).
 - (i) The writer emphasizes with two statements the truth that all true sons are disciplined:

1. **If you be without discipline (chastisement)** ... you are illegitimate.
 2. **All have become partakers**
- (ii) Note how he describes those who sin but experience no discipline: illegitimate children and not sons.
- (iii) Some earthly fathers fail in this responsibility, but God does not. David never “caused any pain” to his son Adonijah, and this son rebelled against him and tried to become king (1 Kings 1:5,6).
- c. Submit to it for it produces good fruit – life, holiness, peace, righteousness (12:9-11).
- 1) Submit out of respect. (12:9)
 - (i) We respected our earthly fathers for their discipline.
 - (ii) The problem is that most people do not submit to God, for they do not “respect” the Son. Luke 20:13, “*And the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’*”
 - (iii) Note: if we received discipline from our parents with respect we will have little trouble receiving it from the Lord. We will respect Him. BUT, children who do not receive discipline and who do not respect their earthly father will have more difficulty respecting their heavenly father.
 - (iv) Note: a different word is used: we *reverence* our earthly fathers; we *submit* to our Heavenly father. The difference is that of respect and complete submission.
 - 2) Submit to **the Father of spirits**. (12:9)
 - (i) Notice the contrast:
 1. Earthly fathers, fathers of only physical beings, in contrast to Him who is the Father of all living creatures (Father of spirits).
 2. Fathers of the physical life; Father of the spiritual life, of eternal life.
 - (ii) It is as Jesus warned, do not fear those who can destroy the body but afterward have no more they can do, but fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna (Matthew 10:28).
 - 3) Submit because the fruit of discipline is good.
 - (i) We receive “**life**” (9).
 1. True life, true blessings, true joy, come not from freedom from constraint but in complete submission.
 2. This suggests what we have learned before, that faith and obedience are related. John 3:36, “*He who believes the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*”
 - (ii) Discipline produces **holiness** (10).
 1. Note again two contrasts:
 - a. Earthly fathers discipline us only for a short time (only while we are children), but God disciplines us until we reach perfect holiness (not directly stated but implied).
 - b. The discipline of earthly fathers was as seemed best to them (and thus was not always perfect in motive or result), but God disciplines perfectly, producing holiness. Fathers’ mistakes = favoritism; excessive anger; lack of full knowledge of circumstances.
 2. Note about holiness:
 - a. Trials and affliction lead us to greater holiness.
 - b. Holiness is being different because pure, like the Lord.
 - c. Holiness is “His” to give to us. We have none of our own.
 3. Holiness is “**for our good**” (12:10).
 - a. Its benefits are always good.
 - b. Unholiness is always bad.
 - (iii) It produces **righteousness**.
 1. The fruit is called “**peaceable**” because the conflict is over; we have submitted and God has given our hearts rest even in trouble.
 2. Note how David thanks God for chastening and says that the result will be “relief.” -- Psalms 94:12-13, “*Blessed is the man whom Thou dost chasten, O LORD, and dost teach out of thy law; that thou mayest grant him relief from the days of adversity, until a pit is dug for the wicked.*”
 3. It is called “righteousness” because it makes us more like the Righteous One.

4. We show that we have been declared righteous by our response to God's chastening.
- (iv) Note that righteousness and peace go well together:
 1. Unrighteousness causes conflict, righteousness produces peace.
 2. The result of being declared righteous is peace with God.
 - a. *Isaiah 32:17*, "And the work of righteousness will be peace, and the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever."
 - b. *James 3:18*, "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."
- (v) Summarize:
 1. When we submit to God's chastening we benefit; we have peace in our hearts and the assurance that we have been made righteous.
 2. The ultimate blessing in this regard is to receive what Paul called the "crown of righteousness" (*2 Tim. 4:8*).
- 4) Submit all of your life (contrast with for a short time).
- 5) The major hindrance to submission (*12:11*) = The present pain: "**all discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful.**"
 - (i) To be effective, chastening has to be painful. But we do not like the pain.
 - (ii) If it is not painful, it will not keep us back from pursuing the wrong course.
- 6) The right response is not simply submission, but learning from the chastening: being trained by it.
 - (i) David said:
 1. *Psalms 119:67*, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Thy word."
 2. *Psalms 119:71*, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes."
 - (ii) Everything depends upon our response, our attitude. In order to be trained (**exercised**) by chastening we must accept it and try to learn from it.
 - (iii) Remember this: God's "judgment" of us is "chastening" that we might not be finally "judged with the world" (*1 Corinthians 11:32*).
- d. Help others to submit to it by your encouragement and example (*12:12-13*).
- 1) Strengthen the weak (*12:12-13*).
 - (i) The image is again of the athlete; he must run the race until the end and not quit midway.
 1. The tired athlete allows his hands to hang down and his knees want to buckle = some of these Christians were giving in to discouragement and were thinking of quitting.
 2. The struggle is serious and difficult, but they must continue because the issues are eternal.
 - (ii) The writer borrows the thought from *Isaiah 35:3*, "Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble. Say to those with anxious heart, 'Take courage, fear not. Behold your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will save you.'"
 - (iii) The "**hands hanging down**" refers to those who are tired and have quit fighting; they are relaxed when they should be struggling.
 1. "**παρημι**" = 2x in NT
 2. The other reference is *Luke 11:42*, about Pharisees "neglecting" other duties of mercy.
 - (iv) The "**feeble knees**" refers to being paralyzed.
 1. "**παρὰλυσ**" = 5x in NT (*Luke 5:18*, "a man who was paralyzed"; *Luke 5:24*, "the paralytic"; *Acts 8:7*, "many who had been paralyzed and lame"; *Acts 9:33*, "bedridden eight years, for he was paralyzed.")
 2. Thus these Christians were not only spiritually weak; they were also paralyzed by their lack of zeal and their fear of persecution.
 - (v) Learn:
 1. We encourage and strengthen others with God's promises: God WILL come and He WILL save us from all of our difficulties.
 - a. Note the part that words and instruction played in Job's helping the weak.
 - b. *Job 4:3-4*, "Behold you have admonished many, and you have strengthened weak hands. Your words have helped the tottering to stand, and you have strengthened feeble knees."
 2. Discouragement makes us ineffective in the Lord's work.
 - a. We become discouraged when we lose hope.
 - b. We become discouraged when we become weary in doing our duty.
 - c. We become discouraged when we are looking at ourselves, others and the difficulties rather than at the King of the Better Country.

3. We are obligated to encourage one another.
 - a. Every Christian will have his “weak” times. Elijah, David, Jeremiah and Paul did!
 - b. Recall 10:25, “*not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.*”
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:14, “*And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.*”
 - 2) Do your assigned duty: make straight paths for your feet (12:13a).
 - (i) Do not go the right hand or to the left; stay on the path God has given you.
 - (ii) Remember that the best way to help others is to set a good example before them.
 - (iii) Proverbs 4:26-27, “*Watch the path of your feet, and all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.*”
 - 3) Remove obstacles in the path of those who are struggling spiritually (the lame) [12:13b].
 - (i) The implication here is that by doing right ourselves, we help others stand up and do right.
 - (ii) Thus, one of the obstacles in the way of the weak is the lack of courage and resolve in those who are supposed to be strong.
 - (iii) The result of encouraging one another, or doing our own duty faithfully so as not to put obstacles before the weak will be that the lame are healed!
 - (iv) Few spiritual victories are more precious than seeing a weak believer made strong!
2. By pursuing peace and sanctification (12:14-17)
- a. What we must do: pursue peace and holiness (12:14).
 - 1) We must actively and diligently pursue peace with all men (12:14a).
 - (i) Statements about the blessedness of peace and peacemaking.
 1. “*Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the sons of God*” (Mt. 5:9).
 2. Abraham said, “*Let there be no strife between us or between our herdsmen.*” “*You take whichever part of the land you desire, and I will take the other.*” See Genesis 13:6-9.
 3. The blessing of peace with the brethren: Psalms 133:1, “*Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!*”
 4. The blessing of being at peace with those who oppose us.
 - a. Proverbs 16:7, “*When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.*”
 - b. Generally, God blesses those who do right with peace; He causes even the enemies to cease their opposition. When we sin, we are not only fighting against the world but against God.
 - c. Romans 12:18 speaks of being at peace as much as possible, and Romans 14:19 speaks of being at peace and trying to edify one another.
 - d. Ephesians 4:3 speaks of the need to “endeavor” to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
 - (ii) All of these verses make it clear that God wants us to not be at fault when there is not peace.
 1. Lack of peace comes from one of two things: pride or principle.
 2. If pride is the problem, we must humble ourselves.
 3. If principle is the problem, then we must commit that to God.
 4. Jesus said that because of His righteous principles there would not be peace at times (Mt. 10:34).
 - 2) What we must do: just as fervently pursue becoming more holy (12:14b).
 - (i) Note: It is not peace at any cost; it is a peace based on God’s Word, on purity.
 1. The person who does not show a desire to become holy will not see God, that is, will not enter heaven.
 - a. Rev. 21:27, “*and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*” SO THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE WRITTEN ARE HOLY PEOPLE!
 - b. Rev. 22:14-15, “*Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.*”

- i. Note: The cleansing and then the entrance.
 - ii. Those who are not cleansed by the blood cannot enter.
 2. The unholy person would not want to be in heaven; he would be uncomfortable and out of place.
 - (ii) The issue is will we receive God's "holy" commandments. If we accept God's Word we will want to live holy lives. See 2 Peter 2:21-22, *"For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, 'A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT,' and 'A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.'"*
 - (iii) The reward: we shall see God!
 1. Matthew 5:8, *"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."*
 2. Those who have the hope of seeing God are even now purifying themselves. See 1 John 3:3, *"And every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."*
 - (iv) True holiness is not like that of Pharisees, an outward observance to be seen of men, but an inward love for God and longing for Him.
 - (v) We are to be holy because He is holy; we are to strive to be like Him Who has become our "sanctification" (1 Cor. 1:30).
 - (vi) Note again that disunity is not holiness; people who are out of harmony are not holy.
- b. What we must not do: what we must look out for (12:15-17).
- 1) Make sure no one in our assembly is unsaved (12:15a).
 - (i) **Someone might not be truly saved:** [*"comes short of the grace of God," 15a*].
 - (ii) This is another warning about apostasy, about turning back.
 1. 3:12, *"take care lest there be in any of you and unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God."*
 2. 4:1, *"let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it."*
 3. 6:4-6 = warning of no hope for those who reject the Gospel's blessings
 4. 10:26-31 = warning about despising the blood of the covenant
 5. 12:25-29 = warning about "refusing Him who is speaking"
 - (iii) Compare for this and the next point Moses' warning to the Israelites about one *"whose heart turns away from the LORD ... to go and serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood"* (Deut. 29:18).
 - 2) Make sure there is no one in our assembly who is a "bitter root" who will infect and ruin others (12:15b).
 - (i) There might be "bitter root" in our midst = someone who will infect and ruin us.
 - (ii) It seems that the bitter root here is not an attitude but a person.
 - (iii) As Moses said, a person like this who is "bearing poisonous fruit" and is "wormwood" can "destroy the watered land with the dry" [the good folks with the bad-- Deut. 29:19].
 - (iv) The point is that this person thinks himself okay because he belongs to the group ("I am safe"), but the fact will be that his stubborn rebellion and idolatry will bring judgment on the whole nation if they do not deal with him.
 - (v) "Defiled" -- see Titus 1:15.
 - 3) Make sure no one is a fornicator (12:16a).
 - (i) Someone might be a fornicator [not absolutely clear if the text is saying Esau was this].
 - (ii) Their life indicates that they would rather satisfy the flesh than live for God.
 - (iii) They choose the pleasures of the flesh over the joys of heaven.
 - (iv) There are many temptations; we must make sure none of us fall into this sin.
 - 4) Make sure no one is profane, making light of infinitely valuable spiritual privileges (12:16b-17).

- (i) Someone might be profane [βεβηλος] like Esau was.
- (ii) He profaned the birthright.
 - 1. He did not place much importance upon the blessing that God promised to the firstborn.
 - 2. He was willing to exchange God's blessings for a good meal.
 - 3. For a "profane" person, nothing is sacred; for a price he will sell his spiritual blessings and even his own soul.
 - 4. This person does not treat holy things with respect; he makes worldly talk as important as talk about eternal matters.
 - a. 1 Tim. 6:20, "avoiding worldly and empty chatter."
 - b. Same in 2 Tim. 2:16.
- (iii) He profaned true repentance: thought tears = blessing when his heart had not changed. (12:17) "For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind [in his father,] though he sought it diligently with tears."
- (iv) Learn:
 - 1. Those who make light of God's blessings will likely lose them.
 - a. Esau could not change his father's mind even with tears.
 - b. Those who were invited to the king's wedding feast despised the offer and were destroyed and others were invited (Mt. 22:7-8, "But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy.")
 - 2. Appreciate the spiritual blessings that God has given you.
 - a. The privileges of the firstborn included:
 - i. Special blessing of the father.
 - ii. Double portion of the father's goods as inheritance (Deut. 21:17).
 - iii. Dominion over the other brothers.
 - iv. Being spiritual leader (priestly function) when the father was away [until the time of the Aaronic priesthood.
 - b. Note what Esau received in exchange: "a morsel" = only a paltry amount and only for one time! Half of his father's goods for that?!
 - 3. Beware of slighting holy things:
 - a. The Word
 - b. Prayer
 - c. God's blessings but also God's warnings
 - 4. Draw near to God while you can. Is. 55:6, "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near."

C. Enjoy the blessings of the kingdom (12:18-24).

- 1. Contrast Mount Sinai's threatenings (12:18-21). The Law had its place to teach men their need of the Savior, the Messiah, but we are not to remain there. We have not come for our destination to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion, the sure hope of heaven. Unlike those who did not submit to the Lord, we have already experienced some of the blessings of heaven.
 - a. It was fearful because of God's command not to touch it (18, 20b).
 - 1) In contrast to them, we "have not come to a mountain that may be touched."
 - (i) God's command was that IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHED THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED (see Exodus 19:10-13).
 - (ii) Ex. 19:12, "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 no hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, he shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount."
 - b. It was fearful because of the natural and supernatural signs seen and heard (12:19-21).
 - 1) It "burned with fire."
 - 2) It was surrounded with
 - (i) "blackness" = murk, an impenetrable black pall
 - (ii) "and darkness" = darker than dark, totally black
 - (iii) "and tempest" = whirlwind

- (iv) Deut. 4:11, “And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness.”
- (v) Deut. 5:22, “These words Jehovah spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them unto me.”
- 3) There were unusual sounds:
 - (i) “**The sound of a trumpet**” -- Ex. 19:16, “And it came to pass on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud.”
 - (ii) “**The voice of words**”
 - 1. God spoke to Moses and they heard it.
 - 2. “Moses spake and God answered him with a voice” (Ex. 19:19).
 - 3. Deut. 4:12, “And Jehovah spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form; only [ye heard] a voice.”
 - (iii) Because of their fear the people did not want to hear God’s voice anymore.
 - 1. They were afraid they would die as a result.
 - 2. “Which [voice] they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them” (Heb. 12:19).
 - 3. Deut. 5:25-27, “Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of Jehovah our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it.”
- 4) The strict command not to even touch the mount scared them; they realized the absolute holiness of God. Heb. 12:20, “for they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned.”
- 5) Moses himself was quite afraid. Heb. 12:21, “and so fearful was the appearance, [that] Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.”
- 6) Learn:
 - (i) When man understands the holiness of God he will fear God properly.
 - (ii) We cannot possibly be saved by the works of the Law.
 - (iii) The Law is good because it shows our sin, but even the most holy men fear and tremble before the Law and receive no peace and forgiveness.
 - (iv) We must have a mediator between us and the Law. Romans 10:4, “For Christ [is] the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”
 - (v) LET US LOVE HIM WHO FULFILLED THE LAW FOR US!

2. Delight in Mount Zion’s privileges (12:22-24).

a. Introduction to the privileges

- 1) Note about the tense of the verb: “**we have come**” -- we have already tasted of the joys and blessings to come. Salvation is sure for the believer; in fact, he has already come to heaven in a sense.
- 2) Note about “**Mount Zion**.”
 - (i) Zion was the highest hill in Jerusalem (the temple was on Mount Moriah which is actually lower than Zion).
 - (ii) Zion is:
 - 1. The place where God Himself dwells forever.
 - a. Psalms 9:11, “Sing praises to Jehovah, who dwelleth in Zion: Declare among the people his doings.”
 - b. Psalms 76:2, “In Salem also is his tabernacle, And his dwelling-place in Zion.”
 - 2. The place from which Christ will sit and reign.
 - a. Psalms 2:6, “Yet I have set my king Upon my holy hill of Zion.”
 - b. Psalms 110:2, “Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”
 - c. Isaiah 24:23, “Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for Jehovah of hosts will reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders shall be glory.”

3. The place from which all blessings come; it is the joy of the whole earth.
 - a. *Psalm 48:2*, “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is mount Zion, [on] the sides of the north, The city of the great King.”
 - b. *Psalm 14:7*, “Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When Jehovah bringeth back the captivity of his people, Then shall Jacob rejoice, [and] Israel shall be glad.”
- 3) Contrasts between Sinai and Zion.
 - (i) Sinai in a “waste, howling desert” -- one of driest on earth; Zion in the midst of the land flowing with milk and honey.
 - (ii) Sinai was barren and forbidding; Zion was “Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth.”
 - (iii) Sinai was enveloped in darkness and blackness; it was out of Zion that God shined. *Psalm 50:2*, “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth.”
 - (iv) God visited Mount Sinai for a few days; He dwells in Zion forever.
 - (v) Sinai represented the earth; Zion represents heaven. We are blessed now, not materially, but spiritually with all the blessings of heaven.
 - (vi) On Sinai, the mediator Moses trembled; on Zion, the True Mediator, Christ, is crowned and enthroned with glory and honor.
 - (vii) Sinai had threatenings; Zion has invitations to reconciliation. Sinai had fear; Zion has hope. Yet, these privileges abused make one all the more guilty.
 - (viii) Sinai represents the years of wandering; Zion represents arrival, safety, security.
- b. We have also come to “**the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.**”
 - 1) Zion and Jerusalem are essentially synonymous.
 - (i) When David captured the city from the Jebusites, he captured “*the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David*” (*2 Sam. 5:6-8*).
 - (ii) *Amos 1:2* “And he said, Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.”
 - 2) Sinai is only a barren mountain; Zion is a city, but it is more than an earthly city that could be destroyed in a few minutes of shaking or a few days of fighting, it is a heavenly city.
 - 3) The city is like its Founder, eternal; He is the “*living God*.” (see also *3:5*; *13:8*; *20:12*)
 - 4) God does not dwell alone; he has His people around Him in a city, a social structure.
 - 5) Thus we see both God’s Majesty and His Love; He reigns, but He showers His grace and blessings upon His subjects.
 - 6) This is the city which “hath foundations” for which Abraham looked (*11:10*) and for which we still seek (*13:14*).
- c. We have also come to “**myriads of angels [in festal assembly].**” **μυριασιν αγγελων πανηγυρει**
 - 1) *Deut 33:2 (ASV)* “And he said, Jehovah came from Sinai, And rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, And he came from the ten thousands of holy ones: At his right hand was a fiery law for them.”
 - 2) *Psalm 68:17*, “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands; The Lord is among them, [as in] Sinai, in the sanctuary.”
 - 3) *Daniel 7:10*, “(ASV) A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousands of thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.”
 - 4) In the above cases the angels inspired awe and even fear; in heaven they are our glad partners in joyful worship.
 - 5) The atmosphere of heaven is one of festivity and praise!
 - (i) The angels are rejoicing as those who have gathered for the happiest celebration.
 - (ii) Even now we ought to have joy and live in an atmosphere of praise, just as Paul and Silas did at midnight in the Philippian jail.
- d. We have come also to the “**church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.**” **εκκλησια πρωτοτοκων απογεγραμμενων εν ουρανοις**
 - 1) The believers in the past, unlike Esau, valued their birthright.
 - 2) Our inheritance is heaven!
 - 3) We have the right to claim it for our own. Jesus is preparing a place just for me!
 - 4) No one will be able to make a false claim; every name of those who may inherit has been written down in God’s ledger.

- 5) See Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Isa. 4:3; Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 20:12, and Rev. 21:27, *“and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”*
- e. We have also come to **“God the Judge of all.”** κριτη θεω παντων
 - 1) The literal word order or the phrase is “to the Judge, God of all.”
 - (i) God is fair with all; no one will be there who should not be, and all who know Christ will be there.
 - (ii) What is to the lost a throne of judgment is to the Christian a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).
 - (iii) God is fair because He knows all: 4:13, *“(ASV) And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”*
 - 2) As “Judge,” God manifests the truth, what is right.
 - (i) This is a comfort to believers (2 Thess. 1:5-7).
 - (ii) But this is a fearful thing to the lost (Heb. 12:29) -- it means the fires of judgment.
 - 3) Texts about God’s judgment.
 - (i) Isaiah 3:11, *“(ASV) Woe unto the wicked! [it shall be] ill [with him]; for what his hands have done shall be done unto him.”*
 - (ii) Job 8:3, *“(ASV) Doth God pervert justice? Or doth the Almighty pervert righteousness?”*
 - (iii) Psalms 58:11, *“(ASV) So that men shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.”*
 - (iv) Psalms 98:9, *“(ASV) Before Jehovah; For he cometh to judge the earth: He will judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with equity.”*
- f. We have come to **“the spirits of just men made perfect.”** πνευμασιν δικαιων τετελειωμενων
 - 1) They are called “spirits” here because they have not yet received their resurrection, glorified bodies.
 - (i) They have been “brought to their goal” of heaven, but they are waiting to be “clothed upon” (2 Cor. 5:4).
 - (ii) Absent from the body, they are at home with the Lord (Phil. 1:21, 23; 2 Cor. 5:8, *“to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”*).
 - (iii) Their spirits have been perfected; they no longer sin!
 - 2) This shows again that the writer is referring to our PRESENT experience.
 - 3) The believers who have died are blessed, but something remains yet for them to experience.
- g. We have come to **“Jesus the mediator of a new covenant.”**
 - 1) Truths about the New Covenant and Jesus as the Mediator:
 - (i) Its foundation:
 1. Jesus’ blood
 - a. Mt. 26:28, *“for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.”*
 - b. Heb. 13:20 *“Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, [even] our Lord Jesus.”*
 2. Jesus’ substitutionary death, accepting the punishment for sin.
 - a. This was the problem with the old covenant: those who transgressed had to die.
 - b. Jesus suffered for our transgressions, so in the new covenant we do not have to experience the eternal judgment.
 - c. Heb. 9:15 *“And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”*
 - (ii) Its results:
 1. Israel’s salvation. Heb. 8:10-11, *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, And on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a God, And they shall be to me a people: 11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, From the least to the greatest of them.”*
 2. Salvation of many Gentiles.
 - a. Note: word covenant not used.
 - b. 1 Tim. 2:5-7, *“For there is one God, [and] one mediator also between God and men, [the] man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony*

- [borne] at the proper time. 7 And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth."*
- (iii) Its duration: it is eternal (13:20, "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, [even] Jesus our Lord,")
 - 2) We have not come to the covenant, but to "Jesus," the mediator of the covenant.
 - (i) The Israelites wanted Moses to intercede for them; he did, but he too had sin.
 - (ii) We have Jesus to intercede for us; He stands between us and God the Father.
 - 3) This covenant is new in that it has only been accomplished since Jesus' death.
 - 4) Of course, it is of a "better" quality also (7:22; 8:6).
 - h. We have come to "the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel."
 - 1) This is the last use of the word *better* in Hebrews. (Heb 1:4; 6:9; 7:19,22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:4,16,35,40; 12:24)
 - (i) 1:4, "*having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.*"
 - (ii) 6:9, "*But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.*"
 - (iii) 7:19, "*(for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.*"
 - (iv) 7:22, "*so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*"
 - (v) 8:6, "*But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.*"
 - (vi) 9:23, "*Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*"
 - (vii) 10:34, "*For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.*"
 - (viii) 11:4, "*By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous.*"
 - (ix) 11:16, "*But as it is, they desire a better [country], that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*"
 - (x) 11:35, "*Women received [back] their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection;*"
 - (xi) 11:40, "*because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*"
 - (xii) 12:24, "*and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than [the blood] of Abel.*"
 - 2) Abel's blood called for vengeance: Jesus' blood calls for mercy and forgiveness.
 - (i) Genesis 4:10, "*And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.'*"
 - 3) Abel's blood called to Cain and spoke despair to his heart; Christ's blood speaks peace to us. Col. 1:20, "*and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, [I say], whether things on earth or things in heaven.*"
 - i. SUMMARY: Key thought is access; we "have come" to God; we enter into the holy of holies each time we pray in Christ's name on the basis of His perfect sacrifice. WE HAVE COME! WE CAN HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD!

D. Serve in the kingdom (12:25-29).

- 1. Warning to those who refuse to serve (12:25-27)
 - a. The SPEAKER of the warning: God, through His Son.
 - 1) God is speaking to us through His Son, through His Son's bloody sacrifice (see previous verse about the blood "speaking").
 - 2) God is the One who spoke on earth [see next verse about him shaking the earth with His voice] and God is the One "**who warns from heaven.**"
 - b. The NEED for the warning -- some in the past refused to serve.
 - 1) Some would abuse God's grace and think they do not need to listen to Him.
 - 2) God offers through Jesus' blood, grace, pardon, and salvation. Therefore, how guilty will someone be who refuses to listen to that message!

- 3) Note: the word “**refuse**” suggests the idea of requesting & MAKING EXCUSE. [**παραιτομαι**] Luke 14:18, “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’”
- 4) Another explanation of the problem = “they turn away from Him who warns from heaven.”
 - (i) This refusal of God's Words will characterize the last days. 2 Timothy 4:4, “and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.”
 - (ii) This turning away is not an ear problem but a heart problem.
 1. Deut. 30:17, “But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them.”
 2. This is the verb of apostasy (1 Tim. 4:14 and above, 2 Tim. 4:4).
 3. Titus 1:14, “not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth.”
 - (iii) Those who stubbornly turn away and do not listen will find that God Himself will not listen to them! Jeremiah 11:10-11, “They have turned back to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.” 11 Therefore thus says the Lord, ‘Behold I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them.’”
- c. The SERIOUSNESS of the warning – no unbeliever will escape God’s judgment (“shaking”) (26-27).
 - 1) Worse than God’s not listening will be God’s judgment.
 - 2) Those who reject God’s merciful offer of salvation through Jesus’ blood have no hope. 10:29, “How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?”
 - 3) Recall this theme in 2:1-3, “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away [from it.] 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard.”
 - 4) This is an eternal judgment when God will shake not only shake the earth but also heaven (12:26-27).
 - (i) At Mount Sinai God shook the earth. Psalms 68:8, “The earth quaked; The heavens also dropped [rain] at the presence of God; Sinai itself [quaked] at the presence of God, the God of Israel.”
 - (ii) In the future, everything that can be shaken will once and for all be done away with.
 1. Rev. 20:11, “And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.”
 2. Psalms 102:26, “Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed.”
 3. 2 Peter 3:10-11, “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. 11 Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness.”
 4. Revelation 21:1, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer [any] sea.”
 - (iii) In particular this means that the “CREATED THINGS” will all be “shaken.”
 1. All those beings and things in opposition to God will be destroyed.
 2. Man's best building, best roads, will crumble like ashes in the fingers.
 3. Are the things we are trusting in and spending time in shakable or unshakable?
 - (iv) What kinds of things are eternal and unshakable?
 1. Jesus is unchangeable (13:8).
 2. Work done for His glory receives eternal rewards. Colossians 3:23-24, “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”
 3. Work done God’s way bears fruit that will remain forever. 1 Corinthians 3:11-14, “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it

is [to be] revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward."

4. Kind deeds done to God's people will be blessed forever. *Matthew 25:34-38*,
"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me [something] to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37 Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? 38 And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39 'And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, [even] the least [of them,] you did it to Me.'"
5. Those who persevere in doing good deeds will receive "unshakable blessing" such as "glory and honor" and "immortality" and "eternal life."

2. Exhortation to those serving:

a. Serve out of gratitude (12:28a).

- 1) Again the emphasis is the "kingdom."
- 2) It is a better kingdom because it is unshakable, it will last forever.
 - (i) In simple terms, that which is unshakable is a "kingdom."
 - (ii) No terrorist can scare the citizens; no one will fear the death of the Monarch; the enemy cannot attack, and there will be no opposition from within. The kingdom will be one of perfect harmony, peace, and eternal happiness.
 - (iii) It is called the "eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11).
- 3) We do not earn this kingdom, we "receive" it as a precious gift from God.
 - (i) *Daniel 7:18*, "But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come."
 - (ii) After the other kingdoms are destroyed the "saints" of the Highest "receive" and possess" the kingdom not only forever, but for "all ages to come."
- 4) Recall for your encouragement: Jesus is already reigning over His kingdom.
 - (i) He sits now at the right hand of God (12:2; 1:3).
 - (ii) See also *Ephesians 1:20-22* and *1 Peter 3:22*.
- 5) The proper response then can only be "thankfulness" (lit. = *χαριν*).
 - (i) The use of this phrase elsewhere suggests the idea of gratitude.
 - (ii) *Luke 17:9*, "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were commanded, does he?"
 - (iii) *1 Timothy 1:12*, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service."
 - (iv) *2 Tim. 1:3*, "I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day."
- 6) Learn:
 - (i) We cannot begin to truly serve God unless we have grateful hearts.
 - (ii) Serving out of a sense of duty brings no blessing.
 - (iii) Our gratitude and praise is our strength.
 - (iv) The lack of gratitude to God is the root of all sin and rebellion against God. *Romans 1:21*,
"For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - (v) Thanksgiving is not optional but is commanded.
 1. *Ephesians 5:20*, "always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father."
 2. *Colossians 3:17*, "And whatever you do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
 3. *1 Thess. 5:18*, "in everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you."

b. Serve with reverence

- 1) The word is "*εὐλαβείας*"

- (i) *Hebrews 5:7*, “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His **piety**.”
- (ii) *Hebrews 11:7*, “By faith Noah, being warned [of God] concerning things not seen as yet, moved with **godly fear**.”
- 2) The Christian serves God out of both gratitude and an awareness of the seriousness of neglecting such service. The words suggest being watchful and careful in doing all duties.
- 3) Only this kind of service is acceptable. *Deut. 28:47*, “Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things.”
- c. Serve with awe.
 - 1) The word here is “**δεος**.”
 - 2) This word means to apprehend danger as one would who is walking in a forest and hears wild beasts approaching.
 - 3) What is the danger? The danger is ingratitude and rebellion and resistance to God.
 - 4) The writer closes the chapter with the words of warning, “**For our God is a consuming fire**.”
 - (i) God's character never changes; Sinai and Zion differ, but God is always merciful to those who humble themselves and always righteously angry with those who rebel.
 - (ii) Even as “our” God He is a consuming fire, burning up everything about us that is worthless.
 - (iii) Therefore, we must serve Him acceptably.
 - (iv) Notice at what God's fiery judgment is sent:
 - 1. Against **complainers** *Num. 11:1*, “And the people were as murmurers, [speaking] evil in the ears of Jehovah: and when Jehovah heard it, his anger was kindled; and the fire of Jehovah burnt among them, and devoured in the uttermost part of the camp.”
 - 2. Against **the rebellious** (against spiritual authorities and God's restrictions). *Num. 16:35*, “And fire came forth from Jehovah, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense.”
 - 3. Against **idolaters** *Deuteronomy 4:23-24*, “Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image in the form of anything which Jehovah thy God hath forbidden thee. For Jehovah thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.”
 - 4. Against **the wicked nations** *Deuteronomy 9:3*, “Know therefore this day, that Jehovah thy God is he who goeth over before thee as a devouring fire; he will destroy them, and he will bring them down before thee: so shalt thou drive them out, and make them to perish quickly, as Jehovah hath spoken unto thee.”
 - 5. Against **those who do not obey the Gospel** *2 Thessalonians 1:7-8*, “and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”
 - 6. Against those who know the truth but turn from it: **apostates** *Hebrews 10:26-27*, “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries.”
- d. Learn in conclusion:
 - 1) We have received a better kingdom!
 - 2) Are we serving in the kingdom?
 - (i) Are we serving with *gratitude*?
 - (ii) Are we serving with *reverence*, with carefulness to do what God requires of us?
 - (iii) Are we serving with *the proper respect*, realizing God's power to judge?

VIII. THE BEST PRACTICE: OBEDIENCE [TO VARIOUS COMMANDS] (13:1-25)

A. Show proper love (13:1-4).

- 1. Love for the brethren (13:1)
 - a. *1 Peter 3:8*, “(ASV) Finally, [be] ye all like-minded, compassionate, loving as brethren, tenderhearted, humble minded.”
 - b. Love is shown by striving for biblical unity, by showing compassion, by showing tenderness, and by humility.

- c. *1 Thess. 4:9, “(ASV) But concerning love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”*
 - d. Every true believer is taught by God to love the brethren.
 - e. So whatever a person may have or do, if he does not love the brethren he is not a true Christian.
 - f. Make list of verses “Love the Brethren.”
2. Love for strangers [hospitality] (13:2) [love -- see Greek = **της φιλοξενίας μη επιλανθανεσθε**] *“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”*
- a. Hospitality to strangers will often bring unexpected blessings.
 - 1) Abraham actually entertained angels. See *Genesis 18:1-8*.
 - 2) Lot also entertained angels (*Genesis 19:1-3*). *Genesis 19:1-3, “And the two angels came to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 2 and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn aside, I pray you, into your servant’s house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your way. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. 3 And he urged them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.”*
 - 3) Manoa and his wife also entertained an angel. *Judges 13:15, “And Manoa said unto the angel of Jehovah, I pray thee, let us detain thee, that we may make ready a kid for thee.”*
 - b. Godly people are quick to show hospitality, especially to God’s servants.
 - 1) *1 Kings 17:10-16, “So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. 12 And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat [many] days. 16 The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah.”*
 - 2) The widow recognized that he was God’s servant and readily hosted him.
 - c. We ought to be diligent in showing hospitality. If we consider it a privilege we will sometimes “constrain” others to accept our hospitality.
 - 1) *2 Kings 4:8, “And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.”*
 - 2) *Acts 16:15, “And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us.”*
 - d. When we show hospitality to those in need, we are actually showing it to Christ Himself. See *Matthew 25:43-46, “I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. 46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.”*
 - e. Hospitality is commanded.
 - 1) *Romans 12:13, “communicating to the necessities of the saints; given to hospitality.”*
 - 2) *1 Peter 4:8-9, “above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins: using hospitality one to another without murmuring.”*
 - 3) Note the connection between loving the brethren and showing hospitality.
 - f. Hospitality is praised.
 - 1) *1 Timothy 5:10, “well reported of for good works; if she hath brought up children, if she hath used hospitality to strangers, if she hath washed the saints’ feet, if she hath relieved the afflicted, if she hath diligently followed every good work.”*

- 2) 3 John 5, “Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal.”
- g. Learn in summary:
 - 1) Christians who show love to people they do not even know, will soon have many people to love.
 - 2) The command here is not really hospitality; it is rather to show love to strangers. We must be open and loving to those who come into our assembly that we do not know.
 - 3) It is easy to neglect this virtue: the readers had been neglecting it.
 - 4) We must have the biblical balance: we are NOT to show hospitality to false teachers (2 John 10-11).
3. Love for prisoners and the ill-treated [visit them] (13:3)
 - a. Introduction
 - 1) In 64 AD many Christians were imprisoned in Rome due to Nero’s persecution.
 - 2) Recall also that Peter had been imprisoned (Acts 12).
 - 3) The apostle John had been exiled to Patmos (Revelation 1:9).
 - 4) John the Baptist, Paul, Timothy, Silas and others were imprisoned.
 - b. Reasons for remembering the ill-treated. Note: Does not say to “visit” them, but to “**remember**” them (opposite of forgetting in v. 2).
 - 1) It is an expression of brotherly love (context).
 - (i) It is the natural response of a true believer.
 - (ii) The Philippian jailor (Acts 16:31-33, “And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.”)
 - 2) We are to consider them as part of ourselves.
 - (i) When one member of the body of Christ suffers, all suffer.
 - (ii) 1 Corinthians 12:26, “And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or [one] member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.”
 - (iii) Paul asked the Colossians to “remember” his “bonds” (Col. 4:18).
 - 3) We are to realize that it could just as easily be us suffering (“**since you yourselves are also in the body.**”)
 - (i) We cannot expect to be exempt from the trials of life and of faith.
 - (ii) Hebrews 10:32-33, “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; 33 partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used.”
 - c. Examples of remembering the ill-treated.
 - 1) Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian eunuch, remembered Jeremiah. Jeremiah 38:7-10, “Now when Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, who was in the king’s house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon (the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin,) 8 Ebed-melech went forth out of the king’s house, and spake to the king, saying, 9 My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die in the place where he is, because of the famine; for there is no more bread in the city. 10 Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die.”
 - 2) The Jerusalem Christians prayed for Peter. Acts 12:5, “Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.”
 - 3) The Philippian believers when they sent money to Paul. Philippians 4:14-16, “Howbeit ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction. 15 And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; 16 for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.”
 - 4) Onesiphorus visited Paul in prison. 2 Timothy 1:16-18, “The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 but, when he was in Rome, he sought me diligently, and found me 18 (the Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day); and in how many things he ministered at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.”
 - 5) The Hebrew Christians.
 - (i) Hebrews 10:34, “For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.”

- (ii) Note: KJV says “on me in my bonds” 10:34, (KJS) *For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the ...*”
- 6) Conclusion: The true Christian will have compassion for other Christians who are suffering for the faith. Such compassion is an evidence of brotherly love.
4. Love in marriage (13:4)
- a. God’s blessing upon the marriage relationship.
 - 1) Genesis 2:24, “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*”
 - 2) Proverbs 5:18, “*Let thy fountain be blessed; And rejoice in the wife of thy youth.*”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 7:2, “*Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.*”
 - 4) 1 Timothy 5:14, “*I desire therefore that the younger [widows] marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling.*”
 - b. God’s warnings about sexual activity outside of marriage:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9, “*Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men.*”
 - 2) Galatians 5:19, “*Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, 21 envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*”
 - 3) Ephesians 5:5, “*For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*”
 - 4) Colossians 3:5, “*Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things’ sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience.*”
 - c. How to avoid these sins of the flesh in a day of great immorality.
 - 1) DETERMINE NOT TO LOOK AT TEMPTING THINGS.
 - (i) Job 31:1, “*I made a covenant with mine eyes; How then should I look upon a virgin*”?
 - (ii) Psalms 119:37, “*Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, And quicken me in thy ways.*”
 - (iii) Matthew 5:28-29, “*But I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.*”
 - (iv) 1 John 2:16, “*For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*”
 - 2) MEMORIZE PASSAGES LIKE THIS ONE. Psalms 119:9-11, “*Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed [thereto] according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: Oh let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I laid up in my heart, That I might not sin against thee.*”
 - 3) STAY AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO INDULGE IN THESE SINS.
 - (i) Proverbs 5:8, “*Remove thy way far from her, And come not nigh the door of her house.*”
 - (ii) Ephesians 5:11-12, “*and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; 12 for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of.*”
 - 4) ASK GOD TO “LEAD YOU NOT INTO TEMPTATION” AND TO HELP YOU HATE THESE SINS. Matthew 6:13, “*And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil [one.]*”

B. Be content with the Lord (13:5-6).

1. The enemy of contentment: the love of money.
 - a. Literally the text says we are to have a “way of life” that is “without this love for silver. “way of life” = **τροπος**
 - b. This love for silver manifests itself in begin stingy and in a grasping spirit, wanting to get more but unwilling to give any to those in need.
 - c. A good test of stinginess is our giving to the Lord’s work.

- d. Many warnings about this in Scripture.
 - 1) NOTE: Often associated with immorality.
 - (i) 1 Corinthians 5:11, “but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.”
 - (ii) Ephesians 5:3, 5, “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; 4 nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.”
 - 2) Is often the sin of false prophets.
 - (i) Jeremiah 6:13, “For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.”
 - (ii) 2 Peter 2:3, 14, “And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not.”
 - (iii) 2:14, “(ASV) having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing;”
 - 3) Achan was covetous and brought judgment on himself and his family. Joshua 7:21, “And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Of a truth I have sinned against Jehovah, the God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: 21 when I saw among the spoil a goodly Babylonish mantle, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”
 - 4) Jesus gave the parable of the rich man who was covetous and who built bigger barns and died suddenly.
 - (i) He was a fool; he was “poor” toward God.
 - (ii) Luke 12:15-21, “And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”
 - 5) The one who is covetous and trying to become rich only pierces himself through with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6:9-10, “(ASV) But they that are minded to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil: which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”
2. The meaning of contentment: satisfaction with “what you have.”
 - a. Paul had learned contentment: Philippians 4:11, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.”
 - b. Worry about food and clothing and shelter is not contentment. Seek God’s kingdom first and all these will be added.
 - c. Jesus told the soldiers to “be content with your wages” (Luke 3:14).
 - d. David’s is a good prayer: Psalms 119:36, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, And not to covetousness.”
3. The reason for contentment: the Lord’s promise = “**I will never leave you**” (13:5), and “**The LORD is my helper**” (13:6).
 - a. What else do we need other than the knowledge and experience of His presence?
 - b. If we, like Luther, make Psalms 118:6 (“Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear: What can man do unto me?”) our own, we too can be content.
 - c. Men are discontent because they want more pleasure or more security.
 - 1) Our pleasure is our walk with Jesus, a walk that gets sweeter each day.
 - 2) Our security is Him Who never leaves us, even in our failure and sin.
 - d. The statement of promise about the Lord’s not forsaking us is taken loosely from such passages as these:
 - 1) Genesis 28:15, “And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee, whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land. For I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”
 - 2) Deut. 31:8, “And Jehovah, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.”

- 3) *Joshua 1:5*, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."
 - 4) *1 Chronicles 28:20*, "And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah God, even my God, is with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until all the work for the service of the house of Jehovah be finished."
 - 5) The promise that He will not "leave us behind" is the assurance we need in times of scarcity.
εγκαταλείπω = to leave behind, as in *Mt. 27:46*; *2 Tim. 4:10*.
 (i) God the Father "forsook" the Son (*Mt. 27:46*).
 (ii) Demas "forsook" Paul (*2 Tim. 4:10*).
4. The affirmation of contentment: **"the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"**
- a. The writer "boldly" affirms that the "Lord is indeed his helper and that he has determined not to fear what man can do to him" (6).
 - b. Sometimes in the midst of financial trial we need to courageously trust and claim God's promises.
 - c. Note that contentment is inextricably linked with trust of the Lord and disregard of man's threats.
 - d. Occasionally we need to think: "I will not consider any new thing for a time and will be content 'with the present things.'"

C. Honor spiritual leaders (13:7).

1. Introduction: the definition of a spiritual leader:
 - a. One who "leads" you.
 - 1) In this case, the verb is past tense, indicating that they were to remember in particular those who had died (like James and Peter).
 - 2) The pastor's responsibility is to lead the people.
 - (i) He is to guide them away from danger and to lead them to still waters and green pastures.
 - (ii) He is to set the example before the sheep rather than drive them.
 - b. One who speaks God's Word to you.
 - 1) Beware of following one who is not speaking the Word of God!
 - 2) People follow many false teachers who lead them astray.
 - (i) You have no responsibility to follow one who ignores God's Word.
 - (ii) Note: Some will "*corrupt*" the Word of God (*2 Cor. 2:17*) and "*handle it deceitfully*" (*2 Cor. 4:2*).
 - 3) The true spiritual leader will guide you with the Bible. *Acts 20:26-27*, "Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. 28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."
 - 4) The "Word of God" refers to both the OT and the NT revelation.
2. Honor by remembering them.
 - a. Verb is present = "be remembering."
 - b. Verb means to "be mindful of" or to "keep in mind."
 - 1) *John 15:20*, "Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also."
 - 2) The disciples did not "keep in mind" the significance of the miracle of feeding the five thousand. *Matthew 16:9*, "Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?"
 - c. Paul gives us the right attitude: knowledge, love, esteem. *1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*, "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves."
3. Honor by imitating their way of living.
 - a. "Considering" = Present active participle of **αναθεωρεω**, late compound, to look up a subject, to investigate, to observe accurately, in N.T. only here and *Acts 17:23*, "For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship ..."
 - b. "Outcome" = **εκβασις** is an old word from **εκβαίνω**, to go out (*Heb. 11:15*, here only in N.T.). Originally way out (*1 Cor. 10:13*), but here (only other N.T. example) in sense of end or issue as in several papyri examples.
 - c. "Imitate" from noun = actor, or mimic.

- 1) Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to “follow his example” of working. *2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9*, “For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 neither did we eat bread for nought at any man’s hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you: 9 not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves and ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us.”
- 2) *John 1:11*, “Beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”
- d. Imitate their “faith.” Trust God while living and when facing death as they did.
- e. Summary:
 - 1) The readers were thinking of going back from the Lord, so they were not only to remember OT saints, they were also to think deeply upon the testimony of their former teachers and pastors.
 - 2) They were to consider seriously not only the living of these teachers but their glorious death, their “going out” of this life.
 - 3) They were to consider what blessed effects their lives are still producing in the lives of Christians.
 - (i) If these readers were Jews in Rome, then the reference would be especially to Peter (martyred in 64 AD) and Paul (martyred in 67 AD).
 - (ii) Learn then the lasting power of a godly testimony.

D. Establish yourself on Christ and sound doctrine (13:8-9).

1. Jesus never changes; therefore, establish yourself upon Him as the only foundation.
 - a. He is the only foundation. *1 Cor. 3:11*, “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
 - b. He was the same “yesterday” when in heaven’s glory as He was on the earth.
 - 1) The same to their previous leaders.
 - 2) The same to the heroes of the faith in *Heb. 11*.
 - c. He is the same “today” in our special trials and tests. The grace and help He gave to them He will also give to us!
 - d. He will be the same not only tomorrow, but “forever.”
 - 1) Illustrate: seeing the missionary friends after six years or so on the mission field and hardly recognizing the wife.
 - 2) Illustrate: the point of this book is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism and to urge these believers not to go back.
 - (i) Remember that Israel’s high priests died, but ours lives forever.
 - (ii) Israel’s prophets lived and died, but we have one eternally living Prophet.
 - (iii) Israel’s kings were many, but Zion’s king is eternal.
 - e. Because Jesus is God’s perfect and final revelation, no one has hope who rejects this unchangeable Savior.
 - f. *Malachi 3:6*, “For I, Jehovah, change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.” Note the relationship to mercy and grace.
 - g. *John 8:56*, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.” He was the same to Abraham.
 - h. *James 1:17*, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.” Not the slightest change of any kind!
2. Truth about Jesus never changes; therefore, establish yourself on the foundation of sound doctrine.
 - a. Do not be moved.
 - 1) Jesus is stable; He is our foundation.
 - 2) Therefore, we are to be steadfast, unmovable always abounding in the work of the Lord.
 - 3) “Carried away” [*παράφρεσθε* = from *παράφρω*]
 - (i) To lead along. See *Jude 1:12*, “... clouds without water, **carried along** by wind ...”
 - (ii) To carry past. See *Mark 6:55*, “and ran round about that whole region, and began to **carry about** on their beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.”
 - (iii) To be tossed around and moved. See *Ephesians 4:14*, “(ASV) that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and **carried about** with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;”
 - b. In particular, do not be moved by false doctrine.
 - 1) There are many false doctrines (note the plural).
 - 2) These false doctrines are:

- (i) “Varied” = lit. “many colored,” but here various, manifold. False doctrines are virtually limitless.
- (ii) “strange” = **ξένος** = not heard of or known before (v. 2). Beware of “new” teaching, it is not always wrong, any more than the old is always right (Mt. 13:52) but many people are looking for something “new” when God has given us the “Old, Old, Story of Jesus and His love.”
- (iii) Often related to the externals of religion and not the internal.
 - 1. E.g., some make the eating of certain “foods” the most important part of obeying God. This did not make people holy in OT days and it does not “benefit” us either (see Colossians 2:16-23).
 - 2. Jesus said, *“Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? 18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: 20 these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.”* (Matthew 15:17-20)
 - 3. Paul warned about those who would teach the necessity of “abstaining from foods” because “God has created these foods to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Timothy 4:3).
- 3) Rather, be established by God’s grace on the foundation of Jesus and the truth about Him.
 - (i) The only thing that can make the heart stable is God’s grace.
 - (ii) Summary: Beware of being tossed here and there by various doctrines: rather “grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ.”
 - (iii) *Ephesians 4:14-16, “that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; 15 but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, [even] Christ; 16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in [due] measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.”*
- 4) Learn:
 - (i) What will make us unstable? Wrong doctrine.
 - (ii) What will make us stable? God’s grace and our knowledge of Christ -- in fellowship with the Head who never changes, we too will be immovable.

E. Offer spiritual sacrifices to Christ (13:10-16).

- 1. The sacrifice of bearing Jesus’ reproach (13:10-14)
 - a. Bear His reproach because we have the right to eat of His sacrifice: to feed on Him (13:10-11).
 - 1) We, in contrast to the average Levitical priests, “**have an altar.**” (13:10).
 - (i) The unsaved Jews were probably criticizing these Jewish Christians, boasting of their altar in the temple where the sacrifices were offered.
 - 1. The altar is the place of sacrifice = the cross.
 - 2. We do not need any other altar.
 - 2) Note the contrasts that indicate our special privileges and blessings:
 - (i) OT priests had some animal sacrifices of which they could eat and some which they could not eat (the sin offering in Leviticus 4:1 ff).
 - 1. When Aaron and his sons were ordained, and when they offered for themselves or for the whole congregation they were to burn everything and were not allowed to eat of this sin-offering (Lev. 6:30).
 - 2. For other times, when they offered for individuals they were allowed to eat of the sin-offering (Leviticus 6:25-26). *Leviticus 6:25-26, 30, “Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin-offering: in the place where the burnt-offering is killed shall the sin-offering be killed before Jehovah: it is most holy. 26 The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in a holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting. 30 And no sin-offering, whereof any of the blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt with fire.”*
 - (ii) On the Day of Atonement only the High Priest could enter the Holy place with the blood of the goat, but even he could not eat of that meat, for the entire bodies were burned outside the

- camp. *Leviticus 16:27*, "And the bullock of the sin-offering, and the goat of the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be carried forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung."
- 3) We have been made priests; before only the high priest could enter the "sanctuary," but every Christian can enter at any time; we can have continual and sweet fellowship with the Lord because of our altar, the cross of Christ, and the perfect sacrifice of Christ.
 - 4) Consider the idea of feeding on Jesus, our altar.
 - (i) *John 6:51-55*, "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.) The Jews therefore strove one with another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. 54 He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life: and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."
 - (ii) *John 6:35*, "Jesus said unto them. I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."
 - (iii) Thus coming to Christ = feeding on Him = believing on Him.
 1. Result 1 = Receive life
 2. Result 2 = Sustain life -- never thirst or hunger
 - 5) Summary:
 - (i) Their eating was physical, ours is spiritual.
 - (ii) Their eating was limited, ours is unlimited. They could eat only certain sacrifices; we can fellowship with Jesus always.
 - (iii) Their eating brought no forgiveness; ours brings a clean conscience and perfect forgiveness.
 - (iv) In other words, Christ has fulfilled the OT symbolism.
 1. We have privileges that the OT believers did not have.
 2. Why turn back to the shadow when we have the Perfect Lamb of God to feed on!
 - b. Bear His reproach because He has sanctified us (*13:12*).
 - 1) He has sanctified us thoroughly with "his own blood." Let us show that sanctification by a separation from the world's evil thinking, dress, music, and practices.
 - 2) He has sanctified us with his blood on the very place that the Jews would have considered unholy.
 - (i) Thus Jesus' suffering "outside the gate" demonstrated that there is no need of holy places.
 1. Salvation is not within Judaism, it is for all who will come unto Jesus.
 2. Anywhere two or three meet in Jesus' Name is a holy place of prayer and worship.
 3. In the New Jerusalem there is no sanctuary, the whole city is a Temple and God Himself is there (*Rev. 21:22*, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.")
 - (ii) It also demonstrated His identifying with the world in its sin. We could not draw near to God because of our uncleanness, but He drew near to us!
 - (iii) The key word here is "**suffered**."
 1. Not only did He die for us, He also suffered for us.
 2. By His sufferings we are made well!
 3. We must not complain when we bear reproach (suffer) for His Name.
 - c. Bear His reproach because we ought to follow His example (*13:13*).
 - 1) Jesus' sacrifice was total and our dedication to Him must be total.
 - 2) How do we bear His reproach?
 - (i) By accepting criticism and reproach for His Name's sake.
 - (ii) By boldly speaking for Him when others are ridiculing Him.
 - (iii) By being willing to suffer and even die for Him if necessary.
 - 3) What is the "camp" in our case?
 - (i) In Jesus' case, the camp and the gate were Jerusalem and the Jews.
 - (ii) He suffered literally without the gate because the Jews rejected Him.
 - (iii) Our camp then is the place that rejects Jesus, and thus = the world.
 - 4) Therefore we are to be spiritually separate from the world. We live in the world but we are not to be like it.
 - (i) This does not mean we live in a monastery and separate ourselves physically from the world.
 1. *1 Corinthians 7:31*, "and those that use the world, as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

2. 1 Corinthians 5:9-10, "I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators; 10 not at all [meaning] with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."
 - (ii) It does mean we are to holy and thus different from the world. Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, [which is] your spiritual service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
 1. James 4:4, "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God."
 2. 1 John 2:15-17, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - (iii) We cannot expect and we should not desire the world's friendship.
 1. John 15:19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
 2. 2 Timothy 3:12, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - (iv) Learn: we are not simply to be separate, we are positively to go from the world and go out "unto Christ" (v. 13). Separation without going to Christ will make us like the Israelites who went out of Egypt but who still lusted for the pleasures of Egypt.
 - d. Bear His reproach because we are looking for a city to come, not one in this world (13:14).
 - 1) A city suggests stability, but the world's cities are only temporarily stable (Cain built a city, where is it? Babylon? Nineveh?) Our city is stable because it has foundations laid by God (11:10).
 - 2) A city suggests convenience: everything we need is always and immediately available in Christ who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification.
 - 3) The only "abiding" place is God's city. Let us labor to bring more people into that city!
2. The sacrifice of praise (13:15)
- a. Praise God through Jesus.
 - 1) Through Jesus we have free access to God.
 - (i) Jesus is the door (John 10:9) and the only way to God; no man can come unto the Father but by Him (John 14:6).
 - (ii) Through Him both Gentiles and Jews have access by one Spirit to the Father. Ephesians 2:18, "(NKJV) For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father."
 - 2) Jesus is both our High Priest and the Perfect Sacrifice.
 - 3) By Him, that is, based on faith in His blood, let us boldly offer praise to God.
 - 4) Our offerings are acceptable to God only because of Jesus. 1 Peter 2:5, "(NKJV) you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."
 - b. Praise God continually.
 - 1) Day by day = daily 2 Chronicles 30:21, "So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, [singing] to the Lord, accompanied by loud instruments."
 - 2) Day and night
 - (i) Revelation 4:8, "(NKJV) [The] four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!'"
 - (ii) Take time before going to sleep to praise God for His goodness during the day.
 - (iii) Praise God for His...
 1. Majesty (Psalm 96:1,6; Is. 24:14)
 2. Glory (Ps. 138:5; Eze. 3:12)
 3. Excellency (Ex. 15:7; Ps. 148:13)

4. Greatness (1 Ch. 16:25; Ps. 145:3)
 5. Holiness (Ex. 15:11; Isa. 6:3)
 6. Wisdom (Dan. 2:20; Jude 1:25)
 7. Power (Ps. 21:13)
 8. Goodness (Ps. 107:8; 118:1; 136:1; Jer. 33:11)
 9. Mercy (2 Ch. 20:21; Ps. 89:1; 118:1-4; 136:1-26)
 10. Loving-kindness and truth (138:2)
 11. Faithfulness and truth (Isa. 25:1)
 12. Salvation (Ps. 18:46; Isa. 35:10; 61:10; Lu. 1:89-69)
 13. Wonderful works (Ps. 89:5; 150:2; Isa. 25:1)
 14. Consolation (Ps. 42:5; Isa. 12:1)
 15. Judgment (Ps. 101:1)
 16. Counsel (Ps. 16:7; Jer. 32:19)
 17. Fulfilling of His promises (1 Kings 8:56)
 18. Pardon of sin (Ps. 103:1-3; Hosea 14:2)
 19. Spiritual health (Ps. 103:3)
 20. Constant preservation (Ps. 71:6-8)
 21. Deliverance (Ps. 40:1-3; 124:6)
 22. Protection (Ps. 28:7; 59:17)
 23. Answering prayer (Ps. 28:6; 118:21)
 24. The hope of glory (1 Peter 1:3-4)
 25. All spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3)
 26. All temporal blessings (Ps. 104:1, 14; 136:25)
- 3) Throughout life Psalm 104:33, “(NKJV) *I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.*”
 - 4) Forever and ever Psalm 145:1-2, “(NKJV) *I will extol You, my God, O King; And I will bless Your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.*”
 - 5) More and more as we grow in grace. Psalm 71:14, “(NKJV) *But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.*”
 - 6) Note: We are to praise continually because His mercy and grace and goodness we experience every day, all day, forever!
 - (i) That is exactly why David praised the Lord. 2 Chronicles 7:6, “(NKJV) *And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the Lord, which King David had made to praise the Lord, saying, “For His mercy [endures] forever,” whenever David offered praise by their ministry. The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.*”
 - (ii) Ezra did the same. Ezra 3:11, “(NKJV) *And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord. ‘for [He] [is] good, For His mercy [endures] forever toward Israel.’ Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.*”
- c. Praise God as though offering a sacrifice. (We are all priests.)
- 1) This the sacrifice that pleases the Lord, much more than the sacrifice of bulls or goats. Psalm 69:29-31, “(NKJV) *I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving. 31 [This] also shall please the Lord better than an ox [or] bull, which has horns and hooves.*”
 - 2) David specifically calls this praise of God “a sacrifice of thanksgiving.”
 - (i) Psalm 107:22, “(NKJV) *Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing.*”
 - (ii) Note: this is the proper response for those who have been “healed” by the word and delivered from destruction (v. 20).
 - (iii) Psalm 116:17, “*I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the Lord.*”
- d. Praise God vocally, with the lips.
- 1) We should do more than think praise, we should express it vocally.

- (i) *Psalm 63:3-5*, “Because Your lovingkindness [is] better than life, my lips shall praise You. 4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. 5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.”
 - (ii) *Psalm 119:171*, “My lips shall utter praise, For You teach me Your statutes.”
 - (iii) But no good if ONLY from the lips and not from the heart. *Matthew 15:8*, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with [their] lips, But their heart is far from Me.”
 - 2) Singing should be part of our praise.
 - (i) *Psalm 18:49*, “Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name.”
 - (ii) *Psalm 71:23*, “My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.”
 - (iii) *Psalm 69:30-31*, “I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving. 31 [This] also shall please the Lord better than an ox [or] bull, Which has horns and hooves.”
 - (iv) *Ezra 3:11*, “And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: “For [He] [is] good, For His mercy [endures] forever toward Israel.” Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.”
 - (v) *Ephesians 5:19-20*, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - (vi) *Revelation 5:9*, “And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”
 - e. Praise God by giving thanks.
 - 1) See 1, 3, 4, and 5 above -- all of which connect praise with thanksgiving.
 - 2) We can test our praise by asking ourselves if we can give thanks “for all things.”
 - f. Praise God by honoring His Name.
 - 1) Without this proper respect for God’s Name, for His character and being, we cannot offer acceptable praise.
 - 2) Just repeating His Name is no good, we must honor that Name as we praise Him.
 - 3) More than what He does for us, we should praise God for what He is, for His Name.
 - g. Learn:
 - 1) God delights in sacrifices, but remember that the sacrifice that pleases Him is (1) from the heart and not outward, and (2) shows praise and thanksgiving.
 - 2) You may not have much money or worldly goods to offer, but you can offer the sacrifice of praise.
 - 3) Children too can offer this sacrifice!
 - 4) You may not know how to offer a bullock as an offering, but with your praise you can offer a better sacrifice to God.
 - 5) Remember, as a believer you are part of the Priesthood. You are required to offer sacrifices to God. One required sacrifice is that of praise. Are you a faithful priest?
3. The sacrifice of sharing wealth with others (*13:16*).
- a. Such a sacrifice is “doing good.”
 - 1) This doing good is often connected with sharing what we have.
 - (i) *Luke 6:35*, “But love your enemies, and do [them] good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.”
 - (ii) *Acts 9:36*, “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.”
 - 2) The responsibility is toward all, but especially toward Christians. *Galatians 6:10*, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.”
 - 3) The Philippians did good to Paul. *Philippians 4:14*, “Howbeit ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction”

- 4) Doing good is not limited to sharing our wealth. *Acts 10:38*, “[even] Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.”
- b. Such a sacrifice is “fellowship” with those in need.
 - 1) Recall *Philippians 4:14* above.
 - 2) We are to have our goods in common with those in need.
 - 3) So we are to have fellowship with
 - (i) Other Christians in need.
 - (ii) Missionaries in need -- *Philippians 4:15*.
 - (iii) Our spiritual teachers -- *Galatians 6:6*, “But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”
- c. Such a sacrifice pleases God.
 - 1) It is a sweet-smelling aroma to Him. *Philippians 4:18*, “But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things [that came] from you, and odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.”
 - 2) It pleases God because such giving shows our submission to the Gospel and thus to the Lord. Conversely, those who do not give show their lack of submission, their basic rebellion against the Lord and lack of love for His people. *2 Corinthians 9:12-13*, “For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; 13 seeing that through the proving [of you] by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of [your] contribution unto them and unto all.”
- d. Such a sacrifice is easy to neglect.
 - 1) We tend to think more of our own needs than those of others.
 - 2) We tend to be ungenerous with what the Lord has given us.
 - 3) Those who have no faith neglect it. *James 2:14-16*, “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but have not works? can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit?”
 - 4) Those who have no love neglect it. *1 John 3:17*, “But whoso hath the world’s goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?”
 - 5) See the sin and penalty of neglecting it. = God’s curse (many curses) *Proverbs 28:27*, “He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack; But he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.”

F. Obey spiritual leaders (13:17).

1. The command
 - a. Obey [πειθο] = the idea of listening to and being persuaded, thus the obedience results not from authority but from being persuaded; thus the verb is closely related with believing (*Heb. 3:18-19* -- the Israelites did not obey, and could not enter in because of unbelief).
 - 1) *1 Samuel 8:19*, “But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay: but we will have a king over us.”
 - 2) The Philippians obeyed Paul, whether he was present or absent from them. *Philippians 2:12*, “So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
 - b. Submit [υποκούω] = to put oneself under authority (to God, to Christ -- natural elements, to the faith and the gospel and doctrine, to Abraham by Sarah, to parents by children, to masters by servants, and even to sin)
 - 1) The younger are to submit to the elders of the church [note: no article before younger or elder and thus probably refers primarily to age -- those who are young should submit to those who are older in the faith and in experience]. *1 Peter 5:5*, “Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.”
 - 2) Paul exhorted the Corinthians to submit to those who labored in the Gospel. *1 Corinthians 16:16*, “that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth.”
 - c. Learn:
 - 1) Those who serve should be served by submission.

- 2) We are to be more interested in submission than in leading. Ephesians 5:21 says we are all to be submitted to one another.
2. The reasons for the command
 - a. The work of the spiritual leader
 - 1) They are to be watchful, to the point of going without sleep to care for your souls.
 - 2) The physician and nurse will watch for the body, but the spiritual leader has a graver responsibility, to watch for danger to the souls of his people.
 - (i) Ezekiel 3:17, “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.”
 - (ii) Ezekiel 33:9, “Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, and he turn not from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.”
 - 3) Shepherding includes providing food and watching over (“Feed the flock of God” -- 1 Peter 5:2).
 - b. The joy of the spiritual leader
 - 1) Philippians 4:1, “Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown ...”
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? 20 For ye are our glory and our joy.”
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 3:9, “For what thanksgiving can we render again unto God for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.”
 - 4) He ought to receive double honor. 1 Timothy 5:17, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor ...”
 - c. The grief of the spiritual leader
 - 1) Jeremiah wept over Israel. Jeremiah 13:17, “But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for [your] pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because Jehovah’s flock is taken captive.”
 - 2) Moses grieved over Israel. Exodus 32:31, “And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.”
 - 3) Paul grieved over the “enemies of the cross.” Philippians 3:18, “For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ.”
 - d. The profit of the believer
 - 1) “unprofitable” = will bring grief if disobey. Proverbs 5:11-13, “And thou mourn at thy latter end, When thy flesh and thy body are consumed, 12 And say, How have I hated instruction, And my heart despised reproof; 13 Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!”
 - 2) Will bring shame if disobey. 1 Thessalonians 3:14, “And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed.”

G. Pray for others (13:18-21).

1. Their prayer for the writer (13:18).
 - a. The writer requests their prayers.
 - 1) He has warned them about falling away and exhorted them, but he regards them as true Christians.
 - 2) He has confidence in their prayers.
 - 3) Paul often requested the prayers of the saints.
 - (i) Romans 15:30-31, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; 31 that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judaea, and [that] my ministration which [I have] for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints.”
 - (ii) Ephesians 6:19-20, “And on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”
 - (iii) Colossians 4:3-4, “withal praying for us also, that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”
 - (iv) 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as also [it is] with you; 2 and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith.”
 - (v) Note: We help other Christians and especially missionaries by praying for them. 2 Corinthians 1:11, “ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the

gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf.”

- b. The writer asks prayer that he and other leaders would be able to continue conducting themselves in an honorable way.
 - 1) Some of the writer’s critics may have accused him of evil, his answer is that he has a good conscience, for he has tried to live honorably. Because he is trying to do right, we should pray for him.
 - 2) Still, he would like for them to pray for him that he might always live in a way that brings glory to God.
 - 3) People will attack spiritual leaders and falsely accuse them; we must pray for them to “live well” so that the mouths of the enemy might be silenced.
 - (i) The writer apparently knew that some had attacked his motives.
 - (ii) Pray for your spiritual leaders that they would live godly lives.
 - 4) Our spiritual leaders need our help by means of prayer, just as Moses’ helpers aided him by holding up his arms. *Exodus 17:12, “(NKJV) But Moses’ hands [became] heavy; so they took a stone and put [it] under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”*
 - c. The writer requests that they pray even more diligently for him (19a). *“And I urge [you] all the more to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.”*
 - 1) As we learned in v. 17, the Christian has a special responsibility to obey his spiritual leaders. These verses teach us that the Christian also ought to be praying for his spiritual leaders.
 - 2) We ought to pray even more fervently for those leaders who have been faithful in serving us.
 - 3) Do you need to pray more diligently? Do you need to pray more?
 - d. The writer urges them to pray for his safety in travel and renewed fellowship with them (19b).
 - 1) The writer believed in God’s sovereign control of all events and circumstances.
 - 2) The writer believed that Satan could hinder travel plans and plans to help believers.
 - (i) *1 Thessalonians 2:17-18, “But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you--even I, Paul, time and again--but Satan hindered us.”*
 - (ii) *Romans 15:22-23, “For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you.”*
 - 3) Note: the reason for the hindrance is that the spiritual leader might not be able to help the believers.
 - 4) We ought also to pray for their health and safety from arrest. We do not now which of these was the case, or if some other hindrance is in mind. In any case, he wanted to be “restored to them.”
 - e. Learn:
 - 1) The writer realized that spiritual success came not by human might but by God and that we can ask God and expect God to give victory through prayer.
 - 2) The more diligently and faithfully we pray, the more we ourselves will be blessed as the spiritual leaders watch over us. Praying for them is also praying for self.
 - 3) We sin against one another if we do not pray for one another (1 Samuel 12:23).
2. Pray for the Lord to equip them and use them for His glory (13:20-21).
- a. Introduction:
 - 1) This is a **Model Prayer** = *“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”*
 - 2) This prayer begins with God and ends with God. True prayer focuses more on God than anything, including the need.
 - b. Recall God’s character and work.
 - 1) God’s character as a God of peace.
 - (i) Man’s fundamental problem is that he is not at peace with God.

- (ii) Because of his sin nature and because of his disobedience to God's commands he is the enemy of God.
 - 1. Some expressions = "children of disobedience"
 - 2. "carnal mind is enmity with God"
 - 3. "vessels of wrath"
 - 4. "children of wrath"
 - 5. "of our father the devil"
 - 6. "blinded by the god of this world" "*having the understanding darkened and being alienated from the life of God*" (*Eph. 4:18*)
 - (iii) Paul uses the phrase "God of peace" six times. E.g., *1 Thess. 5:23*, "*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
 - (iv) Jesus has made peace by His blood. *Colossians 1:20*, "(NKJV) *and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*"
 - (v) Therefore, God now calls on all men to receive the peace. *2 Cor. 5:18-20*, "(NKJV) *Now all things [are] of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore [you] on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*"
 - (vi) God wants His people to always enjoy peace. *2 Thess. 3:16*, "(NKJV) *Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord [be] with you all.*"
- 2) God's powerful work of raising Jesus from the dead.
- (i) This is the only direct mention of the resurrection in the epistle. However, there are clear allusions to it are in *1:3* and *12:2* where, following the cross, He sat down "*at the right hand of God.*"
 - (ii) This is what makes Jesus a "great" High priest: He is different from all the others, for they all died.
 - (iii) Note: peace comes as the result of victory. Jesus' victory over sin and then death procures peace for us.
 - (iv) His blood was the price of our peace; His resurrection is the guarantee of our peace. Without the cross He could not have been Savior; without the resurrection He could not have been Saviour and Lord, for He would have only been one more in an innumerable series of sacrifices.
- 3) Jesus' character as the Great Shepherd of the Sheep
- (i) *Isaiah 40:11*, (NKJV) "*He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry [them] in His bosom, [And] gently lead those who are with young.*"
 - (ii) *Ezekiel 34:23*, (NKJV) "*I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them--My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd.*"
 - (iii) For "great" see *4:14* = (NKJV) "*Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] confession.*"
 - (iv) What the shepherd does.
 - 1. The shepherd FEEDS -- He provides good food for the sheep.
 - 2. The shepherd PROTECTS -- He will even give His life for the sheep.
 - 3. The shepherd CORRECTS -- He does not let the sheep wander (chastening) .
 - 4. Texts:
 - a. *John 10:10-11*, (NKJV) "*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.*"
 - b. *1 Peter 2:25*, (NKJV) "*For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*"
 - c. *1 Peter 5:4*, (NKJV) "*And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*"

4) Jesus' work of shedding His blood and establishing the everlasting covenant.

(i) Zechariah 9:11, (NKJV) *"As for you also, Because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit."* Jesus fulfilled this promise.

(ii) Recall ...

1. Mark 14:24, "(NKJV) And He said to them, *"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."*
2. 1 Corinthians 11:25, "(NKJV) In the same manner [He] also [took] the cup after supper, saying, *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of Me."*

(iii) Jesus is the mediator of this new covenant. He guaranteed its fulfillment with His blood.

1. Thus His blood has eternal power to maintain this eternal covenant.
2. 9:15, *"And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."*
3. Those who reject Him "profane the blood of the covenant." 10:29, "(NKJV) *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?"*
4. The name of this Great Shepherd is put emphatically last in the Greek sentence = "OUR LORD JESUS."
 - a. "Our" indicates the faith of the writer and readers.
 - b. Jesus reigns and rules as Lord.
 - c. What a Shepherd! What a Savior! What a salvation!

c. Request these things for believers.

1) Introduction: Recall that we are to begin our prayer with thoughts of God; this will encourage us to pray with faith. When we start with God we start with the assurance of omniscience and omnipotence and of mercy and concern (the Great Shepherd).

2) That they would do God's perfect will.

(i) Introduction: Jesus Himself came "to do the Father's will" (10:7), so that is the example for us to follow.

(ii) For this they will need God's completing, equipping work.

1. Note: We are asking God to this work in them and for them. The subject of the "equipping" and "working" is God, not the other believer.
2. The word for equip suggests that ...
 - a. We may have spiritual defects that are hurting our testimony and effectiveness.
 - b. Used for "mending" nets: Mark 1:19, *"When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the [son] of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also [were] in the boat mending their nets."*
 - c. Used for "restoring" a brother who has fallen away from the Lord. Galatians 6:1, *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who [are] spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."*
3. We certainly have need of spiritual progress toward perfection [suggests "goal"].
 - a. Used for perfecting praise: Matthew 21:16, *"...Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?"*
 - b. Used of prayer for the perfecting of Christians: 2 Corinthians 13:9, *"For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete."*
4. We have daily need of God's supplies of grace, wisdom and help.
 - a. Used of supplying what is needed.
 - b. 1 Thessalonians 3:10 *"Night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?"*

(iii) For this they will need to be engaged in every good work.

1. There are many kinds of good works. The Lord wants us to neglect none of them.
2. God equips us, not for ourselves, but so that we might work for Him and be a blessing to others.

3. Every Christian is to be a “worker” for the Lord. What is your work for the Lord?
 4. If every Christian does his work, then God’s work will go forward.
 5. Let’s pray for each other that we will be equipped for work and that we will then do the work God has called us to do.
- 3) That they would do what is well-pleasing in God’s sight:
- (i) We are to learn what pleases God and then we are to do it.
 1. Find out what is pleasing: *Ephesians 5:10*, “*finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.*”
 2. Do it: *James 4:17*, “*Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do [it], to him it is sin.*”
 - (ii) They will need for God to “work” this in them.
 1. Again we see God’s part in our spiritual walk and growth.
 2. Since God is the one who does the work in us, we need to beseech Him to do this work, both in us and other believers.
 3. We can be encouraged in this because we know it is God’s will to perfect His people. *Philippians 2:12-13*, “*Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for [His] good pleasure.*”
 - (iii) They can only do this “through Jesus Christ.”
 1. We can do nothing good without His help. *John 15:4-5*, “*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*”
 2. We can do EVERYTHING good with His help.
 - a. *Philippians 4:13*, “*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*”
 - b. *1 Corinthians 15:10*, “*But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God [which] [was] with me.*”
- d. Close with ascribing glory to God.
- 1) Begin and end prayer with thoughts of God.
 - 2) Our motive in prayer should not be our satisfaction or glory, but solely God’s glory.
 - 3) Note: Jesus Christ is the One who should receive all the glory, and forever. The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel’s land!

H. Accept the exhortations of this book (13:22).

1. He has spoken strongly at times. He did this not to harm them but to strengthen them. He did it because he loved them and wanted to see them hold fast their confession and grow as Christians.
2. This verse gives us the purpose for the epistle: it was hortatory. He was urging them to enter into God’s rest, to draw near to God, to go on to perfection, to exhort one another to love and to good works, to serve God with reverence, and to offer spiritual sacrifices.
3. Receiving exhortation is not always easy; it takes some patience and endurance.
 - a. We might tend to become angry or impatient with exhortation.
 - b. The right response is to receive it gladly.
 - c. The writer was concerned that they might not receive the exhortation in the right spirit and that they might not suffer spiritually. They were facing the danger of apostasy.

I. Final information and greetings (13:23-25).

1. Information about Timothy (13:23). “*Take notice that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I shall see you.*”
 - a. Apparently they knew Timothy well and would be happy to know of his release from jail.
 - b. Timothy was evidently no longer at Ephesus. The apostle John had come to Ephesus and would remain there for many years, and therefore Timothy was free to travel around.
2. “*Greet all your leaders and all the saints*” (13:24a).
 - a. No other greeting in the NT to “all the leaders.”
 - 1) The writer recognized the godliness of these leaders. He respected them.

- 2) These people were blessed to have such leaders.
- 3) “All” does not necessarily mean a large number, maybe only four or five.
- b. He also sends greetings to all the saints; the epistle is for the whole church. Note: Christians are called “saints” and ought to live like saints.
3. **“Those from Italy greet you.”**
 - a. We do not know for sure if these Italian Christians were presently in Italy or in some other land sending greetings to the Hebrew Christians.
 - b. It is possible that Italians send greetings because the Hebrew Christians written to were residing in Italy. Lenski = “We take these Italians to be associates of Apollos, who were present with him outside of Italy.”
4. Closing benediction: **“Grace be with you all.” (13:25)**
 - a. We need grace every day, all day.
 - 1) We are saved and kept by grace.
 - 2) Some closing thoughts about God’s grace: “Grace” is not a common word in Hebrews, used only 7 times.
 - (i) 2:9, “*But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, [namely,] Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*”
 - (ii) 4:16, “(NKJV) *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*”
 - (iii) 10:29, “(NKJV) *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*”
 - (iv) 12:15, “(NKJV) *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*”
 - (v) 12:28, “(NKJV) *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*”
 - (vi) 13:9, “(NKJV) *Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For [it] [is] good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.*”
 - (vii) 13:25, “(NKJV) *Grace [be] with you all. Amen.*”

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