

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE



Hebrews

CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE

CLT Bible Study

HEBREWS

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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Welcome to the Continuing Lay Ministries series of Bible studies. You are engaged in a study venture that will be both helpful and enjoyable. Here are a few suggestions that will make this Bible study the most beneficial to you.

1. Since this is a Bible study, have your Bible near you at all times. This study outline is only designed to help you read the Bible.
2. The Bible version used for this study is the New International Version (NIV). The editor primarily used the language of the NIV to prepare the lessons. You may use other versions of the Bible if you choose. While the language may be different, the meaning will be the same.
3. Before you begin each section, read the entire Scripture passage. This is very important. The study outline will help you understand the particular Bible verses but does not tell what they say.
4. **IMPORTANT:** Note that some of the scriptures from the particular book being studied may not have the book's name. For example, if the Bible reference is (1:6-8), you will find these verses (6-8) in the first chapter of Hebrews. Other books of the Bible will include the name in the reference, for example, Isaiah 53:1 and John 17:1.
5. Go through the study outline carefully. Take time to look up all the Scripture verses in the outline.
6. You may want to mark your study Bible as you go. Marking your Bible will help the words become more and more your own.
7. Finally, read the Bible passage again to better understand its meaning. Perhaps you may benefit of listening to the reading of the Book of Hebrews.
8. The editor has also included how to pronounce some of the more difficult proper names and words. The first time the word is introduced, the pronunciation will follow the word. At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of the words in the order in which they were introduced. Additionally, at the end of the document, all of the words and pronunciations will be listed alphabetically. For pronunciation of additional terms and their definitions please refer to *A Dictionary of the Bible & Christian Doctrine in Everyday English* (Eby, et al, 2004).

If a family or a few friends decide to take this study together, here are two suggestions.

1. Have one person read the Bible passage and another person read the Continuing Lay Ministries outline.
2. Then discuss the Scripture and outline. Ask questions of each other to help clarify the meaning of the Scripture.

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CHAPTER 1

Background to Hebrews



NOTES

The Epistle to the Hebrews stands tall and majestic among the books of the Bible, unique in its presentation of the culmination of divine revelation in Christ. This is especially true as it points to the finality of Christianity in the work and person of Christ. He is presented as greater than the angels, Moses, the Aaronic priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the prophets. He thus outmodes the old covenant.

The Epistle is also unique in the obscurity of background detail. Study of it evokes a number of questions:

Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, and when was it written - authorship and date?

Where was the author when writing, and to whom was it written - place of origin and of destination?

What was the occasion of his writing and the purpose for which it was written?

None of these questions can be answered satisfactorily when studying the Epistle itself.

SECTION 1.1. AUTHORSHIP AND DATE

A. AUTHORSHIP

The Epistle to the Hebrews contains neither a direct statement nor a helpful hint about the person who wrote it. It merely begins, "To the Hebrews," according to the earliest manuscripts. In turning to the Early Church fathers, one finds several views.

Three separate traditions arose in very early Christian times. First, in Rome and the Western Roman world, the belief prevailed that Paul was not the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Second, in North Africa with Tertullian (ca. A.D. 195) among the first proponents, there arose the tradition that Barnabas wrote this Epistle. One particular reason for this suggestion is the possible coincidence between the name Barnabas, meaning "son of exhortation," and the term "word of exhortation" (13:22), which seems to apply to the entire Epistle. In addition, Barnabas was a Jew, and this may explain his special interest in the Epistle in the priesthood and sacrificial system of the Old Testament. Third, at Alexandria [a-luhg-ZAN-dree-uh]



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and perhaps in the East, the view was generally accepted that Paul was the author. Clement of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 195) held that Paul wrote it in Aramaic [eh-ruh-MAY-uhk], and Luke rewrote it in Greek. Origen [AW-ruh-jn] (ca. A.D. 220) believed that Paul masterminded the Epistle in an original, short form but that an unknown person was responsible for its final, fuller form.

Views along these general lines have prevailed since the second and third centuries down to the present time. Pauline's authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews was generally accepted from Augustine [AA-guh-steen] (early fifth century A.D.) until the Reformation. The reformers, however, almost unanimously rejected Pauline's authorship. Calvin contended that style and manner of teaching definitely ruled out Paul as an author. Luther believed that Apollos [uh-PAA-lowz] was the author. Luther's view is the most inviting of all and is subscribed to by more scholars than any other view. However, there is still nothing more that can be stated about the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews than was affirmed during the early Christian centuries. In modern times, we are forced to accept that God, in his providence, has withheld this information from us.

B. DATE

There are a number of statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews that provide a basis for referring to an approximate time of writing. The readers to whom the Epistle was sent apparently were Christians for some time (see 5:12 and 10:32). The exhortation to remember their leaders (13:7) may indicate that attention is being called to the former leaders who have died. This verse thus may allude to the martyrdom of James. On the other hand, Timothy was still alive at the time of the writing of the Epistle since he is mentioned in 13:23. Further, there is no mention of the destruction of Jerusalem. The language of 8:4 and 10:1 seems to hint that the Temple was still intact and the sacrifices were still being offered in it. This could not be true after A.D. 70 when the Temple was destroyed. It is possible, therefore, to propose sometime between A.D. 60 and 70 as the date of composition.

SECTION 1.2. PLACE OF ORIGIN AND OF DESTINATION

A. PLACE OF WRITING

The title "to the Hebrews," used as early as the second century, is no indication of where the Epistle was written. One small clue is "They of Italy salute you" in 13:24. But the Greek preposition *apo*, translated "of," means "from." This phrase can mean either "They who are from [living in] Italy" or "They who are from [no longer in]



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Italy.” There is a tendency among scholars recently to prefer the latter meaning. But, here again, we face obscurity concerning the background.

B. PLACE OF DESTINATION

Lack of definite information concerning destination has led to numerous suggestions, such as Jerusalem [juh-REW-suh-lum], Caesarea [seh-suh-REE-uh], Antioch [an-TEE-aak] in Syria [see-ree-uh], Ephesus [EH-fuh-suhs], Alexandria, and Rome. Statements in the Epistle and the intent of its writer indicate rather clearly that it was sent to a specific group of Christian Jews. The almost unanimous opinion of the Early Church was that it was sent to Christian Jews in Jerusalem. These Jews would understand best the contrasts made in the Epistle. They knew better than any other Jewish group the splendors of the Temple and the latent appeal of the ritual and ceremony of the Old Covenant.

SECTION 1.3. THE PURPOSE IN WRITING

The Epistle’s purpose may be ascertained by noticing details that point to specific background conditions. Certain passages contain exhortations or warnings against returning to a way of life that is inferior to the Christian way. Christians are urged to maintain confidence (3:6, 14; 4:14). They are warned against lethargy (5:11; 6:12). They are said to be failing in developing spiritual understanding (5:12-14). They are tempted to accept other and strange teachings (13:9). They face backsliding and apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see] (3:12; 10:26). They are about to give up their belief in Christ, and were they to do this, they would face the judgment of God (10:26-31). The occasion for the writing of the Epistle was that of the waning, weakening the faith of a group of Christian Jews, probably in Jerusalem.

The purpose, therefore, was to encourage and bolster their faith.

Consequently, the superiority of Christianity over Judaism is stressed, as the basic features of the Old Testament covenant are enumerated and shown to be inferior in the light of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The obscurity covering many details of the background may hinder it from a strictly historical standpoint. But, the great truths presented about Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Savior of lost humankind, are eternal. They stand as a great mountain peak of truth for all ages and generations. The absence of background details helps this peak of truth stand out all the more in bold relief and is, therefore, not a hindrance but an aid in our use of the Epistle to the Hebrews in this generation.

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The Epistle to the Hebrews may be outlined as follows:

The Better Messenger (1 - 2)

The Better Leader 3)

The Better Rest (4:1-13)

The Better High Priest (4:14 - 7:28)

The Better Covenant in Christ (8 - 10)

The Better Way of Life (11 - 13)

Alexandria [a-luhg-ZAN-dree-uh]

Aramaic [eh-ruh-MAY-uhk]

Origen [AW-ruh-jn]

Augustine [AA-guh-steen]

Apollos [uh-PAA-lowz]

Caesarea [seh-suh-REE-uh]

Antioch [an-TEE-aak]

CHAPTER 2

The Better Messenger (1 - 2)

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Without introductory personal statements, the writer opens the Epistle with a great literary enhancement. As Genesis begins with its "In the beginning God created" and the Gospel of John with its "In the beginning was the Word," the Epistle to the Hebrews starts with an equally grand theme: "In the past God spoke . . . in these last days He has spoken to us". The author thus immediately sets forth his main reason for writing the Epistle, that is, to show that God in his Son has spoken in a way better than the many ways in which He had spoken in the past throughout Jewish history. It is the writer's assertion that God has revealed himself in a specifically unique way, that true religion is not futile grasping or unending quest but acceptance of truth as revealed in God's Son.

SECTION 2.1. THE CULMINATING WORK OF CHRIST (1:1-3)

A. THE PAST - "IN THE PAST, GOD SPOKE." (1:1)

There were three elements with which first-century correspondence generally opened, whether it was official or personal. Paul includes them here.

1. "To our forefathers by the prophets."

The forefathers are descendants of Abraham, the line of people from the writer back to Abraham himself. It thus seems to identify the writer and those to whom he is writing as Jews. God had spoken to the descendants of Abraham through a long line of prophetic voices - Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Amos, and others.

2. "At many times and in various ways."

The thought is that God had spoken in many different ways. This phrase and reference to the prophets refer to the Old Testament period - considerably more than a thousand years when God spoke to Israel in miraculous acts, blessing and judgment, and dreams and visions.

B. THE PRESENT - GOD HAS SPOKEN TO US. (1:2-3)

1. "In these last days."

This phrase, occurring also frequently in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, refers to the time when God would carry out the great

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redemptive act that the prophets were led to predict. This great event of redemption has occurred. God has spoken by it. The writer thus asserts without hesitation that he and his would-be readers are living in the days of and beyond the greatest of all events of history.

2. "God ... has spoken to us by his Son."

The days of preparation passed, and their purpose was served; God then sent his Son. Revelation of the Eternal God had been imperfect because it was impersonal, but now it was perfect because it was personal in the person of Jesus Christ. Several statements asserting the completeness and uniqueness of God's revelation of himself in Christ support the contention that Christ is the culmination of all previous revelations.

a. "Heir of all things."

Christ is the End of all history. He alone gives meaning to history. History finds its ultimate goal in him. History is in his power. He owns it.

b. Creator of the world.

Christ is the Originator or the Beginner of all history. There is here the same theme as found in "the Word" in John 1:1-3 and in the creativity of the spoken word in Genesis 1.

c. The Manifestation of God.

Being "the radiance of God's glory" is similar to Colossians 1:15. The word translated "radiance" may also be rendered "shining forth." Christ is a "visible outshining" or "reflection" of God's glory. "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" (Psalm 8:1)

d. The Counterpart of God.

"The exact representation of his being" may also be translated as "He bears the very stamp of his nature." The Greek word is *charakter*, from which we get our word "character." It means "stamp" or "impress". This and the previous phrase are an assertion that "Christ is the manifestation of God's glory and the exact reproduction of his essence or nature." The writer of the Epistle had no doubt concerning the deity of Christ.

e. The Sustainer of all things.

Christ is the One who upholds "all things by his powerful word." He has not only created the world, but He also preserves it. No suggestion here of an absentee God - sitting on some distant throne aloof and cold.



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f. The Purifier of our sins.

Christ, in shedding his blood and dying on the Cross, “had provided purification for sins.” In his atonement, He provided for the purging of our sins - not a partial but a complete atonement [uh-TOWN-muhnt] for our sinfulness.

g. Coregent with the Father.

Having carried out his redemptive mission on earth, the Son “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” Sitting suggests an assignment completed. The final word concerning man’s redemption [ruh-DEMP-shn] has been given.

In these first three verses, we find some of the grandest statements in the Bible. The assertion that God has spoken to us by his Son is full of meaning! God has spoken by his Son - the eternal, pre-existent Word; the incarnate Word (very God, very man); the Suffering Servant and dying Savior; the resurrected, living, triumphant Lord. Nowhere in the Bible is the gospel story so condensed as here.

SECTION 2.2. BETTER THAN ANGELS (1:4-14)

The Jews came to believe that angels gave the old covenant to Moses at Sinai. But angels were created, so redemption had a beginning in time. They apparently were asserting the lack of a comparable beginning for Christianity. But, in calling attention to the greatness and exaltedness of Christ, the writer shows that Christianity had an even greater beginning.

A. CHRIST ABOVE ANGELS IN MANY WAYS (1:4-13).

1. Acknowledged as God’s Son (1:5).

Psalms 2:7 and 98:26 are quoted to show that “son” applies rightly to Christ and not to angels.

2. Worshiped by Angels (1:6-7).

Psalms 97:7 and 104:4 are used to make the point that only Christ, not angels, can command the adoration and praise of angels.

3. Addressed as God (1:8-13).

Again, psalms are quoted to call attention to the deity of Christ. There is a



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reference to Psalm 45:6-7 in verses 8 and 9 - that Christ is God and that He reigns in righteousness on an everlasting throne. There is a reference to Psalm 102:25-27 in verses 10-12 - that Christ, as Founder of heaven and earth, will endure though the created world may pass away. There is a reference to Psalm 110:1 in verse 13 - that only of Christ may it be stated that He sits at the right hand of God.

B. ANGELS ARE MERELY MINISTERING SPIRITS (1:14).

Angels are of a heavenly order, to be sure, and they are divinely sent forth. Their mission is essentially serving - helping people keep true to their faith in God, but they can never save people. This is one of the chief differences between angels and Christ.

SECTION 2.3. THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL DRIFTING (2:1-4)

The Epistle to the Hebrews contains a number of alternating warnings and exhortations. These are the red and green signals of God's strategically placed "traffic lights" along life's spiritual highway.

A. CLOSER ATTENTION OR SPIRITUAL DRIFTING (2:1).

1. "Earnest Heed" Necessary to Spiritual Growth.

The person having come into possession of the "pearl of great price" can lose it through lack of effort and diverted interest.

2. Drifting Is an Ever-present Peril.

Our salvation is never guaranteed without condition. Effort on our part is required to maintain it; none to lose it!

B. NEGLECTING GOD'S WORD IS FATAL (2:2-4).

1. "Word Spoken by Angels" (2:2).

Truth revealed by angels, or special messengers, in Old Testament times has been validated time and again. God has judged and punished people who have broken his laws and disobeyed.

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2. Neglect of the Spoken Word Is Neglect of Salvation (2:3).

No one can expect to be exempted from God's law of punishment of sinful acts apart from the acceptance of the saving Word (the Son).

3. The Spoken Word Commands Attention.

We cannot take the word of salvation lightly. We cannot escape the wrath that comes when we disregard who Christ is and what He has done for us. There are at least two reasons for this:

a. The Word has a divine origin (2:3).

It was declared at first by the Lord.

b. The Word has divine confirmation (2:4).

God has borne witness to his Word through signs, miracles, and wonders. The gifts of the Holy Spirit also add to the confirmation of the Word.

SECTION 2.4. THE SUFFERING SON OF MAN (2:5-18)

Jesus was not only very God but also very man - the GodMan.

A. JESUS, TRULY MAN (2:5-9).

1. "World to Come" Subject to Christ (2:5).

The writer speaks of Christ as One who has "in subjection the world to come". This is another way of presenting him as the End, Ultimate Goal of all history. So before developing thought on the humanity of Christ, another peg is driven with regard to the deity of Christ. This is not to be lost in dwelling on his humanity.

2. God Became Man (2:6-9).

The Old Testament again provides the basis for the assertion that Jesus was fully human. Other points of the writer's own understanding are added.

a. Son of Man in the fullest sense.

Psalm 8:4-6 is quoted to show clearly that it can be said of Christ, "What is man ...?" This Old Testament scripture is applied to Christ and thus given its highest level of interpretation.

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- b. The Incarnation [in-kar-NAY-shuhn] historical fact.

The Eternal Word, the Christ, was made “a little lower than the angels.” This suggests that for a brief interval Jesus lived on earth subject to time, space, and other earthly limitations as we are.

- c. The crown after the Cross.

Jesus, who knew no sinful nature nor acts of sin, bore in his body the penalty for our sins unto his death. It was He who was made a Sin Offering for us on the Cross. Because of his supreme act of love for us, He has been “crowned with glory and honor” - the Recipient of homage, exaltation, and praise that He alone is worthy to receive.

- d. Substitutionary suffering and dying.

The Old Testament shows clearly that sin brings everyone under the penalty of death before God, who is holy and just. Divine love for humankind motivated Jesus to “taste death for everyone”; i.e., though He was not under the penalty for sin, He assumed our penalty and therefore presented us with the wondrous possibility of being released from sin’s power. Jesus did this for us! We have here the glorious mystery of the wrath and justice of God being tempered by love and mercy. *“Upon the cross of Jesus, My eye at times can see The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me. And from my smitten heart, with tears, Two wonders I confess - The wonder of his glorious love, And my own worthlessness.”* (Elizabeth Cecilia Clephane)

B. JESUS, THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION (2:10-13).

1. Perfected Through Suffering (v. 10).

Jesus, the Word by whom all things exist (see 1:2-3), has led the way for salvation from sin, essentially through suffering. The verb translated “make perfect” means to “bring to completion.” There is suggested the profound thought that salvation could not have been accomplished apart from the incarnation and the suffering of Jesus. Jesus’ work and person, as it were, remained incomplete in their redemptive role until the suffering on the Cross.

2. Sanctifier and Sanctified Are One (2:11-13).

A bond of unity places Jesus and the entirely sanctified on a common basis: a mutual fellowship and a mutual desire to do the will of the Father.

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- a. Common origin.

There is the hint that “sons of glory” (2:10) or “the sanctified” (2:11) and the Sanctifier (Christ) have their origin in the Divine Being (God). This is indeed a glorious thought! When we are saved and sanctified, we have our origin as spiritual beings in God himself.

- b. A member of the family of God.

God is Father; those who have been born again are his sons - members of the heavenly family.

C. GOD BECAME MAN TO BE A REDEEMER OF MEN (2:14-18).

A number of explicit statements are made about the humanity of Christ to show why the Incarnation is the pivotal fact of redemption.

1. Jesus' Humanity a Crucial Point in the Redemptive Plan.

Some of the most glorious thoughts ever penned are found herein. If ever truth will humble a person, the truth of this passage will!

- a. A Partaker of human nature (2:14).

A mystery but nonetheless the greatest of revealed truth: God in the God-Man, Jesus, identified himself with humans. He “also himself in like manner partook of the same” (ARV).

- b. Redemption is possible only as Christ was both human and divine (2:17).

Jesus could not have become the Savior of the world had He remained aloof and above humanity. His saving mission could be accomplished by his being also very man: “For this reason, He had to be made like his brothers in every way (i.e., in every respect).”

- c. Human experiences witness to his humanity (2:18).

He experienced weariness, privation, temptation, sorrow, pain, and death. He entered into human life both extensively and intensively, without a doubt, more than any other human being.

2. His Humanity Essential to Redemption (2:14-18).

Again, the Incarnation stands out as a great fact in human history. Our redemption could never have been possible unless Jesus had partaken of humanity, becoming flesh, and dwelt among people (see John 1:14).

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a. Jesus' humanity and deliverance (2:14).

The very specific purpose for which Jesus became man was placing himself in a position to overthrow the devil's power over sinful men and set them free. Our release from sin's bondage and death has been accomplished only in Jesus' humiliation - his partaking of human nature.

b. The specific concern of Jesus (2:16).

In mention of the descendants of Abraham, it is suggested here, as in the Gospels, that Jesus' concern about lost, sinful men rested first (but not solely) on the Jews.

c. Mediator and Sacrifice (2:17).

In the Old Testament days, the specially appointed and anointed priest stood between God and Israel as a mediator between God and man, interceding on behalf of sinful people. There was also the sacrificial animal whose blood was shed as atonement for sin. Christ is not only "a merciful and faithful high priest" but also our atoning Sacrifice, the One "to make atonement for the sins of the people" (2:17).

d. Ability to help others through experience (2:18).

Jesus could not be the understanding Savior He is had He not known the sufferings and temptations of people. His entering completely into human life added significantly to his being our Savior.

atonement [uh-TOWN-muhnt]
redemption [ruh-DEMP-shn]
Incarnation [in-kar-NAY-shuhn]

CHAPTER 3

The Better Leader (3)



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The writer addresses his would-be readers as “holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling” (3:1). He then directs them to consider who Jesus is and to observe how He surpasses Moses on every significant point, for even Christian Jews no doubt were tempted to look to Moses with greater esteem than to anyone else.

SECTION 3.1. JESUS, “APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR PROFESSION” (3:1)

A. JESUS AS APOSTLE

“Apostle” is applied in the New Testament to the men who were “on the ground floor” of Christianity. It is a term for those who walked with Jesus and who directly received his commission to spread the gospel after his ascension. It is a special term for early Christianity. Applied to Jesus, it directly identifies him with Christianity.

B. JESUS AS HIGH PRIEST

“High priest” is a term for one of the most significant offices of the old covenant. Thus, Jesus as Apostle and High Priest is identified with both Old Testament faith (Judaism) and Christianity. Against the supposition of some with whom the writer was concerned, there actually is not an antithesis [an-TI-thuh-suhs] between Judaism and Christianity, but the two are compatible in this one sense - one prepared the way for the other.

SECTION 3.2. JESUS BETTER THAN MOSES (3:2-6)

The main thought about Jesus and Moses is that Jesus was “found worthy of greater honor than Moses” (3:3). Both persons have figured prominently in the household of faith; that is, “God’s house” of 3:2-3, which may be considered as explained by “we are his house” of 3:6.

A. MOSES IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

Moses was divinely appointed to fill a position in God’s house and served faithfully in filling this position.

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1. Moses Better Than Anyone Before Christ.

Numbers 12:6-8 shows clearly that Moses stood in a unique relationship before and within the community of believers before the time of Christ.

2. Moses' Status Always That of a Servant.

Moses served well to preserve and promote the household of faith. But, he himself was a part of that which was entrusted to him. It could never be said of him that he was the originator or builder of it in the ultimate sense.

B. CHRIST IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

Jesus Christ, by his very person and by his relationship to the household of faith, has been counted "worthy of greater honor than Moses."

1. Jesus, the Builder of the Household of Faith (3:4).

Only of Jesus Christ can it be said that God's house begins in and with him.

2. Jesus, More Than Servant - God's Son (3:6).

Jesus alone in the household of faith occupies the unique role as "the Son of God," and thus He is Ruler over it.

SECTION 3.3. A WARNING AGAINST THE DANGER OF UNBELIEF (3:7-19)

Many may have been stumbling over the fact that a better leader than Moses has come. There is, therefore, a warning against refusal to accept this truth. There is also an exhortation to regard the rightful place of Christ in their lives.

A. A HISTORY OF HARDNESS OF HEART AND REBELLION (3:7-11)

Psalms 95:7-11 is quoted to show that if they turn from the truth that has come to them, they will do what is described of their fathers. The possibility of turning from truth touches on the story of people often turning away from God, a story that is being continued in many ways in our day.

B. BELIEVING ESSENTIAL TO THE LIFE IN CHRIST (3:12-15)

Once believing and then disbelieving the claims made about Christ inevitably

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leads to losing the vital relationship with God. Our concern should be that we are not deceived with respect to the work and person of Christ (3:13). A dynamic, vital faith is dependent upon proper belief in Christ.

C. HEARING OF TRUTH NOT A GUARANTEE AGAINST REBELLION (3:16-19)

Some people may believe that hearing the truth about God, Christ, sin, and salvation is enough. It is necessary to look at only one point in Old Testament history, even during the time of Moses, to see that many “heard and rebelled” and that their rebellion arose in their hearts because of unbelief.

For the person today who is unbelieving and rebellious, there are pardon and restoration. He may pray with Fanny Crosby: *“Let me at the throne of mercy Find a sweet relief; Kneeling there in deep contrition, Help my unbelief.”*

antithesis [an-TI-thuh-suhs]

CHAPTER 4

The Better Rest (4:1-13)



NOTES

The “rest” into which followers of Christ may enter is patterned to some extent after God’s rest following creation. It is a rest into which only Christ can lead.

SECTION 4.1. A REST BEYOND JUSTIFICATION (4:1-7)

Those addressed by the writer are called “holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling” (3:1). It is thus clear that he wrote to believers, persons justified by faith. Therefore, the emphasis is that believers are to go on a step further - on to a peace of heart, entire sanctification, that would be entering into God’s rest.

A. FAILURE BRINGS JUDGMENT (4:1).

In times past (during the Old Testament period), the good news of God’s rest came to the Israelites, “but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard” (4:2 ARV). God, therefore, judged them for their lack of faith, as He always judges those who do not walk in the light they may receive.

B. THE SANCTIFIED LIFE AN EXPERIENCE OF THE PRESENT (4:3).

Entering into God’s rest is more than an ideal. It is a blessed experience in grace that may be realized in this life. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it clear that those who take the proper step of faith can possess God’s rest: “For we who have believed do enter into that rest” (4:3 ARV). The contrast is also given: it is just as true that those disbelieving in the past could not enter God’s rest (see 4:3).

SECTION 4.2. JOSHUA’S INABILITY VERSUS CHRIST’S ABILITY (4:8)

The point made by verse eight, though briefly presented, is nonetheless important for the line of argument followed by the writer of the Epistle. “Jesus” is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “Joshua,” but Joshua fits the context better, and thus, Joshua is the preferred reading. The thought is that they did not attain God’s rest under Joshua: the pros and cons about the possibility of how they would have this rest under Joshua are not given. There is merely the statement



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that they did not enter into God's rest under Joshua. Thus, Joshua's inability is contrasted with Jesus' ability. Jesus is set forth as the One in whom we may enter into God's rest - the sanctified life.

SECTION 4.3. A REST PATTERNED AFTER A DIVINE EXAMPLE (4:4, 9)

The rest God has for his people has its example in God's ceasing from his labors and resting on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2). That is, we are now in God's sabbath (sabbath means "to rest"). How is the "rest" of the "entirely sanctified" similar to God's resting after creation? The writer makes only broad suggestions; he leaves details to the reader. On this basis the following suggestions are made.

A. INNER SABBATH

The rest of the sanctified is essentially a peace and harmony within. It is a rest resulting from the removal of carnality [kar-NAL-li-tee], the source of provocation within a person. Just as "God rested from all his work" (4:4) after creation, there is the promise for God's people that rest can follow their toil and labor arising out of the struggle within.

B. NOT INACTIVITY BUT FRUITFUL ACTIVITY

Experiencing God's rest does not mean that one becomes complacent, folding one's hands and sitting down to a life of ease. It means that one's life can be integrated along those lines and toward those ends which benefit the kingdom of God and people. Just as God in his sabbath has not withdrawn himself, having nothing to do with the world anymore, but creatively maintains it, so the person entering into the sanctified [SANGK-tuh-fide] life with a unified inner life lives a creative, dynamic life for God and for good. He thus lives the way God intends for people to live!

SECTION 4.4. THE RESPONSIBILITY IS OURS (4:11-13)

An appropriate exhortation follows a comment on entering into God's rest.

A. OUR PART IN BECOMING SANCTIFIED (4:11).

"Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest" shows that God does not arbitrarily give this experience to a person. However, it is not by our efforts that

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we qualify ourselves and thereby work our way into the sanctified state of grace. Rather, it is that each person must meet certain conditions. Each one must make this decision. Otherwise, they will never enter into God's rest. The emphasis is on individual human responsibility.

B. FAILING TO BE SANCTIFIED LEADS TO FALLING FROM GRACE (4:11).

One becomes guilty of disobedience if one does not meet the conditions for entering God's rest. If someone refuses to walk as God commands, this is rebellion against God's will.

C. THE PROBING, DEFINING WORD (4:12-13).

One can be sure that what one does with respect to truth will be known by God in heaven. God's Word pierces and probes into the far recesses of a person's heart until everything about the person is exposed before God. This makes it all the more imperative that one should not lose one's standing with God through the default of failing to become sanctified.

carnality [kar-NAL-li-tee]
sanctified [SANGK-tuh-fide]

CHAPTER 5

The Better High Priest (4:14-7:28)



NOTES

The writer of the Epistle speaks of Jesus as “High Priest whom we confess” first in 3:1. There, he introduced the idea; now, he developed it.

SECTION 5.1. A GLORIOUS THEME (4:14-16)

“Therefore, since we have a great high priest, who has gone through the heavens,” is the thought either in the foreground or the background of the Epistle. Christian Jews are here reminded that there need be no alarm because the Mosaic system is being replaced.

A. “LET US HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION” (4:14-15).

Upon hearing that there was One greater than Moses, there was greater reason than ever to hold to the Christian faith. It cannot be said of Moses but only of Christ: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses; but we have one who has been tempted in a way, just as we are, yet without sin.”

B. LET US DRAW NEAR (4:16).

Coming through Christ as High Priest to the throne of God, we may receive the helpful touch of God’s grace on our lives as we face demanding situations in life. What a wonderful thought! In those times of great need, we can draw on an adequate source of divine grace.

SECTION 5.2. THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD AND JESUS’ PRIESTHOOD (5:1-10)

The priesthood of the Old Testament is described in detail in order to show that Jesus is vitally related to it, yet nevertheless goes beyond it. Thus, Christians are urged to look to Jesus rather than to Moses.

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A. THE OLD TESTAMENT HIGH PRIEST (5:1-4).

1. A Human Mediator.

The Old Testament priest, selected from one of the families of Israel, stood between his people and God in order to “offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (5:1).

2. Acquainted with Human Frailties and Sin (5:2).

The Old Testament priest, a frail human being himself, was heir to the weaknesses and sins of those whom he served.

3. Sin Offerings for All (5:3).

Both priests and people were sinners before God and in need of atoning sacrifices.

4. Divinely Called (5:4).

The office of the high priest was a holy and sacred trust. Only men whom God designated could fill it. Aaron and his sons were these men (see Exodus 28:1 and other Old Testament passages).

B. JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST (5:5-10)

1. God-appointed (5:5).

The One who first spoke the quotations used from the Old Testament (see Psalms 2:7 and 110:4) is the One who appointed Christ as our High Priest. He is, of course, God. In this respect Christ and Old Testament priests are alike.

2. The God-Man, Our Mediator (5:7).

Jesus, by virtue of his humanity (“during the days of Jesus’ life on earth”), is Mediator [MEE-dee-ay-tr] and Intercessor [in-tur-SES-ur] between God and sinful people. He has experienced humankind’s heartaches and woes. He offered up prayers “with loud cries and tears.” Jesus, as Son of Man, is like the Old Testament priest who stands between God and people. Yet, He is unlike the priest of the old covenant. First, He is not only man in the fullest sense but also God. Second, He lived thus without sinning (see 4:15).

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3. An Obedient, Perfected Son (5:8-9).

Jesus, by his example, demonstrated what God wants most in his followers - wholehearted obedience. In this obedience unto suffering and death, we are again confronted with the profound theme that suffering perfected our Savior, that He “became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him” (5:9).

4. “After the Order of Melchizedek” (5:6 and 9).

Order of Melchizedek, an order of priests different from the Aaronic priests, is discussed in detail at a later point (see 7:1-3).

SECTION 5.3. A PLEA FOR PERFECTION AND MATURITY (5:11 - 6:12)

There were those who apparently had become wearied by the deep truths of the spiritual life or possibly had never shown concern for these truths which count the most in life. The writer left his main theme to emphasize that they “go on to perfection.”

A. DULLNESS RETARDS GROWTH TOWARD MATURITY (5:11-14).

As with Jesus, so with the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews; there were those who had ears but did not hear. Spiritually dull, they may be described in one of several ways.

1. Being Taught When They Ought to Be Teaching (5:12).
2. Childish in Terms of Spiritual Living - staying on milk when “solid foods” ought to be the regular diet (5:13). It is possible, the writer says, for Christians of long-standing to remain shallow in their comprehension of the things of God. The challenge is to move on into adult life.

B. THE ALTERNATIVES: PERFECTION OR APOSTASY [UH-PAA-STUH-SEE] (6:1-6).

1. “On to Maturity” (6:1).

The Greek verb of this verse is passive and is best rendered, “Let us be borne on to perfection” rather than “Let us go on to maturity.” The emphasis thus is not on personal effort but on submissiveness to an actual influence. There



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is, of course, more involved than what is stated specifically, but being in a place where we are borne by the Spirit to maturity is, in effect, going beyond the elementary doctrines and experiences (see 6:1-2). So again, the writer clearly touches on an experience of grace that is beyond repentance and forgiveness. That becomes a reality for a Christian, not by one's personal efforts, but essentially by the full surrender of the will to the Spirit of God.

2. Safeguarding against Apostasy (6:4-6).

It is a tragedy for an individual who has held to faith in God to give it up. Further, one cannot always stay in a "childish" state spiritually and remain truly Christian. One will either move up or move out.

This passage is difficult to explain. It teaches clearly that a person can fall away from faith in God. It also raises a question: Is it possible to be restored after falling away? On the surface, the answer seems to be "No" for all backsliding. But it is important to remember to whom the Epistle was written originally and to note the particular kind of backslidden condition described. It is a description of an extreme condition of apostasy. It is not merely a severed relationship with God but an arrogant denial of all that was formerly held dear. The Jews who were formerly Christians were in such denial, crucifying Christ afresh (6:6). It was and is those persons who once believed take the precarious position of denying that Christ was the very God and very man while on earth and who remain resolute in their backslidden condition that have no hope for restoration. Those who once knew and loved the Door and then denied He is the Door can find no entrance into life.

C. RESPONSE TELLS THE STORY ABOUT A MAN (6:7-8).

In the spiritual life as in the natural, the seed, the plant, and the fruit provide identification. The thought is that the inner life and the way it expresses itself outwardly tell the story, whether a person is spiritual or carnal. The figure of the seed and soil is used.

1. The Soil Does Not Count.

Trees and thistles alike may grow in the same soil. The environment is not a determining factor.

2. Rain Does Not Make the Main Difference.

Rain may benefit both desirable and undesirable vegetation. Inherited benefits and advantages do not make the difference between a saint and a sinner.

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3. The Kind of Life Makes the Difference.

The kind of life to be manifested is dependent upon the “seed” that has been planted. This is not predestinarian emphasis at all. It is merely the teaching that one cannot expect to reap spiritual fruits if one has not planted a spiritual seed. Human initiative and freedom are strongly underlined. The seed planted, and the resulting fruit in the spiritual life identify a person (see Galatians 6:7).

D. REALIZATION OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE (6:9-12).

1. Better Things Belong to the Godly (6:9).

The perfection mentioned above (6:1) is followed by emphasis on the adult spiritual life. The challenge to the early Christians to whom this Epistle was addressed is the same one that comes to all Christians today: Be content only with the “food” of the godly diet, not the “milk.”

2. God Honors Love Service (6:10).

A part of the realization of the Christians’ hope is God’s acknowledgment of the acts of service they have performed in his name for others (Matthew 25:40).

3. Imitation Endorsed (6:12).

In godly life, imitating the great soldiers of the Cross is never a mistake. Of course, our greatest Example is Jesus. Imitation of this sort is one means of overcoming spiritual dullness and apathy.

SECTION 5.4. GOD’S INTEGRITY, OUR HOPE (6:13-20)

Abraham is an example of one who remained faithful. His belief in the sureness of God’s word was the solid rock foundation upon which Abraham’s faith rested.

A. ABRAHAM’S HOPE - THE CERTAINTY OF GOD’S PROMISE (6:13-15)

When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees [KAL-dees], Abraham acted on the hope God would fulfill the promise made to him (Genesis 12:1). After patiently enduring, Abraham “received what was promised” (6:15). Thus, Abraham’s hope rested on the certainty of God’s promise of blessing to him. As God kept his promises to Abraham, so He will keep them today for us.

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B. GOD, THE MAKER AND GUARANTOR OF A GREAT PROMISE (6:16-18)

God has also made a hope-raising promise to all mankind and was himself Guarantor of its fulfillment: "Since there is no one greater for him to swear by, He swore by himself" (6:13), and "it is impossible for God to lie" (6:18).

The promise of God as Promiser and Guarantor is not treated explicitly by the writer of Epistle. He gives a hint in verse 18 as he writes: "We who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged." The strong consolation and hope is that Christ can save us from sin. The godly person can witness this personally and can hold out this hope to sinners everywhere.

C. THE SURE AND STEADFAST ANCHOR OF OUR SOULS (6:19-20)

1. "Anchor of the Soul" (6:19).

Anchor was commonly used as a symbol of hope. Here, it depicts our confidence that when we turn and lay hold on Christ, we are anchored to that which is beneath and unseen and unmovable. *"We have an anchor that keeps the soul Steadfast and sure while the billows roll, Fastened to the Rock which cannot move, Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love."* (Priscilla J. Owens)

2. Jesus, Our Forerunner (6:20).

As Jesus has gone beyond the veil, has rent it (see Matthew 27:51), there is no longer the necessity of going through the human priesthood. Further, it may become an experience for everyone to enter into the most holy relationship with God.

3. A present hope through Jesus.

In Christ as the One who has gone before us, we need no longer remain blocked off from God by an elaborate priesthood and sacrificial system of former days. In Jesus, we Christians today can enter "the holy of holies" of communion with God. *"My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness."* (Edward Mote)

4. A lasting hope through Jesus.

The hope of entering into the holiest of all relationships with God is centered in a High Priest, not of a temporal order, but of an eternal order. Thus, the

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hope of the Christian today is just as lasting as the Person upon whom it rests - and He is without beginning or end.

SECTION 5.5. A PRIEST “AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK” [MEL-CHUH-ZEH-DUHK] (7:1-25)

After calling attention to similarities between Jesus’ priesthood and Aaronic [eh-RAA-nuhk] priesthood, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews then turned to an all-important difference. Perhaps this difference proved to be a stumbling block to Jews. The writer, therefore, referred to Melchizedek, the ancient priest-king of Jerusalem, in order to show that in the Old Testament, there was anticipation of Jesus as High Priest.

A. MELCHIZEDEK: PRIEST-KING OF ANCIENT JERUSALEM (7:1-10)

Melchizedek is mentioned first in Genesis 14:18, then in Psalm 110:4, and nine times in the Epistle to the Hebrews (5:6, 10; 6:20; and several times in chapter 7). He typified the great, eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, by name, position, and otherwise.

1. A King of Righteousness and Peace (7:1-2).

Melchizedek’s very name and the place over which he ruled identified him with righteousness and peace. The predictions of Isaiah (9:7 and other passages), the announcement of the angels (Luke 2:14), and the works of his life all identify Jesus with righteousness and peace. In fact, Jesus was Righteousness and Peace in the flesh. *“Jesus, the very thought of Thee With sweetness fills my breast.”* (Bernard of Clairvaux)

2. A High Priest of a Special Order (7:3).

The language of 7:3 is intended to suggest a particular point as far as Christ is concerned rather than to assert actuality for Melchizedek. The Jews gave strong emphasis to the human lineage, as is evident from the many genealogies [jee-nee-A-luh-jeez] of the Old Testament, for a person’s identity and prestige rested upon one’s known line of human forebears. In the lack of a known genealogy for Melchizedek, there is the suggestion that he was “without beginning of days or end of life” (7:3). In this, he faintly foreshadows the Son of God, who continues a High Priest forever. In the lack of known human genealogy Melchizedek remains and shall remain a type of the eternal High Priest. (Note: It is of Christ it is repeated that He is eternal. Christ

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and Melchizedek were similar in certain ways, but only of Christ may it be asserted that He is eternal in his priesthood.)

3. Greater than Abraham (7:4-7).

"How great he is!" was said of Melchizedek. In Old Testament times, the priest paid tithes to God. This was the divinely established order even before the time of Moses and the Levites, as Abraham fully recognized. By virtue of Melchizedek's position between God and Abraham and his receiving payment of tithes, it is said of Abraham and Melchizedek: "And without doubt, the lesser person is blessed by the greater" (7:7). Christ, like Melchizedek, is superior to Abraham. Furthermore, He is greater than any other person who has ever lived. It is indeed always appropriate for us to sing: "How Great Thou Art!"

B. CHRIST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK (7:11-25)

Christ is now shown to be superior to the Aaronic priesthood in terms of the order of Melchizedek.

1. Perfection through a Descendant of Judah (7:11-14).

Perfection was an impossibility under the Levitical [luh-VI-tuh-kl] priests, those of Aaronic descent. Otherwise, "why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" (7:11) But, a new law ruled out the old system and a High Priest of the tribe of Judah made perfection a possibility (7:12-14).

2. Eternal Existence, the New Requirement (7:15-18).

Under the old law, the priest must be of the Aaronic line, whose priests died as all human beings die. However, a Priest in the likeness of Melchizedek is qualified to be a Priest by virtue of eternity - "the power of an indestructible life" (7:16). The result is that Christians under the order of Melchizedek have a better hope "by which we draw near to God" (7:19).

3. Priesthood Based on God's Unchangeableness (7:20-22).

The priesthood of Christ "after the order of Melchizedek" is founded upon God's sure and unchanging word. Isaiah's words are ever true: "The grass withers, the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever" (40:8).



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4. A High Priest Once and for All Time (7:23-25).

Because of death, there were frequent changes in the Aaronic priestly office, but Jesus “has a permanent priesthood” (7:24).

5. No need for a successor.

He is able for all time to save those who draw near (7:25).

6. He alone may be called Savior.

His priesthood has been, is, and will be the only means by which people have a Mediator and Intercessor before God (7:25).

SECTION 5.6. SUMMARY (7:26-28)

Verses 26-28 are a reiteration of points already made about Christ. He alone is qualified to be our High Priest in every respect.

1. He lived without sin on earth, fully partaking in human nature (7:26).
2. He offered himself once and for all as a Sacrifice for the sins of others (7:27).
3. He was not appointed by the usual law for priests but by God’s oath as a Son consecrated (made perfect) forever (7:28).
4. He now sits at the right hand of God, exalted “above the heavens” (7:26).
These great truths about our Savior inspire us to sing with Haldor Lillenas:
*“Thou art fairer to me than the fairest of earth, Thou omnipotent, life-giving Word.
O Thou Ancient of Days, Thou art worthy all praise, My wonderful, wonderful Lord!”*

Mediator [MEE-dee-ay-tr]
Intercessor [in-tur-SES-ur]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
Chaldees [KAL-dees]
Melchizedek” [mel-chuh-ZEH-duhk]
Aaronic [eh-RAA-nuhk]
genealogies [jee-nee-A-luh-jeez]
Levitical [luh-VI-tuh-kl]

CHAPTER 6

The Better Covenant in Christ (8 - 10)



NOTES

Having shown that Jesus is a Priest of a better order than the Aaronic order, the Epistle writer speaks of Jesus as a Priest in a heavenly tabernacle and thus Mediator of a new covenant. His main thought here is that the old covenant with its Aaronic priesthood, sacrifices, and Tabernacle belonged to a temporary, changing order that served to typify and point to an order that should replace it. This was and is the new order or new covenant established by Jesus Christ - Lord, Savior, High Priest, Redeemer [ruh-DEE-mr].

SECTION 6.1. MOSES AND THE OLD COVENANT (8:3-5, 7-13)

Thoughts about Christ and his ministry are intertwined with those about Moses and his administration of the Old Covenant.

A. A COPY AND SHADOW OF THE HEAVENLY (8:5)

The Mosaic system was not an end in itself. To be sure, it served as a means whereby the Israelites worshiped God acceptably in the Old Testament days. But, it also pointed to and typified Christ as the Redeemer. From the beginning, there was concern that everything is “according to the pattern” (8:5) because the order being typified was to become a reality and to endure for all time.

B. A PRIEST IN THE OLD COVENANT (8:3-4)

The duties of the old covenant priests (Leviticus 1-7) involved offering gifts and sacrifices the Israelites brought to God. Jesus never did and never could serve as an Old Testament priest, for He was not of the Aaronic line.

C. FAULTY OLD COVENANT TO BE REPLACED BY ADEQUATE NEW COVENANT (8:7-13)

The old covenant’s inadequacy was recognized even by people for some time before Jesus came.

1. A New Covenant Promised.

God promised a new covenant to Jeremiah and the people contemporary

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with him (8:8-12; and Jeremiah 31:31-34).

2. Law within.

For the new covenant, the emphasis is upon the life within, not that without (8:10; Ezekiel 36:26).

3. Oneness of Fellowship.

In the new covenant there is to be a oneness in warm personal relationship between God and people (8:10).

4. Universal Knowledge of God.

God will be universally known under the new covenant - "they will all know me" (8:11).

5. A Time of Mercy and Forgiveness.

Under the new covenant, people are to experience God's mercy in the forgiveness of sins (8:12).

SECTION 6.2. JESUS OF THE HEAVENLY ORDER (8:1-2, 6)

Jesus, belonging to a higher order, thereby established a better covenant.

A. "ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY" (8:1)

Jesus, though once on earth, is now abiding in heaven on the throne with the Father.

B. A MINISTER IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY OR TRUE TABERNACLE (8:2)

Jesus is the High Priest to be eternally worshiped. His priesthood was foreshadowed by the Old Testament forms of worship, but at the same time, He is not a creature of time and space (8:6 and 9:11).

C. "MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT" (8:6)

Because of "better promises" and God's keeping his oath (see 6:13-20 and 7:28), Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry, "the covenant of which He



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is mediator is superior" (8:6). Thus, the new covenant mediated by Christ has outmoded the old covenant (8:13)..

SECTION 6.3. THE SANCTUARY AND REGULATIONS OF THE OLD COVENANT (9:1-10)

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews recognized, as the Gospel writers did (see Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:44; etc.), that Jesus did not come to do away with the law by destroying it but to fulfill and bring it to completion. Jesus, in fulfilling the law and the prophets, demonstrated in his person and his work that He is the Reality (Truth) prefigured in the different aspects of the old covenant.

A. THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNITURE (9:1-5)

These verses should be studied with reference to Exodus 25-28.

1. The Holy Place with Its Furniture.

The Tabernacle plan of the Old Covenant consisted of three main parts: first, the area enclosed by the outer fence (wall), which was called the court; second, the holy place, which was the larger of the two parts of the Tabernacle itself; third, the holy of holies or the most holy place, which was the smaller of the two parts within the Tabernacle.

The "outer tent" (9:2, 6) here refers to the holy place, which had among its objects those enumerated: the lampstand, the table, and the bread of presence on the table.

2. The Holy of Holies with Its Furniture.

The "tent" beyond the inner veil (the "second veil" of 9:3) was the most sacred place of all. It was a place where only the high priest could stand before the Most High God and only after a special purification ceremony. It had the following objects of furniture: the golden altar of incense, the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, and the overshadowing cherubim [cheh-ruh-bm] of glory.

Perhaps we should say with the writer of the Epistle: "We cannot discuss these things in detail now." (9:5)

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B. THE PRIESTS' DUTIES IN THE TABERNACLE (9:6-10)

The priests functioned according to specific regulations within the precincts of the Tabernacle.

1. Priests Had Continual Access to the Holy Place.

The priests carried out certain ceremonial duties every day in the "outer tent."

2. The High Priest Entered the Holy of Holies Infrequently (9:7-8).

On the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16), the high priest could only enter the holy of holies. This he did after a special ceremony and sprinkling atoning blood about him.

a. Veil still significant.

The veil indicates that mankind's way to God "was not yet opened."

b. As long as the outer tent is still standing (9:8).

With the holy place ("outer tent") still in use, people's way to God would be blocked by the veil. This was the situation during the Old Testament days.

c. A figure (9:9).

The holy place as "a figure for the time then present" was significant for two reasons. First, it was the best possible way to worship God before Christ came. And second, it was intended as a figure of the ministry of Christ, who was to come.

3. An Imperfect Arrangement with Imperfect Results (9:9-10).

The duties of the priests were primarily those of making visible offerings to God - gifts and sacrifices of food and drink.

a. Regulations for the body (9:10).

Ceremony and ritual, by their very nature, lay stress on the external aspect of religion. These could have led the worshiper to the heart of religion, but almost invariably, they did not. This is a serious charge against the old covenant.

b. Which cannot perfect the conscience (9:9).

Under the old covenant, the worshiper of God did not come into the satisfying, meaningful religious experience that can be realized under

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the new covenant. The fact that offerings and sacrifices had to be oft-repeated witnesses mutely but undeniably to this. This was another great weakness of the old covenant: put to the test of human experience, it failed.

- c. Only a temporary arrangement

Another fault of old covenant ways was their temporality. "Until the time of the new order" (9:10) suggests a change-over to a new and better order.

SECTION 6.4. CHRIST, HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS (9:11-22)

The inadequacy of the Old Covenant is contrasted with the adequacy of Jesus Christ, who has come and who, by his coming, has ushered in a new and better means of attaining salvation and perfection.

A. "GOOD THINGS TO COME" (9:11-14)

Since Jesus has come, it is no longer "until the time of the new order." No longer is the type functioning to point to "the heavenly" or to the truth beyond it. But Christ, by his very person and his life, has brought the believer to "the time of reformation." He has presented the believer with truth, not merely a type or figure. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

1. "By a Greater and More Perfect Tabernacle" (9:11).

Tabernacle is here used beyond its usual sense in the Epistle (see 8:2 and 10:19). It refers broadly to the common meeting place of people and God. Thus, Jesus Christ becomes the "new tent" - not of this creation, which is temporal and physical (9:11).

2. A "Once for All" Atonement (9:12).

Again, the finality or completeness of Christ's redemptive role is presented. In entering the holy of holies (here called the "Most Holy Place"), Jesus offered his own blood as atonement for sin. Other offerings were repeated. Jesus' atonement was "once for all." Another way of stating this is that it is an atonement providing redemption for people of all time. Christ, therefore, in shedding his blood, has "obtained eternal redemption for us" (9:12). May we ever humbly and gratefully sing: *"The Blood that Jesus once shed for me As my Redeemer upon the tree, The Blood that setteth the pris'ner free will never lose its pow'r."* (C.D. Martin)

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3. Superior to Old Testament Atonement (9:13-14).

Atoning sacrifices of the Old Testament period, even of the Day of Atonement, were not an end in themselves. At their best, they pointed in prospect to one atonement that has ever been efficacious [eh-fuh-KAY-shuhs] unto the remission of sins. Thus, Christ's suffering and death are the only atonement that is adequate for people's redemption.

a. The Old Testament Day of Atonement (9:13).

On Old Testament Days of Atonement, persons were sprinkled with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer (Leviticus 16). The result was sanctification [sank-tuh-fi-KAY-shuhn] "so that they are outwardly clean." Their sanctification was external and ceremonial. It did not always become the ultimate religious experience that God desired for his followers. In this, the inadequacy of the old covenant is clear: the holiness attainable was external - a type or figure. It prefigured the inner heart holiness through Christ's atonement under the new covenant.

b. The "much more" of the blood of Christ (9:14).

First, the blood of Christ is effective unto inner purification - it is said to "cleanse our consciences"; that is, one's inner life. Second, the atoning blood of Christ saves one from a religion of works and makes it possible through inner purification to enter into a vital, dynamic religious experience. *"The Holy Spirit, hour by hour. Under the Blood, under the Blood, Exerts His sanctifying pow'r, Under the precious Blood."* (E.E. Hewitt)

B. THE MEDIATOR OF A NEW COVENANT (9:15-22)

Christ, as the reality prefigured in the old covenant, as Initiator and Bringer of "better things," is appropriately called the Establisher or Mediator of a new covenant.

1. Purpose of the New Covenant.

The old covenant was inadequate. The old covenant correctly called attention to one's sin. However, it did not provide adequate redemption from sin. Therefore, the new covenant's purpose was to provide for the forgiveness and removal of sin through Christ's death (9:15).

2. Death Establishes a Testament (Covenant) (9:16-22).

A testament (or last will) never becomes effective until after the testator dies.



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This applies also to Christ's testament in this way: his testament (bequest to sinful people) was not efficacious until after his death on the Cross. Thus, the writer makes it clear that Calvary is of great importance to the Christian faith.

- a. Blood ratifies a covenant (9:18-19).

The old covenant had not been effective until life had been given in the shedding of blood.

- b. The principle still remains.

Atoning Blood is the only answer to the sin problem in all its aspects: "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." (9:22). *"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan! Oh, the grace that bro't it down to man! Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span."* (William R. Newell)

SECTION 6.5. THE NEW COVENANT SUPERIOR IN ITS "ONCE FOR ALL" SACRIFICE (9:23 - 10:18)

Christ as Fulfiller of the sacrificial system of the old covenant is the Final Word concerning atonement. The "once for all" emphasis on Christ's suffering and death adds clarity to Jesus' words on the Cross, "It is finished."

A. THE COPY AND THE HEAVENLY (9:23 - 10:10)

The Old Testament may be shown as the "copy" of the new covenant (that is, the "heavenly") in a number of ways.

1. The Copy - the Old System of Sacrifices.

A number of weaknesses become evident in looking at the old order of sacrifices.

- a. Incompleteness.

The fact that sacrifices were offered each year (see 9:25; 10:1 and other passages) suggests that they were temporary and limited.

- b. Inadequacy.

Inadequacy. The inadequacy of the old system of sacrifices may be seen in at least two ways. First, the basic point is that it is "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (10:4). Second, the law, being "a shadow of good things to come," could never "with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the

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comers thereunto perfect" (10:1). Perfection in the fullest sense was not possible under the old system.

2. The Heavenly - the Better Sacrifice.

The reality to which the Old Testament sacrifices pointed is Christ Jesus. Of Christ, the Supreme Sacrifice for sinful mankind, several points are made.

a. A one and only Sacrifice.

Christ's coming "to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:26) was not to be repeated. There is a completeness, an adequacy, in Christ that was always lacking in the old order. In Christ, as Sacrifice for sin, there is "a once-for-all" sacrifice (see 9:26, 28;10:10).

Of Christ and his sacrifice for sin on the Cross, it can be said: *"Above the hills of time the Cross is gleaming, Fair as the sun when night has turned to day; And from it, love's pure light is richly streaming, To cleanse the heart and banish sin away. To this dear Cross the eyes of men are turning Today as in the ages lost to sight; And for the love of Christ men's hearts are yearning As shipwrecked seamen yearn for morning light."* (Thomas Tiplady)

b. The copy no longer necessary.

With the new covenant made available, there is no further need for the copy. The first or old order has given way to the new (see 10:5-9).

c. Sanctification now possible.

Christ, in being a "once for all" Sacrifice, did the will of God the Father (see 10:7-9). In this demonstration of complete obedience, there is a basis for our sanctification: "And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (10:10)

We cannot realize fully all that was involved in Christ's prayer in the garden: "You will be done." (Matthew 26:42). One thing is clear. However, our redemption, full and free, was involved in it!

d. Christ's second coming.

Christ, in coming again, will come for an entirely different purpose from that of his first coming. His first coming to earth was to deal with sin, whereas the Second Coming will be to take those who await him (9:28). *"Now the Saviour, long expected, See in solemn pomp appear. All His saints, by man rejected, Now shall meet Him in the air."* (Henry Smart)

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B. CHRIST AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD (10:11-18)

In referring again to Christ's position beside the Father, the writer of the Epistle apparently wished to emphasize, first, that Christ has indeed completed his mission on earth, and second, his sacrifice has been accepted by the Father.

1. Perfection of the Sanctified by a Single Offering (10:14).

The writer here reveals a deep concern for his readers to go on to all God has provided them in Christ.

2. Witness of the Holy Spirit

It is in the witness of the Holy Spirit to the perfection of the sanctified that the passage in Jeremiah is fulfilled; that is, the law is written on the heart (see 10:16-17 and Jeremiah 31:33-34).

3. The Ultimate Triumph of Christ and His Order.

Christ, seated at the right hand of God, now awaits the outworking of his redemptive mission. The day will come when enemies and forces against his kingdom will be put down. This was a hope which the prophets knew, always with respect to the coming of the Messiah of whom they predicted. The final triumph of Christ over Satan is ever our hope, as expressed beautifully by John Oxenham: *"Beyond the war-clouds and the reddened ways, I see the Promise of the Coming Days! I see His Sun arise, new charged with grace Earth's tears to dry and all her woes efface! Christ lives! Christ loves! Christ rules! No more shall Might, Though leagued with all the Forces of the Night, Ride over Right. No more shall Wrong. The world's gross agonies prolong. Who waits His Time shall surely see The triumph of His Constancy; - When without let, or bar, or stay, The coming of His Perfect Day Shall sweep the Powers of Night away."*

SECTION 6.6. EXHORTATIONS, WARNING, AND ENCOURAGEMENT (10:19-39)

In frequent use of "therefore" (see 2:1; 3:1, 7; 4:1, 11; 6:1; 9:15, 23), the writer of the Epistle seems to insist that the better things in Christ are within the reach of those desiring to live wholly consecrated lives. Thus, he turns to exhortation, warning, and encouragement.

A. EXHORTATIONS (10:19-25)

Christ, in opening the veil for us (10:20), has removed every hindrance of access

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to God. This is a reason why confidence was never possible under the old covenant. Thus, the writer of the Epistle urged that the response of faith be in keeping with the revealed truth:

1. Drawing Near to God in Full Assurance (10:22)
2. Holding Fast the Profession of Faith (10:23)
3. Boosting One Another with Love and Good Works (10:24)
4. Not Forsaking Service of Worship (10:25).

B. WARNING AGAINST REJECTION OF THE SON OF GOD (10:26-31)

A warning for the benefit of all is that a person could commit the most serious sin of one's life, that of spurning the Son of God after having received knowledge of the truth. Such a person can expect the most decisive judgment.

1. A Fearful Prospect (10:27)
2. Worse Punishment than under Moses (10:28-29)
3. The Terror of Falling into the Hands of a Living God (10:30-31)

C. ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE PAST AND PRESENT (10:32-39)

Encouragement can be gained from the past as well as the present. It is most encouraging to think back to the time one met Christ in a personal, heart-warming experience and to remember the strength for endurance this experience provides (see 10:32).

1. Endurance in the Past (10:32-34).

Certain experiences of the past stand out as high points of achieving faith and provide a challenge for continued faithfulness.

- a. Struggles and persecutions.

The past holds in its grasp incidents of daring witness, severe persecution, and public hatred.

- b. Joyful acceptance of loss.

The past also holds those times of glorious victory: loss of possessions

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not followed by upsetting disturbance but rather consolation in the spiritual inheritance in Christ. *"Take the world, but give me Jesus, Sweetest comfort of my soul; With my Saviour watching o'er me, I can sing though billows roll."* (Fanny J. Crosby)

2. Endurance in the Present (10:35-39).

The severe testing of the past may diminish, but the present, with its easier way of life, tests the godly with a subtle process of cooling off. Thus, the challenge always comes: Endure in the faith by:

- a. Doing continually the will of God (10:36)
- b. Thinking and standing positively for Christ (10:37-39)

Redeemer [ruh-DEE-mr]
cherubim [cheh-ruh-bm]
efficacious [eh-fuh-KAY-shuhs]
sanctification [sank-tuh-fi-KAY-shuhn]

CHAPTER 7

The Better Way of Life (11 - 12)



NOTES

The Christian life as a better way to live is discussed, with attention given to living by faith, laying aside every hindrance, and enduring and accepting certain responsibilities.

SECTION 7.1. LIVING BY FAITH (11:1-40)

Hebrews 11 is easily identified as the “Faith Chapter” of the New Testament. It is sometimes called the Westminster Abbey of the Bible.

A. FAITH DEFINED (11:1-3)

“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (11:1). Faith is thus our response to God’s revealed truth - our confidence in his promises.k

1. Faith Alone Brings Understanding of Creation (11:3).

Faith surpasses reason in comprehending the truth that God brought the world into being out of nothing.

2. Faith Is the Key to Divine Approval (11:2).

People of the Old Testament do not say that they kept certain ceremonies or did great things and thus experienced divine approval. Divine approval was experienced because of their faith.

B. FAITH ILLUSTRATED (11:4-12, 17-38)

The writer of the Epistle then lists some men of the Old Testament who are remembered not only for divine approval but for the way their faith motivated them to live and die.

1. Abel Offered a More Acceptable Sacrifice (11:4).

2. Enoch Did Not See Death (11:5-6).

3. Noah Constructed the Ark and Inherited Righteousness (11:7).

4. Abraham Obeyed God (11:8-12, 17-18).

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5. Isaac Pronounced Future Blessings on Jacob and Esau (11:20).
6. Jacob Blessed the Sons of Joseph (11:21).
7. Joseph Foresaw the Exodus (11:22).
8. Moses Chose to Serve God (11:23-28).

Many others suffered and endured to the glory of God (11:29-38).

C. BY FAITH AND YET SHORT OF THE PROMISE (11:13-16, 39-40)

The Old Testament heroes of faith during their lifetime on earth did not experience “better things” in Christ, as these still were within the unfolding promise to Abraham.

1. Faith Apprehended Christ in Prospect (11:13).

Although the faithful of Old Testament times did not live to possess the promises of God in fulfillment, they all died in the faith, having been enabled to see the fulfillment afar off.

2. A Desire for a “Heavenly” Country (11:15-16).

Their desire and their faith did, however, enable them to finally see a “heavenly” inheritance.

3. Faith Guaranteed Receipt of the Promise (11:39-40).

While none of those of faith in the Old Testament “received what had been promised,” they will receive it. The “better things” we have in Christ will also be theirs. That is, our experiencing better things in Christ guarantees their experiencing better things in Christ - “God had planned something better for us, so that only together would they be made perfect.” (11:40)

The heritage that comes down to us from people of great faith should inspire us always as we sing: *“Faith of our fathers, living still In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword! Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy Whene’er we hear that glorious word! Faith of our fathers, holy faith! We will be true to thee till death!”* (Fredrick W. Faber)

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SECTION 7.2. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AS A RACE (12:1-17)

Persevering in the Christian life may be likened to running a race. The great faith heroes of the past may be likened unto spectators in the stadium (12:1). Their “cheers and support” provide encouragement for those still engaging in the contests. Successful running depends upon several things.

A. REMOVAL OF EVERY HINDRANCE (12:1)

Here are two points of great significance.

1. Laying Aside Every Weight (12:1).

One cannot run well in the Christian life if carrying along selfish interests, worldliness, undue interest in the material, and wrong motives. It is essential to remove, or have God remove, these things that would deter and lead to defeat.

2. Eradication of Carnality.

It is in carnality that there are the hindering and encumbering weights. Carnality is aptly described as a “sin that so easily entangles” (12:1). Actual removal of carnality rests with the power of the grace of God. But, our part is recognizing that it is our chief troublemaker and surrendering our wills to the will of God. Meeting conditions, we can enter into the blessed experience of the purified, Spirit-filled heart with carnality removed!

B. LOOKING TO JESUS, THE AUTHOR AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH (12:2)

No one can hope to stay in the Christian way very long if taking one’s eyes off Jesus. An essential of perseverance is continually looking to Jesus, our Savior and Sanctifier.

1. Perfecter of Our Faith.

In the suffering, humiliation, and death on the Cross, Jesus gave validity to our faith; of this, we must ever be mindful.

2. Present Exaltation.

Beyond the Cross is the risen, triumphant Lord seated now at the Father’s right hand.

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C. USING JESUS' ENDURANCE AS OUR PRIME EXAMPLE (12:3-4)

Though strong opposition may arise at times, there is always encouragement in considering Jesus' example of suffering and endurance. Otherwise, there may be the temptation to succumb during times of faintheartedness [FAYNT-hart-uhd-nuhs].

D. UNDERSTANDING THE DIVINE PURPOSE IN CHASTENING (12:5-11)

If the Christian is to understand God's chastening (education or instruction), one must recognize that one is a member of the family of God. Chastening, therefore, is within the family - a father-son relationship.

1. Love Prompts Chastening and Correction (12:6-7).
2. Lack of Chastisement [cha-STIZE-muhnt] Indicates Lack of Love, as with an unwanted child (12:8).
3. Correction Creates Respect. This is true with earthly parents and even to a greater extent with respect to God (12:9).
4. Chastening Is Essential to Growth in Holiness Living (12:10).
5. Chastening, Though Painful at the time, in the End, Yields the "harvest of righteousness and peace" (12:11).

E. MAINTAINING A POSITIVE UPWARD LOOK AND OUTLOOK (12:12-17)

In the Christian life, there is the constant temptation to slacken one's pace and to weaken before unrelenting opposition. To offset this, one must:

1. Renew Strength and Perspective Daily (12:12-13).
2. Pursue Peace with Others and Holiness in Everyday Life (12:14).

This great holiness text includes crisis experience, but its greatest emphasis is upon growth in grace beyond the second crisis experience.

3. Realize That Failure to Obtain the Grace of God Is Tragic (12:15-17).

If one fails, one either gives occasion for a "bitter root" to spring up or to go beyond a place of true repentance, as with Esau.

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SECTION 7.3. SUMMARY: THE TWO MOUNTAINS (12:18-29)

The writer of the Epistle proceeded to point out that one can know that the day for the new or heavenly order has arrived. He did this very effectively by describing what happened to Moses and Israel at Mount Sinai and by enumerating what happens when one by faith comes to Mount Zion - "the city of the living God." (12:22)

A. AT MOUNT SINAI (12:18-21)

When the law was given at Mount Sinai, Moses and a select few were the only ones allowed to draw near to God. A boundary was fixed at the base of the mountain beyond which death awaited man or beast, except for Moses, Joshua, and the few others whom God called up to the mount. The frightening mystery, the limitation of access to God, and the heaviness of the divine commands stand out in the mind of the writer of the Epistle as the main features of the old covenant as it may be associated with Mount Sinai.

B. AT MOUNT ZION (12:22-29)

When the Word became flesh and dwelt among people, Jerusalem is the place remembered most in connection with his life and death. It is Jerusalem or Mount Zion that the writer spiritualizes to speak of the new order in Christ and of the striking contrast between the new and the old. The writer, therefore, suggests that under the present order, we come to be associated with the "church of the firstborn" to "God, the Judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant" (12:23-24).

faintheartedness [FAYNT-hart-uhd-nuhs]
Chastisement [cha-STIZE-muhnt]

CHAPTER 8

Closing Exhortations (13)



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The Epistle to the Hebrews closes with a number of warmly given exhortations. Its writer was concerned to the last that those who started to serve God should continue to do so acceptably.

SECTION 8.1. SELF-IMPOSED DUTIES (13:1-6)

There are a number of things mentioned by the writer of the Epistle that one must assume as basic Christian duties if one is to serve God acceptably.

A. BROTHERLY LOVE IS ESSENTIAL; PROMOTE IT (13:1).

B. SHOW KINDNESS TO PEOPLE (13:2).

Especially to those beyond the circle of usual acquaintances and associates.

C. REMEMBER PERSONS IN PRISON (13:3).

D. MARRIAGE VOWS ARE SACRED (13:4).

They should never be marred by infidelity.

E. THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD BE FIRST (13:5-6).

SECTION 8.2. RESPONSIBILITIES TO LEADERS (13:7, 9, 17)

In God's work, leaders are always important. Frequently, progress or lack of progress is determined by the attitude of the laity toward their leaders. The Epistle to the Hebrews calls attention to a number of important responsibilities that the average member of the congregation should assume with respect to one's leaders.

A. REMEMBER YOUR LEADERS (13:7, 9)

The writer of the Epistle did not say who these leaders were or whether they passed from the scene of leadership due to replacement or death. These leaders should be remembered for several reasons:

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1. They Had First Preached the Gospel to Them (13:7).
2. They Had Set a Wonderful Example of Living by Faith (13:7)
3. They Had Given Instruction in Sound Doctrine, and thus, there was no need to be “carried by all kinds of strange teachings” (13:9).

B. OBEY YOUR LEADERS (13:17).

The first concern of the true leader of God’s people is the spiritual welfare of those who are being led. Giving heed to exhortations and instructions concerning the godly life is the response that brings joy and not grief to leaders.

SECTION 8.3. A DIGRESSION: OUR UNCHANGING LORD (13:8, 10-16)

Even in thinking about duties to leaders, the writer of the Epistle felt he must restate significant truths about Christ. It has been this way all through the Epistle. He cannot say enough about Christ, whom he loved and served.

A. A NEVER-CHANGING SAVIOR (13:8)

The faith and hope of the Christian are based on the constancy, trustworthiness, reliability, and availability of our Lord - “the same yesterday and today and forever.”

B. THE ONE WHO DIED “OUTSIDE THE CAMP” (13:10-16)

1. “Outside the Camp” during the Old Covenant.

Under the old covenant, the blood and certain parts were all that was offered within the camp for the sin offering (see Leviticus 4). The skin and remaining parts of the animal were then taken outside the camp and burned. Two thoughts arise: first, an offering for sin had no place in the center of a holy people (God’s chosen people of the Old Testament), and second, the sin offering could not be completed within the confines of the old covenant arrangements. Therefore, in a sense, even in Old Testament days, the offering was completed outside and beyond the old covenant setting.

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2. "Jesus ... Suffered without the Gate" (13:12).

Jesus, in dying on the Cross outside the city walls of Jerusalem, fulfilled the points mentioned about the sin offering of the Old Testament. First, Jesus as a Sin Offering was not offered within the city of Jerusalem among the Jews. Second, and more significantly, Jesus as an Offering for sin was outside and beyond the Old Testament order. Had his death been within this order, it would still have been an old covenant offering and not the efficacious (effective) atonement that it is. He suffered outside the camp in order to "make the people holy through his own blood" (13:12).

3. Our Role: To Suffer and Bear Reproach (13:13).

The writer shows that identity with Christ means that one must go beyond Judaism or any established order of Christ-less religion. This also means that one will inevitably face reproach and abuse, for people deluded by the "father of lies" and living in sin do not appreciate being shown they are living a lie.

4. Acceptable Sacrifices Now (13:15-16).

Since Christ as Sacrifice and Sin Offering has outmoded the old order of offering sacrifices to God, the acceptable sacrifices now are:

- a. Continual praise and thanksgiving to God
- b. Doing good and helping others.

SECTION 8.4. A PLEA FOR PRAYER (13:18-19)

Little has been said directly on prayer throughout the Epistle. That the writer believed prayer to be important is seen in his plea that those to whom he wrote pray for an undesirable situation to be changed. He believed that through their prayers, he would be restored to them.

SECTION 8.5. A CLOSING BENEDICTION (13:20-21)

One of the great blessings of the Bible is given to us by the writer of the Epistle. In beautiful phrasing, it is a prayer that the God of peace blesses and ends with power for faithfulness in Christian living.

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SECTION 8.6. A FINAL APPEAL AND GREETING (13:22-24)

A. “THE WORD OF EXHORTATION” (13:22)

The writer of the Epistle hoped that his brief and sincere letter would benefit those receiving and reading it.

B. GOOD NEWS (13:23)

He reported to his readers that Timothy had been released (having been in prison perhaps) and that he and Timothy would soon come to them.

C. GREETINGS TO ALL LEADERS AND SAINTS (13:24)

The writer of the Epistle extended a general greeting to all those who were living for Christ just as he was. He also relayed a greeting from those from Italy.

SECTION 8.7. A FINAL BENEDICTION (13:25)

“Grace be with you all. Amen” (13:25).

STUDY QUESTIONS



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CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND

1. What is true about the uniqueness of the Epistle to the Hebrews?
 - A. its presentation of the culmination of divine revelation in Christ
 - B. how it points to the finality of Christianity in the work and person of Christ
 - C. the obscurity of background detail
 - D. all of these are true
2. The Epistle to the Hebrews contains neither a direct statement nor a helpful hint about the person who wrote it.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. What is true about the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews?
 - A. In Rome and the Western Roman world, the belief prevailed that Paul was not the writer.
 - B. In North Africa there arose the tradition that Barnabas wrote this Epistle.
 - C. At Alexandria and perhaps in the East there was generally accepted the view that Paul was the author.
 - D. all of these are true
4. The Epistle to the Hebrews begins much like Paul's letters.
 - A. True
 - B. False
5. Lack of definite information concerning destination has led to suggestions, such as:
 - A. Jerusalem
 - B. Rome
 - C. Ephesus
 - D. all of these are true
6. The occasion for the writing of the Epistle to the Hebrews was that of the waning, weakening faith of a group of Christian Jews.
 - A. True
 - B. False

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7. A number of statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews which provide a basis for referring to an approximate time of writing:
 - A. 30 A.D.
 - B. 40 A.D.
 - C. 50 A.D.
 - D. between 60 and 70 A.D.
8. The content of the Epistle to the Hebrews is too difficult to be outlined.
 - A. True
 - B. False

CHAPTER 2. THE BETTER MESSENGER (1 - 2)

9. What is true about the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews?
 - A. the author is identified
 - B. the recipients are identified
 - C. the greeting offers the blessing of grace and peace
 - D. none of these are true
10. The writer to the Hebrews contrasts the way God spoke to people in the past to the recent way He spoke to people.
 - A. True
 - B. False
11. What is true about how God spoke through his Son?
 - A. God spoke in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - B. Christ is the End of all history.
 - C. Christ is the manifestation of God.
 - D. all of these are true
12. God the Father does not have a Coregent.
 - A. True
 - B. False
13. What is true about God the Son in Hebrews 1:1-3?
 - A. He is the eternal, pre-existent Word.
 - B. He is the incarnate Word (very God, very man).
 - C. He is the Suffering Servant and dying Savior.
 - D. all of these are true

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14. The writer to the Hebrews shows that Christianity had an even greater beginning than the old covenant that was revealed to Moses.
 - A. True
 - B. False
15. What is true about God the Son being above angels?
 - A. "Son" applies rightly to Christ and not to angels.
 - B. Only Christ, not angels, can command the adoration and praise of angels.
 - C. Angels are merely ministering spirits.
 - D. all of these are true
16. The Epistle to the Hebrews contains a number of alternating warnings and exhortations.
 - A. True
 - B. False
17. The idea of spiritual drifting is not present in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
 - A. true
 - B. false
18. What is true in Hebrews regarding neglecting God's Word?
 - A. Neglecting God's Word is fatal.
 - B. Neglect of the spoken word is neglect of salvation.
 - C. The Word has a divine origin.
 - D. all of these are true
19. Jesus was not only very God but also very man - the God-Man.
 - A. True
 - B. False
20. What is true of the writer of Hebrew's affirmation of Christ?
 - A. He is the End of all history.
 - B. He is the Ultimate Goal of all history.
 - C. He is the deity.
 - D. all of these are true
21. The writer of Hebrews affirms that a man, Jesus, became God the Son.
 - A. True
 - B. False

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22. Hebrews affirms the Incarnation as a historical fact.
- A. True
 - B. False
23. What is true of Jesus' "crown after the cross"?
- A. Jesus, who knew no sinful nature nor acts of sin, bore in his body the penalty for our sins unto his death.
 - B. Jesus was made a Sin Offering for us on the Cross.
 - C. Because of his supreme act of love for us, Jesus has been "crowned with glory and honor."
 - D. all of these are true
24. The Old Testament shows clearly that sin brings everyone under the penalty of death before God.
- A. True
 - B. False
25. Moses' law is the only way to temper the wrath and justice of God.
- A. True
 - B. False
26. What is true about Jesus, the Captain of Our Salvation?
- A. Jesus, the Word, has led the way for salvation from sin.
 - B. Salvation could not have been accomplished apart from the incarnation and the suffering of Jesus.
 - C. Jesus' work and person remained incomplete in their redemptive role until the suffering on the Cross.
 - D. all of these are true
27. A bond of unity places Jesus and the entirely sanctified on a common basis.
- A. True
 - B. False
28. God is Father. Now, everyone is a member of the heavenly family.
- A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

29. What is true about God becoming Man to be the Redeemer of people?
- A. The Incarnation is the pivotal fact of redemption.
 - B. Jesus' humanity is a crucial point in the redemptive plan.
 - C. Jesus could not have become the Savior of the world had He remained aloof and above humanity.
 - D. all of these are true
30. The very specific purpose for which Jesus became man was to place himself in a position to overthrow the devil's power over sinful men and set them free.
- A. True
 - B. False
31. Our release from sin's bondage and death has been accomplished only in Jesus' exaltation to heaven.
- A. True
 - B. False
32. What is true about the Old Testament priests?
- A. They were specially appointed and anointed.
 - B. They stood between God and Israel as the mediator between God and people.
 - C. They were interceding on behalf of sinful people.
 - D. all of these are true

CHAPTER 3. THE BETTER LEADER (3)

33. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews addressed his readers as "holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling".
- A. true
 - B. false
34. Christian Jews did not look to Moses with greater honor than to anyone else.
- A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

35. What is true about Jesus, “Apostle and High Priest of Our Profession”?
- A. “Apostle” is applied in the New Testament to the men who were “on the ground floor” of Christianity.
 - B. “High priest” is a term for one of the most significant offices of the old covenant.
 - C. Jesus as Apostle and High Priest is identified with both Old Testament faith (Judaism) and Christianity.
 - D. all of these are true
36. What is true about Moses in the Household of Faith?
- A. Moses was not faithful in filling this position.
 - B. Moses did not serve well in his position.
 - C. It could never be said of Moses that he was the originator or builder of the Household of Faith in the ultimate sense.
 - D. none of these is true
37. Jesus alone in the household of faith occupies the unique role as “the Son of God.”
- A. True
 - B. False
38. Once believing and then disbelieving the claims made about Christ does not affect one’s relationship with God.
- A. true
 - B. false
39. No pardon or restoration is offered for those who are unbelieving and rebellious today.
- A. true
 - B. false

CHAPTER 4. THE BETTER REST (4:1-13)

40. The “rest” into which followers of Christ may enter is patterned to some extent after God’s rest following creation.
- A. true
 - B. false

NOTES

41. What is true about “a rest beyond justification”?
- A. During the Old Testament period, the good news of God’s rest never came to the Israelites.
 - B. God does not judge those who do not walk in the light they may receive.
 - C. The Epistle to the Hebrews makes it clear that those who take the proper step of faith can possess God’s rest.
 - D. none of these is true
42. What is true of Joshua’s inability to give rest contrasted with Jesus’ ability to give rest?
- A. The Israelites fully attained to God’s rest under Joshua.
 - B. Joshua led the Jews into the sanctified life.
 - C. Jesus is the One in whom we may enter into God’s rest – the sanctified life.
 - D. none of these is true
43. What is true of the rest of the sanctified?
- A. The rest of the sanctified is essentially a peace and harmony within.
 - B. It is a rest resulting from the removal of carnality.
 - C. It is the rest of “removal of the source of provocation” within a person.
 - D. all of these are true
44. Experiencing God’s rest means that one may become complacent, fold one’s hands, and sit down to a life of ease.
- A. True
 - B. False
45. Failing to be sanctified leads to falling from grace.
- A. True
 - B. False

CHAPTER 5. THE BETTER HIGH PRIEST (4:14-7:28)

46. Coming through Christ as High Priest to the throne of God, we may receive the helpful touch of God’s grace on our lives as we face demanding situations in life.
- A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

47. Hebrews affirms that the priesthood of the Old Testament goes beyond that of Jesus.
- A. True
 - B. False
48. What is true of the Old Testament priest?
- A. He was selected from one of the families of Israel.
 - B. He was a frail human being.
 - C. Both priest and people were sinners before God and in need of atoning sacrifices.
 - D. all of these are true
49. What is true of Jesus Christ as our high priest?
- A. He is God-appointed.
 - B. He is the God-Man.
 - C. He is "after the order of Melchizedek."
 - D. all of these are true
50. What is not true of those considered "dull" regarding spiritual maturity
- A. They needed to be taught when they ought to be teaching.
 - B. They were childish in terms of spiritual living.
 - C. They had a spiritual diet of "solid foods."
 - D. none of these is true
51. Being in a place where we are borne by the Spirit to maturity is, in effect, going beyond the elementary doctrines and experiences.
- A. True
 - B. False
52. Hebrews teaches clearly that a person cannot fall away from faith in God.
- A. True
 - B. False
53. The inner life and the way it expresses itself outwardly tell the story, whether a person is spiritual or carnal.
- A. True
 - B. False
54. Abraham is not a good example of one who remained faithful.
- A. True
 - B. False

NOTES

55. What is true of God as the “anchor” of our souls?
- A. This anchor is sure and steadfast.
 - B. It is our confidence that when we turn and lay hold on Christ, we are anchored to that which is beneath, unseen, and unmovable.
 - C. We have a present hope through Jesus.
 - D. all of these are true
56. What is true about the priesthood of Melchizedek?
- A. He was the ancient priest-king of Jerusalem.
 - B. His very name and the place over which he ruled identified him with righteousness and peace.
 - C. He was greater than Abraham.
 - D. all of these are true
57. What is true about the priesthood of Christ after the order of Melchizedek?
- A. Christ is inferior to the Aaronic priesthood in terms of the order of Melchizedek.
 - B. Christ is perfect as a descendant of Judah.
 - C. The priesthood of Christ “after the order of Melchizedek” is founded upon God’s sure and unchanging word.
 - D. all of these are true

CHAPTER 6. THE BETTER COVENANT IN CHRIST (8 - 10)

58. What is true of the better covenant in Christ?
- A. Jesus is a Priest in a heavenly Tabernacle.
 - B. Jesus is the Mediator of a new covenant.
 - C. Jesus is Lord, Savior, High Priest, and Redeemer.
 - D. all of these are true
59. In Christ the faulty old covenant was replaced by the better new covenant.
- A. True
 - B. False
60. Unlike the Gospel writers, the writer of Hebrews did NOT recognize that Jesus did NOT come to do away with the law by destroying it, but to fulfill it and bring it to completion.
- A. True
 - B. False.

NOTES

61. Atoning sacrifices of the Old Testament period, even of the Day of Atonement, were an end in themselves.
- A. True
 - B. False
62. The old covenant correctly called attention to one's sin. However, it did not provide adequately for redemption from sin.
- A. True
 - B. False
63. What is true of Christ as the fulfiller of the sacrificial system of the old covenant?
- A. He has the final word concerning atonement.
 - B. A number of weaknesses become evident in looking at the old order of sacrifices.
 - C. The fact that sacrifices were offered each year suggests that they were temporary and limited.
 - D. all of these are true

CHAPTER 7. THE BETTER WAY OF LIFE (11 - 12)

64. What is true of the Christian life as a better way to live?
- A. It involves living by faith.
 - B. It involves laying aside every hindrance and enduring.
 - C. It involves accepting certain responsibilities.
 - D. all of these are true
65. Which of the following was not one of the men of the Old Testament who are remembered, not only for divine approval but for the way their faith motivated them to live and die?
- A. Abel
 - B. Enoch
 - C. Timothy
 - D. Noah
66. Chastening, though painful at the time, yields the "harvest of righteousness and peace."
- A. True
 - B. False.

NOTES

67. In the Christian life, there is the constant temptation to slacken one's pace and to weaken before unrelenting opposition.
- A. True
 - B. False
68. When the law was given at Mount Sinai, Moses and all of Israel were allowed to draw near to God.
- A. True
 - B. False

CHAPTER 8. CLOSING EXHORTATIONS (13)

69. The writer of Hebrews was not concerned that those who started to serve God should continue to do so acceptably.
- A. True
 - B. False
70. What is true of basic Christian duties in Hebrews 13?
- A. Brotherly love is not to be promoted.
 - B. Kindness is not to be promoted.
 - C. We must remember those in prison.
 - D. Marriage vows are not important.
71. What is true of responsibilities to leaders in Hebrews 13?
- A. In God's work, leaders are always important.
 - B. Frequently, progress or lack of progress is determined by the attitude of the laity toward their leaders.
 - C. We respect our leaders.
 - D. all of these are true
72. What is true of the basis of faith and hope of Christians?
- A. the constancy of our Lord
 - B. the trustworthiness of our Lord
 - C. the reliability and availability of our Lord
 - D. all of these are true
73. Christ as Sacrifice and Sin Offering has outmoded the old order of offering sacrifices to God.
- A. True
 - B. False



74. The writer of Hebrews believed that he would be restored to them through their prayers.
- A. True
 - B. False
75. One of the great benedictions of the Bible is given to us by the writer of the Epistle.
- A. True
 - B. False

METHODS OF STUDY

Have you enjoyed this study of the Epistle to the Hebrews? Do you wish to study further? If so, here are a few more suggestions.

1. Compare the relationship of the pastoral epistles to the Epistle to the Hebrews.
2. Compare the relationship of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the prison epistles.
3. Compare the Old Covenant of Exodus to the New Covenant in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
4. Further examine the views of apostasy in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
5. Further examine the views of angels in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
6. Further examine the views of sanctification in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

May Jesus, the Head of the Church, become even more influential in your life as you study the Epistle to the Hebrews!

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE



NOTES

Aaronic [eh-RAA-nuhk]
Alexandria [a-luhg-ZAN-dree-uh]
Antioch [an-TEE-aak]
antithesis [an-TI-thuh-suhs]
Apollos [uh-PAA-lowz]
apostasy [uh-PAA-stuh-see]
Aramaic [eh-ruh-MAY-uhk]
atonement [uh-TOWN-muhnt]
Augustine [AA-guh-steen]
Caesarea [seh-suh-REE-uh]
carnality [kar-NAL-li-tee]
Chaldees [KAL-dees]
Chastisement [cha-STIZE-muhnt]
cherubim [cheh-ruh-bm]
efficacious [eh-fuh-KAY-shuhs]
faintheartedness [FAYNT-hart-uhd-nuhs]
genealogies [jee-nee-A-luh-jeez]
Incarnation [in-kar-NAY-shuhn]
Intercessor [in-tur-SES-ur]
Levitical [luh-VI-tuh-kl]
Mediator [MEE-dee-ay-tr]
Melchizedek" [mel-chuh-ZEH-duhk]
Origen [AW-ruh-jn]
Redeemer [ruh-DEE-mr]
redemption [ruh-DEMP-shn]
sanctification [sank-tuh-fi-KAY-shuhn]
sanctified [SANGK-tuh-fide]