



Hebrews God's Plan For Spiritual Maturity

Written By John Powers
Edited By Joseph F. Roberts, ThD, PhD

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Table of Contents

Copywrite Page	1
Table of Contents	2
Foreword	5
Introduction	6
Chapter 1 Hebrews Introduction To The Book Of Hebrews	7
Chapter 2 Hebrews 1-1-4 God Has Spoken To Us	14
Chapter 3 Hebrews 1-1-14 Christ Greater Than Angels	18
Chapter 4 Hebrews 2-1-4 Don't Drift From The Word Of God	26
Chapter 5 Hebrews 2-5-18 Son Of Man Is Better Than Angels	31
Chapter 6 Hebrews 3-1-6 The Son Of Man Is Greater Than Moses	42
Chapter 7 Hebrews 3:7-4:13 Christ Is Greater Than Moses And Joshua In The Rest He Gives	49
Chapter 8 Hebrews 4:14-5:10 Jesus Christ Is Greater Than Aaron The High Priest Part I	58
Chapter 9 Hebrews 4:14-5:10 Jesus Christ Is Greater Than Aaron The High Priest Part II	72
Chapter 10 Hebrews 5:11-14 The Marks Of Spiritual Immaturity	83
Chapter 11 Hebrews 6:1-12 The Call To Spiritual Maturity	89
Chapter 12 Hebrews 6:13-20 The Basis For Spiritual Immaturity	98
Chapter 13 Hebrews 7:1-10 A Superior Priesthood The Historical Argument	102
Chapter 14 Hebrews 7:11-28 A Superior Priesthood The Doctrinal And Practical Argument	108
Chapter 15 Hebrews 8:1-13 The Better Covenant	116
Chapter 16 Hebrews 8:1-13 The Blessing Of A Better Covenant	124
Chapter 17 Hebrews 9:1-10 The Superior Sanctuary The Inferior Sanctuary	133
Chapter 18 Hebrews 9:11-28 The Superior Sanctuary The Superior Heavenly Sanctuary	140
Chapter 19 Hebrews 9:23-28 The Appearings Of Jesus Christ	144

Chapter 20 Hebrews 10:1-18 The Superior Sacrifice Part I	150
Chapter 21 Hebrews 10:19-25 The Superior Sacrifice Part II	155
Chapter 22 Hebrews 10:26-39 Warning - Do Not Despise God's Word	162
Chapter 23 Hebrews 11:1-3 The Just Shall Live By Faith-The Description Of Faith	170
Chapter 24 Hebrews 11:4 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Worshipping	173
Chapter 25 Hebrews 11:5-6 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Walking With God	177
Chapter 26 Hebrews 11:7 The Just Shall Live By Faith - Faiths Witness For God	180
Chapter 27 Hebrews 11:8-19 The Just Shall Live By Faith - Abraham - Faith Waiting	187
Chapter 28 Hebrews 11:11-12 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Sarah-Faiths Conclusion	193
Chapter 29 Hebrews 11:20-21 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Overcoming	197
Chapter 30 Hebrews 11:22 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Joseph-Faith Waiting	204
Chapter 31 Hebrews 11:23 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Overcoming	
The Fear Of Man	212
Chapter 32 Hebrews 11:24-26 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Overcoming	
The Praise Of Man	216
Chapter 33 Hebrews 11:27-28 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Acting Without Fear	219
Chapter 34 Hebrews 11:29-30 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Israel-Faiths Obedience	223
Chapter 35 Hebrews 11:31 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Rahab-Faiths Conclusion	229
Chapter 36 Hebrews 11:32-40 The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Conquering	
And Suffering	234
Chapter 37 Hebrews 12:1-4 Encouragement For Christian Living The Example	
Of The Son Of God	238
Chapter 38 Hebrews 12:3-13 Encouragement For Christian Living The Assurance	
Of The Love Of God	241
Chapter 39 Hebrews 12:14-29 Encouragement For Christian Living The Enablement	
Of God's Grace	247
Chapter 40 Hebrews 13:1-6 Evidences Of Faith Enjoying Spiritual Fellowship	259
Chapter 41 Hebrews 13:9-16 Evidences Of Faith Sharing In Spiritual Worship	267

Chapter 42 Hebrews 13:7-9,17,24 Evidences Of Faith Submitting To Spiritual Leadership	269
Chapter 43 Hebrews 13:18-25 Evidences Of Faith Experiencing Spiritual Lordship	273

Foreword

The International Missionary Baptist Ministries Publishing is excited about this first book of the new John Powers Series. Pastor John Powers is currently the pastor of the Cornerstone Missionary Baptist Church in El Paso, Arkansas. IMBM obtained two manuscripts written by Pastor Powers with the John Teague materials upon Dr. Teague's death many years ago. While some of Dr. Teague's manuscripts have been edited and published, this is the first of Pastor Powers.

It is the desire of the Publishers that the reader will gain much insight on the book of Hebrews from this veteran Warrior of the Word.

Introduction

The Book of Hebrews has been called "The Fifth Gospel". The four Gospels describe Christ's ministry on earth, but this book describes His ministry in Heaven at God's right hand. The book of Hebrews exalts the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Our eyes are fixed upon Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). He is set before us "crowned with glory and honor" in the heavens (Hebrews 2:9). When we realize all that we have in and through Him, we have no desire for anyone else or anything else.

This book was written primarily to Jewish Christians at Jerusalem who were wavering in their faith and were in danger of lapsing back into Judaism. Because of the taunts and jeers of their persecutors, the Jewish Christians were beginning to think that they had lost everything—the altar, priests, sacrifices—by accepting Christianity. The writer proved that they had only lost the shadow to be given the substance, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were undervaluing their privileges in Christ, were becoming discouraged and were thinking about going back to Judaism as a form of worship.

The writer was trying to lead them from an elementary knowledge to a mature grasp. He exhorted them to be loyal to Christ. He showed the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. In this letter, the Christian was admonished to press on to perfection or maturity of full growth in spiritual things, especially in the knowledge and power of the Lord Jesus Christ Who saves us, directs, and intercedes for us.

It is true that Hebrews carries a particular message to the Jewish believers who were faced with problems we do not face today. They were living in the transition period Law and Grace, the transition from the Law of Moses with its ceremonies to the liberty of Grace, the transition from bondage of legalism to grace and truth that makes us free.

As the reader will see, the Book of Hebrews is truly God's plan for spiritual maturity for the child of God.

Chapter One

Introduction To The Book Of Hebrews

Hebrews 12:2: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Hebrews 2:9: *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Beginning statement:

The Book of Hebrews has been called "The Fifth Gospel". The four Gospels describe Christ's ministry on earth, but this book describes His ministry in Heaven at God's right hand. The book of Hebrews exalts the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Our eyes are fixed upon Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). He is set before us "crowned with glory and honor" in the heavens (Hebrews 2:9). When we realize all that we have in and through Him, we have no desire for anyone else or anything else.

TO WHOM THE BOOK OF HEBREWS IS WRITTEN

This book was written primarily to Jewish Christians at Jerusalem who were wavering in their faith and were in danger of lapsing back into Judaism. Because of the taunts and jeers of their persecutors, the Jewish Christians were beginning to think that they had lost everything—the altar, priests, sacrifices—by accepting Christianity. The writer proved that they had only lost the shadow to be given the substance, the Lord Jesus Christ. They were undervaluing their privileges in Christ, were becoming discouraged and were thinking about going back to Judaism as a form of worship.

The writer was trying to lead them from an elementary knowledge to a mature grasp. He exhorted them to be loyal to Christ. He showed the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant. In this letter, the Christian was admonished to press on to perfection or maturity of full growth in spiritual things, especially in the knowledge and power of the Lord Jesus Christ Who saves us, directs, and intercedes for us.

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THE HUMAN AUTHORSHIP

While there are some uncertainty and question about the authorship of the Book of Hebrews, there is much evidence in favor of the Apostle Paul. What we see in this book is that the Personality of Christ is preserved rather than the personality of the writer.

In Hebrews 13:23-24, there is a reference to Timothy. From both Philippians and Colossians, we know that Timothy was with Paul in Rome during the Apostle's imprisonment there. In Philippians 2:19, we read that Paul was sending Timothy from Rome to Philippi to visit the church and to encourage the Christians there. In Hebrews 13:23, we learn that the author of the letter to the Hebrews was expecting Timothy's soon return (See 2 Timothy 4:9, 21). Certainly "they of Italy" (Hebrews 13:23) refers to the city of Rome. Certainly, the epistle to the Hebrews was written in Italy, and there is good reason to believe that it was written in Rome.

Hebrews 13:23, 24: ***23Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. 24Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.***

Philippians 2:19: ***But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.***

2 Timothy 4:9, 21: ***9Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:... 21Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.***

THE OBJECT OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The object of the Book of Hebrews is to set forth Christ, above angels—their Creator, indeed; above Moses—Son, not servant; above Abraham—who paid tithes to Melchizedek; Christ, not connected with Aaron, of wholly different order because the earthly tabernacle, priesthood and sacrifices are done away; not a priest on earth, but Christ our Great High Priest at God's right hand in Heaven itself—Who ever lives to make intercession for us.

Christ is set before the believers as the Son of God, the Son of man, the Great High Priest in Heaven to cause them constantly to occupy their thoughts and worship with God, into whose presence Christ by His blood has brought them.

THE TIME OF THE WRITING

"Most scholars agree that the Hebrew epistle was written between A.D. 62 and 65. We know it was not written immediately after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. See Hebrews 2:3-4. But is also obvious that the epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus the Roman in 70 A.D because at the time of the writing the temple in Jerusalem was still standing (Hebrews 13:11-12), the Mosaic institutions were still being observed, and priests were still offering gifts according to the Law of Moses (Hebrews 8:3-5; 10:11)." (Hebrews, Dr. Oliver Greene).

Hebrews 2:3, 4: ***3How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and***

with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Hebrews 13:11, 12: ***11For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.***

Hebrews 8:3-5: ***3For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.***

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

Jerusalem was a news gathering center. News coming out of Jerusalem was considered the final word and was more acceptable than from another city.

About Hebrews, Dr. Oliver Greene wrote:

"The epistle to the Hebrews is not light, easy reading. On the contrary, it is extremely deep in spiritual truth, and the believer who would understand this epistle must not only read it, but re-read it again and again, studying vigorously and looking to the Holy Spirit to open the treasure and reveal the deep truths contained in the words of this extraordinary epistle. There is no other book like it in all the Word of God....The believer who studies this epistle and abides in the teaching therein set forth, is led, spiritually speaking, from childhood to maturity; and his knowledge of Christian truth and Christ Himself is greatly enlarged. The believer who abides in Hebrews is going on unto perfection of spiritual maturity."

Of Hebrews, Dr. H C Mears wrote:

"How often when you take a trip for the first time over a new road, you drive straight along anticipating where it will lead and what difficulties you may encounter. It seems to be the thing to do. Coming back over the same road, you took around and notice things. Do this in studying the Book of Hebrews. Read it through, and do not be overanxious about thing you cannot understand. Then you can go back over the road in your reading and take notice of the many things along the way. You could spend months in Hebrews. It presents so many wonderful truths. At the first reading, you will be impressed by one fact above all others: that Jesus Christ is prominent on every page. This is not true in all the other books of the New Testament. In Acts, the apostles, disciples, the Jews, and pagans are predominant. In Romans, a great doctrine attracts our attention. In the other letters,

the church and its problems are considered, but here it is our Lord Himself." (What The Bible Is All About, Dr. H. C. Mears, p584).

WE as Christians have that which is BETTER—better in every way. The KEY WORD to the Book of Hebrews is better and is used 13 times as the writer shows the superiority of Jesus Christ and his salvation over the Hebrew system of religion.

Another word that is repeated in this book is perfect. It means a perfect standing before God. The terms eternal and forever are important terms in the message of Hebrews. When we combine these four important words, we discover that Jesus Christ and the Christian life He gives are better because these blessings are eternal, and they give us a perfect standing before God. The religious system under the Mosaic Law was imperfect because it could not accomplish a once-for-all redemption that was eternal.

THE DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The Book of Hebrews has two major parts: Doctrinal Chapters 1:1—10:18 and Practical Chapters 10:19—13:25.

THE DOCTRINAL MESSAGE

1. Christ as the Son of God is better than the angels (Chapter 1:4-14).
2. Jesus as the Son of man is better than the angels (Chapter 2:5-18). Verse 9 reveals the purpose of His being made lower than the angels.
3. Jesus Christ is better than Moses (Chapter 3:1-6).
4. Jesus our High Priest is better than Aaron (Chapters 4:14-5:10).
5. The new Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek (Chapter 7).
6. The new sanctuary and the new covenant are better than the old (Chapter 8).
7. Christ's blood has power to inaugurate the new sanctuary and the new covenant (Chapter 9).
8. The new way into the holiest is through Jesus (Chapter 10:1-18).

THE PRACTICAL MESSAGE

It deals with our living and our privileges as Christians. This division begins with the words, "Having therefore," (Chapter 10:19). The term therefore means "because of the preceding, the following is or should be true." Here, the word denoted the responsibility of the individual believer toward the Lord Jesus Christ because of what He has done for us in such a marvelous way.

1. Entering the Holiest and dwelling there in fellowship with God (Chapter 10:9-25).
2. The privilege of the fullness of faith (Chapter 11).
3. Of the patience of hope (Chapter 12:1-13).
4. Of love and good works (Chapter 13).

THE FIVE WARNINGS

These warnings present one message: "Heed God's Word." The writer calls this book "the word of exhortation." (Hebrews 13:22). The Greek word "paraklesis" translated "exhortation" simply means encouragement. This book is not written to frighten people but to encourage them. The purpose of the warning is to encourage us to trust God and heed His Word. (Exhort, Chapter 3:13; 10:25; 12:5).

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

Hebrews 10:25: ***Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.***

Hebrews 12:5: ***And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:***

"The Epistle to the Hebrews opens with an important declaration: 'God... has spoken to us by or through His Son (Chapter 1:1-2). In Hebrews 12:25, the writer states: 'See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.' In other words, 'God has spoken; we have His Word. What are we doing about it?

"With this in mind, we can now better understand the significance of those five 'problem passages' or warnings in Hebrews. Each of these passages encourage us to heed God's Word by pointing out the sad spiritual consequences that result if we do not." God has spoken, let us heed His words. (W. W. Wiersbe)

The five warnings:

1. Drifting from or disregarding the Word. (Chapter 2:1-4). Neglect.
2. Doubting the Word (Chapter 3:7-4:13). Hard Heart.
3. Dullness toward the Word. Sluggishness,
4. Despising the Word (Chapter 10:26-29). Willful sin.
5. Defying the Word (Chapter 12:14-29). Refusing to hear.

The natural progress entailed in the five exhortations or warnings. If we do not listen to God's Word and really hear it, we will start to drift. Neglect always leads to drifting in things material and physical, as well as spiritual. As we drift from the Word, we start to doubt the Word, because faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). We start to get doubting or hard hearts, and this leads to spiritual sluggishness which produces dullness toward the Word. We become "dull of hearing", lazy listeners. Dullness leads to a spiteful attitude toward the Word to the extent that we willfully disobey God. Willful sin gradually develops into a defiant attitude—we almost "dare" God to do anything about it.

Romans 10:17: ***So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.***

Now what does God do while this spiritual regression is going on? He keeps speaking to us,

encouraging us to get back to the Word. If we fail to listen and obey, then God begins to chasten us. This chastening process is the theme of Chapter 12, the climatic chapter in Hebrews. Hebrews 10:30 states, "***The Lord shall judge His people.***" God does not allow His children to become "spoiled brats" by permitting them willfully defy His Word. He always chastens in love.

These five exhortations or warnings are addressed to people who are truly born again. Their purpose is to get the readers to pay close attention to God's Word. While there is some stern language in some of these passages, there is no threat to the readers that they may lose their salvation. If we persist in defying God's Word, we may lose our lives. Hebrews 12:9, "***Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?***" The inference is that if we do not submit, we might die. But if Hebrews teaches anything, it teaches the assurance of eternal life in a living High Priest Who can never die (Hebrews 7:22-28).

Hebrews 7:22-28: ***22By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.***

Conclusion

Some try to explain away these warning by claiming that the readers were not truly born again but were only professors of the Christian faith. However, the way the writer addresses them would eliminate that approach. He called them "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1). He told them that they had a High Priest in heaven (Chapter 4:14), which he would not have written if they were lost. They had been "made partakers of the Holy Spirit" (Chapter 6:4). The admonitions in Hebrews 10:19-25 would be meaningless if addressed to the unsaved.

Hebrews 10:19-25: ***19Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21And having an high priest over the house of God; 22Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.***

The Epistle to the Hebrews proves that Jesus Christ is much better than anything the Law of Moses has to offer. The epistle is also a book of exhortation, urging its readers to hear and heed the Word of God, lest they regress spiritually and experience the chastening hand of God.

Chapter Two

God Has Spoken To Us

Hebrews 1:1-4: *1God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

Introduction

One of the great truths given in the Bible is that the Holy God, Who created all things and knows all things, has spoken to humanity.

There are two ways in which God has spoken and revealed Himself to mankind. God spoke to mankind even though he rebelled and sinned against Him.

1. He has spoken through men.
2. He has spoken through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Mankind would be wise and well served if he would listen to what God has said and give heed to His message.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES Verses 1, 2

What does the Bible say about the Word of God?

2 Tim. 3:16-17: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*

Acts 3:18-21: *"But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."*

2 Peter 1:21: *"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

God spoke though men in time past to the fathers (Verse 1). God spoke to men through Noah, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and the prophets. God has spoken to us through His Son (Verse 2). Jesus spoke to the people while He lived here upon the earth. He has spoken to us today through the writings of many of those who heard him speak.

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE TWO REVELATIONS

In time past. THE OLD TESTAMENT. In these last days. THE NEW TESTAMENT. God has spoken in both. Verse 2.

THE OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTERIZED

It was Ancient. "In time past unto our fathers." "Since the world began" (Acts 3:21). It has been four thousand years since God began to speak. It has been fifteen hundred years since the first part of the Old Testament has been written. It has been four hundred years since God had ceased speaking through men.

Acts 3:21: *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

It was given by or through the prophets (2 Peter 1:21; Acts 3:21). The primary meaning of prophet (Gr. prophetes) is "he who declares things before they come to pass. This foretelling or fore-announcing may be, and often is, of the office of the prophet, but is not the essence of that office." (Wuest).

2 Peter 1:21: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 3:21: *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.*

The prophet (Gr. prophetes) is "our speaker; he speaks out the counsel of God with clearness, energy, and authority which springs from the consciousness of speaking in God's name and having received a direct message from Him to deliver." (Wuest). Thus, the prophets were the mouth pieces of God and for God.

It was Fragmentary. "At sundry times or at various times." It was given little by little, part by part. It was given first by oral communication and later by writing. It was given in connection with temporary dispensations—the Adamic, the Abrahamic, and the Mosaic dispensations.

It was in Multiform, "In Divers" or various manners. God spoke in:

1. Dreams: Jacob (Genesis 28:12-16); Joseph (Genesis 37:5-11); Pharaoh (Genesis 40-41); Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel, 2 & 4); and Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25).

2. Visions: Abraham (Genesis 15); Jacob (Genesis 46); Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37); Ananias (Acts 9:10-16); Cornelius (Acts 10:1-6); Peter (Acts 10:9-20; 11:4-11); and Paul (Acts 16:9-10).
3. Voices: Adam and Eve (Genesis 3); Samuel (1 Samuel 3); and at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-18).
4. Through Angels: Daniel (Daniel 9:20-27); Zacharias (Luke 1:10-20); Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25); Mary (Luke 1:26-36); and Philip (Acts 8:26).

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERIZED

It was recent and final. Verse 2, "In these last days has spoken to us." It was given in His Son. Verse 2, "Hath....spoken unto us by His Son." God manifested in the flesh (John 1:1-3, 14). Jesus was declared to be the Son of God (Matthew 3:16-17; 17:1-5).

John 1:1-3, 14: *1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2The same was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made....14And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Matthew 3:16-17: *16And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Matthew 17:1-5: *1And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

It was complete and perfect. Prophecy was fulfilled in the Son.

Acts 10:43: *"To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive the remission of sins."*

Luke 16:16: *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."*

Luke 24:44: *"And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto*

you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."

The New Testament (Covenant) is superior to and takes the place of the First Testament (Covenant).

THE PROPHETS AND THE SON CONTRASTED

The Son is superior to the prophets. The prophets were only inspired. The Son is the Divine Person, God manifested in the flesh, the second Person in the Godhead. The prophets were only servants. This is God the Son. The prophets were only God's spokesmen. This is God Himself speaking.

The revelation which God gave in His Son, consisted not merely in what was said, as in the case of the prophets but also in what the Son was and not merely in what He (the Son) said. It was a revelation made by One, Who in all that He is, in all that He does, and in all that He says, reveals God the Father. He is the Logos, the total concept of Deity, Deity told out, the Word of God, not in the sense of a spoken or written word, but in the sense of a Person Who in Himself expresses at! that God the Father is. John 1:1-3, 14 (Quoted earlier).

The Son is superior to the prophets in that the latter were merely created beings used as instruments by God, whereas the Son is God the Son, thus very God of very God.

Not only is the Son superior in His being, but the mode of revealing God's Word to the human race was superior in His case. When the prophets spoke, it was merely as mouth pieces. When the Son spoke, it was God Himself Who spoke.

The Scriptures are very clear that God has spoken to us. God has spoken through men. God has spoken through His Son.

CONCLUSION

Have you heard the message from God? Has there been a time when you acknowledged that you were lost and needed a Saviour? God has provided that Saviour you need. Have you received that Saviour? If you were to die today, do you know for sure that you would live in Heaven? If not, why not?

God has revealed to us how to live after He has saved us from sin. Are you living for Him and serving Him through His Church? If not, why not?

Chapter Three

Christ Greater Than Angels

Hebrews 1:1-14: *1God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 10And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: 11They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; 12And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. 13But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? 14Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

INTRODUCTION

One of the great truths of the Book of Hebrews is the fact that God the Father has spoken to us through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This was important for the Hebrew Christians to remember. They were undergoing much persecution, and some had begun to wonder whether they had lost everything. The writer sought to encourage them by telling them that they had received the substance which fulfilled the shadow. In this lesson, the writer emphasized the fact that Jesus Christ is better than the angels.

THE GLORY OF THE SON OF GOD

In relation to God the Father

He is the Son of God. It is not merely a title. It is a designation of the natural and eternal relation of the Second Person of the Godhead to the First Person. The only begotten Son of God—the sameness of essence with the Father.

He is the manifestation of God. Verse 3.

John 1:14, ***"And the Word was made (became) flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."***

Philippians 2:5-6: ***5Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:***

Colossians 1:14-15: ***14In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:***

He is the very image of God's person (Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:14-15). The Shekinah glory in the Tabernacle had not the personal form of God, but the Son bears His real and perfect likeness.

John 10:30, ***"I and My Father are one."***

The Son so perfectly bears the impress, the exact expression of God, that Jesus could say, ***"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."*** John 14:9.

Colossians 2:9, ***"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."***

In relation to the universe

He is its Creator.

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

Colossians 1:14-17: ***14In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.***

He is the Sustainer of all things. Hebrews 1:3, ***"...upholding all things by the word of His power...."***

He is its Possessor. Hebrews 1:2, ***"...Whom He appointed Heir of all things."*** As the Son of God, He received this appointment and gift before the foundation of the earth. His position as Heir has to do with the incarnate Son, Jesus, the Son of man.

John 17:9-10: ***9I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. 10And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.***

Matthew 21:33-38: **33Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: 34And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. 35And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. 36Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. 38But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.**

He is Lord of all. He has all authority.

Matthew 28:18: **18And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.**

He has the keys of death and hell. He has power over all flesh.

Revelation 1:18: **I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

In relation to the Church

He is her Prophet, Hebrews 1:2, Teacher. He is her Priest, Hebrews 1:3, "**...He had by Himself purged our sins.**" Jesus sacrificed Himself as the Lamb of God. The sacrifice He made on the Cross was for the remission of sins. The Son by Himself, as our High Priest, purged (made atonement for) our sins. This aspect of His ministry will be explained in detail in Hebrews 7-10. When God saves a sinner, He breaks the power of the indwelling sinful nature at the moment the sinner places his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 6. When the believer dies. He loses the sinful nature and in his glorified body has only the divine nature.

God also removes the guilt and penalty of sin and gives the believer a righteous standing. The Son of God make all this possible when He died on the cross. His blood delivers the believers from the power of sin in this present life and from the presence of sin in the future life. His blood removes the guilt and penalty of sin and cleanses the believer from its defilement. That is what is included in the act of our Lord's making purification for sin. (Wuest).

He is her King, Hebrews 1:3, "**.. .sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.**" The seated posture indicates that His work as our High Priest was finished. This was in contrast to the Levitical Priests who never sat down so far as their tabernacle work was concerned. The reason was that the work of the Levitical Priests was never finished, and the blood of bulls and goats could not pay for sin.

The verb "sat down" (ekathisen) denotes a solemn, formal act. It speaks of the assumption of a position of dignity and authority. The reference is to the Son's glorification and ascension.

Philippians 2:6: ***Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:***

1 Peter 3:22: ***Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.***

In His exalted position, He is still bearing all things toward their destined consummation and is still dealing with sin as the Great High Priest, saving sinners by His precious blood and cleansing saints from the defilement of sin that at times enters their lives. (Wuest).

The fact that Jesus has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, the place of honor, proves that He is equal with God the Father, for no mere created being could ever sit on God's right hand.

Creator, Prophet, Priest, King—Jesus Christ is superior to all the prophets and servants of God who have ever appeared on the sacred pages of Scriptures. It is no wonder that the Father said at the hour of Christ's Transfiguration, "***This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him***" (Matthew 17:5). Two of the greatest prophets were there with Jesus—Moses and Elijah; but Christ is superior to them.

CHRIST AS SON OF GOD BETTER THAN THE ANGELS Verses 4-14.

His was a better name: SON. Verses 4-5 testifies that He is in a better position than the angels. The writer sets forth the fact that the SON through Whom God has spoken to us is better than the angels.

These Jewish Christians were familiar with the important part the angels played in the Old Testament. "Being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. The writer was speaking of His glorification which was conditioned upon His fulfillment of the requirements of His human state, which He emphasizes. After He had passed through the experience described in Philippians 2:6-8, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high as Messianic sovereign, and there became and was proven to be that which in reality He always was, superior to the angels.

Philippians 2:6-8: ***6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

He became superior to the angels when He resumed His pre-incarnate dignity at His resurrection. The writer tells us in Hebrews 2:7-9 that for a little time, i.e., during His incarnation previous to His glorification, He was made a little lower than the angels.

Hebrews 2:7-9: ***7Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst***

him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

He has a better name or a more excellent name because of His relationship to the Father, Verse 5. Consider a few quotations in regard to this truth. First, note the rhetorical question quoted in Psalm 2:7. The word "begotten" in the context refers to the act of God the Father establishing in an official sonship relation, His Son at the resurrection. The idea in the words, "I have begotten thee" are "I have begotten thee to kingly dignity." The reference is not to entrance into life, but to entrance to an office. The writer reminded his readers that such statements were never made of the angels.

Psalm 2:7: I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

Second, consider a quotation from 2 Samuel 7:14. While it is concluded that the primary reference to Solomon is found in 2 Samuel 7:12-16, yet the clear and final reference is to the Son of God. Solomon's kingdom was not established but divided, whereas the Son's kingdom will be eternal. Solomon built a temple for God, but the Son will build the Millennial Temple.

2 Samuel 7:12-16: 12And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.13And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite. 14And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed? 15And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died. 16And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

Third consider the Hebrew writer as he applies these words, "***I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son,***" directly to the Lord Jesus. This was never said of the angels.

The Son is worshipped by angels, Verse 6. A fourth quotation is noted with the word "Again" in verse 6. It denotes a different quotation from the previous ones. The word "first begotten" is the translation of "prototokos", a term used by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 1:15 and by the writer to the Hebrews to refer to the Son of God. Christ is the "firstborn of all creation" (Colossians 1:15), because He created all things, and He is the highest of all who came back from the dead (Colossians 1:18). When He came into the world, the angels worshipped Him. God commanded them to do so, which proves that Jesus Christ is God. None of God's angels would worship a mere creature.

Colossians 1:15, 18: 15Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of

every creature:... 18And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

He is Creator and Master of the angels, and they serve Him, Verse 7. This is a quotation from Psalm 104:4. Angels are created spirits; they have no bodies, although they can assume human forms when ministering on earth. Angels sometimes ministered to or served our Lord when He was here on earth (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43). They serve Him and us now.

Psalm 104:4: *Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:*

Matthew 4:11: *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

Luke 22:43: *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

The Son is God, has an eternal throne, and is anointed with the Holy Spirit. Verses 8-9. This brings us to a fifth quotation found in Psalm 45:6, 7. Angels minister before the throne, but they DO NOT sit upon the throne. One of the main teachings of Psalm 110 is that Jesus Christ, God's Anointed is now enthroned in glory. Jesus referred to this Psalm in Mark 12:35-37 and Mark 14:62. Peter used it on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:34-36). Our Lord Jesus has not yet entered into His earthly Kingdom, but He has been enthroned in glory (Ephesians 1:20-21).

Psalm 45:6, 7: *6Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

Mark 12:35-37: *35And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the Son of David? 36For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 37David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.*

Mark 14:62: *And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

Acts 2:34-36: *34For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Ephesians 1:20, 21: *20Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named,*

not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

"Anointed" is the translation of "chrism" which is always used in the New Testament of the anointing with the Holy Spirit. Here the oil of gladness refers to the Holy Spirit Who bestows joy. Kings were anointed in Israel with oil when they ascended to the throne. The high priest was anointed with oil as he entered the office. Our Lord was anointed with the Holy Spirit for His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king at the time of His baptism and entrance into His earthly ministry.

The Son is unchangeable, the eternal Creator, Verses 10-12. In the support of his argument that the Son is better than the angels, the writer quotes Psalm 102:25-27. The unchangeable and eternal power and majesty of the Son, spoken of in Verses 10-12, find their basis in the fact that He is the ONE who laid the foundation of the earth and fashioned the heavens.

Psalm 102:25-27: 25Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 26They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

The Son is seated at God's right hand, Verses 13-14. This last quotation in Chapter 1 comes from Psalm 110:1. The fact that Jesus Christ is now at the Father's right hand, the place of honor, is mentioned many times in the New Testament (Matthew 22:43-44; 26:64; Mark 16:9; Acts 2:33-34; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22).

Psalm 110:1: (A Psalm of David.) The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Matthew 22:43, 44: 43He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

Matthew 26:64: Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Mark 16:9: Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Acts 2:33, 34: 33Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Romans 8:34: Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Colossians 3:1: ***If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.***

1 Peter 3:22: ***Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.***

CONCLUSION

The glory of Jesus is greater than the glory of the angels. The angels are created spirits, but the Son is the Creator of all things. The angels worship Jesus Christ. The angels are ministering spirits and serve the Lord Jesus Christ Who is seated on the Throne. Jesus Christ is so much better than the angels and has a more excellent name than they have. Jesus is the anointed High Priest and the Saviour of sinners.

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour?

Chapter Four

Warning Do Not Drift From The Word Of God

Hebrews 2:1-4: *1Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Introduction

If you were unaware that danger was near, would you want someone to warn you about the danger? Usually, we think we would want to get such a warning. In the Book of Hebrews, the writer gives five warnings. In this chapter, the first warning is given. It is "Heed the Word of God and do not drift from it."

The purpose of this warning was to and still is to encourage the readers to pay attention to God's Word and obey it. God does not sit idly by and permit His children to rebel against Him. He will continue to speak. When there is disobedience, God will chasten His children.

TO WHOM IS THE WARNING GIVEN?

This admonition or warning was written to believers. The writer included himself when he used the first-person plural pronouns "we" and "us". These terms are used six times in our text and is the same that is used in Hebrews 1:2.

This letter was addressed to those whom the writer called "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," (Hebrews 3:1), "brethren" (Hebrews 3:12), and "partakers of Christ" (Hebrews 3:14).

The writer wrote about "neglecting salvation" and not "rejecting salvation." Neglect (ameleo) means not to care for, be heedless, negligent. He was not encouraging sinners to become believers. He was encouraging believers to pay attention to God's Word and to live out the great salvation which they had received from the Lord.

ABOUT WHAT WERE THE BRETHREN WARNED?

They were to give the more earnest heed to the "things we have heard," Verse 1. Heed (prosecho) means to hold to, to bring to or near; used of the mind, to turn one's mind, thought or attention to a thing. Ought (dei) means it needs, there is need of something that is absent or lacking; it is necessary from the nature of the case, one must; it is right and proper.

Note the connection with the teaching in Chapter 1. (Note Chapter 2:1 and Chapter 1:1-2.) Note the word "therefore" (*dia touto*) means on account of or because of, referring to what had already been said. Chapter 1:1-2, "God.... has spoken unto us by His Son..." The exhortation is to give "the more earnest heed" to the New Testament message and not let them slip or do not drift from them. The words "let them slip" comes from the Greek word *pararreho*, which means to flow near, flow by. Here, the second Aorist passive, carried away beside or with; referring not like the active to the act of floating away, but to the being carried away beside, or floating away past anything with the stream. The word is used of snow slipping off from the soldiers' bodies and of a ring slipping off the finger. Note Proverbs 4:20-22, "***My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them and health to all their flesh.***"

WHY WERE THE BELIEVERS WARNED?

God judged the people of the Old Testament era by what they had heard through the prophets and angels (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:2). Believers today have the message spoken by His Son Who is greater than the prophets and angels. Israel had given heed to the Old Testament which was given to them by the prophets and angels. Now, because the Son is superior to these, the message He brought is better than the one they introduced. Therefore, they should hold their minds the more earnestly to it. During the Old Testament days, people who did not heed or obey the Word were sometimes punished. That Word was given by prophets and angels. How much more or greater responsibility do we have today who have received the Word from the Son. Compare adultery in Old Testament and in the New Testament (Matthew 5:27-28). The message was spoken by the Son, confirmed unto those who heard Him, and attested or proven by miracles, Verses 2-4.

Matthew 5:27-28: 27Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Consider the evidence given, Verses 2-4. The Greek word translated "if" represents a fulfilled condition, not a hypothetical case. The idea is "in view of the fact" or "since this did happen or is true." The Word spoken by angels was steadfast, proven, sure, held good, and those who disobeyed were punished accordingly. Those, who had professed faith in Jesus Christ and professed His as their Great High Priest were under the stress of persecution from apostate Judaism, were beginning to neglect the attendance in worship with the Church. They were allowing themselves to drift from or by New Testament truth, were leaning back toward the Old Testament form of worship, and were in danger of returning to the temple sacrifices.

The term "salvation" refers to salvation itself, and not to the teaching concerning it. The salvation is great because of the Person Who saves, the price that was paid, the provision, and the product—the Saviour, the suffering, the satisfying of the demand of the law, the scope, and the security.

This confirmation not only had back of it the official sanction of those who heard the Lord and their proven character and truthfulness, but also the accompaniment of "signs and wonders" and "divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit." The primary purpose of "signs, wonders, and miracles" was not to alleviate distress and suffering, but to prove that the one performing them

spoke or wrote from God (John 3:2; Matthew 11:2-5; Mark 2:1-11; John 11:42-45; Acts 2:22; Mark 16:17-20; John 20:30-31).

John 3:2: *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*

Matthew 11:2-5: *2Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, 3And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? 4Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

Mark 2:1-11: *1And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. 2And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. 3And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. 4And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. 5When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. 6But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? 10But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) 11I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.*

John 11:42-45: *42And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. 45Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.*

Acts 2:22: *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:*

Mark 16:17-20: *17And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18They shall take*

up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. 19So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

John 20:30-31: 30And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

The phrase "signs and wonders" is found eleven times in the New Testament. Here in Verse 4, it refers to the miracles that witnessed to the Word and gave confirmation that it was true. These miracles were performed by the Apostles (Mark 16:17-20; Acts 2:43). Today, we have the completed Word of God; so, there is no need for these apostolic miracles. God now bears witness through His Spirit, using His Word (Romans 8:16; 1 John 5:1-13).

Mark 16:17-20: 17And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. 19So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. 20And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Acts 2:43: And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

Romans 8:16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

1 John 5:1-13: 1Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 6This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not

God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

HOW MAY WE DRIFT FROM THE WORD?

We may drift by not reading the Word, by forgetting the Word, by not obeying the Word, and by compromising the Word.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR DRIFTING FROM THE WORD?

We neglect our salvation. More spiritual problems are caused by drifting from the Word and neglecting salvation than perhaps any other failure on our part. When we neglect or drift from God's Word, we neglect prayer, worship with God's people, and other opportunities for spiritual growth.

There is the loss of the blessings of obedience. There is the loss of the joy of obedience.

John 15:10-11, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

There is the chastening of God, Verses 2-4; James 4:17; Hebrews 12:6-7; and Revelation 3:19.

James 4:17: Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Hebrews 12:6, 7: 6For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

Revelation 3:19: As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

CONCLUSION

God has spoken to us through and by His Son. As believers, we must give earnest heed to His message so that we do not drift from it. God will judge and reward us according to whether we obey or disobey His Word. When we drift from the Word, we neglect our salvation and become ineffective in our witness for God.

Chapter Five

Son Of Man Is Better Than Angels

Hebrews 2:5-18: *5For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. 14Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

Introduction

In Chapter 1, the writer declared that God the Father has spoken unto us through His Son. He also declared that the Son of God is better than the angels. In the opening verses of Chapter 2, the writer appealed to his readers to give an ***"earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we drift away from them."***

The fact, that angels are "ministering spirits" (Hebrews 1:7) without human bodies, would seem to give them an advantage over Jesus Christ who had a human body while He ministered on earth. Today, He has a glorified body that knows no limitations.

In verse 5, the words, "put in subjection," are from the Greek word "hupotasso", which means "to arrange or put under, to subordinate, to make subject. It was a military term used of arranging soldiers in order under the commanding general. The word speaks of a system of administration.

The word, "world" comes from the Greek word "oikomene" which means "the inhabited earth."

The expression "world to come" speaks of the millennial kingdom and the future. This kingdom will not be administered by angels. An angel, Lucifer, once was the ruler for God on the pre-Adamic earth. He was the anointed cherub, the guardian of the holiness of God. But he rebelled (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:1-19). The earth over which he had ruled was made desolate and waste. Lucifer, now known as Satan, and his cohorts were banished. After the restoration of the earth, God made man, placed him upon it, and gave everything into subjection to him, but man sinned and handed the scepter over to Satan, who is now the god of this world system and whose throne is again on earth (Revelation 2:13).

Isaiah 14:12-14: 12How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Ezekiel 28:1-19: 1The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, 2Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: 3Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: 4With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: 5By thy great wisdom and by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: 6Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; 7Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. 8They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. 9Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the hand of him that slayeth thee. 10Thou shalt die the deaths of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord GOD. 11Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 12Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17Thine

heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Revelation 2:13: I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

But the Lord Jesus Christ became flesh and dwelt upon the earth. Through His blood on the cross, He has regained for man the dominion over the earth and will in the millennial kingdom be enthroned, ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords. The saved of the human race will be associated with Him in that reign. Therefore, the angels will not rule over the millennial earth, but man in the person of the Son of man and those who are saved by His precious blood will rule over the earth. THEREFORE:

HIS HUMANITY ENABLED HIM TO REGAIN MAN'S LOST DOMINION Verses 5-9

Adam was placed over the earth, and he lost his dominion through sin. In verses 6-8a, the writer quotes from Psalm 8:4-6.

Psalm 8:4-6: 4What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

NOTE the sadness of Verse 8b: ***"But now we see not yet all things put under him."*** Although lower than the angels, Adam was crowned with glory and honor. The position of Adam as the federal head of the human race and his control of the animal kingdom through love spoke of his exalted position. But sin changed things. Verse 8b, ***"...But now we see not yet all things put under him."*** These words point to the fact that Adam, through his fall into sin, lost the dominion he had before enjoyed. He was no longer the master of himself. He had become a fallen creature with a totally depraved nature. He was a slave to sin. The animal kingdom was subservient to him now not through affection but fear.

Jesus, the Son of man, was God's answer to man's dilemma. Vs 9, ***"But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."*** Jesus Christ became a man that He might suffer and die for man's sin and restore the dominion that was lost because of sin.

When Jesus was here on earth, He exercised that lost dominion over the fish (Luke 5:1-11;

Matthew 17:24-27; John 21:1-11); over the fowl (Luke 22:34, 60); over wild beasts (Mark 1:12-13); and the domesticated beasts (Mark 11:1-7). Today, everything is under His feet (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Luke 5:1-11: 1And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, 2And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. 3And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. 4Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. 6And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. 7And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. 8When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. 9For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: 10And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. 11And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Matthew 17:24-27: 24And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? 25He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. 27Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

John 21:1-11: 1After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. 3Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. 4But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 5Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. 6And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. 7Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast

himself into the sea. 8And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. 9As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. 10Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

Luke 22:34, 60: 34And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.... 60And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

Mark 1:12-13: 12And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. 13And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Mark 11:1-7: 1And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, 2And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him. 3And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. 4And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. 5And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. 7And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

Ephesians 1:20-23: 20Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Jesus did all of this for us, for lost sinners, because of the "grace of God." (Verse 9) If He had not become man, He could not have died and "tasted death for every man." It is true that angels cannot die; but it is also true that angels cannot save lost sinners and restore man's lost dominion (Luke 19:10).

Luke 19:10: For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

HIS HUMANITY ENABLED HIM TO BRING MANY SONS TO GLORY Verses 10-13

Christ was crucified and was a stumbling Mock to the Jews. (1 Corinthians 1:23)

1 Corinthians 1:23: ***But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;***

This may have been one of the factors which was influencing these Jewish believers in their drift away from their new profession of Jesus Christ as Messiah and back to the Levitical sacrifices. The writer sought to justify his bold assertion of Verse 9. He sensed the recoil which his readers would have from the thought of a suffering Messiah. Now, he showed that Jesus' suffering and death were according to the prophecies of the Old Testament.

The fact that God the Father decreed that the sin debt had to be paid is dear in the Scriptures. God declared that it must be through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross that the Captain of our salvation would become the Savior of sinners. This declaration found its origin in the nature of God. A holy God cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. A righteous God demands that the violated law be satisfied. The loving God provided the very payment of the penalty which His law demanded.

The writer showed the reasonableness of the cross. Because only God could satisfy the demands of His law, only the Son of man could provide the sacrifice that was needed. God the Father provided the salvation, God the Son procures or obtains it, and God the Holy Spirit applies it.

Jesus, the Son of man, brings many sons into glory and perfection. In verse 10, the words "to make perfect" (Greek *teieioo*) means "to carry to the goal or consummation." This does not imply any moral imperfection in Jesus Christ. It speaks of the consummation of the human experience of suffering and the death of the cross, through which Jesus must pass if He is to become the Captain of our salvation.

The word "Captain" is from the Greek word "archegos", a compound word of "ago" which means "to lead or go" and "arche" which means "first." Therefore, it means "the one who goes first, a leader." The Son precedes the saved on the road to heaven (John 14:6; Hebrews 10:19-20). Our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the leader on the road or way to God, but He is the road or way itself.

John 14:6: ***Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.***

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

"He that sanctifieth" is the Son, (Verse 11). "They who are sanctified" are the saved or saints. They both are of one or out of one. That is, the Lord Jesus and the saved, saints, are out of the one same source. Therefore, "He is not ashamed to call them (the saints) brethren." The Greek word for brother (*adeiphos*) means "from the same womb or from the same origin." That one Source is God the Father. In His humanity, Jesus finds His Source in God the Father. Believers find their source of sonship in God the Father. Therefore, Jesus calls those who believe His brethren. Even though the Son is superior and has exalted dignity, he is not ashamed to call us brethren.

In Verse 12, the writer quotes from Psalm 22:22. While the Psalm has its background in David's own experience, yet the final and full application of its truth is to the Son of God. The writer to the Hebrews quotes this statement, not for its contextual value, but to give scriptural verification to his statement in Vs 11.

Psalm 22:22: *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*

In Verse 13, the writer quotes from Isaiah 8:18. This quotation is used to show the close unity which exists between the Lord Jesus and those whom He calls brethren. The context of the quotation from Isaiah concerns the prophet's denunciation against trusting in any help but God's during the Syro-Israelitish war under Ahaz. Isaiah declared his own trust in God, and that his children have been appointed as living symbols of the divine will. Both the prophets and the children were omens of the future of the nation. The children were babes at the time. Therefore, the unity which existed between Isaiah and the children was that which existed between every father and his children. The writer uses this unity as an illustration of the close unity between the Lord Jesus and the believers, whom He calls brethren.

Isaiah 8:18: *Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.*

HIS HUMANITY ENABLED HIM TO DISARM SATAN AND DELIVER US FROM DEATH Verses 14-16

The children of Verse 14 refer to human beings, the subjects of redemption that is in Jesus Christ. The word "partakers" is from the Greek word "koinoneo" which means "to have a share in common with someone else." The individuals of the human race have something in common with one another, flesh, and blood.

The words "took part of" are the translation of a different word from the word translated "partakers." It is "metecho" and is made up of "echo" meaning to hold and "meta" meaning with, thus, "to hold with." Our Lord took hold of human nature without its sin in the incarnation and held it to Himself as an additional nature, thus associating Himself with the human race in its possession of flesh and blood. He took to Himself something with which by nature He had nothing in common. Human beings possess a human nature in common with one another. The Son of God united with Himself something that was not nature to Him. Westcott says that "Koinonia" (partakers) marks the characteristic sharing of the common fleshly nature as it pertains to the human race at large, where as "metecho" (took part of) speaks of the unique fact of the incarnation as a voluntary acceptance of humanity.

The reason the Lord Jesus became incarnate was that He might die. The reason He needed to die was that through dying and raising Himself out from under death, He might break the power of death and break the power of the one who has the power of death. The term "destroy" comes from a Greek word which means "to bring to naught, to render inoperative, to make of none effect." Satan was not annihilated at the cross. His power was broken. Spiritual death cannot hold the

person who puts his faith in the Savior. Physical death cannot keep his body in the grave. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus provides the believer with eternal life and his body with glorification at the rapture. Jesus conquered death and brought the devil to naught. Satan had the power of death, not in the sense that he had power over death, but that he had the sovereignty or dominion of death. He had a sovereignty of which death is the realm. (John 8:44). The Greek word used here for "power" is "kratos" and means "power in the sense of dominion." His dominion over the human race was in the form of death. That dominion is now broken.

John 8:44: *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

In verse 15, the word "deliver" (Greek *apallasso*) means "to release." Our Lord, through His death, made possible for the believing sinner to be released from the grip that death had on him. The word "subject" (Greek *enchoi*) means "to hold in." The idea is that death held sinners in bondage.

In verse 16, the words "he took" (Greek *epilambanetai*—PMI verb) means "to take, lay hold of, take possession of." By a metaphor drawn from laying hold of another to rescue him from peril, the word came to mean "to lay hold of for the purpose of helping."

The idea here is that the Lord Jesus, in His work at Calvary, did not provide the salvation for fallen angels. But He did provide salvation for fallen human beings. In perfect righteousness, He passed by fallen angels, and in His infinite mercy and condescension, stooped to provide salvation for man. Jesus did not take on Himself the nature of angels to save fallen angels. When He became a man, it was not just "man" in general, but He became a Jew, a part of the "seed of Abraham."

HIS HUMANITY ENABLED HIM TO BE A HELPFUL AND SYMPATHETIC HIGH PRIEST TO HIS PEOPLE Verse 17-18

Jesus, the Son of man, can identify with mankind. Being pure spirits who have never suffered, the angels cannot identify with us in our weaknesses and needs. But Jesus can! While here on earth, Jesus was "made like unto His brethren" in that He experienced the sinless infirmities of human nature. He knew what it was to be a helpless baby, a growing child, a maturing adolescent. He knew the experiences of weariness, hunger, and thirst. (John 4:6-8). He knew what it was to be despised and rejected and to be lied about and falsely accused. He experienced physical suffering and death. All of this was a part of His "training" for His heavenly ministry as High Priest.

John 4:6-8: *6Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)*

Jesus Christ is both merciful and faithful. The Greek word for "merciful" speaks of that "feeling of sympathy with the misery of another that leads one to act in his behalf to relieve the misery." The idea is that of a compassionate heart leading one to acts of mercy, the purpose of which is to

relieve the suffering and misery of the object of that compassion. The idea of a compassionate Priest would be welcomed by the Jewish readers of this letter, who knew the lack of sympathy shown by the Aaronic priesthood.

Jesus Christ is both merciful toward the people and faithful toward God. He can never fail in his priestly ministry. He made the necessary sacrifice for our sins so that we might be reconciled to God. He did not need to make a sacrifice for Himself because He is sinless.

The words "in things pertaining to God" are a technical phrase in the Jewish language speaking of the function of worship. The particular service our Lord as High Priest rendered is given us in the words "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." The verb is "hiliskomai." Its noun form "hilasterion" is found in Romans 3:25, where it is translated "propitiation." In its Biblical usage, the verb refers to the act of our Lord offering Himself on the cross to satisfy the righteous demands of God's justice so that His government might be maintained, and that mercy might be shown on the basis of justice satisfied.

Romans 3:25: ***Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;***

Wuest's Expanded translation of Verse 17: "For this reason it was an obligation in the nature of the case for Him in all things to be made like to His brethren, in order that He might become a compassionate and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, with view to offering that sacrifice for the sins of the people that would perfectly meet the demands of God's justice."

But what happens when we who have been saved are tempted to sin (Verse 18)? He stands ready to help us! He was tempted when He was here on earth, but no temptation ever conquered Him. The word "tempted" (Greek peirazomai) refers first to the action of putting someone to the test to see what good or evil is in the one being tested, and second, because so many broke down under the test and committed sin, the word came to mean "a solicitation to do evil." (Matthew 4:8-9; Matthew 16:21-23; Matthew 26:36-46). The writer had in view the testing and solicitations to do evil that were associated with His suffering on the cross.

Matthew 4:8-9: ***8Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.***

Matthew 16:21-23: ***21From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. 23But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.***

Matthew 26:36-46: ***36Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called***

Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. 45Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

When Peter tempted Him to put away the cross, Jesus recognized Satan's hand in it all and withstood the temptation, choosing the way that pleased God, not man. In the Garden of Gethsemane, our Lord was a victor when He said, "nevertheless, not My will but thine be done." He chose death to self rather than disobedience to His Father's will. That is what Paul was speaking of in Philippians 2:5-8,10. In all temptations, the Lord Jesus stands ready to give aid to the sorely tried child of God. He understands all about it, not only in His omniscience, but also experientially, because He has experienced all this Himself. The word "succour" (Greek boetheo) means "to run to the cry of those in danger and bring help when it is needed." Angels are able to serve us (Heb. 1:14), but they are not able to succour us in our times of temptations. Only Jesus Christ can do that, and He can do it because He became a man and suffered and died.

Philippians 2:5-8,10: 5Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.... 10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

Wuest's Expanded translation of Verse 18: *"for in that which He suffered, having Himself been tempted, he is able to run to the cry of those who are being tempted and bring them aid."*

As our High Priest, the Lord Jesus is able to give us grace to keep us from sinning when we are tempted. If we do sin, then He is our Advocate Who represents us before the Throne of God and forgives us when we sincerely confess our sins to Him. (1 John 1:5-2:2).

1 John 1:5-2:2: 5This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the

truth: 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2:1, 2: 1My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Conclusion

Jesus, the Son of Man is better than the angels. His humanity enabled Him to regain man's lost dominion. His humanity enabled Him to bring many sons to glory. His humanity enabled Him to disarm Satan and deliver us from death. His humanity enabled Him to be a helpful and sympathetic High Priest to His people.

Do you know Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Are you walking in fellowship with Him?

Chapter Six

The Son Of Man Is Greater Than Moses

Hebrews 3:1-6: *1Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; 2Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. 3For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. 4For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. 5And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.*

Introduction

In Chapter 1, the writer showed that Jesus, the Son of God, is better than the prophets (Verses 1-3) and is better than the angels (Verses 4-14).

In Chapter 2, the writer showed that Jesus, the Son of man, is better than the angels. In this lesson, the writer began to show that Jesus, the Son of man, is better than Moses.

Next to Abraham, Moses was undoubtedly the man most greatly revered by the Jewish people. To go back to the Law meant to go back to Moses, and the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews were sorely tempted to do just that. It was important that the writer convince the readers that Jesus is greater than Moses because the entire Jewish religion came through Moses. In this section, the writer began to set forth proof of this fact.

By the use of the word "wherefore," the writer drew a conclusion from the preceding argument. Having shown that Jesus the Son is better than the prophets and the angels, he asked his readers to consider Him in relation to Moses. He called them "holy brethren". The word "holy," as used here, does not have a particular reference to a quality of life but to a position in salvation. The Greek "hagios," translated "holy," means "set apart for God." Therefore, the basic idea of the word is that of a "set-apart, separated position with reference to God." The term, "holy brethren" refers to the New Testament believers, the saints, the set-apart ones.

These brethren were also called "partakers of the heavenly calling." "Partakers" is translated from the same Greek word that is translated "fellows" in Chapter 1:9, and "partners" in Luke 5:7. The word speaks of one who is associated with others in a common task or condition. Here the word designates the saints as those who are associated with one another in a heavenly calling. This expression in Hebrews 3:1 speaks of the Church. Israel had an earthly calling and an earthly destiny. The Church has a heavenly calling and a heavenly destiny. There, the writer marked the Jews to whom he was writing as belonging to the Church as distinct from Israel.

Luke 5:7: *And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.*

Because these people were holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling, they were able to give the confessions of their faith in Jesus Christ. The word translated "profession" (homologia) could better be translated "confession." The Greek word means "to speak the same thing as another." Therefore, the idea is to agree with someone else or to say the same thing as another. The idea here is that the believer agrees with God the Father concerning the report of His Son He gave in the Bible. See 1 John 5:9-13. The word "profession" has within it the idea of bearing testimony to what one believes, but it does not have the idea of agreement with someone else on something and then testifying to one's faith in that thing.

1 John 5:9-13: *9If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

CHRIST AS THE SON OF MAN IS GREATER THAN MOSES IN HIS PERSON

Verses 1-2

It was not Moses who did all of this for the people. It was Jesus Christ! The writer did not exhort them to consider Moses but to consider Jesus. The word "consider" (Greek katanoeo) means "to consider attentively, to fix one's eyes or mind upon." The readers of this letter needed that exhortation. They were allowing their attention to relax so far as Jesus Christ and the New Testament were concerned, and their gaze was slowly turning back upon the Old Testament sacrifices. They were called upon to give careful consideration of Who Jesus is and what He has done.

That Jesus Christ is superior to Moses is an obvious fact. Moses was a mere man, called to be a prophet and a leader, while Jesus is the Son of God sent by God the Father into the world. The title "Apostle" means "one sent with a commission." Moses was called and commissioned by God, but Jesus Christ was sent as God's "last word" to sinful man. There are many verses in the Gospel of John where Jesus is referred to as "sent from God." See John 3:17, 34; 5:36, 38; 6:29,57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3.

John 3:17, 34: *17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved....34For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

John 5:36, 38: *36But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works*

which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.... 38And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

John 6:29, 57: 29Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.... 57As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

John 7:29: But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

John 8:42: Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 10:36: Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

John 11:42: And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

John 17:3: And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Jesus Christ is not only the Apostle, but He is also the High Priest. Moses was a prophet who on occasions served as a priest (Psalm 99:6), but he was never a high priest. That title belonged to his brother Aaron. In fact, Jesus Christ has the title of "great high Priest," Hebrews 4:14.

Psalm 99:6: Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

Hebrews 4:14: Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

As the Apostle, Jesus Christ represented God to men. As the High Priest, Jesus now represents men to God in heaven. Moses, of course, fulfilled similar ministries. He taught Israel God's truth, and he prayed for Israel when he met God on Mount Sinai, (Exodus 32:30-32). Moses was primarily the prophet of the Law, while Jesus is the Messenger of God's grace. John 1:17, "**For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.**" Moses helped prepare the way for the coming of the Savior to the earth, (Exodus 25:40; 34:20; Deuteronomy 34:10-12).

Exodus 32:30-32: 30And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

Exodus 25:40: *And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.*

Exodus 34:20: *But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.*

Deuteronomy 34:10-12: *10And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11In all the signs and the wonders, which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, 12And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel.*

The writer of Hebrews noted that Moses and Jesus were both faithful in the work which God gave them to do, Chapter 3:2. Moses was not sinless, as was Jesus Christ, but he was faithful and obeyed God's will. (Numbers 12:3-8). This would be an encouragement to those first century Jewish believers to remain faithful to Christ, even in the midst of the tough trials they were experiencing. Instead of going back to Moses, they should imitate Moses and be faithful in their calling.

Numbers 12:3-8: *3(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) 4And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. 5And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. 6And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. 7My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. 8With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?*

CHRIST IS GREATER THAN MOSES IN HIS MINISTRY Verses 3-6.

The word "house" is used six times in these verses. It refers to the people of God, not to a material building. Moses ministered to Israel, the people of God under the Old Covenant. Today, Christ ministers to His Church, the people of God under the New Covenant ("whose house are we," verse 6). There is an illustration of this dual use of "house" in 2 Samuel 7. David wanted to build a temple for God, a house in which God could dwell. But God told David that He would build David's house (household) or family and make a covenant with David descendants.

The contrast between Moses and Jesus Christ is clear. Moses was a servant in the house, while Jesus Christ is the Son over the house. Moses was a member of the household, but Jesus built the house. This truth is a powerful argument for the deity of Jesus Christ. If God built all things, and Jesus Christ built God's house, then Jesus Christ must be God.

There is another factor in Christ's superiority over Moses. The Prophet Moses spoke about things

to come, but Jesus Christ brought the fulfillment of these things. Vs 5-6. Moses ministered "in the shadows" as it were (Hebrews 8:5; 10:1), while Jesus Christ brought the full and final light of the Gospel of the grace of God. Since Jesus Christ is better than Moses, the Testament which he inaugurated must be better than the one which Moses was instrumental in bringing before the people. The reason for this is that a superior workman turns out a superior product.

Hebrews 8:5: *Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

Hebrews 10:1: *For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

The Greek word translated "servant," (Vs 5), is not the usual New Testament word for servant or slave. This word "therapon" carries the meaning of "a voluntary servants who acts because of affection." At the beginning of his ministry, Moses was a bit hesitant and resisted God's call. But once he surrendered, he obeyed out of a heart of love and devotion.

The "if" clause of Verse 6 needs to be understood in light of the total context, which is Moses leading Israel out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. The writer is not suggesting that we, as Christians, must keep ourselves saved. This would contradict the major themes of the book, which is the finished work of Jesus Christ, and His heavenly ministry guarantees our eternal salvation (Hebrews 7:14 ff). The writer was affirming that those who hold fast their confidence and hope are proving that they are truly born again. The writer proposed to his readers a test whereby they could tell whether the really belonged to the house of God or not, that is, whether they were really saved or not. If those Jews to whom he wrote, held fast their confidence and the rejoicing of their professed hope in Jesus Christ firm unto the end of their lives, that fact showed that they belonged to the house of God, that is, they were saved, (cf. Matthew 13:1-23). If they renounced their profession or confession and returned to the system of Levitical sacrifices, that would show that they were never saved. It is not the retention of salvation or staying saved that is in question here, but the possession of salvation is the question. Verse 6 does not say, "whose house will we continue to be" but "whose house are we." The subject of the security of the believer is not in view here.

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

Matthew 13:1-23: *1The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered*

away. 7And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. 18Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The word "confidence" (Greek *parresian*) means "freedom of speech, openness." The idea is one of boldness and confidence which are exhibited in freedom of speech, the unreserved, unfettered flow of language which is opposed to fear, ambiguity, and reserve. When you are free to speak, then there is no fear, and you have confidence. A believer can come boldly (same word as confidence) to the "throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16) with openness and freedom and not be afraid.

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

We have this boldness because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19). Therefore, we should not have confidence in ourselves because we are too prone to fail, but we should have confidence in Jesus Christ Who never fails.

Hebrews 10:19: *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*

Because of this confidence in Christ and this confession of Christ, we can experience joy and hope (Verse 6). The writer exhorted those suffering saints to enjoy their spiritual experience and not simply endure it. Jesus Christ is the beloved Son over His house, and He will care for each member of the family. He is the faithful High Priest who provides all the grace we need for each demand of life. As the Great Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20-21), Jesus Christ is using the experience in His people's lives to equip them for service that will glorify His name.

Hebrews 13:20-21: 20Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In other words, those who have trusted Jesus Christ prove this confession by their steadfastness, confidence, and joyful hope. They are not burdened by the past or threatened by the present, but they are living for the future as they await the "blessed hope" of their Lord's return. It is this "heavenly calling" that motivates the believers to keep on living for the Saviour, even when the going is tough.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ as the Son of Man is greater than Moses. It was Jesus Christ, not Moses, who provided salvation and eternal life. Moses was called to be a prophet and a leader, but Jesus Christ is the Son of God Who was sent by the Father into the world. Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest Who represents believers before God the Father. The Prophet Moses spoke about things to come, but Jesus brought fulfillment to these things. Living according to our confession is proof that we are believers, children of God.

Do you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour? Does your life let others know that you belong to Him?

Chapter Seven

Christ Is Greater Than Moses And Joshua In The Rest He Gives

Hebrews 3:7-4:13: *7Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? 18And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.... 1Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

Introduction

All of us know how important it is for us to get physical rest. We cannot function at our best if we do not get enough rest. When we are sick, physical rest is necessary for us to get better.

Just as rest is important for us physically, rest is also necessary for us spiritually. In the verses of our lesson, the writer talked about rest. He showed that Jesus gives a better rest than did Moses and Joshua.

In addition to showing how Jesus is better than Moses and Joshua in the rest He gives, this section also issues a warning. The first warning in the book of Hebrews was concerning the danger of drifting from the Word because of neglect (Hebrews 2:1-4). In this portion of Scripture, the writer explained the danger of doubting and disbelieving the Word because of hardness of the heart. It is important that we understand the background of this section, which is the exodus of Israel from Egypt and their experience of unbelief in the wilderness.

The word "wherefore" reaches back into the letter to the preceding arguments. In view of the fact that Jesus Christ is better than the prophets, the angels, and Moses, the warning is not to harden their hearts in renouncing their professed faith in Jesus Christ and in returning to the sacrifices.

THE SPIRITUAL LESSONS IN THE GEOGRAPHY OF ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCES

To understand these verses, we must understand that there are spiritual lessons in the geography of Israel's experiences. The nation's bondage in Egypt is an illustration of a sinner's bondage in this world. Just as Israel was delivered from Egypt by the blood of the lambs and the power of God, even so a sinner who believes on Christ is delivered from the bondage of sin by the blood of the Lamb of God. Colossians 1:13-14, "**(God the Father) who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins...**" Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God" whose death, burial, and resurrection have made our deliverance from sin a reality.

It was not God's will that Israel remain either in Egypt or in the wilderness. His desire was the people enter their glorious inheritance in the land of Canaan. But when Israel got to the border of their inheritance, they delayed because they doubted the promise of God (Numbers 13-14). "We are not able," wept the ten spies and the people. "We are able with God's help," cried Joshua and Caleb. Because the people went backward in unbelief instead of forward by faith, they missed their inheritance and died in the wilderness. It was the new generation that possessed the land and entered into their rest.

What does Canaan represent to us as Christians today? It represents our spiritual inheritance in Christ (Ephesians 1:3, 11,15-23).

Ephesians 1:3, 11,15-23: 3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:...11In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:...15Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is

the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

It is unfortunate that some of our hymns and gospel songs use Canaan as a picture of heaven and "Crossing the Jordan" as a picture of death. Since Canaan was a place of battles, and even of defeats, it is not an illustration of heaven. Israel had to cross the river by faith, which is a picture of the believer as he dies to self and the world (Romans 6) and claims the inheritance by faith. They had to step out by faith (Joshua 1:3) and claim the land for themselves, just as believers today must do. Canaan is NOT a picture of heaven but a picture of being in the place of God's will, serving God, being blessed of God, and being tested as we serve God.

Joshua 1:3: Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.

Now we can understand that the wilderness wanderings represent the experiences of believers who will not claim their spiritual inheritances in Christ and who doubt God's Word and live in restless unbelief. To be sure, God is with them as He was with Israel, but they do not enjoy the fullness of God's blessing. They are "out of Egypt" but they are not yet "in Canaan."

THE REST

Let us consider the meaning of the word "rest." The "rest" of Chapter 3:11, 18; Chapter 4:1, 3, 5, 8, 11 is the Greek word "katapausis." It denotes a cessation, as from work, pain, travel, trials; a causing to cease, or a putting to rest. The "rest" of Chapter 4:9 is the Greek word "sabbatismos" and indicates a Sabbath festal celebration, a holy keeping of Sabbath. It indicates the rest of the first word and considerably more.

Consider the kinds of rest. God's Sabbath rest (Chapter 4:4; Genesis 2:2). This speaks of when God ceased from His creation activities. The Sabbath rest is a picture of our rest in Christ through salvation (Matthew 11:28). This gives the believer rest from the guilt and burden of sin (Romans 8:2; Hebrews 9:13-14). The believer has rest full in Christ's work for him, with a conscience cleansed by Christ's blood from legal works or from hoping in the flesh providing anything.

Genesis 2:2: And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

Matthew 11:28: Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Romans 8:2: ***For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.***

Hebrews 9:13-14: ***13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?***

Look at Israel's rest in Canaan (Chapter 3:11, 18-19). The Canaan rest is a picture of our present rest as we claim our inheritance in Christ. This is the rest of submission.

Deuteronomy 12:9-11, ***"For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety; Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause His name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD."***

Joshua 21:43-45: ***43And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. 44And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he sware unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.***

The future rest (Chapter 4:9). This rest will be the rest in heaven. The word "rest" comes from the Greek word "sabbatismos." This is the only place where this word is used. When the saints enter Heaven, it will be like sharing God's great Sabbath rest with all labors and battles ended. Revelation 14:13, ***"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."*** "Rest"—"anapauo"—to rest up, to pause, to cease from labor; to cause to rest up; to cause to cease from labor.

The three rests may be described in the following way.

- a. PAST. God's Sabbath rest Israel's Canaan rest
- b. PRESENT. Salvation rest Submissive rest (victory in Jesus)
- c. FUTURE Heaven

THE THREE-FOLD WARNING

Let us take heed (Hebrews 3:7-19).

Hebrews 3:7-19: ***7Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his***

voice, 8Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? 18And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The writer called upon his readers to take heed to the sad history of Israel and the important lessons it teaches. The writer quotes from Psalm 95:7-11, which records God's response to Israel's tragic spiritual condition. God had delivered His people from Egypt and had cared for them, revealing His power in many signs and wonders. Israel saw all of this and benefited from it, but the experience did not bring them closer to God nor make them trust Him more. All that God did for them did not benefit them spiritually. In fact, just the opposite took place. They harden their hearts against God. They put God to the test, and He did not fail them. Yet they failed Him (Hebrews 3:7-9).

Psalm 95:7-11: 7For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, 8Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. 10Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: 11Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

The heart of every problem is a problem in the heart. The people of Israel, except Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, erred in their hearts (Chapter 3:10), which means their hearts wandered from God and His Word. They also had evil hearts of unbelief (Chapter 3:12). They did not believe that God would give them the victory in Canaan. They had seen God perform great signs in Egypt. Yet they doubted He was adequate for the challenge of Canaan.

When a person has an erring heart and an unbelieving heart, the result will also be a hard heart. This is a heart that is insensitive to the Word and work of God. So hard was the hearts of Israel that they wanted to return to Egypt. Of course, all of this history spoke to the hearts of the readers of this letter because they were in danger of "going back" themselves.

God's judgment fell on Israel in the wilderness at Kadesh-barnea. That entire congregation was condemned to physical death, and only the new generation would enter the land (Chapter 3:10-

11). But what message does this bring to the believer today? No believer, Jew, or Gentile could go back to the Mosaic legal system since the temple was gone and there was no priesthood. But every believer is tempted to give up his confession of Christ and go back into the world system's life of compromise and bondage. This is especially true during times of persecution and suffering. The fires of persecution have always purified the Church because suffering separates true believers from the counterfeit. True believers are willing to suffer for Christ, and they hold firmly to their convictions and their confessions of faith (Chapter 3:6, 14). We are not saved by holding to our confession. The fact that we hold to our confession is proof that we are God's children.

The sin of Israel is stated in Verse 12: "departing from the living God." The Greek word gives us the English word "apostasy." This is the only place in Hebrews where this word is used. Does "apostasy," departing from the living God, mean abandoning one's faith and therefore being condemned forever? That does not fit into the context. Israel departed from the living God by refusing God's will for their lives and stubbornly wanting to go their own way back to Egypt. God did not permit them to return to Egypt. Rather, He disciplined them in the wilderness. God did not allow them to return to bondage.

The emphasis in Hebrews is that true believers have an eternal salvation because they trust a living Savior Who constantly intercedes for them. But the writer is careful to point out that this confidence is no excuse for sin. God disciplines His children. REMEMBER that Canaan is not a picture of heaven but of the believer's present spiritual inheritance in Christ. Believers who doubt God's Word and rebel against Him do not miss heaven, but they do miss out on the blessings of their inheritance and fellowship today. They also suffer the chastening of God.

NOTE: Both Moses and Aaron are spoken of as being children of God and are in heaven. But both of them died in the wilderness and did not enter Canaan. Yet they were saved.

Let us fear (Hebrews 4:1-8).

Hebrews 4:1-8: 1Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

Believers today may enter and enjoy their spiritual inheritance (the abundant life, John 10:10) in Christ. We must be careful lest we fail to believe God's Word, because it is only as the Word is "mixed with faith" that it can accomplish its purposes. The argument is given in several

propositions.

John 10:10: ***The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.***

God finished His work and rested. His rest had been available since creation. The Jews failed to enter into their rest. Many years later (Psalm 95:7-11) God said that a rest was still available. That "today" is still here. This means that Joshua did not lead Israel into the true or perfect rest, because a rest remains. (Note that the name "Jesus" in Chapter 4:8, KJV ought to read "Joshua." "Jesus" is the Greek form of "Joshua.")

Psalm 95:7-11: ***7For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, 8Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. 10Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: 11Unto whom I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.***

The Canaan rest for Israel is a picture of the spiritual rest we find in Christ when we surrender to Him. When we come to Christ by faith, we find salvation rest, (Matthew 11:28). When we yield and learn from Him and obey Him by faith, we enjoy submission rest, (Matthew 11:29-30). The first is "peace with God." (Romans 5:1). The second is the "peace of God." (Philippians 4:6-8). It is by believing that we enter into rest. (Hebrews 4:3). It is by obeying by faith and surrendering to his will that His rest enters us.

Matthew 11:28: ***Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.***

Matthew 11:29, 30: ***29Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.***

Romans 5:1: ***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:***

Philippians 4:4-6: ***4Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.***

The hearer of the word will die in his sins if he fails to put his faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior, just as the wilderness wanderers died a physical death because of unbelief. (Hebrews 3:15-4:8).

Hebrews 3:15-4:8: ***15While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16For some, when they had heard, did***

provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief....1Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

Let us labor (Hebrews 4:9-13).

Hebrews 4:9-13: 9There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

"Labor" comes from a Greek word which means "to speed, to make haste, as manifested in diligence, earnestness, or zeal; to give diligence, be in diligence. Verse 11 could be rendered, "Let us give diligence to enter into rest." OR "Let us be eager to enter into that rest."

Diligence is the opposite of "drifting." (Chapter 2:1-4). We give diligence by paying close attention to the Word of God and by ready to obey at once the Word of God by faith (Colossians 3:1-3). Israel did not believe God's Word; therefore, the rebels fell in the wilderness. Believers cannot be out of fellowship with God and still prove by their works that they are saved.

Romans 10:17: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

In comparing the Word of God to a sword (Chapter 4:12), the writer is not suggesting that God uses His Word to slaughter saints. It is true that the Word cuts to the heart of the sinner with conviction (Acts 5:33; 7:54), and the Word defeats Satan (Ephesians 6:17). The Greek word translated "sword" means a short sword or dagger. The emphasis is on the power of the Word to penetrate and expose the inner heart of a person. The word is a "discerner" or critic (kritikos— one

who is able to judge. The Israelites criticized God's Word instead of allowing the Word to judge them. Consequently, they lost their inheritance.

Acts 5:33: *When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.*

Acts 7:54: *When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.*

Ephesians 6:17: *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

Of course, God sees our hearts (Chapter 4:13); but we do not always know what is there (Jeremiah 17:9). God uses the Word to enable us to see the sin and unbelief in our own hearts. The Word exposes our hearts; and then, if we trust God, the Word enables our hearts to obey God and claim His promises. This is why each believer should be diligent to apply himself to hear and heed God's Word. In the Word, we see ourselves as we really are. This experience enables us to be honest with God, to trust His will, and to obey Him.

Jeremiah 17:9: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

Conclusion

Before Joshua conquered Jericho, he went out to survey the situation, and he met the Lord Jesus Christ. Joshua 5:13-15. Joshua discovered that he was SECOND in command. The Lord had a sword in His hand, and Joshua fell at His feet in complete submission. It was this action in private that gave Joshua his public victory.

Joshua 5:13-15: *13And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? 14And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.*

We too claim our spiritual inheritance by surrendering to Him and trusting His Word. We must be aware of and evil heart of unbelief. It is a wicked thing not to believe God's Word. Therefore, while we are doubting God's Word, we are out of fellowship with Him, and this causes us to miss many blessings which God would give us if we would obey.

Chapter Eight

Jesus Christ Is Greater Than Aaron The High Priest Part I

Hebrews 4:14-5:10: *14Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need....1For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 7Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

Introduction

This text will be presented in two parts. Both parts have the same name and the same scriptural passage. This chapter will be Part I and next chapter will be Part II.

Moses did not lead the people of Israel into the promised rest. In fact, he himself was forbidden to enter the promise land. Joshua led them into their physical rest but not into the promised spiritual rest (Hebrews 4:8). But what about Aaron, the first high priest? Is it possible that the Aaronic priesthood, with all its sacrifices and ceremonies, can bring a troubled soul into this rest?

The Hebrew Christians who received this letter were sorely tempted to return to the religion of their fathers. After all, any Jew could travel to Jerusalem and see the temple and the priests as the ministered at the altar. When a person is going through persecution, as these Hebrews were, it is much easier to walk by sight than it is to walk by faith. Some of us have doubted the Lord under much less provocation than these people had.

The central theme of Hebrews is the priesthood of Jesus Christ and what He is now doing in heaven on behalf of His people. Is the high priest ministry of Jesus Christ superior to that of Aaron and his successors? The answer is "Yes"!

JESUS CHRIST HAS A SUPERIOR TITLE

Hebrews 4:14-16: ***14Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.***

Note verse 14, "*Seeing then (therefore) that we have a great high priest....*" Aaron was a high priest, but Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest. No Old Testament priest could assume that title. But in what does our Lord's greatness consist?

His person

Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Son of man. Jesus is both God and man, the God-man. He is Jesus Christ the Son of God (John 20:31).

John 20:31: ***Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.***

The name Jesus means Savior and identifies His humanity and His ministry on earth. Son of God affirms His deity and the fact that He is God. In His unique person, Jesus Christ unites deity and humanity, so that He can bring people to God and bring to people all that God the Father has for them.

His position

Aaron and his successors ministered in the tabernacle and temple precincts once a year entering into the Holy of Holies. But Jesus Christ has "passed through the heavens." Jesus Christ is now in the third heaven where He ministers on our behalf. The word "through" is the clue that opens up the truth here which shows that the Messiah is better than Aaron. Aaron, as high priest in Israel, passed through the court of the tabernacle, through the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies, where were all figures or types of the realities.

Exodus 25:40: ***And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.***

Jesus Christ, as the Great High Priest, passed through the heaven of clouds and air, the heaven of the stars, and into the heaven of heavens, the third heaven that is the abode of Deity. Since Jesus Christ passed through the realities of which the tabernacle was only a picture of the true, and Aaron passed through the things that were the types, Jesus Christ is better than Aaron.

Jesus is not only in heaven, but he is enthroned. His throne is "the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16).

The mercy seat on the ark of the covenant was God's throne in Israel (Exodus 25:17-22). But it could never be called a "throne of grace." Grace does not veil itself from the people.

Exodus 25:17-22: 17And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

The common people were not permitted to enter the holy precincts of the tabernacle and the temple. The priests got only as far as the veil. The high priest alone went beyond the veil, and went in only on the Day of Atonement (Levitus 16). But every believer in Christ is invited and is even encouraged to **"come boldly unto the throne of grace"** (Hebrews 4:16).

Jesus Christ is ministering mercy and grace to those who come for help. Mercy means that God does not give us what we deserve. Grace means that God gives us what we do not deserve. No Old Testament high priest could minister mercy and grace in quite the same way. When an Israelite was tempted, he could not easily run to the high priest for help, and he certainly could not enter the Holy of Holies for God's help. But as believers in Jesus Christ, we can run to our Great High Priest at any time, in any circumstances, and find the help we need.

Two important conclusions

There is no need in giving up our profession or actually our confession just because we are going through testing and trial (Hebrews 4:14, 15). (The word translated "profession" means "confession.") These Hebrew Christians were tempted to give up their confession of faith in Jesus Christ and their confidence in Him (See Hebrews 3:6, 14). It was not a matter of giving up their salvation, since salvation through Jesus Christ is eternal (Hebrews 5:8, 9). It was a matter of their public confession of faith. By returning to the Old Testament system, they would be telling everyone that they had no faith in Christ. Galatians 2:11-21. This kind of unbelief would only bring reproach to the name of Christ.

Hebrews 4:14, 15: 14Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 3:6, 14: 6But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we,

if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end....14For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Hebrews 5:8, 9: 8Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Galatians 2:11-21: 11But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? 15We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. 17But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

There is no need to go back because we can come boldly into the presence of God and get the help we need (Hebrews 4:16). No trial is too great, no temptation is too strong, but that Jesus Christ can give us the mercy and grace we need when we need it. When Jesus Christ ministered on earth in a human body, He experienced all that we experience, and even more. After all, a sinless person would feel temptation and trials in a much greater way that you and I ever could feel them. Christ was tempted or tested, yet He did not sin. He is able to help us when we are tempted. If we fail to hold fast our confession, we are not proving that Jesus Christ has failed. We are only telling the world that we failed to draw on His grace and mercy when it was freely available to us.

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

In Verse 15, the expression "touched with" comes from the Greek word "sunpatheo" which means "to suffer with another person, thus, to sympathize with him to the extent of entering into his experience and feeling his heartache." The use of the word here means more than knowledge of human infirmity. It points to knowledge that has in it a feeling for the other person by reason of common experience with that person.

Jesus Christ felt in His own consciousness the difficulty of being righteous in this world. He has felt pressing upon Himself the reasons and inducements that entice men to choose sin that they may escape suffering and death. In every part of His human constitution, Jesus has known pain and conflict with which alone temptation can be overcome. The one difference between our temptations and those of Jesus is that His were without sin.

JESUS CHRIST HAS A SUPERIOR ORDINATION

Hebrews 5:1, 4-6: *1For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:...4And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

No man could appoint himself as priest, let alone as high priest (Hebrews 5:4). King Saul invaded the priesthood and lost his kingdom (1 Samuel 13).

1 Samuel 13: *1Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. 3And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. 4And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. 5And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven. 6When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. 7And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 9And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. 10And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold,*

Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. 11And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; 12Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. 13And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 14But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee. 15And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men. 16And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: 18And another company turned the way to Bethhoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. 19Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears: 20But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. 21Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. 22So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. 23And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

Korah and his fellow rebels tried to make themselves priests, and God judged them (Numbers 16).

Numbers 16: 1Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? 4And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: 5And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he

shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. 8And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? 12And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: 13Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? 14Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. 15And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. 16And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow: 17And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer. 18And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. 19And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. 20And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 21Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? 23And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 25And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. 27So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. 28And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. 29If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. 30But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: 32And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. 33They, and all that appertained to

them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. 35And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. 36And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 37Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. 38The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. 39And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar: 40To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses. 41But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. 42And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. 44And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 45Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. 46And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. 47And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. 48And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. 49Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. 50And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

When King Uzziah tried to enter the temple and burn incense, God smote him with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16-23).

2 Chronicles 26:16-23: 16But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: 18And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. 19Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn

incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. 22Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write. 23So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

Aaron was chosen by God to be the high priest, and he was duly ordained and installed into office (Exodus 28).

Exodus 28: 1And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. 2And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. 3And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 4And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 5And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. 6And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work. 7It shall have the two shoulderpieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and so it shall be joined together. 8And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. 11With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD upon his two shoulders for a memorial. 13And thou shalt make ouches of gold; 14And two chains of pure gold at the ends; of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches. 15And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. 16Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. 17And thou shalt

set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. 18And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 19And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 20And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. 21And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. 22And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. 23And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. 25And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it. 26And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. 27And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 28And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod. 29And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. 30And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the LORD continually. 31And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. 33And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about: 34A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. 35And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not. 36And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. 38And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. 39And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework. 40And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them,

and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 42And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach: 43And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute for ever unto him and his seed after him.

Aaron was chosen from men to minister to men. For a priest to officiate on behalf of men, he must be taken from among men. A priest must partake of the nature of the person for whom he officiates. His work is to minister to men in things that involve man's relationship to God. This he does by offering gifts and sacrifices which God had appointed (Hebrews 8:3-4; 9:14). The word "offer" is the translation of "prosphero" which means "to carry toward or to." It was often used of the priest's bringing the sacrifice to the altar. The word gift (dora) refers to the gifts in general which the word sacrifices (thusias) speak of the blood sacrifices. These were for the sins of the individual. Unless the sacrifices were offered in the right place by the right person, they were not accepted by God.

Hebrews 8:3, 4: 3For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

Hebrews 9:14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Jesus Christ did not appoint Himself as High Priest. He was appointed by God the Father (Hebrews 5:1, 5-6). The quotation of Verse 5 is from Psalm 2:7. This verse was already quoted in Hebrews 1:5 and was used to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. But the emphasis of Hebrews 5:5 is on the priesthood of Jesus Christ, not on His deity.

Hebrews 5:1, 5, 6: 1For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:...5So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Psalm 2:7: I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

What is the significance of this quotation as it relates to this discussion of the Priesthood of Jesus? In Acts 13:33-34, the Apostle Paul quoted Psalm 2:7 and explained what it meant. Acts 13:33-34, ***"God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."*** The phrase "today have I begotten thee" does not refer to the birth of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem, but to His resurrection from the dead. The

Son of God was "begotten" into a glorious new life in His resurrection. He ascended to heaven in a glorified body to become our High Priest at the throne of grace. When Aaron was ordained to the priesthood, he offered animal sacrifices. But Jesus Christ, to become our High Priest, offered the sacrifice of Himself, and then He arose from the dead.

But God the Father not only said, "Thou art my Son" in Psalm 2:7, but He also said, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Hebrews 5:6 is a quotation from Psalm 110:4. When Aaron was ordained, God did not speak directly to him and declare his priesthood. But the Father did make this special declaration concerning His Son.

Two factors make Christ's Priesthood unique, and therefore His ordination greater than Aaron's. He is a High Priest forever. No Old Testament priest ministered forever because each priest died and relinquished the office to his successor. The word "forever" is an important word in this letter. At least six times the writer affirms that Christ's high priesthood is forever (Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28). Since He is a priest forever, He gives His people salvation forever (Hebrews 7:23-28). Christ's ordination is unique because He belongs to the order of Melchisedec. This is key concept in the book of Hebrews.

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

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

Hebrews 7:17, 21, 24, 28: *17For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec....21(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:.)....24But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood....28For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

Hebrews 7:23-28: *23And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

Melchisedec is mentioned in only two places in the entire Old Testament (Genesis 14:17-24; Psalm 110:4). His name means "King of righteousness." He was also "King of Salem." Thus, Melchisedec

was both a priest and a king. King Uzziah wanted to be both a priest and a king, and God judged him. Only in Jesus and in the pre-law Melchisedec were these two offices combined. Jesus Christ is a High Priest on a Throne.

Genesis 14:17-24: 17And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. 18And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. 21And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. 22And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Psalms 110:4: The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

The reason Jesus can be "a priest forever" is because He belongs to the "order of Melchisedec. As far as the Old Testament record is concerned, Melchisedec did not die (Hebrews 7:1-3). Of course, because he is a real man, he did die at some time, but the record is not given to us. So Melchisedec becomes a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who is a priest forever.

Hebrews 7:1-3: 1For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

But Melchisedec also pictures our Lord as a heavenly High Priest. Jesus Christ could never have served as a priest when He was on earth because He did not belong to the tribe of Levi. Jesus was born of the seed of David of the tribe of Judah. He became the sacrifice on earth that He might become the High Priest in heaven. All of the truths will be developed in Hebrews 7-10, but they are introduced here.

Conclusion

Jesus is greater than Aaron the high priest because He has a superior title. Jesus is the Great High Priest. Jesus is greater than Aaron the high priest because he has a superior ordination.

Believers have a Great High Priest upon whom we can call and receive mercy and grace. Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father. His Throne is now a throne of grace.

Jesus Christ gives eternal life to all who believe on Him.

Have you repented of sin and believed on Him for salvation?

As a believer, do you come often to the throne of grace in order that you may receive mercy and grace to help in time of need?

This concludes Part One of Hebrews 4:14-5:10. We will continue with Part II in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Nine

Jesus Christ Is Greater Than Aaron The High Priest

Part II

Hebrews 4:14-5:10: *14Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need....1For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. 4And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. 5So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. 6As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 7Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

Introduction

Since man is a sinner by nature, choice, and practice, he cannot approach the Holy God. He needs someone to represent him to God. In the Old Testament, God established the office of priest. He chose the tribe of Levi to be the priest for the nation of Israel. Aaron was selected by God to be the first high priest.

The writer sought to encourage the Hebrew believers to be steadfast in their faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He did so by showing the Jesus is greater than the angels, prophets, and Moses. In this section, the writer set forth the fact that Jesus Christ is greater than Aaron the high priest.

We have already seen two reasons why the writer stated that Jesus is greater than Aaron.

1. Jesus Christ has a superior title (Hebrews 4:14-16).
2. Jesus Christ has a superior ordination (Hebrews 5:1, 4-6).
3. In this chapter, we will look at two more reasons why Jesus Christ is greater than Aaron the high priest.

JESUS CHRIST REVEALS A SUPERIOR SYMPATHY

Every Old Testament high priest had to offer sacrifices for and administer to people who were "ignorant, and out of the way" (wayward or those being led astray) Hebrews 5:2). God made no provision but judgment for high-handed sins of rebellion (Exodus 21:12-14; Numbers 15:27-31). But He did make provision for people who sinned through ignorance or weakness. An Old Testament priest could identify with the sinner since he himself was a sinner. In fact, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest had to offer a sacrifice for himself before he could offer one for the nation of Israel (Leviticus 16; Hebrews 9:7).

Hebrews 5:2: *Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.*

Exodus 21:12-14: *12He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.*

Numbers 15:27-31: *27And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. 28And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. 30But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. 31Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.*

Leviticus 16: *1And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; 2And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. 3Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. 4He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on. 5And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. 6And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. 7And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. 10But*

the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness. 11And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself: 12And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail: 13And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: 14And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. 15Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: 16And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. 20And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 21And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. 23And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: 24And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people. 25And the fat of the sin offering shall he burn upon the altar. 26And he that let go the goat for the scapegoat shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. 27And the bullock for the sin offering, and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung. 28And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. 29And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the

tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you: 30For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. 32And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: 33And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. 34And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

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

The high priest after the order of Aaron did not always have sympathy for the people. Sin makes a person selfish. Sin can blind us to the hurts of others. Sin can harden our hearts and make us judgmental instead of sympathetic. Eli misjudged heartbroken Hannah and accused her of being drunk (1 Samuel 1:9-18). Eli's sons were guided by greed as they served as priest. Therefore, they were not very sympathetic to the people (1 Samuel 2:11-26).

1 Samuel 1:9-18: 9So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. 10And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 11And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. 12And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. 13Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 15And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. 17Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. 18And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

1 Samuel 2:11-26: 11And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest. 12Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 13And the priests' custom with the people was,

that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; 14And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. 15Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. 16And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force. 17Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. 18But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. 19Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. 21And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD. 22Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 23And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. 24Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress. 25If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. 26And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

It is the spiritually minded person with a clean heart who sympathizes with a sinner and seeks to help him. Galatians 6:1, ***"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*** Because we are so sinful, we have a hard time helping other sinners. But because Jesus Christ is perfect, He is able to meet our needs after we sin.

Our Lord was prepared for His High priestly ministry during His days of ministry on earth (Hebrews 5:7, 8). The phrase "in the day of his flesh" means in the days when He was on earth in a human body. From His birth to his death, our Lord experienced the sinless infirmities of human nature. He knew what it was to grow and mature (Luke 2:52). He experienced hunger and thirst, as well as weariness (John 4:6-8, 31). He also faced temptations to sin (Matthew 4:1-11) and persecutions from the hands of sinful men.

Hebrews 5:7, 8: 7Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Luke 2:52: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God

and man.

John 4:6-8, 31: 6Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)31In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

Matthew 4:1-11: 1Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. 3And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. 10Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 11Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

How could the Son of God "learn obedience"?

Hebrews 5:8, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

He learned obedience in the same way any son must learn obedience, and that is by the experiences of life. We must remember that our Lord, in His earthly walk, lived by faith in His Father's will. As God, He needed to learn nothing. But as the Son of man come in the flesh, He had to experience that which His people would experience, so that He might be able to minister as their High Priest. He did not need to learn how to obey because it would be impossible for God to be disobedient. Rather, as the God-man in human flesh, Jesus had to learn what was involved in obedience. In this way, He identified with us.

Philippians 2:5-8, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

This preparation involved the experience of death. In Hebrews 5:7, the writer focused on our Lord's experience in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46). As Jesus faced the cross, it was not

the physical suffering that burdened him, but the fact that He would be made sin and would be separated from His Father. Other servants of God have faced death and did not express such great emotion; but no other servant ever bore on his body the sins of the whole world.

Matthew 26:36-46: 36Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. 38Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. 45Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

In His prayer in Gethsemane, our Lord did not oppose the Father because He prayed, "**Not My will, but Thine be done**" (Luke 22:42). He was NOT praying to be spared from death but to be saved out of death. The Greek word translated "from" in Hebrews 5:7 is "ek" and means "out of or out from within". If the prayer of Jesus was that He might escape death, then His prayer was not answered because He died on the cross. Yet the writer declared that the prayer of Jesus was answered. Therefore, we know that at no time did He pray to escape death.

The cup for Him in Gethsemane included two things: That He was to be made sin for us, and That the fellowship between Father and the Son would be broken.

Matthew 26:39-42: 39And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Matthew 27:46: And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Jesus was praying for the resurrection from the dead, to be save out of or out from within death. God the Father answered that prayer. He had prophesied His own death and had made it clear that

He was laying down His life of His own free will. He also promised that He would take it up again (John 10:17, 18).

John 10:17, 18: *17Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

Psalm 22 is called a Messianic Psalm and presents the Suffering Savior. Verses 1-6 speak of His heart sufferings because of His abandonment by God the Father. Verses 7-13 speak of His heart sufferings because of the fact that mankind rejected Him. Verses 14-18 describe His physical sufferings. Verses 19-21 record His prayer for resurrection. Verses 22-31 record His thanksgiving for answered prayer.

Psalm 22:1-31: *1(To the chief Musician upon Ajeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David.) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? 2O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. 3But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. 4Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. 5They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. 6But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. 9But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. 10I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. 11Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. 12Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. 13They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. 14I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. 15My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. 16For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. 19But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. 20Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. 21Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. 22I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. 23Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. 24For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. 25My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. 26The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. 27All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. 29All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. 30A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. 31They shall come, and shall declare his*

righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

Hebrews 5:7 states that the prayer of Jesus "was heard", that is, answered by God the Father. Since Jesus did die on the cross, we know that His prayer was not to be spared from death. If He had prayed that prayer and the Father had answered it that way, then Jesus would not have been crucified. Jesus did not pray to be saved from death but out of death, and God the Father answered His prayer by raising Him from the dead.

No one else ever died the kind of death that Jesus died. He was made sin for us. 2 Corinthians 5:21, ***"For he hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."*** See 1 Peter 2:21-24. Men have died because of their own sins, but only Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. He experienced the ultimate suffering. Therefore, He is able to sympathize with His people when they are suffering.

1 Peter 2:21-24: ***21For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.***

The readers of this letter were going through difficult times, but they ***"had not yet resisted unto blood"*** (Hebrews 12:4). Their goods had been seized, and they had been ridiculed (Hebrews 10:32-34), but they had not been crucified and forsaken by the Father.

Hebrews 10:32-34: ***32But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.***

No matter what trials we meet, Jesus Christ is able to understand our need and to help us. We need never to doubt His ability to sympathize and to strengthen. It is also worth noting that sometimes God puts us through difficulties that we might better understand the needs of others and become able to encourage them (2 Corinthians 1:3-11).

2 Corinthians 1:3-11: ***3But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the***

law; 9Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

JESUS CHRIST OFFERED A SUPERIOR SACRIFICE

Hebrews 5:3, 9, 10: 3And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins....9And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 10Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

This topic has already been touched upon, and it will be discussed in detail in chapters 9 and 10. Let us note, however, the following things:

- Jesus Christ did not need to offer any sacrifice for Himself. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest after the order of Aaron first had to offer a sacrifice for himself. Then he could offer the sacrifices for the people (Leviticus 16). Since Jesus is the sinless Son of God, there was no need for Him to sacrifice for Himself. He was in perfect fellowship with the Father and needed no cleansing.
- Our Lord's sacrifice was once and for all, whereas the Old Testament sacrifices had to be repeated. The sacrifices of the Old Testament could only cover sins, but they could never cleanse sins. It required the sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God for sin to be cleansed and removed.

The word "perfect" in Hebrews 5:9 comes from the Greek word "teleios". The fundamental idea of this word is the bringing a person or thing to a goal fixed by God; completion, maturity. This verse speaks of Jesus Christ having reached the: end which was contemplated in his divinely appointed discipline for the priesthood. This consummation was reached in His substitutionary death on the cross.

Because He is the sinless, eternal Son of God, and because He offered the perfect sacrifice Jesus is the "Author of eternal salvation." The word author is the translation of the Greek "aitios" which means "that in which is the cause of our salvation." In His death on the cross, Jesus Christ is the cause of our salvation. His death is that from which our salvation proceeds. No Old Testament priest could offer eternal salvation to anyone, but that is exactly what we have in Jesus Christ.

Does the phrase "them that obey Him" of verse 9 suggest that if we do not obey Him, we may lose that eternal life or eternal salvation? The words "them that obey Him" are descriptive of those who are saved. They do not present the grounds of their salvation. "To obey" is the same as "to trust God.

"Them that obey Him" is descriptive of those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ. Acts 6:7, ***"And a great company of the priest were obedient to the faith."***

Romans 10:16, "*But they have not all obeyed the Gospel.*"

1 Peter 1:22, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love....*"

Once we have put our faith in Jesus Christ and thus obeyed His call, we experience eternal salvation.

Conclusion

We must conclude with the writer of this book that Jesus Christ the Great High Priest is superior to Aaron the high priest.

Jesus Christ has a superior title.

Jesus Christ has a superior ordination.

Jesus Christ reveals a superior sympathy.

Jesus Christ offered a superior sacrifice.

It would be foolish to return to the things which are inferior when they could have that which is superior. The Hebrew believers were tempted to go back to legalism because they were not going on to maturity.

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?

Are you growing spiritually or are you still a babe in Christ?

Chapter Ten

The Marks Of Spiritual Immaturity

Hebrews 5:11-14: ***11Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.***

Introduction

In the last section, we noted that the writer set forth the fact that Jesus is greater than Aaron as High Priest. Jesus Christ is the great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec instead of being after order of Aaron and this section emphasizes that since Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, He has taken away the types of it. This section consists of: A description of the spiritual status of the Hebrew readers; A warning not to go back to the fulfilled and done away sacrifices of the Levitical system; and An exhortation to put a heart faith in the New Testament Sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ.

These Hebrew readers are described as: Hard to teach and dull of hearing; Those who ought to be teachers but cannot teach; Those who are babes; Those who are enlightened; Those who had tasted of the heavenly gift and had been made partakers of the Holy Spirit; Those who had tasted of the Word of God and the powers of the age to come; Those who had been brought to repentance; and They are exhorted to put off once for all any dependence upon the Levitical sacrifices and to go on to faith in the New Testament Sacrifice (Hebrews 6:1).

Hebrews 6:1: ***Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,***

Hebrews 6:11, 12 summarize the main message of this difficult (and often misunderstood) section of this letter. Israel wanted to go back to Egypt; and as a result, a whole generation failed to inherit what God had promised. They were safely delivered out of Egypt, but they never enjoyed the promised rest in Canaan.

Hebrews 6:11, 12: ***11And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.***

Today, we believers can make the same mistake. If we keep in mind that the emphasis in this section is on making spiritual progress or reaching spiritual maturity, we will steer safely through misinterpretation that could create problems.

In this chapter, we will look at the marks of spiritual immaturity. The writer is about to begin his

explanation of the heavenly priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec, but he is not sure that his readers are ready for what he has to teach.

The problem is not found in any lack in the writer. The problem is in the spiritual condition of the readers. There were dull hearers! The word translated "dull" (Greek *nothros*) is the same word which is translated "slothful" in Hebrews 6:12. This word means "slow, sluggish."

DULLNESS TOWARD THE WORD OF GOD

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

These believers started on their "backward journey" by drifting from the Word (Hebrews 2:1-4) and then doubting the Word (Hebrews 3:7- 4:13). As a result, they were now dull of hearing. This refers to a condition of spiritual apathy and laziness that prevents spiritual development. These Hebrews were slow, sluggish, and numbed in their comprehension of the teaching of the New Testament truth. This made it difficult to teach them. The difficulty did not lie in the writer. It was in the readers of this letter. They were unable to listen to the Word, receive it, and act on it. They did not have the attitude of the Thessalonians.

1 Thessalonians 2:13, ***"For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."***

They had not always been in that condition, as shown by the word translated "are". The word which is translated "are" in Verse 11 is the same word which is translated "are become" in verse 12. It is in the "perfect tense" which speaks of completed action in past time with the results continuing into the present. These Hebrews had at one time a spiritual understanding of New Testament truth. That understanding was clear enough for them to see that the New Testament Sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ had fulfilled the Old Testament sacrifices, and therefore they had been set aside.

One of the first symptoms or marks of spiritual regression or backsliding is dullness toward the Word of God. Sunday School class is dull, the preaching of God's Word is dull, and anything spiritual is boring. Usually, the problem is not with the Sunday School teacher or the pastor but with the hearer.

INABILITY TO SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Verse 12a. ***"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God..."***

"Time" is from the Greek word "*chronos*", which means "time, duration, time in general, any time; the time in which anything is done," It speaks of the succession of moments, not a specific amount of time. Because of the length of time in which these Hebrews had been under the instruction of teachers presenting the Word of the New Testament truth, they ought to be teaching the same message.

The ability to share spiritual truth with others is a mark of maturity. Not all Christians have the gift of teaching, but all can share the Word and what they have learned from it. The recipients of this letter had been saved and taught long enough that they should have been able to share God's truth with others. But, instead of helping others to grow, these Hebrew Christians were in need of learning again the simple teachings of the Christian life.

The word "ought" is a word which speaks of moral obligation. It is translated from the Greek word "opheilo" and means "to owe, to be indebted; then to be bound, to be obligated to the performance of any duty." This word speaks of necessity imposed either by law or duty or by the matter under consideration. But they again have need that someone would teach them the fundamentals of the beginning of the utterance of God.

A BABY FOOD DIET

Hebrews 5:12b-13. ***"...and are become (have become) such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe."***

Milk is pre-digested food, and it is specially suited for babies. But the mature ones can enjoy meat. The writer defines milk as ***"the first principles of the oracles of God"*** (Verse 12). The meat of the Word is the teaching about our Lord's ministry now in heaven as our Great High Priest. The writer wanted to give them this "meat", but they were not ready for it. Milk is ideal for newborn babies.

1 Peter 2:1, 2: ***"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."***

Meat is from the Greek word "trophes" meaning "food" in general. Today in our English language, the word meat means the edible flesh of animals. When the King James Version translation was made, it meant food in general.

John 4:31-34, ***"In the mean while His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat (broma, food) to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat (broma, food) is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."***

Matthew 4:4: ***"But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."***

Jeremiah 15:16: ***Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.***

The milk of the Word refers to what Jesus Christ did on the earth—His birth, life, teaching, death, burial,

and resurrection. The meat of the Word refers to what Jesus Christ is now doing in heaven. We begin the Christian life on the basis of His finished work on earth. We grow in the Christian life on the basis of His work for us in heaven.

As believers, we can still learn much from our Lord's work on earth. BUT WE MUST NOT STOP THERE! We must make spiritual progress, and we can do this only if we learn about the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ for us in heaven.

Hebrews 13:20, 21: ***"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in very good work to do His will, working you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever."***

Babe comes from the Greek word "nepios", which means "a baby without the power of speech, an infant." Babies are ***"tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine"*** (Ephesians 4:14).

They glory in men (1 Corinthians 3:1-6).

1 Corinthians 3:1-6: ***1And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.***

They must have much sleep. Spiritual babes fuss over this and that, just as babes in the flesh fuss. They are quarrelers, dividers, and those who like a spoiled child want their own way.

UNSKILLED IN USING THE WORD OF GOD

Hebrew 5:13, 14: ***13For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.***

As we grow in the Word of God, we learn to use it in daily life. As we apply the Word, we exercise out "spiritual senses" and develop spiritual discernment. It is characteristic of little children that they lack discernment. An immature believer will listen to any preacher or teacher and are not able to identify whether or not he is true to the Scriptures.

The expression "useth milk" refers to an exclusive diet of milk. Mature individuals may drink milk, but it is not their total diet.

Unskillful is from the Greek "apeiros" which means "inexperienced or without experience."

Note the contrast between the babe and those of full age.

1 Corinthians 14:20: ***"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children (nepios, like an infant), but in understanding be men (telios, mature)."***

The ability to discern good and evil is a vital part of Christian maturity. The nation of Israel in Moses' day lacked this discernment and failed to claim their promised inheritance. The readers of this letter were in danger of making the same mistake. It is impossible to stand still in the Christian life. Either we go forward and claim God's blessing, or we go backward and wander about aimlessly.

The writer was urging his readers to go on to spiritual development or maturity. There was not such thing as perfection under the Law (Hebrews 7:19; Hebrews 10:1).

Hebrews 7:19: ***For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.***

Hebrews 10:1: ***For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.***

Those in Christ are not under the Law of Moses (Romans 6:14; Romans 7:4-6). They are saved and have a spiritual nature which is alive unto God. There is the "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus which has made them free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-4). See also Romans 10:1-4.

Romans 6:14: ***For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.***

Romans 7:4-6: ***4Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.***

Romans 8:1-4: ***1There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

Romans 10:1-4: ***1Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that***

they might be saved. 2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Conclusion

God wants believers to grow and mature spiritually (2 Peter 3:17, 18).

2 Peter 3:17, 18: 17Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. 18But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Immature believers have dullness toward hearing the Word. Immature believers have an inability to share the Word. Immature believers need a "baby food" diet, the milk of the Word. Immature believers are unskillful in using the Word.

What is your spiritual status? Are you mature or immature?

Chapter Eleven

The Call To Spiritual Maturity

Hebrews 6:1-12: *1Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3And this will we do, if God permit. 4For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Introduction

One of the things which the writer of this book desired for his readers was that they become spiritually mature. So far in this letter, we have noted that the writer has called attention to their lack of spiritual growth. In Chapter 2, he spoke of their drifting from the Word of God. In Chapters 3 and 4, he spoke of their doubting the Word of God. In Chapter 5:11-14, we looked at marks of spiritual immaturity. The writer pointed out that they were dull of hearing and hard to teach. Dullness toward the Word of God is a mark of spiritual immaturity. The Hebrew believers were also lacking the ability to share the Word of God. They had been saved long enough and had been taught the truth and ought to be teachers. But instead, they needed to be taught the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Therefore, they had become such that need a baby food diet and were unskillful in the word of righteousness.

In this section, the writer speaks about their dullness to the Word of God. In this chapter, we will look at the call to spiritual maturity. When a person is saved, he is a babe in Christ. But God wants him to grow and to mature. No one can escape coming into the world as a baby, because that is the only way to get here. But it is tragic when a baby fails to grow and mature. No matter how much parents and grandparents love to hold and cuddle a baby, it is their desire that the baby grow up and enjoy a full life as a mature adult. God has the same desire for His Children. That is why we are urged to "go on to maturity."

IT IS A CALL TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Hebrews 6:1-3: ***1Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3And this will we do, if God permit.***

If we are going to make progress, we have to leave the childhood things behind and go forward in spiritual growth.

1 Peter 2:1-3, ***"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."***

2 Peter 3:18, ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever."***

The term "leaving" speaks of a literal moving of an object from the vicinity of another. It contemplates an alteration in state from the viewpoint of the original situation. It means to move on from this point.

The phrase "let us go on" means let us be carried forward. It is God who enables us to progress as we yield to Him, receive His Word, and act on it. The "principles of the doctrine of Christ" or the "word of the beginning of Christ" had been accepted. Now they need to move forward to full growth.

Ephesians 4:13-15: ***13Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:***

Do not lay the foundation again (Verses 1, 2). Note three things. The foundation which these Hebrew believers had is about to be described. The laying of the foundation at the first was approved. The exhortation is not to be occupied with relaying the foundation but to press forward toward maturity.

The foundation

The writer lists six foundational truths of the Christian life. Repentance from dead works. Their consciences were to be cleansed by Christ's blood from dead works (Hebrews 9:13, 14; Deuteronomy 6:24, 25; Galatians 3:11, 12; Romans 4:6; Romans 10:2-4).

Hebrews 9:13, 14: ***13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an***

heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Deuteronomy 6:24, 25: 24And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. 25And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

Galatians 3:11, 12: 11But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

Romans 4:6: Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

Romans 10:2-4: 2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Faith toward God

To turn away from all ordinances and works and to rely upon God would have seemed presumption to them. Yet the Word of the beginning of Christ had taught them just that. This was because of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Galatians 3:24-26).

Acts 20:21: Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-21: 18Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, 21Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Galatians 3:24-26: 24Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Doctrine or teaching of baptisms

Those baptisms are John's baptism and Christian baptism. In Hebrews 9:10, the term translated "baptisms" is translated "washings". When they trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, they left all of the Old Testament washings behind because they were fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Laying on of hands

It was connected with the Old Testament sacrifices, the receiving of the Holy Spirit in the transition stage of the early Church, ordination, and bodily healing (a sign gift).

Resurrection of the dead

The history of the Hebrews held a belief of the resurrection of the dead, (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Job 19:25; John 11:21-26).

Isaiah 26:19: *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*

Daniel 12:2: *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

Job 19:25: *For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:*

John 11:21-26: *21Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*

Eternal judgment

Judgment is spoken of throughout the Bible (Daniel 12:2, 3; John 5:24-29).

Daniel 12:2, 3: *2And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*

John 5:24-29: *24Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26For as the Father hath life in himself; so*

hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The lesson in Hebrews 6:1-3 is clear. The foundation has been laid. You know your ABC's of the faith: Now it is time to move forward! Let God carry you along to maturity. These are also foundation to the Jewish faith. After all, our Christian faith is based on the Jewish faith and is a fulfillment of it (John 4:22-24; Luke 24:44-47).

John 4:22-24: 22Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Luke 24:44-47: 44And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

If the readers of this letter went back to Judaism in order to escape persecution, they would only be abandoning the perfect for the imperfect, the mature for the immature.

THIS PROGRESS DOES NOT AFFECT SALVATION

Hebrews 6:4-6: 4For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

There are several views regarding these verses. Let us note some of them.

One view is that the writer is warning his readers against the sin of apostasy, willfully turning one's back on Jesus Christ and returning to the old life. According to this view, such a person would lose his salvation and be lost forever. Those who teach that a person can lose his salvation also teach that such a person can be restored. But this passage (Hebrews 6:4-6) teaches the opposite. These verses show that "For it is impossible...to renew them again to repentance." In other words, if this refers to apostasy, once a saved person turns his back on Christ, he cannot be restored to salvation. Therefore, he is lost forever.

Another view claims that the people addressed were not true believers. This view states that the readers had cooperated with the Holy Spirit up to a point, but they were not actually born again. This view holds that they had tasted of the heavenly gift which gave them an impression of its character and quality. These Hebrews were like the spies at Kadesh-barnea who saw the land and had the very fruit in their hands and yet wanted to turn back (Numbers 13, 14; Hebrews 4:1-13). One of the pre-salvation ministries of the Spirit is to enable the unsaved, who come under the hearing of the Gospel, to have a certain appreciation of the blessedness of salvation. This view teaches that the Hebrews became participators in the Holy Spirit insofar as an unsaved person can do so, name in the sense that they listened as He led them step by step toward the act of faith. He had led them into the act of repentance. The next step would be that of faith. If they did not make that step, they would not be saved or brought to that point again.

A third view is that this sin (whatever it is) could be committed only by the Hebrew Christians in the first century, while the temple services were occurring. If so, then why did the writer connect this exhortation with the heavenly priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ and the importance of spiritual maturity? If what he wrote about cannot happen today, what is the motivation behind the exhortation?

It is probable that the writer is describing a hypothetical case to prove his point that a true believer cannot lose his salvation. His statement in Verse 9 seems to support this interpretation. **"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, thou we thus speak."** His argument runs like this: "Let's suppose that you do not go on to maturity, does this mean that you will go back to condemnation, that is, that you will lose your salvation. Impossible!

If you can lose your salvation: It would be impossible to get it back again. This would disgrace Jesus Christ. He would have to be crucified again for you, and this could never happen. Remember the writer is talking about spiritual maturity, not salvation. The writer was speaking of fruit of salvation, not the root of salvation (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 1 John 1:7).

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: **11For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**

1 John 1:7: **But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

NOTE SOME OF THE WORDS IN VERSES 4-6.

- Once (hapaz)—once for all. See Hebrews 9:26-28; 10:2, 10; 12:26-27.
- Enlightened (photisthentas—aorist Passive participle) having been enlightened.

- Have tasted (geusamenous—aor. Middle participle) having tasted for themselves, experience, partake of. Verses 4, 5. See Hebrews 2:9. Do not confuse the English word taste with this word. The English word means to test or take a small amount.
- Heavenly gift—salvation through Jesus Christ.
- Partakers (metochous) having in association with another; as substantive, a sharer with another. This word is translated "fellows" in Hebrews 1:9, partakers in Hebrews 3:1, and Hebrews 12:8.
- Were made (genethentas—aorist Passive participle) having been made.
- Shall fall away (parapesontas—aorist 2 Active participle) having fallen away. Not a future tense.

THIS PROGRESS RESULTS IN FRITFULNESS

Verses 7-10: *7For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

The illustration

The writer used an illustration of a field to remind his readers of our Lord's parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23) as well as the teaching about the fire testing our works (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). A field proves its worth by bearing fruit, as a true believer, as he makes spiritual progress, bears fruit to the glory of God. Note that the "thorns and briars" are burned, not the field. God never curses His own! Not all who hear the Gospel believe and are saved.

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23: *1The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9Who hath ears to hear, let him hear....18Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one,*

and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: 11For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

The crop of God's blessing pictured in Hebrews 6:7 is called "things that accompany salvation" in Verse 9. Not every believer bears the same amount of fruit, but every believer bears some kind of fruit as proof that he is a child of God. Some produce 30, 60, and 100 fold. This the fruit of Christian character and conduct produced by the Spirit as we mature in Christ. See Galatians 5:22-26.

Galatians 5:22-26: 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

The writer listed some of the fruit that he knew had been produced in their lives (Verse 10): Their and labor of love, their ministry to the saints, and their continuing ministry to the saints (1 Thessalonians 1:3-10; Revelation 2:2).

1 Thessalonians 1:3-10: 3Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 4Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye

turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Revelation 2:2: I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

These were some of the "things that accompany salvation." But the writer was concerned that they would rest on their achievements and not press on to full maturity and the enjoyment of God's rich inheritance (Philippians 3:12-15).

Philippians 3:12-15: 12Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

THIS PROGRESS DEMANDS DILIGENT EFFORT

Verses 11-12: 11And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

While it is true that it is God who "carries us along" to maturity (Hebrews 6: 1-3), it is also true that the believer must do his part. We must not be lazy ("slothful," the same word as "dull" in Hebrews 5:7) but apply ourselves to the spiritual resources God has given us.

We have the promise from God. We should exercise faith and patience and claim these promises for ourselves. Like Caleb and Joshua, we must believe God's promise and we must want to go in and claim the land.

Conclusion

It is not a sin to be spiritually immature if you have been recently saved. It is the will of God that each believer grow and mature spiritually. If we drift from the Word and doubt the Word, then we are not far from being dull to hearing the Word of God. Becoming spiritual does not affect our position of salvation, but it does affect our practice of our salvation. When we begin to mature, there will be evidence in the form of spiritual fruit.

God is calling every believer to spiritual maturity. What will you do with that call?

Chapter Twelve

THE BASIS FOR SPIRITUAL SECURITY

Hebrews 6:13-20: **13For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, 14Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.**

INTRODUCTION

The writer of this letter was fully aware of the difficulties which these Hebrew believers were facing. Yet, he sought to encourage them to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and not go back to their old way of worship. The writer wanted his readers to understand how much they had in the Lord Jesus Christ and how much God the Father had done for them.

The writer was also aware that many of them were babes instead of being spiritual mature. This fact was true even though they had been saved long enough to have matured. In this section, there is a call to spiritual progress. The foundation had been laid and accepted. They had the basics of the Christian faith and had been saved. Now it was time for them to allow God to carry them on to maturity.

The progress to maturity does not affect salvation. As they matured, they would not become "more saved" or "more secure in their salvation." This progress would result in fruitfulness. They were reminded that God was faithful to them as they matured and produced fruit. Hebrews 6:10 states, **"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and so minister."**

The progress to maturity demands diligent effort (Hebrews 6:11-12). While it is true that it is God who "carries us along" to maturity (Hebrews 6:1-3), it is also true that the believer must do his part. We must not be lazy (slothful, the same word as "dull" in Hebrews 5:7). We must apply ourselves to the spiritual resources God has given us.

In this chapter, let us look at the basis for spiritual security. The writer did not want anyone to misinterpret his call to spiritual maturity. Therefore, he ended this section with a tremendous argument for the assurance of salvation. All of us believers are not making the spiritual progress that we should. But we should never fear that God will condemn us to hell. The writer gave three arguments for the certainty of salvation of the true believers.

GOD'S PROMISE

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

God's main promise to Abraham is recorded in Genesis 22:16-18. In spite of Abraham's failure and sins, God kept His promise and Isaac was born. Many of God's promises do not depend on our character but on His faithfulness.

Genesis 22:16-18: ***16And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.***

The phrase "patiently endured" (Hebrews 6:15) is the exact opposite of "slothful" (Hebrews 6:12). The readers of this letter were being tempted to give up. Their abundance was running out. (See Hebrews 12:1, 2). "You will obtain and enjoy what God has promised if you diligently apply yourselves to the development of your spiritual life" is what the writer was teaching.

Hebrews 12:1, 2: ***1Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

Today, we believers have more of God's promises than did Abraham. So, what is keeping us from making spiritual progress? We do not apply ourselves by faith. To return to the illustration of the farm, the farmer does not reap a harvest by sitting on the porch looking at the seed. He must get busy and plow, plant, weed, cultivate, and perhaps water the soil. The believer who neglects Church fellowship, ignore his Bible, does not obey the truths he understands, and forgets to pray is not going to be very fruitful and reap much of a harvest.

GOD'S OATH

Hebrews 6:16-18: ***16For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:***

God not only gave Abraham a promise, but He also confirmed that promise with an oath. When a witness takes an oath in court, he is confronted with the words "So help me God." We call on the greater to witness for the lesser. None is greater than God, therefore He swore by Himself.

But God did not do this only for Abraham. God has also given His promise and oath to the "heirs of promise" (Verse 17). Abraham and his descendants are the first of these heirs (Hebrews 11:19), but all believers are included as "Abraham's spiritual seed" (Galatians 3:29). Our assurance of salvation is

guaranteed by God's promise and God's oath, "two immutable (unchangeable) things (Hebrews 6:18). We have a "strong consolation" or great encouragement (paraklesis, a calling near, a summons to one's side, hence, an encouraging) concerning the hope set before us. Hebrews is a book of encouragement, not a book of discouragement.

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

Galatians 3:29: *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

The phrase "fled for refuge" (Hebrews 6:18) reminds us of the Old Testament "cities of refuge" described in Numbers 35:5ff and Joshua 20. God appointed six cities, three on each side of the Jordan, into which a man could flee if he had accidentally killed someone. The elders of the city of refuge would investigate the case. If they determined that it was indeed manslaughter and not murder, they would permit the man to live in the city until the death of the high priest. Then he could return to his home. The members of the slain man's family could not avenge themselves so long as the man remained in the city.

We have fled to Jesus Christ, and He is our eternal refuge. As our High Priest, He will never die (Hebrews 7:23-25). Therefore, we have eternal salvation. No avenger can touch us because He has already died and is risen from the dead (Romans 8:31-34).

Hebrews 7:23-25: *23And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Romans 8:31-34: *31What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

GOD'S SON

Hebrews 6:19-20: *19Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

Our hope in Jesus Christ is like an anchor for the soul. The anchor was a popular symbol in the early church. At least sixty-six pictures of anchors have been found in the catacombs. Believers have but one anchor—Jesus Christ our hope (Colossians 1:3-5; 1 Timothy 1:1).

Colossians 1:3-5: *3We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the*

love which ye have to all the saints, 5For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

1 Timothy 1:1: *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;*

The spiritual anchor is different from the material anchors on ships. We are anchored upward, to heaven—not downward. We are anchored, not to stand still, but to move ahead. Our anchor is sure (Greek *asphale*—not falling, immovable, safe, secure). It cannot break. Our anchor is steadfast (Greek *bebaios*—firm, steady, steadfast). It cannot slip. No earthly anchor can give that kind of security.

The writer then clinches the argument. Our Saviour is our Forerunner Who has gone ahead to heaven so that we may one day follow (Hebrews 6:20). The Old Testament high priest was NOT a forerunner, because no one could follow him into the holy of holies. But Jesus Christ has gone to heaven so that one day we may follow.

CONCLUSION

The message of this section is: Believers must go on to maturity, and God has made it possible for us to do so.

If we start to drift from the Word (Hebrews 2:1-4), then we may begin to doubt the Word (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). Before long, we could become dull toward the Word (Hebrews 5:11-6:20) and become lazy hearers.

The best way to keep from drifting is "to lay hold of the anchor."

Have you trusted Jesus Christ to be your personal Savior?

Are you growing spiritually? Do you know your security in Jesus?

Chapter Thirteen

A SUPERIOR PRIESTHOOD

THE HISTORICAL ARGUMENT

Hebrews 7:1-10: *1For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; 2To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; 3Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter shows that the Priesthood of Jesus Christ, like that of Melchisedec, is superior to the priesthood of Aaron and the Levitical order and that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the type set forth in Melchisedec.

The writer picks up the subject of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec as was introduced in Chapter 5:5-10. After a pause in His discourse for a warning against dullness to the Word of God, the writer came back to the subject of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ in Chapter 6:17-20 and continued through Chapter 7. The connecting word between Chapter 6:17-20 and Chapter 7 is "for," which means "the fact is, in fact." The word translated "for" (Greek, *gar*) has a more extensive meaning than the English word "for," which expresses the reason, cause, motive, principle, etc. of what has been previously said.

The Jewish nation was accustomed to the priesthood of the tribe of Levi. This tribe was chosen by God to serve in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple (Exodus 29; Numbers 18). Aaron was the first high priest appointed by God. In spite of their many failures, the priests had served God for centuries, but now the writer has affirmed that their priesthood has ended. To defend this statement and to prove that the order of Melchisedec is superior to that of Aaron, he presents three arguments. He presents the historical argument, the doctrinal argument, and the practical argument. In this lesson, we will consider the historical argument: Melchisedec and Abraham.

MELCHISEDEC WAS BOTH KING AND PREAST

Verse 1: ***1For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;***

In the Old Testament economy, the throne and the altar were separated. Those persons who attempted to invade the priest's office were judged by God (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

2 Chronicles 26:16-21: ***16But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: 18And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. 19Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. 20And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. 21And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.***

Here is a man who had both offices—king and priest. Aaron never had that privilege. And it is important to note that Melchisedec was not a counterfeit priest. He was the "priest of the Most high God." Genesis 14:18-20, ***"And Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all."*** Therefore, the ministry of Melchizedek was legitimate.

HIS NAME IS SIGNIFICANT

Verse 2: ***2To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;***

The name Melchisedec means "king of righteousness." The word "Salem" means "peace."

Melchisedec was the "king of peace" as well as "king of righteousness." The ancient name of Jerusalem was Jebus. When Melchisedec was the king and priest of the city, it was called Salem. Psalm 76:1-2, ***"In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling place in Zion."*** When Jesus comes again, He will rule from David's throne in Jerusalem (Luke 1:30-33). Therefore, both Melchisedec and Jesus are kings of the same city.

Luke 1:30-33: 30And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Righteousness and peace are often found in Scripture.

Isaiah 32:17, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Psalm 85:10, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Psalm 72:7, "In His days shall the righteous flourish; and the abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

James 3:18, "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

Hebrews 12:11, "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless after it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

True peace can be experienced only on the basis of righteousness. If we want to enjoy "peace with God," we must be "justified (declared righteous) by faith," (Romans 5:1). Man cannot produce righteousness by keeping the Old Testament Law. Galatians 2:21, **"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."** It is only through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross that righteousness and peace could have "kissed each other" (Psalm 85:10).

MELCHISEDEC RECEIVED TITHES FROM ABRAHAM

Verses 2, 4-10: 2To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;...4Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

The word "tithe" means "one tenth." Under the Law, the Jews were commanded to give God one tenth of their crops, herds, and flocks (Leviticus 27:30-32). These tithes were brought to the Levites (Numbers 18:21ff) at the tabernacle and later at the temple (Deuteronomy 12:5 ff). If the trip was too long for transporting grain, fruit, or animals, the tithe could be converted into money.

Tithing did not originate with Moses. Abraham paid tithes long before the Law was given (Genesis 14:18-20). This practice was continued by Jacob (Genesis 28:20-22).

Genesis 14:18-20: 18And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Genesis 28:20-22: 20And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

HIS FAMILY HISTORY IS DIFFERENT

Verses 3, 4: 3Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. 4Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

Melchisedec was a man; therefore, he had a mother and a father. But there is no record of his genealogy (descent) in the Old Testament. This is significant because most great persons in the Old Testament have their ancestry identified. It was especially important that the priests be able to prove their ancestry (Ezra 2:62, 63; Nehemiah 7:63-65). Here the writer uses an argument from silence, but it is a valid one. No priest preceded Melchisedec, nor did any succeed him in his order.

Ezra 2:62, 63: 62These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. 63And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummim.

Nehemiah 7:63-65: 63And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name. 64These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were

they, as polluted, put from the priesthood. 65And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.

Melchisedec was not an angel nor some superhuman creature; nor was he an Old Testament appearance of Jesus Christ. He was a real man, a real king, and a real priest in a real city. But as far as the record is concerned, he was not born, nor did he die. In that way, he is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. Since there is no account of Melchisedec's death, as far as the record is concerned, it seems that Melchisedec is still serving as a priest and king. This another way in which he is like the eternal Son of God.

The application is clear. Neither Aaron nor any of his descendants could claim to be "without genealogy." They could not claim to have an eternal ministry. Nor could they claim to be both kings and priests like Jesus Christ.

MELCHISEDEC HAD AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE TITHES AND TO BLESS ABRAHAM

Verses 4-10: 4Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. 5And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: 6But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. 10For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

The greatness of Melchizedek is seen in the fact that Abraham gave him tithes after the victory (Genesis 14:17-24). Abraham acknowledged the authority of Melchisedec. In giving Melchisedec tithes and in receiving his blessing, Abraham affirmed the greatness of this King-Priest.

Aaron and the tribe of Levi were "in the loins" of Abraham, yet unborn. So, when their father, Abraham, acknowledged the greatness of Melchizedek, the tribe of Levi was also involved. The Jewish people believed strongly in "racial solidarity," and this is one of it. The paying of the tithes involved not just the patriarch Abraham but also the unborn generations in his loins.

God had made an everlasting covenant with Abraham, but this did not make Abraham better than Melchisedec (Verses 6-8). Abraham was blessed by Melchisedec who was better than he was. NOTE Verse 8: ***"And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth."*** The expression "men that die" refers to the Levitical priests. The expression "there he" refers to Melchisedec. Abraham, the less, was blessed by Melchisedec, the better.

CONCLUSION

Melchisedec is a type of Jesus Christ. He represents Him in several ways. He is king of peace and king of righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ is a King. He is righteous and He is made unto us righteousness. Melchisedec was a "priest of the most high God." The Lord Jesus is our Great High Priest. Melchisedec received tithes from Abraham. He had authority to receive tithes and to bless Abraham. The priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec is superior to the priesthood of Aaron. The Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the repenting and believing sinner.

Chapter Fourteen

A SUPERIOR PRIESTHOOD-

THE DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL ARGUMENT

Hebrews 7:11-28: *11If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. 20And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

INTRODUCTION

There are denominations today which either have not read the Book of Hebrews or do not believe it at all. The writer of this book has shown that believers have a superior priesthood, and Jesus Christ is our Great High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

The Jews had a priesthood after the order of Aaron, but that priesthood has ended. When Jesus died, rose from the dead, and ascended back to Heaven, He was High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. As such, Jesus is High Priest for both Jews and Gentiles. The priesthood of the denominations is neither after the order of Aaron nor after the order of Melchisedec.

In verses 1-10 of this chapter, the writer presented the historical argument that we have a superior priesthood. In this lesson, the writer presented the doctrinal and practical argument to show that the priesthood of Jesus is superior to the priesthood of Aaron. Therefore, the believing Jews had

not lost anything in receiving Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In fact, they had so much more in Jesus that there was no need for them to go back to the old priesthood.

THE DOCTRINAL ARGUMENT: JESUS CHRIST AND AARON

Verses 11-15: 11If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. 14For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. 15And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

In this section, the writer took his argument one step further beyond the historical argument. Not only is Melchisedec greater than Aaron, but Melchisedec has replaced Aaron. It is no longer "the order of Aaron" or "the order of Levi". It is forever "the order of Melchisedec." Why would God make such a radical change?

Because both the Priesthood and the Law were imperfect (Verses 1-14). The words translated "perfect" and "perfection" are key words in this book. (See Chapter 2:10; 5:9; 6:1; 7:11; 9:9; 10:1, 14). They essentially mean "completed, fulfilled." The Old Testament priest could not by their ministry complete the work of God in the heart of the worshipper. Chapter 7:19, **"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."** The animal sacrifices could not give any worshipper a perfect standing before God (Hebrews 10:1-3; Galatians 3:19-4:7).

Hebrews 10:1-3: 1For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

Galatians 3:19-4:7: 19Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 21Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise....

1Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

The Law of Moses made no provision for a priesthood from the tribe of Judah (Verse 14). Since our High Priest is from the tribe of Judah, according to His human ancestry, then there must have been a change in the law (Verse 12). The entire system of the Old Testament Law has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ and has been taken out of the way. Colossians 2:13-14, ***"And you, being dead in your sins and uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross."*** The believer has been set free from the Law (Galatians 5:1-6) and is dead to the Law (Romans 7:1-4).

Galatians 5:1-6: 1Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. 5For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Romans 7:1-4: 1Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

This new arrangement does not suggest that a Christian has the right to be lawless. "Free from the Law" does not mean "free to sin." Rather, it means that we are free to do the will of God. We obey, not because of the outward compulsion, but because of inward constraint. 2 Corinthians 5:14, ***"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."*** (See Ephesians 6:6). The indwelling Holy Spirit enables us to fulfill the "righteousness of the Law" as we yield ourselves to Him (Romans 8:1-4).

Ephesians 6:6: Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Romans 8:1-4: 1There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2For the law of the Spirit of

life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Because being imperfect, the priesthood and the Law could not continue forever (Verses 15 -19).

Verses 15 -19: 15And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. 17For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. 18For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. 19For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

The word another (Greek, heteros) in verse 5 means "another of a different kind." The Levitical priests were made priest by the authority of a temporary and imperfect law. Jesus Christ was made Priest by a declaration of God the Father. Since Jesus Christ is a Priest forever, and since He has a nature to match that eternal priesthood, he can never be replaced. The annulling (verse 8, disannulling) of the Law meant the abolishing of the priesthood. But nobody can annul "the power of an endless life." The Logic holds: Jesus Christ is a Priest forever.

The writer kept in mind the temptation his readers were facing to go back into the old temple system. This is why he reminded them (verse 19) that Jesus Christ has accomplished what the Law could never accomplish. He brought in a better hope, and He enabled us to draw near to God. To go back to Judaism would mean losing the enjoyment of their fellowship with God through Christ. The only hope Judaism had was the coming of Jesus Christ and that blessing these believers had already.

God's oath cannot be broken (Verses 20-22; Hebrews 6:13-20). No priest in the order of Aaron was ever ordained and established on the basis of God's personal oath. The Aaronic priests ministered "after the Law of a carnal (physical) commandment" (Verse 16). Their moral or spiritual fitness was not examined. The important thing was that a priest belonged to the right tribe and met the right physical and ceremonial requirements.

Verses 20-22: 20And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: 21(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

Hebrews 6:13-20: 13For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul,

both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Jesus Christ's heavenly Priesthood was established on the basis of His work on the Cross, His character (Hebrews 2:10; 5:5-10), and the Oath of God. ***"Thou art a Priest after the order of Melchisedec."*** (Verse 21; Psalm 110:4). Note the introduction of the statement: "The Lord swore and will not repent (change His mind)." The matter is finally settled and cannot be changed, (cf. Hebrews 6:13-20).

Psalm 110:4: ***The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.***

The presence of this oath gives the Priesthood of our Lord a greater degree of permanence and assurance. Jesus Christ is the "surety of a better testament (or covenant)" (Verse 22). The word "surety" (Greek, egguos—yielding a pledge, a bondsman, a surety) means "one who guarantees that the terms of an agreement will be carried out." Judah was willing to be the surety for Benjamin, to guarantee to their father that the boy would return home safely (Genesis 43:1-4). Paul was willing to be the surety for the slave **Onesimus** (Philemon 18, 19). Perhaps the nearest equivalent we have today is a bondsman who posts bail for someone under indictment and guarantees that the indicted person will appear in court to stand trial.

Genesis 43:1-4: ***1And the famine was sore in the land. 2And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. 3And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. 4If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food:***

Philemon 18, 19: ***18If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; 19I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.***

As the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5, 6), Jesus Christ is God's great Surety. Our risen and ever living Saviour guarantees that the terms of God's Covenant will be fulfilled completely. God will not abandon His people. Our Lord not only guarantees to us that God will fulfill the promises, but as our Representative before God, He perfectly meets the terms of the agreement on our behalf. By ourselves, we could never meet the terms; but because we have trusted in Him, He has saved us, and He has guaranteed that He will keep us.

1 Timothy 2:5, 6: ***5For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.***

The writer has given three reasons why God changed the order of the priesthood from that of Aaron to that of Melchisedec:

1. The priesthood and the Law were imperfect.
2. Being imperfect, they could not continue forever.
3. God had sworn by His Oath that the new order would be established.

Now, let us note a fourth reason.

Because, being men, the priest died (Verses 23-25). Not only was the priesthood imperfect, but it was also interrupted by death. There were many high priests because no one priest could live forever. In contrast, we have one High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who lives forever. An unchanging priest means an unchangeable priesthood, and this means security and confidence for God's people. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." (Hebrews 13:8). "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec" (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:21).

The fact that the unchanging Christ continues as High Priest means, logically, that there is an "unchangeable priesthood." (Verse 24). The Greek word translated "unchangeable" carries the idea of "valid and unalterable." Because our Lord's priesthood is valid and unalterable, we can have confidence in the midst of this shaking and changing world.

Note the conclusion stated in Verse 25. "**Wherefore** (because He is the ever living, unchanging High Priest) **He is able to save them to the uttermost** (completely, forever) **that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.**" The emphasis of this verse is on the fact that He saves completely, all who put their faith in him. Because he is our High Priest forever, He can save forever (2 Corinthians 1:9, 10).

2 Corinthians 1:9, 10: ***9But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: 10Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;***

Verse 25 speaks of Christ's work on the behalf of the saved, not the unsaved. The basis for this completed salvation is the heavenly intercession of the Saviour. The word translates "make intercession" simply means "to meet, to approach, to appeal, to make petition." We must not imagine that God the Father is angry with us so that God the Son must constantly appeal to Him not to judge us. The Father and the Son are in total agreement in the plan of salvation (Hebrews 13:20, 21). Neither should we imagine our Lord Jesus Christ uttering prayers on our behalf in heaven or repeatedly "offering His blood" as a sacrifice. That work was completed on the Cross once and for all.

Hebrews 13:20, 21: ***20Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

Intercession involves our Lord's representation of His people at the throne of God. Through Christ, believers are able to draw near to God the Father in prayer and also to offer spiritual sacrifices (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Peter 2:5). It has been well said that Christ's life in Heave is His prayer for us. It is what He is that determines what He does (Romans 8:26, 27).

1 Peter 2:5: ***Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.***

Romans 8:26, 27: *26Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

THE PRACTICAL ARGUMENT: CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER

Verse 26-28: *26For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.*

No matter how devoted and obedient the Aaronic priests were, they could not always meet the needs of the people. But Jesus Christ perfectly meets all of our needs. Verse 26, "**For such an High Priest became us**" means "He was suited to us or He was fitting for us." This means that He meets our needs completely. The emphasis here is on His sinlessness. Being perfect, He is able to exercise a perfect ministry for his people. Because of their sins, some of the Old Testament priests not only were unable to serve the people, but they actually abused them. This could never happen with Jesus and his people.

The Old Testament priests were 'set apart' for their ministry, so in that sense they were "holy." But they were not always holy in their character. They were sinners like the people to whom and for whom they ministered. "Harmless" (Verse 26) means "blameless." No Jewish priest could claim this distinction. "Undefiled" means "unstained." Again, only Jesus Christ can claim these characteristics. He is "separate from sinners," because His position (made higher than the heavens); but He is not separated from the people to whom He ministers. He is always available to us at His throne of grace.

Another proof of His sinlessness is the fact that our Lord never had to offer sacrifices for His own cleansing as the Levitical priests did. On the annual Day of Atonement, the high priest had to sacrifice for himself before he could sacrifice for the people. (Leviticus 16). There were also daily sacrifices offered as a part of the temple services, and if a priest had sinned, he had to bring a sacrifice for his own cleansing. (Leviticus 4:3ff; Exodus 29:38-46). But Jesus Christ offered just one sacrifice for our sins and settled the matter forever (Hebrews 9:23-28).

Leviticus 4:3: *If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering.*

Exodus 29:38-46: *38Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. 39The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even: 40And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil; and the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering. 41And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning, and according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an*

offering made by fire unto the LORD. 42This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. 44And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

Hebrews 9:23-28: *23It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

This is the kind of High Priest we need. We are prone to sin daily, and we need to be able to turn to Him for spiritual help. As our High Priest, Jesus Christ gives us the grace and mercy that we need not to sin. But if we do sin, He is our Advocate at God's Throne (1 John 2:1, 2). If we confess our sins to Him, He forgives us and restores us (1 John 1:9).

1 John 2:1, 2: 1My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

CONCLUSION

Believers have a superior Priesthood in Jesus Christ who is a priest after the order of Melchisedec. He has offered a superior sacrifice. He is superior because He is an unchanging Priest and is a Priest forever. He is a sinless Priest and is fitting for our need. Have you confessed that you are a sinner before God? Have you received His forgiveness?

Chapter Fifteen

THE BETTER COVENANT

Hebrews 8:1-13: *1Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 6But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

Introduction:

In Chapter 7, the writer presented the fact and proof that the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is superior to that of the Levitical order. But is there anything that can minimize this superiority? NOTHING! For He ministers on the basis of a better covenant (Chapter 8), in a better sanctuary (Chapter 9), and with a better sacrifice (Chapter 10). It is the better covenant that is the theme of this chapter. The writer presented three evidences for the superiority of this covenant.

IT IS MINISTERED BY A SUPERIOR HIGH PRIEST

First, the writer shows the superiority of Christ, and then says, "Since Jesus is superior, the covenant He ministers must be a superior covenant." This is not reasoning in a circle; for the conclusion is logical. A superior Priest could never minister on the basis of an inferior covenant. To change the illustration, the most gifted lawyer can do very little if the will he is probating is inadequate. It is unthinkable that our Lord would minister on the basis of an inferior "last will and testament."

The reference of the opening statement in Verse 1 is not to the things just discussed but to the matters to be considered. The word "sum" is the translation of the Greek word "kephalaion" which means "the chief point." It does not refer to the "sum" of what precedes but to the main point of that which follows.

His moral Adequacy. Verse 1b, "*We have such an high priest...*" This statement refers us back to Hebrews 7:2-28. Verse 26, "*For such an high priest became us* (was suited to us)...." The fact that Jesus Christ is morally perfect and yet identified with us in our needs and temptations makes Him superior to any other priest, past or present. Those of his readers who wanted to go back into the Old Testament priesthood would have to leave this suitable High Priest.

His finished work. Verse 1c, "*.. Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*" Today our Lord is seated because His work is completed. There were no chairs in the Old Testament tabernacle because the work of the priests was never finished. The blood of animals did not wash away sins nor cleanse the guilty conscience. It only covered sin until that day when Jesus died to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

John 1:29: *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

His enthronement (Verse 1c). Jesus Christ is not just seated. It is where He is seated that adds glory to His person and work. He is seated on the throne in heaven at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; 12:2). This enthronement was the fulfillment of the Father's promise to the Son. Psalm 110:1, "*Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.*" Not only did the high priest of Israel never sit down, but he never sat down on a throne. Only a priest "after the order of Melchisedec" could be enthroned, because Melchisedec was both king and priest (Chapter 7:1). He is now exalted as high as anyone could be (Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:5-11). Thus, the presence of a superior High Priest in heaven demands a superior covenant if He is to minister effectively to God's people.

Hebrews 1:3: *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*

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

Hebrews 12:2: *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Ephesians 1:20-23: *20Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23Which is his body, the fulness*

of him that filleth all in all.

Philippians 2:5-11: *5Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

IT IS MINISTERED IN A BETTER PLACE

Verse 2-5: *2A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

The tabernacle. Verse 2: *2A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

Jesus Christ is a "minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." This tabernacle in which He ministers is in Heaven. It is the true one of which the earthly tabernacle is a copy. The Lord made the tabernacle in which Jesus serves. Mankind had nothing to do with it.

The duties of the High Priest. Verse 3, 4: *3For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:*

A priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, the Messiah as High Priest must have gifts and a sacrifice to offer also and a sanctuary in which to offer them.

Since the Messiah was not a priest in the order of Aaron, He could not serve on earth. The Levitical order of priesthood was established by the law. Therefore, He would not be a priest on earth. We have seen this truth before in Chapter 7:1-15. Jesus is from the tribe of Judah, the kingly tribe, but the priests came from the tribe of Levi. Therefore, if Jesus Christ were still on earth, He could not function as priest. Since this is true, he must be a High Priest in heaven, because His is after the order of Melchisedec and not of the order of Aaron.

The type. Verse 5: *5Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was*

admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

A "type" is an Old Testament picture of a New Testament "truth." Each type is identified as such in the New Testament. Therefore, we must not try to make every Old Testament person, thing, or event into a type. (Greek tupos—type or pattern) The word "example" is the translation of the Greek word "hupodeigma" which refers to a sign suggestive of anything, an outline, a delineation, a suggestion, a copy. The priests then serving in the temple were actually serving in a sanctuary that was a copy (example) of the heavenly sanctuary. The word "shadow" is the translation of the Greek word "skia" which is an imperfect portrayal or representation of a thing, of a reality which it does not embody. A shadow has no substance in itself. It is merely proof of the fact that there was a real one, the heavenly one where God Himself dwells, where Jesus Christ ministers as the High Priest. The quotation is from Exodus 25:40, where it refers to the heavenly sanctuary. (See also Exodus 26:30; 27:8; Numbers 8:4). Moses saw this pattern on the Mount Sinai and duplicated its essentials in the earthly tabernacle. The Old Testament system was but shadows (See Colossians 2:10-17). The Law had but a **"shadow of good things to come"** (Hebrews 10:1). The true and full light came in Jesus Christ. So why would anyone want to go back into the shadows?

Exodus 25:40: *And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.*

Exodus 26:30: *And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount.*

Exodus 27:8: *Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.*

Numbers 8:4: *And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.*

IT IS FOUNDED ON BETTER PROMISES

Verses 6-13: *6But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their*

unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

The promise of God's grace (Verses 6-9). The emphasis of the New Covenant is on God's "I will." The nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai said, "**All the words which the Lord hath said will we do**" (Exodus 24:3). But they did not obey God's Words. It is one thing to say, "We will" and quite another thing to do it. But the New Covenant does not depend on man's faithfulness to God but on God's faithful promise to man. God led Israel out of Egypt the way a father would take a child by the hand and lead him. God gave Israel His holy Law for their own good, to separate them from the other nations, and to protect them from the sinful practices of the heathen. But the nation failed. "**They continued not in My covenant**" (verse 9). Romans 7:12, "**Wherefore, the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just and good.**" The problem is not with the Law, but with our sinful nature because by ourselves we cannot keep God's Law. The Law "**made nothing perfect**" (Hebrews 7:19), because it could not change any human heart.

The New Covenant is wholly of God's grace. No sinner can become a part of this New Covenant without faith in Jesus Christ.

The promise of internal change (Verse 10).

The Law of Moses could declare God's holy standard, but it could never produce the power needed for obedience. Sinful people need a new heart and a new disposition within. This is just what the New Covenant provides. (Ezekiel 36:26-27). When a sinner trusts Christ, he receives a divine nature within (2 Peter 1:1-4), and is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). This new nature creates a desire to love and obey God. By nature, sinful people are hateful and disobedient (Titus 3:3-7). But the new nature gives each believer both the desire and the power for a godly life.

Ezekiel 36:26, 27: 26A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

2 Peter 1:1-4: 1Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Titus 3:3-7: 3For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It is unfortunate that many Christians think they are saved by grace but then must live their Christian life according to the Old Testament Law. They want the New Covenant for salvation but the Old Testament for sanctification. The Apostle Paul had a phrase to describe this condition: "fallen from grace." (Galatians 5:4). Not "fallen from salvation," but fallen from the sphere of God's blessing through grace. We do not become holy people by trying to obey God's Law in our own power. It is by yielding to the Holy Spirit within that we fulfill the righteousness of the Law (Romans 8:1-4), and this is wholly of grace.

Romans 8:1-4: 1There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The promise of forgiveness for all (Verses 11, 12).

There is no forgiveness under the Law, because the Law was not given for that purpose. Romans 3:20, **"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin."** SEE Galatians 2:15, 16. The Law could not promise forgiveness to Israel, let alone to all mankind. It is only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that forgiveness is possible to all who call upon Him (Hebrews 10:1-3, 16-18).

Galatians 2:15, 16: 15We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Hebrews 10:1-3, 16-18: 1For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.... 16This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws

into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Hebrews 8:11 is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:31-34. It refers to that day when Israel shall be reunited with Judah (Verse 8), and shall rejoice in the promised Kingdom (Jeremiah 31:1-14). In that day, there will be no need to share the Gospel with others because everyone will know the Lord personally.

Jeremiah 31:31-34: 31Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Jeremiah 31:1-14: 1At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. 2Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. 3The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. 4Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. 5Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. 6For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. 7For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. 8Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. 9They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. 10Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. 12Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. 13Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both

young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. 14And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

What does it mean that remembers our sins and iniquities no more (Verse 12)? The phrase "remember no more" means "hold against us no more." God recalls what we have done, but He does not hold it against us. He deals on the basis of grace and mercy, not law and merit. Once sin has been forgiven, it is never brought before us again. The matter is settled eternally.

The promise of eternal blessing (Verse 13)

The new covenant brings eternal blessing. Jesus Christ is the Author of eternal salvation (Chapter 5:9), and eternal redemption (Chapter 9:12). The New Covenant has permanently antiquated the first or the Old Covenant, and it is of such quality that it will not need to be replaced

CONCLUSION

We have a Superior High Priest, who is Jesus Christ. He ministers in a better place, the heavenly tabernacle.

We have a better covenant, the covenant of grace.

Believers are saved by the blood of Jesus Christ and are given eternal life.

Do you have this life? Are you living for Him?

Chapter Sixteen

THE BLESSING OF A BETTER COVENANT

Hebrews 8:1-13: *1Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; 2A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. 3For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. 4For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. 6But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.*

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew believers. The writer instructed and encouraged them concerning the faith. They are told that they had the best system of faith, and they should not even consider going back to Judaism.

The writer has shown that believers have a better priesthood and a better covenant. Jesus Christ is Priest after order of Melchisedec and has a "more excellent ministry." He is also the "mediator of a better covenant which was established upon better promises" (verse 6). Jesus is ministering in a better sanctuary, the "true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man" (Verse 2).

A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE NEW COVENANT

The First or Old Covenant. It was mediated by Moses (Exodus 19; John 1:17). It was conditional (Deuteronomy 28). It could **NOT** produce the necessary righteousness (Hebrews 7:19; Hebrews 8:8; 10:1-4). It was written on stones (Exodus 32:15). It was temporary.

Exodus 19: *1In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. 3And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. 9And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. 15And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. 16And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. 17And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.*

John 1:17: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Exodus 32:15: *And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.*

The New Covenant

It was mediated by Jesus Christ, Hebrews 8:6; 9:14, 15).

Hebrews 9:14, 15: *14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

It is unconditional (Hebrews 8:8, 9). It CAN produce the necessary righteousness (Hebrews 8:11, 12; Hebrews 10:9-14). It is written on living hearts (Hebrews 8:10). The results of the New Covenant are eternal (Hebrews 8:12).

ALSO NOTE:

The First Covenant is past. The New Covenant is present and is for the future. Both Covenants are made with the whole house of Israel. It will be "after those days" (that is, when the present dispensation has passed and other circumstances have come in)— *"the good things that are to come"* (Hebrews 9:11; 10:1). Its announced result is the removal of the transgressions and iniquities of Israel (Hebrews 8:12).

WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE NEW COVENANT?

Before our Lord went to Calvary, He celebrated the Passover with His disciples in the Upper Room. At the Supper, He instituted the "Lord's Supper." Taking the cup, He said, *"This cup is the new testament* (covenant—Greek *diatheke*) *in My blood, which is shed for you"* (Luke 22:20; Mark 14:22-24). The Apostle Paul quoted these words and applied them to the Church. The writer of Hebrews states that Jesus Christ is the *"surety of a better testament* (covenant)" (Hebrews 7:22), *"the mediator of a better covenant"* (Hebrews 8:6), and *"the mediator of the new covenant"* (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24).

What, then, is the relationship between the New Covenant promised to Israel, but experienced today by the Church? Or, to state it another way: how can God promise these blessings to the Jews and then turn around and give them to the Church? Here are the ways that some try to solve the problem.

Some say that the Church is "spiritual Israel" and that the New Covenant promises therefore belong to "Abraham's spiritual seed" today. The believers today are the "spiritual seed" of Abraham is

clear from Galatians 3:13-19. But this is not the same as saying that the Church is "spiritual Israel." The promise quotes in Hebrews 8:8 specifically names **"the house of Israel . . . and the house of Judah."** Once we are permitted to make such plain words as Israel and Judah mean something else, then there is no end to how we might interpret the Bible.

Galatians 3:13-19: **13Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. 15Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. 16Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.**

Another view is that the New Covenant is with the nation of Israel only and has no present fulfillment or application to the Church. This view holds that it will be fulfilled only when the Jews are regathered and the Kingdom is established at our Lord's return to the earth in glory. But then we have the problem of explaining Hebrews 9:15, Hebrews 12:24, and Luke 22:20. From these verses we learn the Jesus Christ is today the Mediator of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 9:15: **And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.**

Hebrews 12:24: **And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.**

Luke 22:20: **Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.**

Yet another view is that there are two covenants in this chapter. One refers to the nation of Israel, and the other refers to the Church. But this raises more questions. If there are two New Covenants, then were there two First or Old Covenants? If so, what was the Old Covenant which God gave to the Church? If not, why were two New Covenants given to replace one Old Covenant? When was the Church ever under the Law?

A fourth view is that is only one New Covenant which will be fulfilled eschatologically with Israel but is participated in soteriologically by the Church today. Thus, there is a dual or a twofold application.

God did promise a New Covenant for His people Israel, but the blessings of the New Covenant are

wrapped up in God's Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator of the New Covenant. When Jesus began His ministry, He went to His own people Israel first (Matthew 15:24; John 1:11, 12). When He first sent out His disciples, He sent them only to the nation of Israel. Matthew 10:5, 6, "***These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.***" When Jesus commissioned the Church, He instructed them to begin in Jerusalem and go to the whole world (Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:8).

Matthew 15:24: ***But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.***

John 1:11, 12: ***11He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:***

Luke 24:46-48: ***46And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48And ye are witnesses of these things.***

Acts 1:8: ***But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.***

Peter's message at Pentecost was addressed only to Jews and Gentiles who were Jewish proselytes (Acts 2:14, 22, 36). In his second recorded message or sermon, Peter clearly stated the good news of the Gospel would go to the Jews first. (Acts 3:25-26). But the nation of Israel rejected the message and the messengers. While it is true that thousands of individuals trusted Christ and were saved, it is also true that most of the nation of Israel rejected the Word, and the religious leaders opposed the ministry of the Church. One result of their opposition was the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7). But what was God's response? The Gospel moved from Jerusalem and Judea into Samaria (Acts 8) and then to the Gentiles (Acts 10).

Acts 2:14, 22, 36: ***14But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:... 22Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:... 36Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.***

Acts 3:25, 26: ***25Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 26Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.***

Today, both Jews and Gentiles are in the body of Christ, the Church (Ephesians 2:11-22; Galatians 3:27-29). All who are "in Christ" share in the New Covenant which was purchased by Jesus Christ on the cross. Today, the blessings of the New Covenant are applied to individuals. When Jesus comes in glory to redeem the nation of Israel, then the blessings of the New Covenant will be applied to Israel as a nation.

Ephesians 2:11-22: 11Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Galatians 3:27-29: 27For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

In order to have a better understanding, you should read all of Jeremiah 31, not merely Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah 31: 1At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. 2Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. 3The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. 4Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry. 5Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: the planters shall plant, and shall eat them as common things. 6For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the LORD our God. 7For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. 8Behold, I will bring them from the north country,

and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. 9They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. 10Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. 12Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. 13Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. 14And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD. 15Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. 16Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. 17And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border. 18I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. 19Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. 20Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD. 21Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. 22How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man. 23Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. 24And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. 25For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. 26Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me. 27Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. 28And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD. 29In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. 30But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

31Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: 33But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: 36If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD. 38Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. 39And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. 40And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

Believers today must avoid the bondage of the First Covenant and must avoid misapplying the New Covenant. We note conclusion of the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:5-29, and especially Vs7-14). In the Book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul addressed the matter of returning to the Law (1:6-9; 3:1-7, 11-14, 24, 25; 4:9-11; 5:1-4.)

Galatians 1:6-9: 6I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 3:1-7, 11-14, 24, 25: 1O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 5He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 6Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the

children of Abraham....11But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. 13Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith....24Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Galatians 4:9-11: 9But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Galatians 5:1-4: 1Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

CONCLUSION

We have a better priesthood and a better priest, Jesus Christ. He ministers in a better sanctuary, the true tabernacle, and is the Mediator of a better covenant with better promises. Jesus is the surety of a better covenant and gives the believer eternal salvation. The New Covenant is a blessing to every individual who believes and will be a blessing to the nation of Israel in the future.

Have you receive the salvation provided by Jesus through the New Covenant? If not, why not? If so, are you living in obedience to the Word of God and serving God through the Church of Jesus Christ?

Chapter Seventeen

The Superior Sanctuary The Inferior Sanctuary

Hebrews 9:1-10: KJV ***1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. 2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. 3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; 4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; 5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. 6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.***

Introduction

One of the key words in the Book of Hebrews is "better". The book opened by declaring that God the Father has spoken to us by His Son, the Lord Jesus. The writer continued by showing that the things which believers have now are better than the things which those who lived under the First or Old Covenant had.

Jesus Christ is better than the angels. Jesus Christ as the Son of man is better than Moses and Joshua. The rest which Jesus gives is better than the rest which they gave. Jesus Christ as the High Priest is greater than Aaron the high priest. The priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec is better than the priesthood after the Levitical order. The New Covenant is better than the First or Old Covenant.

Chapter 9 presents a detailed contrast between the Old Covenant sanctuary (tabernacle) and the New Covenant sanctuary. Jesus Christ our great High Priest now ministers in the heavenly sanctuary. The contrast presented shows that the New Covenant sanctuary is better, superior, to the Old Covenant sanctuary (Verses 11-12).

Hebrews 9:11-12: KJV ***11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal***

redemption for us.

The readers were reminded that the regulations and practices of the Old Covenant tabernacle were ordained of God. If there were any inferiority in the tabernacle services, it was not because God had not established the ritual. While the Old Covenant was in force, the ministry of the priests was ordained of God and was perfectly proper.

Note these areas of inferiority.

IT WAS AN EARTHLY SANCTUARY Verse 1

This means it was made by man (Verse 11; Hebrews 8:4-5) and was pitched by man (Hebrews 8:2). The Jewish people generously brought their gifts to Moses, and from these materials the tabernacle was constructed.

Hebrews 8:4-5: KJV 4 *For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: 5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

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

Then God gave spiritual wisdom and skill to Bezaleel and Aholiab to do the intricate work of making the various parts of the tabernacle and its furnishings (Exodus 35-36).

After the construction was completed, the sanctuary, tabernacle, was put in place and dedicated to God (Ex. 40). Even though the glory of God moved into the sanctuary, the tabernacle was still an earthly building, constructed by humans out of earthly materials.

Being an earthly building, it had several weaknesses. It would need a certain amount of repair over the years. It was limited geographically. If it was pitched in one place, it could not be in another place at the same time. It had to be dismantled and the various parts carried from place to place. It belonged to the nation of Israel and not to the whole world.

IT WAS A TYPE OF SOMETHING GREATER Verses 2-5

The writer listed the various parts and furnishings of the tabernacle because each of them carried a spiritual meaning. They were "patterns of things in heaven" (Verse 23).

Hebrews 9:23: KJV 23 *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.*

The phrases "the first" (Vs2) and "the second" (Vs7) refer to the first and second divisions of the tabernacle. The first was called the "holy place" and the second was called "the holies of the holy". Each of these divisions had its own furnishings, and each piece of furniture had its own special meaning.

In the holy place stood the seven-branched golden candlestick (Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20-21; 37:17-24). "Lampstand" would be a better term to use rather than "candlestick" because the light was produced by the burning of wicks in oil, not by the use of candles which we know today. Since there were no windows in the tabernacle, this lampstand provided the necessary light of the priests' ministry in the holy place.

Exodus 25:31-40: KJV 31 And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. 32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: 33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34 And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. 35 And there shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. 37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38 And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. 39 Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40 And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

Exodus 27:20-21: KJV 20 And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. 21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

Exodus 37:17-24: KJV 17 And he made the candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work made he the candlestick; his shaft, and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, were of the same: 18 And six branches going out of the sides thereof; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three

branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof: 19 Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds in another branch, a knop and a flower: so throughout the six branches going out of the candlestick. 20 And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops, and his flowers: 21 And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it. 22 Their knops and their branches were of the same: all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. 23 And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuffdishes, of pure gold. 24 Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

There was also a table in the holy place with twelve loaves of bread on it. It was called the table of showbread (Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16; Leviticus 24:5-9). On each Sabbath, the priests would remove the old loaves of bread and put fresh loaves on the tables. The old loaves would be eaten. Only the priests could eat this bread, and they were required to eat it in the sanctuary. It reminded the twelve tribes of God's presence that sustained them.

Exodus 25:23-30: KJV 23 Thou shalt also make a table of shittim wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four feet thereof. 27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. 29 And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. 30 And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.

Exodus 37:10-16: KJV 10 And he made the table of shittim wood: two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof: 11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. 12 Also he made thereunto a border of an handbreadth round about; and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. 13 And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. 14 Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves to bear the table. 15 And he made the staves of shittim wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table. 16 And he made the vessels which were

upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold.

Leviticus 24:5-9: KJV 5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. 6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. 7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.

The golden altar stood in the holy place just in front of the veil that divided the two parts of the tabernacle. This is the altar of incense, a picture of prayer ascending to God.

Psalms 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

The holy of holies contained only the ark of the covenant. On the top of this ark was a beautiful "mercy seat" made of gold, with a cherub on each end. The cherubim faced each other with their wings spread up toward heaven. This was the throne of God in the tabernacle.

Psalms 80:1: "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."

Psalms 99:1: "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved."

Exodus 25:17-22: KJV 17 And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18 And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20 And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21 And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

On the Day of Atonement, the blood was sprinkled on this mercy seat which covered the tables of the Law within ark. God did not look at the broken Law. He saw the blood. Christ is our "mercy seat." The Greek word "hilasterion" translated "mercy seat" in Hebrews 9:5 is the same Greek word "hilasterion" which is translated "propitiation" in Romans 3:25. In 1 John 2:2 and John 4:10, the word "propitiation" appears and comes from a different Greek word "hilasmos". This word refers to Jesus Christ as the sacrifice which secures mercy for the believer. In Romans 3:25, the word "propitiation" refers to Jesus Christ as the place where mercy is extended to the believing sinner, corresponding to the "mercy seat."

Romans 3:23-25: ***"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (hilasterion) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."***

1 John 2:1-2: ***"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation (hilasmos) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."***

1 John 4:10: ***"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The blood of Jesus does not just cover our sin; it takes away sin.***

IT WAS INACCESSIBLE TO THE PEOPLE Verses 6-7

The priests and Levites were permitted to go into the tabernacle precinct, but the people from the other tribes were not allowed to enter into it. Although the priests ministered in the holy place day after day only the high priest entered the holy of holies, and that was only one day a year. When he did, he had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins as well as for the sins of the people. In contrast, the heavenly tabernacle is open to all of the people of God and is open at all times (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Hebrews 10:19-25: KJV ***19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.***

IT WAS TEMPORARY Verse 8

As long as the priests were ministering in the holy place, the way had not yet been opened into the presence of God. But when Jesus died on the Cross, the veil in the temple was torn from the top to bottom, and the way was opened into the holy of holies.

Matthew 27:50-51, "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."

There was no longer any more need for either the holy place or the holy of holies on earth, because now believing sinners could come into the presence of God.

ITS MINISTRY WAS EXTERNAL, NOT INTERNAL Verse 9-10

The sacrifices offered and the blood applied to the mercy seat could never change the heart nor the conscience of a worshipper. All of the ceremonies associated with the tabernacle had to do with ceremonial purity, not with moral purity. They were "carnal ordinances" that pertained to the outer man but that could not change the inner man. The ministry of the old sanctuary was a figure or an illustration of good things to come.

Chapter Eighteen

The Superior Sanctuary The Superior Heavenly Sanctuary

Hebrews 9:11-28: *11But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Introduction

This Chapter presents a detailed contrast between the Old Covenant sanctuary (tabernacle) and the New Covenant Sanctuary. Jesus Christ our High Priest now ministers in the heavenly sanctuary. This contrast shows that the New Covenant is better, superior to the Old Covenant sanctuary.

In the last lesson, we saw areas of inferiority which the Old Covenant sanctuary had. It was an earthly sanctuary. It was a type of something greater. It was inaccessible to the people. It was temporary. Its ministry was external, not internal. These five areas of inferiority of the Old

Covenant sanctuary are matched with five areas of superiority of the New Covenant sanctuary.

IT IS A HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

Verse 11: ***11But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;***

The writer has emphasized this fact before because he wanted his readers to focus their attention on the things of heaven and not on the things on earth.

The Old Covenant tabernacle was made by the hands of men (Ex. 35:30-35). The New Covenant sanctuary was not made with human hands (Verse 11). The tabernacle of Moses was made with materials that belonged to this earth. The heavenly sanctuary needed no such materials.

ITS MINISTRY IS EFFECTIVE TO DEAL WITH SIN

Verses 12-15: ; ***12Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.***

Note the contrasts between:

Animal sacrifices and Christ's sacrifice (Verse 12). Christ's blood is superior to the blood of animals. His death was voluntary. He laid down His life. Animal blood had to be carried by the high priest into the Holy of Holies, but Jesus Christ presented Himself in the presence of God the Father as the final and complete sacrifice for sin. Animal sacrifices were repeated, but Jesus Christ offered Himself once for all. No animal sacrifice ever took away sin or purchased eternal redemption, but Christ did.

Ceremonial cleansing and conscience cleansing.

Verses 13-14: ***13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?***

Temporary blessings and eternal blessings.

Verse 15: ***15And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.***

ITS MINISTRY IS BASED ON A COSTLY SACRIFICE

Verses 16-23: ***16For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. 18Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. 19For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, 20Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. 21Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. 22And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.***

The word "covenant" not only means "an agreement," but it also carries the idea of a "last will and testament." If a man writes his will, that will is not in force until he dies. It was necessary for Jesus Christ to die so that the terms of the New Covenant could be enforced. ***"This cup is the new testament (covenant, will) is My blood, which is shed for you."*** Luke 22:20.

The Old Covenant was established on the basis of blood. Verses 19-21 are taken from Exodus 24:3-8, the account of the ratifying of the Old Covenant by Moses and the people of Israel. The book of the Law was sprinkled with blood as well as the people, the tabernacle, and the furnishings.

Since God has ordained that remission of sins is through the shedding of blood, and since purification comes through the sprinkling of blood, it is necessary that blood be shed and applied if the New Covenant is to be in force.

The New Covenant was established on the basis of a better sacrifice and applied in a better place. The patterns (types) were purified by the blood of animals, but the original sanctuary was purified by the blood of the Son of God. This was a far more costly sacrifice.

ITS MINISTRY REPRESENTS FULFILLMENT

Verse 24: ***24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:***

The New Covenant Christian has reality! We are not depending upon a high priest on earth who annually visits the Holy of Holies in a temporary sanctuary. We depend on the heavenly High Priest Who has entered into the eternal sanctuary. There He represents us before God, and He

always will.

Beware of trusting anything for your spiritual life that is "***made with hands***" Verse 24. It will not last. The tabernacle was replaced by Solomon's temple, and that temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. When the Jews returned to the land of Israel after the captivity, they rebuilt their temple. In later years, King Herod expanded and decorated it. But the Romans destroyed that temple in 70 A.D., and it has not been rebuilt.

ITS MINISTRY IS FINAL AND COMPLETE

There can be nothing incomplete or temporary about our Lord's ministry in heaven. The writer pointed out again the obvious contrasts between the Old Covenant ministry and the New Covenant ministry.

OLD COVENANT	NEW COVENANT
Repeated sacrifices	One sacrifice
The blood of animals	The blood of Christ
Covering sin	Putting away sin
For Israel only	For all sinners
Priest left the Holy of Holies	Christ entered Heaven and remains there.
Priest came out to bless the people.	Christ will come again to take His people to heaven.

In short, the work of Jesus Christ is a completed work, and it is final and eternal. On the basis of this completed work, Jesus is ministering now in heaven on our behalf.

Conclusion

The New Covenant sanctuary is superior to the Old Covenant sanctuary. The High Priest who ministers there is superior to the high priest who served on earth. The New Covenant was established upon better promises. The New Covenant has a better sacrifice, a sacrifice which can take away sin.

Do you know the joy of sins forgiven? Are you serving the Lord through the Church which Jesus established while He was here on earth?

Chapter Nineteen

The Appearings Of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 9:23-28: *23It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Introduction

These verses speak of three appearings of Jesus Christ. Two of them are His appearings on earth. The third one is His appearing in heaven for us. Verse 27 is probably the best known and the most quoted verse of Hebrews 9. But it is a part of a sentence which is completed with Verse 28. Since man dies one physical death, so Christ died once and for all for our sins. All whose sins are forgiven will live with Him eternally.

The verses of this chapter are a brief summary of the life and work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

HIS APPEARING TO PUT AWAY SIN

Verse 26. NOTE Verses 24-26: *24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

The purpose of His birth

Matthew 1:21, *"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."*

Luke 2:10, 11: *"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."*

The proclamation of His purpose

John 1:29, *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

Luke 19:10, *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

The picture of His death

Matthew 26:26-29: *26And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

The purpose of His death

Hebrews 9:26. *"..to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* (See also Hebrews 9:27, 28a.)

Matthew 20:25-28, *"But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for man."*

John 10:15-18: *15As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. 17Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

I Timothy 2:3-6: *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."*

1 John 3:5: *"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin."*

Romans 5:6, 8, *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

Ephesians 5:1, 2: *1Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

Galatians 1:3, 4: *3Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, 4Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

HIS APPEARING NOW IN HEAVEN FOR US

Verse 24: *24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

After His resurrection.

John 20:11-17: *11But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, 12And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. 17Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.*

In the heavenly tabernacle (Hebrews 9:11-12, 24-25).

With His own blood (Hebrews 9:11-15, 24-26).

HIS SECOND APPEARING ON EARTH

Verses 27, 28: *27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

NOTE Acts 1:9-11: *"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into*

heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

His promise to His church.

John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

His promise to come again.

Matthew 24:29, 30: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

His plan to set up His kingdom.

Luke 1:31-33, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David; And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end,"

Matthew 25:31-40: 31When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Acts 1:6, 7: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto

them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."

His plan to reward every man's work.

Heb. 9:27, 28: 27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Matthew 16:27: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his work."

Romans 2:5, 6: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds."

II Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give unto me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing."

Revelation 22:12, "And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with me, to give to every man according as His work shall be."

Conclusion

After reading this chapter, the Hebrew Christians who received this letter had to realize that there is no middle ground. They had to make a choice between the earthly or the heavenly, between the temporary or the eternal, between the incomplete or the complete. Why not return to the temple but also practice the Christian faith? Why not have the best of both worlds? Because that would be compromising and refusing to go "without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:13). Therefore, there is no middle ground.

Hebrews 13:13: Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

The believer's sanctuary is in heaven. His Father is in heaven, and his Saviour is in heaven. His citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and his treasure should be in heaven. His hope is also in heaven. The true believer walks by faith, not by sight. No matter what may happen on earth, the believer can have confidence because everything is settled in heaven.

Philippians 3:20: For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

Do you have that assurance which causes you to know that your sins are forgiven and that heaven is your eternal home? Are you willing to be identified with Jesus Christ here on the earth? Are you

a member of His Church, and are you walking in fellowship with Him?

Chapter Twenty

The Superior Sacrifice Part I

Hebrews 10:1-18: *1For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.*

Introduction

In previous chapters, we have studied about the Superior Priesthood (Chapter 7), the Better Covenant (Chapter 8), and the Superior Sanctuary (Chapter 9). In Chapter 10, we will study about the Superior sacrifice. This chapter emphasizes the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ in contrast with the imperfect sacrifices that were offered under the Old Covenant. Our Lord's superior priesthood belongs to a better order—Melchisedec's and not Aaron's. It functions on the basis of a better covenant, the New Covenant, and in a better sanctuary, the one in heaven. But all of this depends on the better sacrifice, which is the theme of this chapter.

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE TAKES AWAY SIN

Verses 1-10: *1For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have*

had no more conscience of sins. 3But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Sin, of course, is man's greatest problem. No matter what kind of religion a man has, if it cannot deal with the problem of sin, it is of no value. By nature, man is a sinner, and by choice he proves that his nature is sinful. It has been well said, "We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners."

There is the need for a better sacrifice (Verses 1-4). Why were the Old Covenant sacrifices inferior? After all, they were ordained by the Lord. There were in force for hundreds of years. The very nature of the Old Covenant sacrifices made them inferior. The Law was only "shadow of good things to come" and not the reality itself. The sacrificial system was temporary, and therefore it could accomplish nothing permanent.

Animal sacrifices could never deal completely with human guilt. God did promise forgiveness to believing worshippers (Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35), but this was a judicial forgiveness and not the removal of the guilt of the people's heart. If those worshippers had been "once purged" from the guilt of sin, they would never again have had to offer another sacrifice.

Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35: 20And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them....26And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him....31And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him....35And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the sacrifice of the peace offerings; and the priest shall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

The annual Day of Atonement did not accomplish "remission of sin". It was only a reminder of sin. True, the nation's sins were covered, but they were not cleansed. Nor did the people have God's inward witness of forgiveness and acceptance (Note 1 John 5:9-12; Hebrews 10:2, 3).

1 John 5:9-12: *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

Hebrews 10:2, 3: *2For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.*

Yes, there was a desperate need for a better sacrifice, because the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins (Verse 4). It could cover sin and postpone judgment. But it could never bring a once-for-all redemption. Only the better sacrifice of the Son of God could do that.

The provision of the better Sacrifice has been given (Verses 5-9). It was God Who provided the sacrifice and not man. The quotation is from Psalm 40:6-8. Here it is applied to Jesus Christ in his incarnation (when He cometh into the world, Verse 5). The quotation makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Covenant sacrifices.

The word sacrifice refers to any of the animal sacrifices. The word offering covers the meal offering, the drink offerings, the burnt offering, and the trespass offering. Each of these offerings typified the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and revealed some aspect of His work on the Cross. (Leviticus Chapters 1-7).

In verses 6 & 8, the writer stated that God "had no pleasure" in the Old Covenant sacrifices. This does not suggest that the old sacrifices were wrong or that sincere worshippers received no benefit from obeying God's Law. It only means that God had no delight in such sacrifices as such, apart from the obedient hearts of the worshippers. No amount of sacrifice could substitute for obedience.

1 Samuel 15:22: *And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

Psalm 51:16, 17: *16For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

Isaiah 1:11: *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.*

Hosea 6:6: *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.*

Jesus Christ came to do the Father's will. This will is the New Covenant that has replaced the Old Covenant. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus Christ has taken away the First Covenant and established the Second Covenant. The readers of this letter called "Hebrews" would get the message. Why go back to sacrifices that were inferior?

The effectiveness of the better sacrifice is clear (Verse 10). Believers have been set apart (sanctified) by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. No Old Covenant sacrifice could do that. An Old Covenant worshipper had to be purified from ceremonial defilement repeatedly. But a New Covenant saint is set apart finally and completely.

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE DOES NOT NEED TO BE REPEATED

Verses 11-18: ***11And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, 16This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.***

The writer contrasted the Old Covenant high priest with Jesus Christ, our High Priest. The fact that Jesus sat down after He ascended to the Father is proof that His work is completed (Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1). The ministry of the priests in the tabernacle and temple was never done and never different. This constant repetition was proof that their sacrifices did not take away sins. What the tens of thousands of animal sacrifices could not accomplish, Jesus Christ accomplished with one sacrifice forever.

The phrase "sat down" refers us again to Psalm 110:1, ***"Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."*** Christ is in the place of exaltation and victory. When He returns, He will overcome every enemy and will establish His righteous kingdom. Those who have trusted Him need not to fear, for they have been ***"perfected forever"*** (Verse 14). Believers are ***"complete in Him"*** (Colossians 2:10). We have a perfect standing before God because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. We know personally that we have this perfect standing before God because of the witness of the Holy Spirit through the Word (Verses 15-18; 1 John 5:9-12). The witness of the Spirit is based on the work of the Son and is given through the words of Scripture. Verses 16 & 17 is a quotation from Jeremiah 31:33, 34. This quotation is also given in Hebrews 8:7-12. The Old Covenant worshipper could not say that he had "no more consciousness of sins" (See Hebrews 10:2). But the New Covenant believer can say that his sins and iniquities are remembered no more. Therefore, there is ***"no more offering for sin"*** (Chapter 10:18) and no more remembrance of sin.

Conclusion

The sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not make the worshipper perfect. The sacrifices of the

Old Covenant could not take away sins. By the one offering of Jesus Christ, "***He has perfected forever them that are sanctified*** " Verse 14. Because of forgiveness of sins through the finished work of Jesus Christ, the sins, and iniquities of believers He remembers no more. Believers have

Do you know the joy of sins forgiven by Jesus Christ? Do you have the assurance of eternal life?

Chapter Twenty-One

The Superior Sacrifice Part II

Hebrews 10:19-25: KJV **19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**

Introduction

This chapter emphasizes the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ in contrast with the imperfect sacrifices that were offered under the Old Covenant. Our Lord's superior priesthood belongs to a better order—Melchisedec's and not Aaron's. It functions on the basis of a better covenant, the New Covenant, and in a better sanctuary, the one in heaven. But all of this depends on the better sacrifice.

Christ's sacrifice takes away sin. The animal sacrifices could never deal completely with human because of sin. Those sacrifices did not make the worshippers perfect. Sacrifices had to be offered year after year.

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

Through the death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus Christ has taken away sin, and those who believe are made perfect.

Hebrews 10:14: ***"For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."***

Hebrews 1:1-10:18 is a presentation of Christ. Hebrews 10:19-13:25 deals with the practice of Christianity.

No Old Covenant worshipper would have been so bold as to try to enter the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. Even the high priest entered the Holy of Holies only one day a year. The thick veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was a barrier between the people and God. Only the death of Jesus Christ could tear that veil (Mark 15:38; Ephesians 2:13-17) and open the way into the heavenly sanctuary where God dwells.

Mark 15:38 KJV ***38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.***

Ephesians 2:13-17: KJV ***13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.***

Beginning in Verse 19, the writer deals with the practical aspect of Life in Christ. Hebrews 10:19-25 shows us that Christ's sacrifice opens the way to God. From now on, the writer tells us the kind of life we should live because of Christ's work as the High Priest for us. Thus, he sets forth the superiority of the Life in Christ. This is based upon the work of Christ as our High Priest. "Therefore", Verse 19, speaks of that which precedes the statements in the following verses.

Dr. H. C. Mears illustrates it this way.

"After one has accepted Christ, there are levels of Christian living. Some Christians live in the basement of Christian experience, merely inside the building but where it is dark, dismal, and gloomy. Others live on the ground floor. They leave the first foundations and go on. Some sunlight enters, but their outlook is upon the circumstances about them. They live very close to the world. Still others live up higher. Sunlight and warmth flood the rooms. The noise and attractions of the worldly street do not disturb them. The air is pure. The outlook is toward the blue skies and distant mountains. These live above the world, hidden with Christ in God. It is in this high realm that God wishes us all to live continuously."

THE BELIEVER'S ACCESS TO THE HOLY PLACE Verses 19-22

A declaration of the believer's privilege. The right of approach unto the presence of God is now the believer's privilege. We may "enter into the holy place." Vsl9. There is a reference here to the entrance of the high priest into the holy of holiest under the Mosaic economy. The holy place in the text is the Divine Sanctuary, the place of God's essential presence. We have the privilege of access into His presence through prayer (Hebrews 4:14-16).

Hebrews 4:14-16: KJV ***14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15***

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Verse 19). This boldness is not rashness or irreverence. It is rather a holy freedom of access to God because of our assurance that we will be graciously receive by Him. We see this in the exercise of prayer.

Note how this privilege has been obtained for us (Verse 19), "by the blood of Jesus." See Romans 5:1-2. It is by the sacrifice of Christ that we have the right of access to the presence of God. It is by the infinite love of God manifested in that sacrifice that we have confidence in availing ourselves to this right. In a word, this privilege has been obtained for us through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1-2: KJV 1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The characteristics of the way are given in Verse 20. It is a new way, that is, newly made, recent, the freshly slain way. It is a living way. This is contrasted to the way under the Old Covenant which could not give life (John 14:6). It is living because Christ "ever liveth to make intercession" for us (Hebrews 7:25).

John 14:6 KJV 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The inauguration of this way is stated in Verse 20. There is a comparison between the flesh of our Saviour and the veil which separated the most holy place from the holy place. In His death, our Lord put off the weak mortal flesh. When Jesus died, "The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," (Matt. 27:51), laying open the Holy of Holies. In His death, Christ laid aside those conditions of the body which could not be taken into heaven itself and removed the barriers which kept us from God.

The encouragement to tread this way is given in Verses 21-22. Our great High Priest has trodden the way before us. He has entered the heavenly sanctuary and abides in the glorious presence of God the Father. He is there on our behalf as our Representative, as our Forerunner, and as an attraction to draw His people there also.

AN EXHORTATION TO AVAIL OURSELVES OF THIS PRIVILEGE IS GIVEN

Verse 22. ***"Let us draw near."***

Let us draw near with perfect sincerity. "With a true heart." This is a heart that is free from hypocrisy and self-deception.

Let us draw near with perfect assurance. "In full assurance of faith." This means not questioning our right of access or the certainty of our gracious acceptance through Christ. This is with no divided confidence but in fullness of faith in Jesus Christ. If we would draw near to God acceptably, we must do so "in full assurance of faith" in our great High Priest as the only and all-sufficient Mediator.

Let us draw near with purity of heart and life (Verse 22c). There is a reference here to the Levitical purification. True faith brings about this Divine action of "sprinkling," that is, of so appropriating the effect of the blood of Christ shed on our behalf to relieve our burdened consciences because we see that our sins have been laid on our Substitute.

Of course, we must prepare ourselves spiritually to fellowship with God. The Old Testament priests had to go through various washings and the applying of the blood on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Also, during the regular daily ministry, the priests had to wash at the laver before they entered the holy place (Exodus 30:17-21.). The New Testament Christian must come to God with a pure heart and a clean conscience. Fellowship with God demands purity (1 John 1:5-2:2).

Exodus 30:17-21: KJV 17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

1 John 1:5 - 2:2: KJV 5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. 1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

CHRISTIAN FIDELITY AND DUTIES ARE LISTED Verses 23-25

An exhortation to Christian fidelity is given (Verse 23). **"Let us hold fast."** The readers of this epistle were being tempted to forsake their confession of Jesus Christ by going back to the Old Covenant. The writer did not exhort them to hold on to their salvation because their security was in Christ and not in themselves (Hebrews 7:25). Rather, he encouraged them to hold fast the **"confession of hope,"** to be faithful, loyal to the confession of hope.

Hebrews 7:25: KJV **25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.**

Note the object of our hope. It is in Christ that we have present forgiveness of our sins, the right of approach unto God, and sanctifying influence. It is through Christ that we will obtain unto future and perfect rest.

Note the confession of our hope. The confession made through Christian baptism of these Hebrew Christians was a confession of their faith in Jesus Christ. When the hope is clear and assured, it cannot remain dumb. It must speak and give reason of its own existence.

There is an emphasis on the glorious hope of the believer. God is "bringing many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10). Believers are "partakers of the heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1). Therefore, we can rejoice in hope (Hebrews 3:6). Hope is one of the main themes of Hebrews 6 (Vs 11-12, 18-20). We are looking for Christ to return (Hebrews 9:29). We are seeking that city that is yet to come (Hebrews 13:14).

The confession is to be maintained. Verse 23b, "Without wavering," or that it wavers not. See Jude 3; Revelation 3:11; 2 John 8. When a believer has his hope fixed on Christ and relies on the faithfulness of God the Father, then he will not waver. Instead of looking back (as the Jews so often did), we should look ahead to the coming of the Lord.

Jude 3: KJV **3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.**

Revelation 3:11: KJV **11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.**

2 John 8: KJV **8 Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.**

The encouragement to Christian fidelity is in the faithfulness of God (Verse 23c). "For He is faithful that promised." Of this we have many guarantees: His infinite intelligence, His almighty power, and His perfect faithfulness (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2; Numbers 22:19). This faithfulness

of God to His glorious promises should ensure us our faithfulness in the confession of our hope in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:18: KJV **18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:**

Titus 1:2: KJV **2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;**

Numbers 22:19: KJV **19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more.**

The duty and design of mutual consideration are given in Verse 24. The duty of mutual consideration is stated in Verse 24a. **"Let us consider one another."** This duty calls upon us to cherish a mutual regard and to exercise a kind consideration one for another (Galatians 6:1-2).

Galatians 6:1-2: KJV **1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**

The design of mutual consideration is given in Verse 24b. **"to provoke unto love and good works."** "To provoke" is used here in the good sense—to excite or to call into activity for a worthy purpose.' "Consider one another" in order to produce in each other a generous rivalry in love and good works. LOVE is the supreme grace of Christian character (1 Corinthians 13:13). It is the most Christ like, the most like God the Father. It is that which most truly represents our Saviour to the world. GOOD WORKS are the expression of that love. Love delights itself in self-sacrificing service for the Beloved.

1 Corinthians 13:13: KJV **13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.**

Encouragement for social or public worship is set forth in Verses 24-25. Fellowship with God the Father must never become selfish. We must also fellowship with other Christians in the local assembly. Apparently, some of the wavering believers had been absent from Church fellowship and worship. It is interesting to note that the emphasis here is not on what the believers gets from this assembly but rather upon what he can contribute to the assembly. Faithfulness in Church attendance encourages others and provokes them to love and good works. One of the strongest motives for faithfulness is the soon coming of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

There are three great Christian virtues that are evidenced here: faith, Verse 22; hope, Verse 23; and love, Verse 24. They are the fruit of our fellowship with God in His heavenly sanctuary.

Do you have the assurance of your salvation? Are you walking in fellowship with God and His Church?

Chapter Twenty-Two

Warning – Do Not Despise Gods Word

Hebrews 10:26-39: *26For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

Introduction

This is the fourth of five warnings or exhortations found in the Book of Hebrews. It is written to believers and follows in sequence with the other warnings or exhortations. The believer who begins to drift from the Word (Chapter 2:1-4) will soon start to doubt the Word (Chapter 3:7-4:13). If this trend does not change, the believer will soon become dull to the Word (Chapter 5:11-6:20) and become "lazy" in his spiritual life. This will result in despising the Word, which is the theme of this warning or exhortation.

As we study these verses, we need to remember the rules of interpretation. The writer wrote to believers. In this chapter, he stated that Jesus Christ has offered the one and only sacrifice which can take away sin. Therefore, the believer has been perfected forever (Verses 10-14). The sins and iniquities of believers God will remember no more (Verse 16, 17). He encouraged his readers to draw near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith because they have boldness to enter the presence of God because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. He encouraged the believers to hold fast their confession of hope without wavering, to consider others, and not forsake the assembling of themselves together in public worship unto God.

THE SOLEMN EXHORTATION

Verses 26-31: ***26For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.***

Some opinions about these verses

That they are speaking of professed believers who know the way of salvation, but they are not really saved.

That they are speaking of a sin that only the Jews of that day could commit. This view suggest that the Jews had received full knowledge of the fact that Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant and was the sacrifice that takes away sin, but they chose to go back to the temple worship and animal sacrifices.

That they are speaking of a saved person who loses his salvation.

That it is speaking to saved persons of the seriousness of sin and the certainty of chastisement for sin. NOTE that the writer included himself in this warning in Verse 26 by the use of the first-person pronoun "we."

The evidence of this "despising" is willful sin (Verse 26). The fact that it is willful sin is emphasized by the word "knowledge". It comes from the Greek word "epignosis" which means "full knowledge." This warning is not dealing with one particular act of sin but with an attitude that leads to repeated disobedience. Under the Old Covenant, there was no sacrifice that could take away sin. But Jesus had offered the only sacrifice that could take away sin.

Verse 31 declares ***"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*** The Apostle Peter wrote, ***"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them"*** (2 Peter 2:21). The warning is to the Hebrew believers because some of them were continuing to go to the temple and actually offering animal sacrifices there. This action made the sacrifice of Jesus Christ meaningless to them. Since the animal sacrifices were a type of Christ's sacrifice and Christ had died, all of that was fulfilled. Therefore, what before the cross had been done in obedience to God's command, now had become willful sin. The writer was telling his readers that they could look back to the temple anymore because there is no longer a sacrifice for sin. If a person rejects the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there is no other sacrifice available, and there is no other way to come to God. They must look to Jesus Christ now instead of the temple. If they refuse to do this, all that is left is judgment.

Presumptuous sinners who despised Moses' law and broke it were executed (Deuteronomy 17:1-7). This explains why David prayed as he did in Psalm 51. Because he deliberately sinned "with a high hand," he should have been slain. But he cried out for God's mercy. David knew that even a multitude of sacrifices could not save him. All he offered was the sacrifice of a broken heart (Psalm 51:16, 17).

Deuteronomy 17:1-7: 1Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evilfavouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God. 2If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, 3And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; 4And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: 5Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die. 6At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. 7The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

Psalm 51:16, 17: 16For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

How does an arrogant attitude affect a believer's fellowship with God (Verse 29)? Treading underfoot the Son of God is a sin against God the Father who gave His Son to become the sin offering (John 3:16). Counting the blood of the New Covenant (Testament) an unholy thing is a sin against the Son who shed His blood. Doing despite to the Spirit of grace is a sin against the Holy Spirit. "Despite" in the Greek has the idea of "insulting". All of this is just the opposite of the exhortation given in Chapter 10:19-25. Instead of having a bold confession of faith, hope, and love, a backslidden believer so lives that his actions and attitudes bring disgrace to the name of Christ and His Church. To act as if the death of Jesus Christ is not sufficient to settle the sin question and to go on as if He had not died is to treat the blood of Jesus Christ as something a person despises.

What can this kind of Christian expect from God (Verses 27-30)? He can expect severe discipline. Chastening is the theme of Hebrews 12. There is no need to "water down" words such as "judgment and fiery indignation" (Verse 27) or "sorer punishment" (Verse 29). We have already seen from the history of Israel that hardly anyone who was saved out of Egypt by the blood of the lamb entered the promised inheritance. Nearly all died in the wilderness.

God does not always take the life of a rebellious believer, but He always deals with him. "**Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense**" was spoken to Israel, God's people (Verse

30). ***"The Lord will judge His people"*** (Verse 30). Verse 30 is a quotation found in Deuteronomy 32:35. Hebrews 10:31, ***"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."***

The major theme of Hebrews is "God has spoken. How are you responding to His Word?" When the nation of Israel refused to believe and obey His Word, God chastened them. Paul used this fact to warn the Corinthians against presumptuous sins (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). Note the examples given in this passage involved people who died because of their willful sins. When we study the subject of "chastening" in Hebrews 12, we will get greater insight into this awesome aspect of God's dealings with His children.

It is important that every believer obeys God and pleases the Father in all things. God forgave David's sins, but David suffered the sad consequences for years afterwards (2 Samuel 12:7-15).

2 Samuel 12:7-15: ***7And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. 9Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 10Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. 12For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. 13And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. 14Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. 15And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.***

What should a believer do who has drifted into spiritual doubt and dullness and is deliberately despising God's Word? He should turn God for mercy and forgiveness. There is no other sacrifice for sin, but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is sufficient for all our sins. It is a fearful thing to fall into the Lord's hands for chastening, but it is a wonderful thing to fall into His hands for cleansing and restoration. David said, ***"Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies."*** 1 Chron. 21:13; 2 Sam. 24:14.

AN ENCOURAGING CONFIRMATION

Vs 32-39: ***32But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became***

companions of them that were so used. 34For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Lest any of his readers should misinterpret his warning or exhortation, the writer follows it with words of encouragement and confirmation. His readers had given evidence that they were true believers. He did not expect them to despise God's Word and experience the chastening of God. In fact, as he did in Hebrews 6, the writer shifts the pronoun from "we" in Chapter 10:26 to "he" in verse 29 and "them" in verse 39.

The readers had been willing to suffer reproach and persecution, even to the spoiling of their goods (Verse 32-34). Their sufferings were of great severity. Their sufferings were patiently endured (Acts 5:40, 41; Hebrews 10:32-34). When they were not being persecuted themselves, they courageously identified with the other Christians who were in danger, even to the point of sharing their bonds (imprisonment). At that time, they had great confidence (boldness) and hope. But now they were in danger casting away that confidence and going back into their old religion. The one thing which sustained them in the noble endurance of cruel persecutions was their assurance that they possessed precious and imperishable treasures. Verse 34b, ***"knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."***

Three things concerning this possession are worthy of note (Verse 32-34). Its certainty. They knew that it existed, and that it existed for them. They had the earnest in their hearts (Ephesians. 1:13, 14). Its superiority. It is "better" than any earthly possession because it is a heavenly possession. Its perpetuity. It is "an enduring substance." It is a better possession which is remaining. Heavenly possessions are inalienable and imperishable.

Ephesians 1:13, 14: ***13In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.***

NOTE: The God who had helped them in the past would not forsake them now nor in their future trials. Thus, the recollection of former deliverances (Verse 32) should be an inspiration in their present trials and for future difficulties (Verse 33).

The secret of victory was in their faith and patience (courageous endurance) (Verses 35-36; 2 John 8; Romans 5:1-5). We have met this combination of graces in Hebrews 6:12, 15. It is here that the introduced the "text" around which Hebrews is written: ***"The just shall live by faith"*** (Verse 38). This quotation is from Habakkuk 2:4 and is used in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11. Romans emphasizes "the just"; Galatians deals with "shall live"; and Hebrews centers on "by faith." We

are not only saved from our sins by faith, but we must also live by faith. This is the theme of Hebrews Chapters 11-13.

2 John 8: ***We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.***

Romans 5:1-5: ***1We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. 3For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. 4For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 5Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:***

Habakkuk 2:4: ***Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.***

Romans 1:17: ***For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.***

Galatians 3:11: ***But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.***

In this letter, the writer emphasizes the fact Divinely settled in the past is that justification is not by animal sacrifices but by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the only sacrifice that takes away sin. "The just shall live by faith." They do not waver and cast away their confidence when living by faith and they trust in Christ's one sacrifice. The Christian life originates in faith and thrives on faith. It is the works of faith that glorify God.

The believer who lives by faith will "go on to perfection." (Hebrews 6:1). But the believer who lives by sight will "draw back unto perdition" (Verse 39), a state of displeasing God and waste. A believer who does not walk by faith goes back to the old ways and wastes his life. Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:15.

1 Corinthians 3:15: ***If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.***

The saving of a soul or life is the opposite of "waste or loss." To walk by faith means to obey God's Word and live for Jesus Christ. We may lose our lives for His sake, but we will save them (Matthew 16:25-27).

Matthew 16:25-27: ***25For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. 26For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in***

exchange for his soul? 27For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

A great encouragement presented (Verse 37).

"The coming One will come and will not delay or tarry." Tarry means to make out the time, spend time, linger, delay, be long in doing anything. He will come. John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20-21.

John 14:1-3: 1Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Acts 1:11: Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Philippians 3:20, 21: 20For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

There must be no uncertainty of this coming mighty event. It is the promise before us now. The promise to Israel was the Messiah. He came (Galatians 4:4). Then He Himself call the promise the coming of the Holy Spirit, which He would send to the Church (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8). He came (Acts 2).

Galatians 4:4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Luke 24:49: And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:4, 8: 4And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.... 8But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Now the Holy Spirit has come, and the expression "the promise" is transferred to the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the matter of expectation of his arrival upon earth again. He will be on time. HE WILL NOT TARRY (Verse 37)! We should not say, "If the Lord tarries or delays His coming." HE WILL NOT (Matthew 24:48; Luke 12:45).

Matthew 24:48: ***But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;***

Luke 12:45: ***But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;***

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice which can take away sin. Do you understand this fact? Or are you trying to find some other way to have fellowship with God?

If we have become dull to the Word of God, we are in danger of despising the Word. Do you know the will of God for your life but are doing something different?

Chapter Twenty-Three

The Just Shall Live By Faith-The Description Of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-3: *1Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

Introduction

This chapter introduces the final section of the epistle which could be called "Faith—A Superior Principle." The fact that Christ is a Superior Person (Chapters 1-6) and that He exercises a Superior Priesthood (Chapters. 7-10) ought to encourage us to put our trust in Him. The readers of this letter were being tempted to go back into Judaism and put their faith in Moses and animal sacrifices. Their confidence was in the visible things of this world, not the invisible realities of God. Instead of going on to perfection (maturity), they were being tempted to go "back into perdition (waste)."

Hebrews 6:1, 2, *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."*

Hebrews 10:38-39, *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."*

In the first ten chapters, the writer proved one thing to be true. The New Testament (Covenant) in Jesus' blood is superior to and takes the place of the Old Testament (Covenant) in animal sacrifices. He has proven this proposition twice. First, by comparing the relative merits of the founders of the covenants, arguing that a superior workman turns out a superior product (Chapters 1:1-8:16), and second, by comparing the relative merits of the Testaments (Covenants) themselves. (Chapters 8:7-10:39).

A study of the Gospels reveals the fact that the Judaism of the first century was not the supernatural system given by God whereby the sinner was given a salvation in answer to his faith in the Offering for sin which God would someday set forth, the animal sacrifice he offered being an outward testimony of his inward faith in the Sacrifice it symbolized. The Judaism of that day as an ethical cult. It taught salvation by works. The sacrifices were a mere form on the altars of Judaism.

It was therefore necessary for the writer to prove to the Jews that salvation was by faith, not by works. In Chapter 11:1-3, the writer describes faith. In Chapter 1:4-40 he illustrates the efficacy of faith by sing examples of Old Testament saints. Then, he exhorts the Jews to the act of faith (Chapter 12:1, 2).

THIS IS MORE OF A DESCRIPTION THAN IT IS A DEFINITION OF FAITH

Vs 1-3: 1Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2For by it the elders obtained a good report. 3Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

It tells what faith does and how it works. True Bible faith is not blind optimism or a manufactured "hope-so" feeling. Neither is it an intellectual assent to a doctrine. It is certainly not believing in spite of the evidence. That would be superstition. True Bible faith is a confident obedience to God's Word in spite of the circumstances and consequences.

THIS FAITH OPERATES QUIET SIMPLY

God speaks, and we hear His Word. We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be. The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences may be frightening and unknown; but we obey God's Word just the same and believe him to do what is right and what is best.

The world fails to realize that faith is only as good as its object, and the object of our faith is God. Faith is not some "feeling" that we manufacture. It is our total response to what God has revealed in His Word.

THERE ARE THREE WORDS IN HEBREWS 1:1-3 THAT SUMMARIZE WHAT TRUE BIBLE FAITH IS.

Substance

It comes from the Greek word "hupostasis". It is made up of "stasis", to stand, and "hupo" under; thus, it means "that which stands under, a foundation." It speaks of the ground or basis upon which one builds a hope. Faith is to a Christian what a foundation is to a house. It gives confidence and assurance that he will stand. Moulton and Milligan report its use as a legal term. They say that it stands for "the whole body of documents bearing on the ownership of a person's property, deposited in archives, and forming the evidence of ownership. In the case of the first century Jew, his act of faith in the Messiah as High Priest would be the title which God would give him, guaranteeing to him the possession of salvation for which he trusted God. In other words, when a believer has faith, it is God's way of giving him confidence and assurance that what is promised will be experienced.

Evidence

It comes from the Greek word "elegchos" which means "a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested." Thayer, in commenting on its usage here, defines it as follows: "that by which invisible things are proved and we are convinced of their reality." His second definition of the word is "conviction."

Vincent says: "*Observe that hupostasis (substance) and elegchos (evidence) are not two distinct and independent conceptions, in which case kai (and) would have been added; but they stand in apposition. Elegchos (evidence) is really included in hupostasis (substance) but adds to the simple*

idea of assurance, a suggestion of influences operating to produce conviction which carry the force of demonstration."

This is the inward conviction from God that what He has promised, He will perform. The presence of God-given faith in one's heart is conviction, enough that God will keep His Word.

Witness

It comes from the Greek "matureo" which means to bear witness to." This verb is in the passive voice. Verse 2, "For by it the elders were borne witness to." The KJV reads, "***obtained a good report.***" This word is used in Verse 2, twice in Verse 4, and once in Verse 5 and Verse 39. In Verse 2 it reads obtained a good report; in Verse 4 obtained witness, testifying; Verse 5, testimony; Verse 39, obtained a good report. The summary in Hebrews 12:1 calls this list of men and women "***so great a cloud of witnesses.***" They are witnesses to us because God witnessed to them. In each example cited, God gave witness to that person's faith.

Conclusion

Faith enables us to understand what God does for us (Verse 3). Faith enables us to please God (Verse 6). Faith enables us to see what others cannot see (Verses 7, 13, 27). As a result, faith enables us to do what others cannot do. Faith comes from the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

A good way to grow in faith is to walk with the faithful. The remainder of Chapter 11 is devoted to a summary of the lives and labors of great men and women of faith found in the Old Testament. In each of their instances is found the same elements of faith.

God spoke to them through His Word. Their inner selves were stirred in different ways. They obeyed God. He bore witness about them (Romans 8:16).

Romans 8:16: ***The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:***

Chapter Twenty-Four

The Just Shall Live By Faith – Faith Worshipping

Hebrews 11:4: *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*

Introduction

In the first three verses of this chapter, the writer gave a description of faith. Beginning with verse 4, the writer gave a number of illustrations from the Old Testament saints. In this lesson, we will consider Abel, who was the second son of Adam and Eve and the first martyr.

BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED UNTO GOD A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE THAN CAIN

Verse 4a: *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts:*

Genesis 4:1-11: *1And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 2And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. 8And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. 9And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? 10And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;*

The sacrifice of Cain

Genesis 4:3: *3And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.*

It was the fruit of the ground, a bloodless sacrifice. It was offered by a person with a wicked heart.

1 John 3:11-12, *"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that*

we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

The sacrifice of Abel

Genesis 4:4: 4And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

It was of the firstlings of his flock, a blood sacrifice. It was offered by a person who was righteous.

1 John 3:11, 12: 11For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Matthew 23:34, 35, "Wherefore, behold, I sent unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

It was offered by faith. It was a type of Jesus Christ.

BY FAITH ABEL OBTAINED WITNESS THAT HE WAS RIGHTOUS, GOD TESTIFYING OF HIS GIFTS

Verse 4b: And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

Abel obtained or received witness because God gave it. Genesis 4:4, "**And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.**" How God gave this witness, Genesis 4 does not tell us. But it was done in such a way that there could not be a mistake about it. Cain could see it as well as Abel and knew the opposite was true in his case. Cain knew that God did not have respect for his offering.

The witness declared that Abel was righteous (Hebrews 11:4b; Matthew 23:34, 35; 1 John 3:11, 12.)

Hebrews 11:4b: "... **And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.**"

Matthew 23:34, 35: 34Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: 35That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew

between the temple and the altar.

1 John 3:11, 12: ***11For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.***

God testified of Abel's gifts. What God had said may be summed up in the Words declared to Israel.

Leviticus 17:11: ***"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."***

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

It is in Genesis 4 that we have the revelation that God provided a substitute whose death He would accept in the sinner's place. All that the sinner could do was in faith to bring his offering and lay his hand upon it and confess it as his substitute (Leviticus 1:4). It is for God to give His testimony that He had accepted it. E. W. Bullinger wrote, "Man's conventional talk is about the sinner's acceptance of Christ. God's Word, for nearly sixty centuries, has been about the sinner believing what He had said." God has told us that he cannot and will not accept us in our sins. In ourselves, we are not only ruined sinners because of what we have done or not done. We are ruined creatures because of what we are. God has also told us that He can accept us only in the merits and Person of that perfect Substitute, His Son Jesus Christ, Whom He has provided. If we believe this, we will by faith lay our hands on Him, confess our belief in God as to our lost and ruined nature and as to Christ as God's provided Salvation. When we believe this, God pronounces us righteous, accepts us in the Person of Jesus Christ, and declares us as "accepted in the Beloved" because God accepted His one offering when He raised Jesus from the dead.

BY FAITH ABEL STILL SPEAKS EVEN THOUGH HE IS DEAD

Verse 4c: ***...and by it he being dead yet speaketh.***

Abel's blood spoke as a witness against Cain (Genesis 4:9-11). The cry of his blood from the ground was for vengeance on Cain.

By faith Abel still speaks even though he is dead. His faith tells us that it is not something else as a substitute for faith, nor is it something in addition to faith. It is not works, feelings, experiences, repentance, or love. It is believing what God has told me about myself, not only about what I have done, but what I am. It is believing what God has told me about Jesus Christ, the Saviour whom He provided, sent, and given, and this Saviour is able to save from sin.

Conclusion

Abel was a righteous man because of faith (Matthew 23:34, 35). God had revealed to Adam and his descendants the true way of worship, and Abel obeyed God by faith. Cain was not a child of God (1 John 3:11-12) because he did not have faith.

Faith has to do with what we hear from God; not with what we feel in ourselves. Our feelings do not connect us with God, but only with ourselves. Whatever the feelings may be, they do not affect our relationship with God or alter our standing before Him.

Feelings are only human at best. But faith has to do with God. Faith, of course, produces its own feelings.

Have you believed what God has said about you and what He has said about Jesus Christ? Do you have peace with God which is received by faith? Do you obey God and worship Him as He has stated? Note John 4:24.

John 4:24: *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Chapter Twenty-Five

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Walking With God

Hebrews 11:5, 6: *5By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Introduction

This lesson gives another illustration of the principle stated in Hebrews 10:38: *"The just shall live by faith."* The illustration is Enoch of whom Genesis 5:24 declares that he walked with God. Note Genesis 5:21-24, *"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch Walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."*

WHO ENOCH WAS

He was the son of Jared (Genesis 5:18).

Genesis 5:18: *And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch:*

He was the seventh from Adam (Jude 14).

Jude 14: *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,*

He was the great grandfather of Noah (Genesis 5:21-29).

Genesis 5:21-29: *21And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 22And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. 25And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: 26And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters: 27And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died. 28And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: 29And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.*

WHAT ENOCH DID

He walked with God (Genesis 5:22-24).

The fact that it is stated that Enoch walked with God implies that there were others who did not. He walked with God because he agreed with God. Amos 3:3: **"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"** Genesis 5:22-24 says nothing about Enoch's faith. It simply gives the results of faith. **"Enoch walked the God."** The conversion of Enoch is not recorded. But there can be no "walk with God" until there is "peace with God." There can be no "peace with God" before there is a sacrifice accepted by God. Justification must come before peace. Romans 5:1: **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."** Therefore, Enoch had peace with God and walked with Him by faith.

He was well pleasing to God.

Hebrews 11:5b: **"...for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."** "...for before his translation, he had obtained witness that he had been well pleasing to God." Enoch heard God's Word. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). Enoch believed God and obeyed. This made him well pleasing to God while he walked with God. 2 Corinthians 5:7-9: **"For we walk by faith, not by sight: We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him."** Accepted and well-pleasing come from the same word. Enoch obtained witness that he was well pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:5b). God gave this witness about Enoch.

Romans 10:17: **So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

He witnessed for God.

Jude 14, 15: **"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."**

Enoch was a prophet (Jude 14a). Since he prophesied as God's spokesman, God spoke to him and told him what to say to the people (Cf. Numbers 11:29; 12:6). He believed God and gave forth the solemn warning of His message (Jude 14, 15).

Numbers 11:29: **And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!**

Numbers 12:6: **And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.**

WHAT ENOCH EXPERIENCED

Translation.

God took him (Genesis 5:24). Enoch was translated (Hebrews 11:5). He went to be with God. He was translated that he should not see death. He was a type of those who are caught up to meet Jesus Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: 13But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Before his translation (Hebrews 11:5b, 6.

He pleased God, that is, he was well pleasing to God. He lived by faith. Enoch heard God and believed Him. This made him well pleasing to God while he walked with God. As God delivered Enoch by translating him before the coming judgment of the flood, so will God deliver his saints from "wrath to come."

Ephesians 5:6: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

Conclusion

The just shall live by faith. Enoch believed God and walked with Him by faith. By faith Enoch was well pleasing to God and illustrates how we can be well pleasing to God. A person cannot walk with God without being saved. A saved person must hear God's Word, believe it, and live by it in order to be well pleasing to God.

Are you walking by faith?

Chapter Twenty-Six

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faiths Witness For God

Hebrews 11:7: *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*

Introduction

Noah is another illustration of the principle stated in Hebrews 10:38. "*The just shall live by faith.*" There are more verses which speak about Noah than there are verses which speak of both Abel and Enoch.

Noah was the great grandson of Enoch and the grandson of Methuselah, who was the oldest man who ever lived. Noah is mentioned in Genesis 5:28-9:17; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Matthew 24:36-39; Luke 3:36; Luke 17:26-27; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5, as well as in our text.

Genesis 5:28-9:17: *28And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: 29And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. 30And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: 31And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. 32And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth....1And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. 13And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt*

thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

Ezekiel 14:14, 20: 14Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD....20Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

Matthew 24:36-39: 36But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. 37But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 38For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Luke 3:36: Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

Luke 17:26, 27: 26And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 27They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

1 Peter 3:20: Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

2 Peter 2:5: And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

The account in Genesis does not mention Noah's faith, but it does declare the result of his faith. Genesis 6:9 says, **"Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."** In order to walk with God, a person must have peace with God. This peace with God comes through faith in God because of the acceptable blood sacrifice. Romans 5:1: **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."** Noah heard God's Word, believed it, and acted in obedience to it. Thus, Noah walked with God.

THE CONDITIONS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

A time of great wickedness.

Genesis 6:1-12: 1And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, 2That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. 3And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. 4There were giants in the earth in those days;

and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. 5And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

There was great wickedness (Genesis 6:5a). There was great evil in the thoughts of the hearts of men (Genesis 6:5b, 11, 12). So great was the wickedness that it grieved God (Genesis 6:6).

It was a time which called for great judgment (Genesis 6:7). It was a time which prefigured the conditions of the earth when Jesus comes again.

Matthew 24:36-39, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Luke 17:26-27, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

THE CHARACTER OF NOAH

He was a just man (Genesis 6:9). He was a man of faith (Hebrews 11:7). He was a man who walked with God (Genesis 6:9). He was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:4, 5).

2 Peter 2:4, 5: 4For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

THE COMMISSION GIVEN TO NOAH

Genesis 6:13-7:24: 13And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15And this is the

fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. 18But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. 19And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. 20Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. 21And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. 22Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he....1And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. 2Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. 3Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 4For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. 5And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. 6And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. 7And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. 8Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, 9There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. 10And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. 11In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; 14They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. 15And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. 16And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in. 17And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. 18And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. 19And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high

hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. 20Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. 21And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: 22All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 23And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. 24And the water prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

He was commissioned to build the ark (Genesis 6:13-22). To get a limited number of animals on the ark (Genesis 7:1-5). He was commissioned to take his family aboard (Genesis 7:13; Hebrews 11:7).

THE COMPLIANCE OF NOAH

Hebrews 11:7: By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

He believed God's Warning of judgment. He had not seen such an ark before. He had not seen a flood before. In spite of this, he did as he was instructed. He built the ark according to God's instructions.

Genesis 6:22: "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

Genesis 7:5: "And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him."

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE LIFE OF NOAH

The human race was preserved. Animal life was preserved. The genealogy of Jesus Christ was preserved. The faith of Noah was demonstrated. The world was condemned.

Hebrews 11:7: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Romans 1:17, 18: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."

Enoch prophesied.

Jude 14-15, *"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."*

Noah proclaimed.

2 Peter 2:4-5, *"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eight person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;"*

The covenant with Noah.

Genesis 6:17, 18: *16A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

Genesis 9:8-17: *8Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 9But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 10And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 12And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more. 13And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. 15And God spake unto Noah, saying, 16Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. 17Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.*

Conclusion

Noah is an illustration of a person who lives by faith. Noah was saved by faith in God. Genesis 6:8: *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."* Although the world was so wicked that God pronounced judgment upon it, Noah still believed and trusted God. Noah witnessed for God both in word and work.

Do you have the assurance that you will go to heaven when this life is over? Does your life prove that you know God as your Saviour and Lord?

Chapter Twenty-Seven

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Abraham-Faith Waiting

Hebrews 11:8-19: **8By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city. 17By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.**

Introduction

Abraham is given as another example of a just person living by faith. **"...Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God"** (James 2:23). (Cf. Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3). God made a covenant with Abraham, and he became the father of the nation of Israel. (Genesis Chapters 12-17). Abraham is the first person to be called a Hebrew. (Genesis 14:13). Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec (Genesis 14:18-22).

Genesis 15:6: **And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.**

Romans 4:3: **For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

Genesis 14:13: **And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.**

Genesis 14:18-22: **18And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19And he blessed him, and**

said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: 20And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. 21And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. 22And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

The Old Testament does not talk about Abraham's faith. But it gives the record of his obedience which clearly reveals his faith in God. Not all of the events of Abraham's life are given in Hebrews 11. Only three events are mentioned, but they are enough to illustrate the writer's point and to give encouragement to the readers. Abraham was called to a life of dependence upon God and to a life as a pilgrim among the lawless inhabitants of Canaan. He was a follower of God who lived in the world but was not of the world.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

Verse 8: 8By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

The Person who called him.

He is called the LORD (Genesis 12:1).

Genesis 12:1: Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

He is the God of glory (Acts 7:2).

Acts 7:2: And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

Abraham was prompt in his obedience (Verse 8; Genesis 12:1-8).

Genesis 12:1-8: 1Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. 4So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in

Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. 6And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. 8And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

Abraham obeyed even though he did not know where he was going (Genesis 12:2; Acts 7:3. He obeyed because he believed God. He believed that God knew what was best for him. He believed that God would lead him in the right way.

Acts 7:3: And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

THE SOJOURNING OF ABRAHAM

Verses 9-16: 9By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. 11Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. 13These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

Sojourn (Greek paroikeo)—to dwell beside or near; to sojourn, to dwell as a stranger.

Elements of his sojourning (Verse 9).

It was by faith. It was in a land that belonged to strangers (Genesis 12:5, 6). He and his company lived in tents, which were temporary and moveable shelter. He had Isaac and Jacob as joint heirs.

Eyes with a focus (Verse 10).

He looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. He was given some promises (Verse 13a). (Cf. Genesis 13:14-16; 17:1-8)

Genesis 13:14-16: *14And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: 15For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. 16And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.*

Genesis 17:1-8: *1And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. 3And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, 4As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 5Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. 6And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. 7And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*

Expectations (Verses 13-16).

There was the promise of a country—the promised land (Verses 13-15). There was the promise of a city (Verse 16), in a better country, and a city which God has prepared.

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM

Verses 17-19: *17By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*

Obedied by faith.

Abraham obeyed when he did not know why God was working in this manner (Genesis 22:1-5).

Genesis 22:1-5: *1And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. 2And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. 3And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes,*

and saw the place afar off. 5And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

He offered up his only begotten son through whom the promises of covenant would come (Verses 17, 18; Genesis 22:6-14). Note the steps of faith which Abraham took (Genesis 22:3-10).

Genesis 22:3-14: And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. 6And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. 9And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. 14And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

1. He rose up early in the morning (Verse 3).
2. He went to the place of which God had told him (Verses 3, 9).
3. He built an altar (Verse 9).
4. He laid the wood in order Verse 9).
5. He bound Isaac (Verse 9).
6. He laid him on the altar (Verse 9).
7. He stretched forth his hand (Verse 10).
8. He took the knife to slay his son (Verse 10).

He obeyed because he believed in God's power Verse 19; Genesis Chapters 15-18).

Conclusion

Abraham showed his faith by his obedience to God. He obeyed God when he did not know where

he was going. He obeyed God when he did not know how God's will would be accomplished. He obeyed God when he did not know when God would fulfill promises. He obeyed when he did not know the purpose of God.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Sarah-Faiths Conclusion

Hebrews 11:11-12: ***11Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. 12Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.***

Introduction

Sometimes in our humanity, we have difficulty in understanding God's assessment of His children. God called David ***"a man after mine own heart"*** (1 Samuel 13:13; 1 Kings 11:4; Acts 13:22). David is also called a "patriarch" and a "prophet" (Acts 2:29, 30), but we remember that David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. Then the question is raised, "How could he be a man after God's heart?" God looks on the heart and sees the whole picture while we see a couple of events.

1 Samuel 13:13: ***And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.***

1 Kings 11:4: ***For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.***

Acts 13:22: ***And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.***

Acts 2:29, 30: ***29Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;***

Peter was an apostle who is presented a loyal servant of Jesus Christ and a leader in the early church, but we remember that he denied the Lord three times.

Thomas was an apostle of Jesus Christ, but the thing which most people remember about Thomas is that for a while he doubted the resurrection of Jesus Christ until he saw the hands and side of Jesus.

The writer of Hebrews listed Sarah as a person whose faith is an illustration of the statement in Hebrews 10:38, ***"The just shall live by faith."*** Sometimes we wonder why she is listed when we

remember some events in her life.

SARAH'S CHALLENGE

The promises of God.

The promise was that in Abraham's seed the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). Her challenge was whether the promise to Abraham included her (Genesis 16:1-5). The specific promise concerning Sarah was when she was 89 years old (Genesis 17:15-21). Then there was the repeated promise concerning Sarah (Genesis 18:9-15).

Genesis 12:1-3: 1Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 16:1-5: 1Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. 5And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

Genesis 17:15-21: 15And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. 16And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. 17Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? 18And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! 19And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. 20And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. 21But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

Genesis 18:9-15: 9And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. 10And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to

the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. 11Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? 13And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. 15Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

The peril of growing old.

It caused her to think she could not bear children (Genesis 16:1-5). There was the deadness of Sarah's womb (Hebrews 11:12; Romans 4:16-19). Caused her to laugh when she heard the angel of the LORD say that she would have a son (Genesis 18:9-15). Why was Sarah rebuked for laughing at being told that she would have a son and Abraham was not rebuked when he laughed (Cf. Genesis 17:15-21 and Genesis 18:9-15? Genesis 17:17: ***"Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?"*** Abraham's laughter was accompanied by the deepest act of reverence. His question was not for information. It was an exclamatory question of Joy. See Romans 4:18-21. John 8:56, ***"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad."*** When Sarah laughed, (Gen. 18:12), there was no such act of reverence. She "laughed within herself." Then she denied that she laughed (Genesis 18:12-15).

Since Sarah was 89 years old, it may have been a shock and a great surprise that she would give birth to a son. But when she realized that this was indeed a promise from God, all doubt vanished. It is affirmed in Hebrews 11:11 that Sarah "received strength" through faith. At the feast of rejoicing when Isaac was weaned, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me." To laugh "within herself was one thing; but it was quite another thing to be "made to laugh" by God.

SARAH'S COURAGE

It was her reminder of God's power (Genesis 18:13, 14). It was the response of faith to God's Word (Hebrews 11:11). Sarah "received strength to conceive seed" (Genesis 17:15-21; 18:9-15; Genesis 21:6).

Genesis 21:6: ***And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.***

SARAH'S CONCLUSION

Hebrews 11:11c, ***".. she judged Him faithful that promised."***

God's Word was heard (Genesis 18:14).

God's Word was kept (Genesis 21:1, 2).

Genesis 21:1, 2: ***1And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. 2For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.***

As He said (Verse 1). Which God had spoken (Verse 2).

Sarah's testimony

Genesis 21:6: ***"And Sarah said, God hath made to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me."***

Hebrews 11:11: ***"Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised."***

This is what Abraham had done.

Romans 4:20, 21: ***"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform."***

Conclusion

God's children are never presented as being perfect in the flesh. They are truthfully presented with all the same frailties and infirmities which we all have.

That is why we have a record of their lives.

Romans 15:4: ***"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."***

We must look away from the ***"great crowd of witnesses"*** (Hebrews 12:1) unto Him Who is the Author of their faith (Hebrews 12:2) and the Giver of strength.

God spoke, and as soon as Sarah understood the meaning of what God said, she ***"judged Him faithful Who had promised."*** When God's faithfulness was realized, Sarah could say ***"God hath made me laugh."***

Chapter Twenty-Nine

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Overcoming

Hebrews 11:20, 21: *20By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.*

Introduction

The Bible reveals the importance of the fathers teaching and passing on their faith to their children. Abraham was a person of faith and was called the friend of God. But he taught his son Isaac concerning the person and work of God.

When God was about to bring judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah, God testified of Abraham's instruction to his children.

Genesis 18:17-19, *"And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him."*

Then this teaching was passed onto Jacob (Genesis 48:21; Genesis 15:13-16).

Genesis 48:21: *And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.*

Genesis 15:13-16: *13And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.*

Both Isaac and Jacob are given as illustrations of the principle, *"The just shall live by faith"* Hebrews 10:38.

ISAAC-FAITH OVERCOMING THE WILL OF THE FLESH

Hebrews 11:20, *"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."*

The twins, Esau and Jacob

Here is the LORD'S declaration (Genesis 25:23)

Genesis 25:23: "And The LORD said unto her (Rebekah) Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thou bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall the younger."

This statement was made before the boys were born. "

Look at their delivery (Genesis 25:24-26).

Genesis 25:24-26: 24And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 26And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.

Look at their differences (Genesis 25:27, 28).

Genesis 25:27, 28: 27And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. 28And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Esau was cunning hunter, a man of the field. He was loved by Isaac because of his venison.

Jacob was a plain man who dwelt in tents, and was a shepherd. He was loved by Rebekah.

The test

Genesis 25:29-34: 29And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: 30And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

Esau gave Jacob his request (Verse 30). Jacob gave Esau his response (Verse 31). Esau made a rash assessment of his condition (Verse 32). He had a reckless disregard for the birthright (Verses 33-34).

The time of blessing (Genesis 27).

Consider the decision made by Isaac (Verses 1-4).

Verses 1-4: *1And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. 2And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: 3Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; 4And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.*

Jacob, however, was very deceitful (Verses 6-25).

Verses 6-25: *6And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, 7Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. 8Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. 9Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: 10And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. 11And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: 12My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. 13And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. 14And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. 15And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: 16And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: 17And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me. 21And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. 22And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 24And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. 25And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.*

Rebekah had a plan (Verses 5-13). Jacob appeared to be happy to participate in his mother's plan (Verses 14-25). The result was the declaration of the blessing upon Jacob (Verses 26-29).

Verses 26-29: *26And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed: 28Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.*

Part of the blessing was a material one (Verses 27, 28); the national blessing (Verse 29), and the covenant blessing (Verse 29; Genesis 12:1-3).

Genesis 12:1-3: *1Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

The declaration of blessing was affirmed (Verses 30-36; Genesis 25:23).

Verses 30-36: *30And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. 32And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. 33And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. 34And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. 35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. 36And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?*

Genesis 25:23: *And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

There was also the desire and blessing of Esau (Verses 36-40).

Verses 36-40: *And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? 37And*

Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? 38And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. 39And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; 40And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

By faith, Isaac overcame the will of his flesh and the will of Esau's flesh. The flesh of Isaac wanted to bless Esau. The flesh of Esau wanted the blessing even though he had despised and sold his birth right. Perhaps Isaac remembered God's declaration before Jacob and Esau were born. This may have encouraged Isaac to let the blessing on Jacob stand.

JACOB-FAITH OVERCOMING THE WILL OF MAN

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

Genesis 48:1-20: 1And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession. 5And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. 7And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem. 8And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these? 9And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 10Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. 11And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed. 12And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. 13And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. 14And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands

wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. 15And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. 17And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. 18And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. 19And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. 20And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

Jacob was sick (Verse 1). Joseph and his sons presented themselves to Jacob (Verses 2-20). Manasseh and Ephraim were brought forth to Jacob (Verse 1; Genesis 41:51, 52).

Genesis 41:51, 52: 51And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. 52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

They were blessed by Israel as Ephraim and Manasseh (Verses 14, 18-20). Israel, the prince of God, pronounced the blessing upon Joseph's son. He was firm in giving the blessing and overcame the will of Joseph who wanted Manasseh blessed as the firstborn (Verses 18-20).

Joseph received a double portion blessing of birthright (Verses 21, 22). Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, had lost the birth right because he had defiled his father's bed (Genesis 49:3, 4).

Verses 21, 22: 21And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. 22Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

Jacob's worship

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

Gen. 47:31b, "...And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head."

Jacob had just gotten the promise from Joseph that he would bury him in Egypt but would carry him back to the promised land and bury him in the sepulcher of his fathers (Genesis 47:28-31). Israel showed faith in God's promise and his faith included worship.

Genesis 47:28-31: 28And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. 29And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: 30But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. 31And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

Conclusion

All of the events in the lives of Isaac and Jacob are not discussed in Hebrews 11. One event in the lives of Isaac and Jacob are used to show how faith worked in their lives to make certain that they were in the will of God. Each of them pronounced blessings when they were old and nearing death. But this circumstance did not keep them from following God by faith.

When a person lives by faith, it not surprising that faith will be present as they approach death.

Chapter Thirty

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Joseph-Faith Waiting

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

Introduction

If you live your whole life believing the promises of God but do not receive them, does this mean that your faith is in vain? Hebrews 11:13 states, *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*

Joseph is given as another example of one who lived by faith. The event to which the writer referred took place as Joseph was dying.

Hebrews 11:22: *"By faith Joseph, when he died (was dying), made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."*

Joseph had been taught about the covenant which God made with Abraham and passed on to Isaac and Jacob. The writer showed that Joseph not only was taught about the covenant, but he also believed that God would keep His promises. That is why Joseph instructed the children of Israel concerning his bones.

THE FACTS ABOUT JOSEPH

Joseph was the son of Jacob and Rachel (Genesis 30:22-24).

Genesis 30:22-24: *22And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. 23And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: 24And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.*

He was the favorite son of Jacob (Genesis 37:3).

Genesis 37:3: *Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.*

He was hated by his brothers because of his father's partiality (Genesis 37:3-11).

Genesis 37:3-11: *3Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. 4And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. 5And Joseph dreamed*

a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

He had dreams of exaltation (Genesis 37:5-10).

He was sold by his brothers into Egypt (Genesis 37:12-28).

Genesis 37:12-28: 12And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. 14And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? 16And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. 17And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. 18And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. 19And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. 21And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. 22And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. 23And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; 24And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. 25And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. 26And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? 27Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. 28Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and

lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

He received a position of great authority in Egypt (Genesis 41:37-57).

Genesis 41:37-57: 37And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? 39And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: 40Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. 44And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. 45And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. 46And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. 49And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. 50And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. 51And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. 52And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. 53And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. 54And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. 56And the famine was over all the face of the earth: and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. 57And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

THE FAITH OF JOSEPH

He had Godly influence (Genesis 39:1-3).

Genesis 39:1-3: 1And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an

officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. 2And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand.

He had Godly conduct in business. (Genesis 39:5, 6).

Genesis 39:5, 6: 5And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. 6And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

He resisted temptation (Genesis 37:7-19; Note Verse 9, "*There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*").

Genesis 37:7-19: 7And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; 9There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? 10And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. 11And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. 13And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, 14That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: 15And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. 16And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. 17And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: 18And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out. 19And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

In spite of what was happening to him, he still had divine favor (Genesis 39:21-23).

Genesis 39:21-23: 21But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and

gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

He had God's provision in difficult circumstances (Genesis 40. Note Verses 5-8).

Genesis 40: 1And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. 2And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. 3And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. 4And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward. 5And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. 6And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. 7And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? 8And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you. 9And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; 10And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: 11And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. 12And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days: 13Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. 14But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: 15For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. 16When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: 17And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. 18And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days: 19Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee. 20And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. 21And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: 22But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted

to them. 23Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

He honored God (Genesis 41:14-16).

Genesis 41:14-16: 14Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. 15And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. 16And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

He was given divine revelations (Genesis 41:25-36).

Genesis 41:25-36: 25And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. 28This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: 30And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; 31And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. 32And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. 33Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

THE FINAL AND GREATEST ACT OF FAITH BY JOSEPH

The promise remembered (Hebrews 11:22).

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

The promise was first given to Abraham (Genesis 15:13-16).

Genesis 15:13-16: 13And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14And also that nation, whom they shall

serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

It was passed on to Isaac and Jacob. It was remembered by Joseph.

Genesis 50:24: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

Genesis 47:29, 30: 29And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: 30But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

God will surely visit you. God will bring you out of this land (Egypt). God will bring you into the land which He sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. God said it. Joseph believed it. ***"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God."*** Romans 10:17.

The faith and commandment of Joseph was honored. The promises of God fulfilled.

Exodus 12:40, 41: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."

The promise to Joseph was kept.

Exodus 13:19, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straightly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you."

The burial of Joseph's bones was done in the promise land as promised. This took place about 300 years after the death of Joseph.

Joshua 24:32, "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

Conclusion

Because Joseph believed God, he commanded the children of Israel to take his bones back to the

promise land. Joseph died in faith, not having received the promise. But he saw it by faith and was persuaded that God's promise was true, and God would keep it (Hebrews 11:13).

Hebrews 11:13: ***These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.***

Joseph was a faithful servant of God and lived by faith. He lived by God's standards and trusted God to keep His promises and to provide for him.

The believer today has not seen heaven, but he believes God's promises about heaven. The believer today has not yet received a glorified body, but he believes that one day he will receive it.

Have you received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? If not, why not do so now?

Chapter Thirty-One

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Overcoming The Fear Of Man

Hebrews 11:23: *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

Introduction

All of the examples of individuals whose lives illustrate the principle, "The just shall live by faith," have come from the book of Genesis. The example which we are considering in this lesson comes from the Book of Exodus.

The whole point of this chapter starts from the definition of faith given in the first verse. **"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"** (Hebrews 11:1). This statement is based upon Romans 10:17: **"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."** The hope of the believer rests on believing what he has heard from God.

Our text says, **"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's command."** This statement tells us that Moses' parents had heard something from God. They believed what they heard, and that gave them the courage to act as they did.

A lot of sermons speak much about the beauty of the child. If their action had been based on the beauty of the child, it would have been by affection, by fancy, or perhaps by pride. If the actions of Moses' parents had been based on affection for the child, their fear would have been increased. Affection would not have driven the fear away. The more they admired and loved the baby, the more would they have feared that something evil would have happened to him. Our text says that it was "by faith." Because of their faith, the more they loved the child, the less they feared. It was because of this faith that they hid the child and had no fear as to the consequences of obeying God instead of obeying man.

THE COMMAND OF THE KING OF EGYPT

Hebrews 11:23: *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.*

Exodus 1:8-22: *8Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. 9And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 10Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12But the more*

they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: 14And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour. 15And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah: 16And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive. 18And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? 19And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. 20Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 22And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

The crowning of a new king in Egypt

There came to power a new king who did not know Joseph (Exodus 1:8). This new king was of a new dynasty.

Isaiah 52:4: *"For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without a cause."*

This new king was of a different kind. This is the idea in the word translated "new." Note Deuteronomy 32:17, *"They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not."* The new gods were of a different kind. With the new king being an Assyrian instead of an Egyptian, we can surely understand why he did not know Joseph.

The concern of the king (Exodus 1:9, 10). He was concerned that the Israelites might join the enemy in a time of war and escape.

The craftiness of the king (Exodus 1:11-14). He planned to make slaves of the Israelites, perhaps to break their will and hinder their growth in number.

The command to kill the male children (Exodus 1:15-22). He gave the order to the Hebrew midwives (Verses 15, 16). This caused great opposition by them (Verses 17-21). Pharaoh gave the order to all of the people (Verse 22).

THE COURAGE OF MOSES' PARENTS

The birth of Moses

Exodus 2:2: ***And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.***

Miriam and Aaron had already been born. Moses was conceived and born after the command to kill the male children was given.

The boldness of Moses' mother

Exodus 2:3: ***And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.***

By faith, she hid him for three months (Hebrews 11:23). By faith, she put him in an ark and placed the ark in the river. W. Bullinger wrote, "It looks as though it were almost defiance; but it was not; it was 'faith. It looks like recklessness, but it was 'the obedience of faith,' for they must have heard from God what He was about to do."

Also, Bullinger wrote, "The king's commandment to his people was: "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river." (Exodus 1:22). Jocebed committed her son to the waters of the very same river: but he was safe amid those waters of death, by a Divinely devised and ordered protection: and the same Divine ordering ruled and over-ruled all to the working out of His own counsels."

Faith was the basis of the mother's courage. Hebrews 11:23, ***"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."*** Her faith was rewarded by the compassion of the king's daughter and the saving of her baby's life.

THE COMPASSION OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER

Exodus 2:5-10: ***5And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. 7Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.***

The arrival of the king's daughter at the river is seen in Verse 5.

The ark containing the baby is found in Verse 5.

The anguish of the baby is seen in Verse 6a.

The acknowledgement and compassion of the king's daughter is seen in Verse 6b.

The action of Moses' sister is revealed in Verse 7.

The assistance requested by the king's daughter is found in Verses 9, 10.

Conclusion

The parents of Moses heard the Word of God and believed it. This was the basis of their action. Because the parents of Moses believed God, they were not afraid of the king's command and took action to save the life of their son. Although the child was "a goodly child," "a proper child," and a child of beauty, it was faith that motivated them to obey God and not kill their son. It was faith that enabled the parents of Moses to believe like Peter and the other Apostles, "***We ought to obey God rather than men***" (Acts 5:29). It is faith that will enable us to say "no" to disobedience and "yes" to obedience to God.

Chapter Thirty-Two

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Overcoming The Praise Of Man

Hebrews 11:24-26: *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

Introduction

We have heard of Moses and his leading the children of Israel out of Egypt. Many have seen the movie "The Ten Commandments" which portrays the life of Moses. Because of his role in Israel's history, he is mentioned often in both the Old and New Testaments.

The writer of Hebrews chose Moses as another example of one who lived by faith. **"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God"** (Romans 10:17). Moses heard the Word of God, believed it, and was blessed by God. Moses' faith enabled him to make the decisions mentioned in our text.

THE REFUSAL BY FAITH

Hebrews 11:24: *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."*

Refused, (Greek, *aireomai*)—to deny, to renounce, to reject.

The offer. "To be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

Acts 7:20, 21: *"In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son."*

The offer meant that he was to be royalty—a prince in Egypt. This also meant that he was to be the ruler of Egypt.

The opportunity.

Acts 7:22: *"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."* He received an excellent education: The wisdom of Egypt and the Word of God.

The objection. "Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter."

This meant that he refused the position of royalty in Egypt, and refused the riches of Egypt. This refusal came because his faith gave him the strength to say "NO."

THE REPROACH OF FAITH

Hebrews 11:25: *"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sins for a season."*

Suffer affliction with Israel.

This choice was made by faith. In his refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he chose to suffer affliction, to be ill-treated, with the people of God. Through the Word of God, Moses had learned that the children of Israel were the people of God.

Acts 7:23-29: *23And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. 24And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: 25For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not. 26And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? 27But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday? 29Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.*

Exodus 2:11-14: *11And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.*

Gave up the pleasures of sin for a season.

Pleasure (Greek, hedone)—delight, enjoyment, pleasurable sensation. The pleasures of sin are temporary. The pleasures of sin are not worth the price to be paid.

THE REWARD OF FAITH

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

Esteem (Greek, Hegeomai)—to view, to regard as being so and so, to count, to reckon. Reproach (Greek, oneidismos)—defamation, reproach, reviling.

Recompence of the reward (Greek, mishapodosia)—full payment of wages.

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

The value that was seen by faith (Verse 26), the treasures in Egypt, and the reproach of the Christ. He counted the reproach of the Christ to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

2 Corinthians 12:10: *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*

James 1:2-4: *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."*

1 Peter 1:6-9: *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto the praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."*

The view of the future recompence.

E. W. Bullinger wrote: "If we believe what we have heard from God about His Christ, and this brings reproach upon us, it ought to make us the happiest of beings. It ought to act like water to a parched plant. It ought to make our joy grow exceedingly." (Great Cloud of Witnesses, p242).

Dr. Vance Havner: "Moses chose the imperishable, saw the invisible, and did the impossible."

The reason was this: "Moses had respect, (looked away from the treasures and from the reproach), unto the recompence." The twofold recompence is: The retribution of the ungodly, and the reward of the righteous.

Conclusion

The whole life of Moses was based on and governed by faith in what God had declared concerning both the ungodly and the righteous. Faith enabled Moses to see the truth about things and gave him the courage to make the right decisions.

Do you know what God has said? Do you believe it? Does your faith give you the strength to say "yes" to God and His ways and strength to say "no" to Satan and his ways?

Chapter Thirty-Three

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Acting Without Fear

Hebrews 11:27, 28: *27By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. 28Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.*

Introduction

By faith, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. By faith, he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season. By faith, Moses esteemed, and counted, the reproach of the Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Like Abraham, Moses had faith which caused him to act in obedience to God. He trusted God and God's promises and demonstrated his faith by his actions. Faith changed Moses from a person of fear to a person who acted without fear.

BY FAITH MOSES FORSOOK, LEFT, EGYPT

Verse 27: *"By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible."*

There is no contradiction between Exodus 2:14, 15 and Hebrews 11:27. Moses left the land of Egypt two times.

The first time, Moses left Egypt in fear.

Exodus 2:14, 15: *"And he (the Hebrew whom Moses confronted) said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killest the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. Now When Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well."*

When Moses visited his brethren (Exodus 2:11), he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. He looked to see whether someone would help the Hebrew and saw no one.

Exodus 2:12: *"And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."*

Seeing no one who would help the Hebrew, Moses slew the Egyptian. This was not a man who was looking to commit a crime without getting caught. Note other verses which use a similar expression as "he saw that there was no man."

Isaiah 59:16: *"And he saw that there was no man, and wandered that there was*

no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him: and his righteousness, it sustained him."

Isaiah 63:5: "And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

Psalms 142:4: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

Ezekiel 22:30: "I sought for a man among them that would make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

Moses left Egypt in fear when he learned that Pharaoh sought to kill him (Exodus 2:14, 15).

The second time Moses left Egypt, it was by faith.

Exodus 2:12-14: 12And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

Hebrews 11:27: By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. (Forsook, forsake (Gk kataleipo)—to leave behind, to forsake, to abandon)

Moses came back to Egypt at the Word of God. He prepared the people to leave Egypt according to the Word of God. When they came to the Red Sea, it was Moses who encouraged the Israelites.

Exodus 14:10, 13, 14: "And When Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD...And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

When there was fear, there was no faith. When there was faith, there was no fear (Hebrews 11:27.) In the first leaving, Moses had fear and took flight. In the second leaving, Moses had faith and forsook Egypt, never to return. When Moses left Egypt the second time, there was no fear of the king.

Moses heard from the LORD about His salvation. He believed what God said, and in the strength of faith, he had no fear and could say "fear not." Hebrews 11:27b tells us that Moses "**endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.**"

BY FAITH, MOSES KEPT THE PASSOVER

Verse 28, "**By faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.**"

Moses obeyed God's command (Exodus Chapter 12). The lambs were selected, the lambs were slain, and the blood was applied (Hebrews 11:28a).

Moses believed God's cause.

Exodus 12:12, "**For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.**" (See also Hebrews 11:28b)

He received God's comfort.

Exodus 14:13: "**And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.**"

He taught the people the commanded memorial.

Exodus 14:14, 21-28: **14The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace....21And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. 26And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came**

into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

Conclusion

Moses' faith moved him to act upon God's Word. By faith, Moses left Egypt behind to serve God. Egypt is a type of the world, and believers need faith in God and God's Word and leave the world behind to serve God. By faith, Moses kept the Passover, the blood was applied, and all the firstborn of Israel were not touched by death.

The Passover was the LORD's Passover (Ex. 12:11-13) and was a type of Jesus Christ Who is our Passover. (1 Cor. 5:7).

Exodus 12:11-13: *11And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. 12For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.*

1 Corinthians 5:7: *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

Are you a believer in Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour? Do you have the assurance that you will go to Heaven when you die? Does your faith cause you to obey God?

Chapter Thirty-Four

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Israel-Faiths Obedience

Hebrews 11:29, 30: ***29By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. 30By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.***

Introduction

Nine plagues had fallen upon Egypt, and Israel was still in bondage. But God would send the plague of the death of the first born. God commanded Moses to prepare the people for deliverance from the plague and from Egypt.

Moses instructed Israel to select a lamb for each family, put it up for three days, slay the lamb, and apply the blood to the door posts. They were to roast the meat and eat it with unleavened bread. They were to be fully dressed and ready to travel. It was the LORD's Passover, which was a type of our Passover, Jesus Christ.

The Israelites were allowed by Pharaoh to leave Egypt after the first born of all Egyptians died.

Exodus 13:21, 22: ***"And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."***

The children of Israel followed the LORD by faith.

IN THE CROSSING OF THE RED SEA

Hebrews 11:29: ***"By faith they (the children of Israel) passed through the Red Sea as on dry land: which the Egyptians assaying (attempting) to do were drowned."***

The Problem.

Exodus 14:5-12: ***5And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? 6And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: 7And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. 8And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. 9But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pihahiroth, before Baalzephon. 10And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after***

them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried out unto the LORD. 11And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? 12Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.

The pursuit of Pharaoh's army was the result of the leaving of the children of Israel (Verses 5-8). The appearance of Pharaoh and his army caused great fear in the children of Israel (Verses 10-12).

The Promise.

Exodus 14:13, 14: 13And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Moses gave the command (Verse 13a). Fear not. Fear has doubt, not faith. Stand still and wait.

Psalms 37:7: "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."

See the salvation of the LORD, which He shall show you today. The salvation or deliverance was the physical lives of the people. They were saved for service. In saving their lives, the children of Israel were baptized in the sea and cloud.

1 Corinthians 10:1, 2: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea."

Their confidence was in the LORD (Verse 13b-14). The enemies will be gone (Verse 13b). The encouragement was to trust the LORD (Verse 14).

The Provision.

Exodus 14:15-31: 15And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward: 16But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. 17And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 18And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 19And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood

behind them: 20And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night. 21And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. 26And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. 29But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. 31And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Their command was to go forward (Verse 15). God was responsible for clearing the way for Israel (Verses 16-22). He was also responsible for closing the way for the Egyptians (Verses 23-29).

The consequences meant victory for Israel but defeat for the Egyptians (Verses 30, 31). It meant the discovery of defeat by the Egyptians (Verses 18, 25); the deliverance of Israel (Verse 30), and the faith of Israel (Verse 30).

The Praise unto the LORD by Israel.

Exodus 15:1-19: 1Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. 3The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. 4Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. 5The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. 6Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. 7And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown

them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. 8And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. 10Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. 14The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. 17Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. 18The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. 19For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

AT THE WALL OF JERICHO

Hebrews 11:30, *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed seven days."*

The Challenge.

Joshua 6:1: *Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.*

The Command.

Joshua 6:2-5: *2And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour. 3And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war, and go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days. 4And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. 5And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.*

The promise was given in Verse 2. The plan was revealed in Verses 3-5.

The Conquest.

Joshua 6:6-20: 6And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD. 7And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD. 8And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rereward came after the ark, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. 10And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. 11So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. 12And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rereward came after the ark of the LORD, the priests going on, and blowing with the trumpets. 14And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. 15And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city. 17And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. 19But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD. 20So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

The compliance to God's plan resulted in the conquering of the city of Jericho (Verses 6-16). The city was easily taken (Verse 20).

Conclusion

In both events cited, the children of Israel obeyed by faith. They heard God's Word, believed it,

and acted upon it. In crossing the Red Sea, they were baptized, and their lives were saved to worship and to serve God.

Do you know the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour? Are you listening to God's Word, believing it, and acting upon it?

Chapter Thirty-Five

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Rahab-Faiths Conclusion

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

Introduction

The victory by Israel at Jericho was an example of the blessing of obeying God. This marked the first of many great victories which Israel would enjoy as they conquered the Promise Land.

But there is another account of faith connected to the victory at Jericho which involved a most unlikely person. There were many people who heard the same thing, but only one person believed what was heard. That person was Rahab the harlot. Although there is not much information given about her, we do know that she believed, was saved, and became a part of the lineage through which David and Jesus. Rahab is mentioned in Joshua 2 and 6, Matthew 1, Hebrews 11, and James 2.

Based upon what she heard about the LORD God of Israel, Rahab concluded that "He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."

THE CHALLENGE OF THE CITY

Joshua 2:1-2: *1And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. 2And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country.*

Jericho was a sinful city. It was given to idolatry. It was a strategic city. All around Jericho was desert like land. North and west of there were some mountainous areas which were greener. Jericho was an oasis. Without conquering Jericho, Israel could not deal with the next city.

It was a structured city. It had a government and a king. It had a military and had mighty men of valor (Joshua 6:2).

It was a strong city. It was a walled city with plenty of supplies on the inside. The military had very important defensive positions on the wall.

THE COOPERATION OF RAHAB

Joshua 2:3-7: *3And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. 4And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: 5And*

it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. 6But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. 7And the men pursued after them the way to Jordan unto the fords: and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate.

Rahab helped the spies (Verse 3) by hiding them (Verses 4-7).

THE CHARACTER OF RAHAB

Joshua 2:1-6: 1And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's house, named Rahab, and lodged there. 2And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither to night of the children of Israel to search out the country. 3And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. 4And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: 5And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. 6But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.

She had a dishonorable lifestyle (Verse 1).

Joshua 6:25: And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

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

James 2:25: "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"

In order to save the Israelite spies, she was deceptive toward the authorities (Vs 4-6).

THE CONCERN OF RAHAB

Joshua 2:8-21: 8 And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; 9And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. 10For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two

kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. 12Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the LORD, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token: 13And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death. 14And the men answered her, Our life for yours, if ye utter not this our business. And it shall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee. 15Then she let them down by a cord through the window: for her house was upon the town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 16And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way. 17And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear. 18Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee. 19And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him. 20And if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear. 21And she said, According unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed: and she bound the scarlet line in the window.

She had heard the facts concerning Israel. She knew about the favor of God on Israel.

Verses 9a, 10: "And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land,...For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt: and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed."

The fear of the Israelites fell upon Jericho.

Verses 9b, 11a: "...your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in man, because of you..."

Yet, in spite of the terror of the population of Jericho, her future was bright. The statement of faith is expressed in Verse 11b. *"...For the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."*

Hebrews 11:31: *By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed*

not, when she had received the spies with peace.

She made a very simple request: Save my family and me (Verses 12, 13). There was a stated requirement (Verses 14-20) concerning the covenant (Verse 14) and the cord (Verses 15-20). The salvation requested was received (Verse 21).

Joshua 6:22-25: 22But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her. 23And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. 24And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR RAHAB

She gained acceptance into the family of the nation Israel. All others of Jericho died. She married an Israelite.

Matthew 1:4, 5: 4And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; 5And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

She had an attainment in the future. She was saved and became a part of the lineage through which David and Jesus were born (Matthew 1:4, 5). Her acceptance was by faith.

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

James 2:25: Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

Conclusion

Rahab was an unlikely person to be saved in that day. She was a Gentile, and she was a harlot. She heard the things which God had done and believed that Israel's God is the God in heaven and earth.

Rahab believed what she had heard.

Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

The salvation of Rahab shows that regardless how sinful a person may be, God will save that person if he believes what God had said. Rahab not only received salvation, but she was blessed as she walked by faith.

Have you heard of the love of God and God's gift of salvation to those who believe what God has said? If you were to die today, do you know that you would go to Heaven? If you are saved, are you serving God through the Church?

Chapter Thirty-Six

The Just Shall Live By Faith-Faith Conquering And Suffering

Hebrews 11:32-40: *32And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*

Introduction

The life that pleases God is the life that is lived by faith (Hebrews 11:6). Faith can operate in the life of any person who will listen to God's Word, believe it, and surrender to God's will.

The writer of Hebrews gave many examples of those who lived by faith. From the days of Adam and Eve to the day in which the writer was writing this letter, there were those in every age who lived by faith. In the previous verses, the writer mentioned examples from Genesis through Joshua. In Genesis, there were Abel, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. In Exodus through Deuteronomy, there was Moses. In Joshua, there were Joshua and Rahab.

In this chapter, the writer mentioned examples from the rest of the Old Testament and examples from his day. But the writer only mentioned them by name or by a brief reference to the deeds which identified them.

FAITH CONQUERING

Gideon.

He was frightened farmer whose faith did not grow strong all at once. But he was used of God to defeat Israel's enemy in a most unusual fashion (Judges 6:11-7:25).

Barak.

He won a resounding victory over Sisera, but he needed Deborah the prophetess as his helper to

assure him (Judges 4:1-5:31.) Both Gideon and Barak are encouragement to us who falter in our faith.

Samson.

Samson was a Nazarite from his birth. He had problems with women, but he did trust God to help and deliver him. In the end, Samson was willing to give his life to defeat the enemy (Judges chapters 13-16).

David.

By faith, he subdued kingdoms and obtained promises.

Samuel.

He was a judge and prophet who worked righteousness by faith.

Daniel.

By faith, he stopped the mouth of lions.

The three Hebrew children.

By faith, the violence of fire was quenched.

Elijah and Jeremiah "escaped the edge of the sword" by faith.

Out of weakness others were made strong.

Abraham.

Romans 4:20: *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;*

Saul.

Uzziah.

2 Chronicles 24:15, 16: *15But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died. 16And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.*

Encouragements to be strong.

Ephesians 6:10: *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of*

his might.

Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

2 Timothy 2:12: *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:*

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10: *9And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

They waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Some examples are David, Joshua, and Hezekiah.

FAITH SUFFERING

Women received their dead raised to life again (Verse 35a). The widow at Zarephath was one (1 Kings 17:8-24), and the Shunammite woman was another, (2 Kings 4).

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance in order that they might obtain a better resurrection. Beginning with this statement in Vs 35 and continuing through Vs38, the writer recorded the fact that many unnamed men and women of faith were not delivered from difficult circumstances. Yet God honored their faith. Sometimes, it takes more faith to endure than it does to escape. Believers should always obey God and leave all the consequences to Him.

What does the writer say about these unnamed men and women of faith? The writer stated that the world was not worthy of these individuals (Verse 38a). These obtained a good report by faith (Verse 39). Although they lived their lives by faith, they did not receive the promise. Note Hebrews 11:13, *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."* God had a plan for them and us (Verse 40).

Conclusion

Faith enables us to turn from the approval of the world and seek only the approval of God. If God is glorified by delivering His people, He will do it. If He sees fit to be glorified by not delivering His people, He will do that. But we must never conclude that the absence of deliverance means a lack of faith on the part of God's children.

Faith looks to the future because that is where the greatest rewards are found. The people named in this chapter did not receive "the promises" (Verses 13, 39), but they had God's witness to their faith that one day they will be rewarded.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). But this kind of faith grows as we

listen to God's Word (Romans 10:17), and fellowship in worship and prayer. Faith is possible to all kinds of believers in all kinds of situations. It is not a luxury for a few "elite saints." It is a necessity for ALL of God's people (Hebrews 10:38; 11:6).

Chapter Thirty-Seven

Encouragement For Christian Living The Example Of The Son Of God

Hebrews 12:1-4, 7: ***1Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin....7If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?***

Introduction

Hebrew 10:38 states that ***"the just shall live by faith."*** Hebrews 11 presents many examples which illustrate this truth. But how does the message given by the examples of people who walked by faith apply to us? Hebrews 12 begins with the word "wherefore." It means that because of the preceding, the following is true; because of the preceding, we are to stand still and consider what God has done and what He is capable of doing.

The one theme that runs through this chapter is endurance. Note Hebrews 12:1-3, 7. Hebrews 10:32, 36: ***"But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;... For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."*** The words "endure", "endurance", and "patience" come from the same Greek root word. The Jewish believers who received this letter were getting weary and wanted to give up. But the writer encouraged them to keep moving forward in their Christian lives, like runners on a track.

LOOK AT THE WITNESSES

Verse 1a: ***Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,***

The "great cloud of witnesses" was introduced in Hebrews 11. These are the heroes of faith. It is not suggested here that these men and women, now in heaven, are watching the activity here on earth as the believers run the race. They are not presented as people seated in a stadium. The word translated "witnesses" (Greek—*marturon*) does not mean "spectators." Our English word "martyr" comes from this Greek word translated "witness."

These people are not witnessing what we are doing. They are bearing witness to us that God can see us through our difficulties. God bore them witness (Hebrews 11:2, 4-5, 39). The cloud of witnesses is bearing witness to us. Note Romans 15:4: ***"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience (endurance) and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*** "Patience" (Greek *hupermene*) means "endurance." "Comfort"

(Greek paraklesis) means "encouragement."

W. W. Wiersbe wrote, "The people listed in chapter 11 are the 'cloud' that witnesses to us, '*God can be trusted! Put your faith in His Word and keep running the race!*' When you read the Old Testament, your faith should grow, for the account shows what God in and through people who dared to trust His promises."

LOOK AT YOURSELF

Verse 1b: ***"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (endurance) the race that is set before us."***

We can learn from athletes. They wore training weights to help them prepare for the events. No athlete would actually participate in a race wearing weights because they would slow him down. The weights would also take from his endurance.

The Christian runner must rid himself of even the innocent things which might hinder or slow him down. Everything that hinders our progress must be removed, even though they may seem to be "good things" in the eyes of others. A good athlete does not choose between the good and the bad. He chooses between the better and the best.

The writer taught that we should also rid ourselves of the sin that does so easily beset or hinders us. He does not name the specific sin. But the writer probably was referring to the sin of unbelief. It was unbelief that kept the children of Israel out of the Promise Land. It is unbelief that hinders us from entering into our spiritual inheritance in Jesus Christ. The expression "by faith" or "through faith" is used at least 21 times in Hebrews 11. This indicates that it is faith in Christ that enables us to endure.

LOOK AT JESUS CHRIST

Verses 2-4: ***2Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.***

The word "looking" comes from the Greek verb "aphorao" which means "to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something." The word also conveys the idea of "turning one's mind to a certain thing." When the dying Jews looked to the uplifted serpent in the wilderness, they were healed (Numbers 21:4-9). This is an illustration of our salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:14-16). "Looking unto Jesus" describes an attitude of faith, a lifestyle, and not just a single act. It describes the spiritual vision being turned away from everything else and focusing the mind upon Jesus. The minute the Greek runner took his attention away from the race course and the finish line and turned it upon the spectators, his speed was slowed. It is true with the believer today. The minute he takes his eyes off Jesus Christ and turns them upon others, his pace in the Christian race is slowed down and his onward progress is hindered.

Numbers 21:4-9: ***4And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. 6And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.***

John 3:14-16: ***14And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.***

Jesus is called the "author and finisher of the faith." "Author" is translated from the Greek "archegon". This compound word means "the chief leader, the one who takes the lead in anything. Vincent says it describes Jesus as the One "Who in the preeminence of His faith far surpasses the examples of faith commemorated in Hebrews 11. The word faith has the article in front of it in the Greek text and not the possessive "our." It is the faith of which the writer is speaking as exhibited in the examples of Hebrews 11 and in our Lord Jesus. It is not the Christian faith as such, but faith absolutely. Christ is the author, the chief leader, of this faith in that He finished the perfect development, the supreme example of faith, and in virtue of this He is the leader of the whole believing host of all time."

The term "finisher" comes from the Greek "teleioo" which means "to carry through completely, to finish, to make perfect or complete." In His life of faith on earth, our Lord became the perfect or complete example of faith. Thayer spoke of our Lord as "One who has in His own person raised faith to its perfection and set before us the highest example of faith."

Kenneth Wuest wrote, The words "'.. .Who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross' are usually interpreted as meaning that the Lord Jesus endured the cross in order that He might obtain certain joy which was placed before Him as a reward for His suffering. But this interpretation is based upon an erroneous use of the preposition 'for'. The Greek proposition is 'anti'; the predominant use of which in the first century was 'instead of. It was so used in Luke 11:11, where we have 'If he ask a fish, will he for (anti—instead of) a fish give him a serpent.'"

Vincent wrote: "the joy was the full, divine beatitude of His pre-incarnate life in the bosom of the Father; the glory which He had with God before the world. In exchange for this, He accepted the

cross and the shame. The contrast is designed between the readers (Vs 1) and the joy which was already present to Christ. The heroic character of His faith appears in His renouncing a joy already in possession in exchange for shame and death. This passage thus falls in with Philippians 2:5-8."

Wuest translated Vs 2 as follows: *"Looking off and away to Jesus, the preeminent leader and perfecter of this aforementioned faith, Who instead of the joy then present with Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God."* The expression "is set down" (Verse 2c) is in the perfect tense in the Greek text. The idea is that after His work of providing salvation was finished, He sat down and remains seated. He does not ever need to rise and repeat His work on the cross for sinners. It is a finished work. He is not only seated, but He occupies the position of preeminence at the right hand of God the Father.

The readers are encouraged to "consider" Jesus (Verse 3), to think about, to reflect upon Jesus and what He has done. Our Lord endured far more than did any of the heroes of faith named in Hebrews 11, and therefore He is a perfect example for us to follow. He endured the cross. He endured the shame, suffering, the contradiction (opposition) of sinners, and even the temporary rejection by His Father. On the cross He suffered for all the sins of all of the world. Yet He endured and finished the work the Father gave him to do (John 17:4). The writer sought to encourage his readers by pointing them to Jesus and what He had done and how He suffered. Although they had suffered persecution, they had not "resisted unto blood." None of them were yet martyrs. But Jesus had suffered and had shed His blood.

The writer called upon his readers to think of Jesus Christ in order that they would not grow weary and faint. Tertullian said, "You can judge the quality of their faith from the way they behave. Discipline is an index to doctrine."

Conclusion

The Hebrew believers who received this letter were getting weary and wanted to give up. The writer called upon them to listen to the message of the "cloud of witnesses." The writer encouraged his readers to keep moving forward in the race of the Christian life.

The writer called upon his readers to look to Jesus and focus upon Him and His finished work. They were instructed to consider, to think upon Jesus, so they would not become weary and faint. They had not yet shed their blood in their battle against sin. Believers must follow the example of Jesus Christ. Doing so will encourage them.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Encouragement For Christian Living The Assurance Of The Love Of God

Hebrews 12:3-13: *3For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

Introduction

Were you every disciplined by your parents? Did they ever tell you that they were disciplining you because they loved you? Did you believe them?

The key word in these verses is "chastening." It comes from the Greek word "paideia" which means "child training, instruction, discipline; the bringing up of a child, especially its training and education." Chastening also speaks of whatever in adults that cultivate the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions. It also speaks of instructions which aim at the increase of virtue. Chastening does not have in it the idea of punishment, but of corrective measures which will eliminate evil in the life and encourage the good.

The Hebrew believers were experiencing persecution, suffering, and hardships. Because of these, they were weary and were becoming discouraged. The writer viewed the trials of the Christian life as spiritual discipline that could help them to be mature believers.

When we are suffering or experiencing difficulties, it is easy for us to think that God does not love us. In those times, Satan also likes to tell us that God does not love us. So, the writer reminded his readers that chastening comes from the Father's heart of love.

THE PROOF FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Vs 5-6: 5And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

The quotation is from Proverbs 3:11, 12. **"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction: For whom the LORD loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."** This is a statement which the Hebrew believers had known but had forgotten. This is one of the sad consequences of becoming "dull" toward the Word of God (Hebrews 5:11, 12). This quotation is an "exhortation," which literally means an encouragement." Because the Hebrew believers had forgotten the Word, they had lost encouragement and were ready to give up.

The key words in this quotation are "son", "children", and "sons." These words are used six times in verses 6-8, and they all come from the same Greek word "uios." The term refers to an adult son and not to a little child. God deals with His children as adult sons because we have been adopted and given an adult standing in the family of God. See Romans 8:14-18 and Galatians 4:1-7. The fact that the Father chastens us is proof that He loves us and that we are maturing. It is the means by which we can mature even more.

Romans 8:14-18 KJV 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Galatians 4:1-7 KJV 1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: 4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Chastening is the evidence that the Father loves us. Satan wants us to believe that the difficulties of life are proof that God does not love us. But the opposite is true. It is because God loves us that He chastens us. Sometimes God's chastening is seen in His rebukes from His Word or from the circumstances. There are times when God shows His love by punishing us. Verse 6, **"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."** Whatever the experience, we can be sure that His chastening hand is controlled by His loving heart.

THE PROOF FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES. Verses 7-11

Hebrews 12:7-11 KJV **7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**

All of us have earthly fathers. If they were faithful, they had to discipline us. If a child is left to himself and is never corrected, he will grow up to become selfish rebel who will bring shame to his parents. Prov. 29:15, **"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."** The father chastens only his own sons, and this is proof that they are his children. All true children of God receive chastening. All others who claim to be saved but who escape chastening are nothing more than counterfeits, and not true sons.

An earthly father chastens his offspring so they will show him reverence and respect and will obey his commands. This is why our heavenly Father corrects us. He wants us to reverence Him and obey His will. A child who does not learn submission to authority will never become a useful, mature adult. Verse 9, **"Furthermore we have had fathers in our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"** The suggestion is that if we do not submit we might not live. 1 John 5:16 tells us, **"There is a sin unto death."** Ananias and Sapphira are examples of this.

Acts 5:1-11 KJV **1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.**

This chapter relates to the five warnings in this book. As a child drifts from the Word and backslides, the Father chastens him to bring him back to the place of submission and obedience. If a believer continues to resist God's will, God may permit his life to be taken. Rather than allow His child to ruin his life more and disgrace the Father's name, God might permit him to die. Thousands of rebellious Israelites died in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). Our Heavenly Father chastens us for our profit or benefit so that we might share His holy character.

1 Corinthians 10:1-12 KJV *1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

THE PROOF OF THE BLESSED RESULTS. Verses 11-13.

Hebrews 12:11-13 KJV *11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

No chastening at the time it is given is pleasant either to the father or to the son. But the benefits are profitable. The Heavenly Father does not enjoy having to discipline His children, but the benefits "afterward" make the chastening an evidence of His love. There is the "peaceable fruit of righteousness." Instead of continuing in sin, the son strives to do what is right. There is also peace instead of war—"the peaceable fruit of righteousness." The rebellion has ceased, and the child is in loving fellowship with the Father. Chastening also encourages a child to exercise in spiritual matters—the Word of God, prayer, meditation on the Word of God, witnessing, and living a holy life. All of this leads to a new joy. Paul describes it as **"righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"** (Romans 14:17).

The important thing is how God's child responds to chastening. He can despise it (Verse 5). He can faint or become weary under it (Verse 5). Both of these are wrong. He can show reverence to the Father by submitting to His will (Verse 9). He can use the experience to exercise himself

spiritually (Verse 11).

1 Timothy 4:7-8 KJV ***7 But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. 8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.***

Conclusion

One of the encouragements to Christian living is chastening. Chastening means training, instruction, correction, and discipline. It is designed to bring us to maturity.

Chastening is an assurance of the love of God. The Scriptures remind us of this truth.

Those who allow chastening to work in their lives are blessed as they mature and are obedient to God's will.

How do you respond to the chastening of God? Have you been chastened by God?

If you are being chastened by God, it is because you are not His child. If you are not His child, you need to be saved.

Do you have assurance in your heart that you are a child of God?

Chapter Thirty-Nine

Encouragement For Christian Living The Enablement Of Gods Grace

Hebrews 12:14-29 KJV **14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. 18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.**

Introduction

Living the Christian life is compared to running a race. In verse one of this chapter, the writer said, **"...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us..."**

God wants each of us to be successful in our Christian lives. Therefore, He gives us encouragement. The writer appealed to his readers to consider the witnesses who have lived their lives by faith and to consider Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He also reminded the Hebrew believers of the assurance of God's love.

In this lesson, the writer pointed them to the grace of God. He appealed to them not **to "fail of the grace of God"** (Verse 15) and **"have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence**

and godly fear" (Verse 28).

The writer explained the goal of the Christian life in verse 14. "Follows peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Follow (Greek—dioko) means to pursue, to seek after. Holiness (Greek—hagiasmos) comes from the same word which is translated sanctification and speaks of being holy, set apart for God, purity. Peace means rest, not at war. Romans 12:18, ***"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."*** Believers are to pursue, seek after peace with all men and live pure, holy lives. Without doing so, believers will not comprehend the goodness, provision, and works of God, nor will they enjoy the fellowship with the holy God.

To run the race successfully requires diligence lest we ***"fail of the grace of God"*** (Verse 15). The term "fail" (Greek—hustereo) means to be last, come behind, to come short of, not to reach, to miss. God's grace does not fail but we can fail to take advantage of His grace and miss the blessing. In this lesson, the writer encouraged his readers to depend upon the grace of God by urging them to look by faith in three directions: Look Back, Look Up, and Look Ahead.

LOOK BACK TO THE BAD EXAMPLE OF ESAU Verses 14-17.

Hebrews 12:14-17 KJV ***14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.***

Esau failed to act on God's grace. Esau's actions are recorded in Genesis 25:27-34 and Genesis 27:1-46. Esau was a profane person (Verse 16). The term "profane" (Greek—bebelos) means a despiser of sacred or holy things. The term "fornicator" in this context refers to one who is a spiritual fornicator. Esau despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for one meal. Therefore, he missed the blessing because it was given to Jacob.

Genesis 25:27-34 KJV ***27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. 29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: 30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.***

Genesis 27:1-46 KJV ***1 And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes***

were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. 2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: 3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; 4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. 5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. 6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, 7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. 9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: 10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. 11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: 12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. 13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. 14 And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. 15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: 16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: 17 And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me. 21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. 22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. 25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: 28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee. 30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the

presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. 32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. 33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. 34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. 35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. 36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? 37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? 38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. 39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; 40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. 41 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. 42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; 44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; 45 Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? 46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

Esau found no place of repentance (Verse 17). Esau tried to get Isaac to change his mind after the birthright blessing was given to Jacob. But it was too late. Even Esau's tears availed nothing.

Lack of spiritual diligence, bitterness against others (Deuteronomy 29:14-18), sexual immorality, and living for the world and the flesh are sins which will rob us of the enablement of God's grace. Some people may have the idea that a "profane person" is someone who is blasphemous, filthy talking person. But Esau was a likeable fellow, a good hunter, and a man who loved his dad. He was not interested in the things of God. God's grace does not ever fail us, but we can fail to depend. Then our lives will be wasted. The life and choice of Esau are a warning to us not to live for the lesser things.

LOOK UP TO THE/GLORY OF THE HEAVENLY CITY Verses 18-24

Hebrews 12:18-24 KJV *18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

The writer contrasted Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Law with the Heavenly Jerusalem and the blessing of grace (Exodus 19:10-25; 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 4:10-24; Hebrews 12:18-21).

Exodus 19:10-25 KJV *10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: 13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. 16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou*

chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Exodus 20:18-21 KJV 18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. 21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Deuteronomy 4:10-24 KJV 10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. 15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: 16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. 20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day. 21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance: 22 But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land. 23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Hebrews 12:18-21 KJV **18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)**

He describes the solemnity and terror that came with the giving of the Law. The mountain was afire and could not be touched. God set boundaries around the mountain, and no one was to cross boundaries under the penalty of death. God had to impress upon His people the seriousness of His Law, just as parents must stress the importance of their rules to their children. This was an infant nation, and children can understand the principle of reward and punishment. If a beast were to touch the mountain while the Law was being given, it was to be stoned or killed with a spear. The people were afraid to hear God's voice. Even Moses feared and trembled (Verses 20b-21). Mt. Sinai represents the Covenant of Law. The writer was reminding the Hebrew believers that they were not under the Law.

The Hebrew believers as well as all believers are under the covenant of grace (Verses 22-24). The Mount Zion and the city of the living God refer to the heavenly or new Jerusalem. This city is the eternal dwelling place of the Church. The citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem are innumerable angels and the Church or assembly of firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven. When we get to heaven and the church dwells in the new Jerusalem, it will be a joyous occasion. The term "general assembly" (Greek—paneguris) means an assembly of a whole nation for a public festival, such as the Olympic games, a high festival, a solemn assembly on such festival. In heaven, we will see God, the Judge of all. The penalty for our sin has been paid the Son of God, and we can stand in His presence in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. In heaven, there will be the "spirits of just men made perfect." These are Old Testament saints whose salvation has been made complete because Jesus Christ has died as the Lamb of God and took away the sin of the whole world. Believers have approached (come) to Jesus Who is the mediator of the new covenant. His blood has been applied and believers have been cleansed. His blood speaks of **"better things than that of Abel"** (Verse 24). Abel's blood cried out for vengeance, but the blood of Jesus Christ speaks of salvation.

Consider Jesus. Look up to Him (Hebrews 12:1-3, 22-24). The writer was trying to get the eyes of the Hebrew believers redirected. Off the temple in Jerusalem. Off a bloody sacrifice. Off a ritual. And onto the person of Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1-3 KJV **1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.**

Hebrews 12:22-24 KJV *22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

LOOK AHEAD TO THE UNSHAKEABLE KINGDOM Verses 25-29

Hebrews 12:25-29 KJV *25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

The writer gives the last warning concerning believers' attitudes toward the Word of God. Vs 25-26. Drifting from the Word (Hebrews 2:1-4). (Neglecting the Word)

Hebrews 2:1-4 KJV *1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

Doubting the Word (Hebrews 3:7-4:13). (Hard heart toward the Word)

Hebrews 3:7 - 4:13 KJV *7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was*

it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. 1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. 3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. 12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Dullness toward the Word (Hebrews 5:11-6:20). (Sluggishness).

Hebrews 5:11 - 6:20 KJV 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. 1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that

accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, 14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Despising the Word (Hebrews 10:26-39). (Willfulness).

Hebrews 10:26-39 KJV 26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. 35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. 37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Defying the Word (Hebrews 12:25-29). (Refusing to hear).

Hebrews 12:25-29 KJV 25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: 26 Whose voice then shook

the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

The writer instructed his readers to "see that ye refuse not Him that speaks." God is speaking to us today through His Word and believers had better listen to Him. The writer set forth our inability to escape the Word. Vs 25b, ***"For if they escaped not who refuse him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven."***

God shook the earth as He gave the Law. If God shook things at Mt. Sinai and those who refused to hear were judged, how much more responsible are we today who have experienced the blessings of the New Covenant. The reference to shaking the earth is a quotation from Haggai 2:6-7. ***"For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."*** In this quotation, there is a reference to the time when the Lord will return with power and great glory. The Law was fulfilled, and after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the temple was destroyed within a few years. But the things of the New Covenant remain. The things of the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem will remain

As we move toward the heavenly kingdom, we must make sure that we are serving God. Verse 28, ***"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: (Verse 29) For our God is a consuming fire."***

Conclusion

The grace of God will enable us to live the Christian life to the glory of God.

We must pursue peace with all men and live holy lives in order to enjoy fellowship with God and to receive His blessings.

If we neglect to live holy lives, we fail of the grace of God, but the grace of God will never fail us.

We must listen to God when He speaks and obey Him.

We are not under the Old Covenant, the Law, but we are under the New Covenant of grace of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator.

We must not refuse the Word of God because we are accountable to Him.

Since believers will receive a kingdom, we need to receive the grace of God whereby we may

serve God in an acceptable manner with a deep respect for Him.

Have receive the salvation which He offers by grace through faith? If not, why? If so, are you living for Him?

Chapter Forty

Evidence Of Faith Enjoying Spiritual Fellowship

Hebrews 13:1-3 KJV ***1 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.***

Introduction

Is there evidence in your life to show to others that you are a follower of Jesus Christ? Do your works show to others that you are Christian in your conduct? Or does your life contradict what you profess with your mouth?

The emphasis in the last three chapters of Hebrews is on living by faith. The writer presented some great examples of faith in Chapter 11 and the encouragements to faith in Chapter 12. In Chapter 13, he presented some evidence of faith that should appear in our lives if we are really walking by faith and not by sight.

In this chapter, we will consider enjoying spiritual fellowship as evidence of faith.

THE BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP Vs I

Hebrews 13:1 KJV ***1 Let brotherly love continue.***

Definition of brother love. It comes from the Greek word "Philadelphia". "Phileo" speaks of human affection or fondness. "Adephos" means brother or one from the same womb. The basis of their Christian fondness and affection for each other and the source of their Christian fellowship was the fact that they all came from the same source. They had been born again and had the same Father, God. These Hebrew believers, no doubt, had been rejected by their friends and perhaps by family members. But the deepest kind of fellowship is not based on race or family relationships. It is based upon the spiritual life we have in Jesus Christ.

Direct command. "Let brotherly love continue." A church fellowship that is based on anything other than a love for Jesus Christ and for one another simply will not last.

Romans 12:10, ***"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another..."***

1 Thess. 4:9-10, ***"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all brethern which are in Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more."***

1 Peter 1:22, "*Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*"

John 13:34-35, "*A new commandment I give unto your, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

HOSPITALITY AND LOVE Vs 2

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

The encouragement, (Verse 2a). Where there is a true Christian love, there will also be hospitality. The term "hospitality" comes from the Greek word "philoxenia" which means love to strangers. The tendency to neglect Christian fellowship would lead to the failure to recognize the needs of Christians coming from a distance. There was an important ministry in the early church because persecution drove many believers away from their homes. Pastors are supposed to be lovers of hospitality (Titus 1:8), but all believers should be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13).

Titus 1:8 KJV **8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;**

Romans 12:13 KJV **13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.**

The example of Abraham (Verse 2b). Genesis 18.

THE CONCERN FOR OTHERS Verse 3

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

The exhortation. It was not unusual for Christians to be arrested and imprisoned for their faith in Jesus Christ. The writer exhorted his readers to be mindful of their fellow believers when they suffered persecution and adversity. These Hebrews were still in their physical bodies and were subject to persecution also. But they were also members of the body of Christ, the Church. To identify with the persecuted believers might be dangerous, but Christ's love demanded that they minister to those who were suffering.

Some examples.

1. Peter and John (Acts 4).
2. The apostles (Acts 5).
3. The Church (Acts 8).
4. James and Peter (Acts 12).
5. Paul (2 Corinthians 11:21-28).

FELLOWSHIP IN THE HOME Verse 4

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Wisdom concerning marriage (Verse 4a). The home is the first place where Christian love should be practiced. A Christian home begins with a Christian marriage in the will of God. This means loyalty and purity. Sex outside of marriage is sinful and destructive. Sex within the protective bonds of marriage can be enriching and glorifying to God.

The warning (Verse 4b). The term "whoremonger" comes from the same word which is translated "fornicator" in Hebrews 12:16. "Pornos" is a masculine word and means a sodomite, catamite, homosexual. "Porne" is a feminine word and means a prostitute, a harlot. "Porneia" is translated fornication and means sexual activity (heterosexual or homosexual) by unmarried persons. The term "adulterers" means married persons who have sex or physical intimacy with ones to whom they are not married.

God's judgment upon immorality. Sometimes God judges those who commit these sins in their own bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:16-18: ***"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."***

Romans 1:24-27: KJV ***24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. (VD, aids, out of wedlock pregnancy, etc.)***

Certainly, they will be judged at the final judgment.

Revelation 21:8: KJV ***8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.***

Revelation 22:15 KJV ***15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.***

Believers who commit these sins certainly may be forgiven but they will lose rewards in heaven.

Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

1 Timothy 1:8-11: KJV 8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; 9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; 11 According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11: KJV 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15: KJV 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. There is also the example of King David.

In these days, when sexual sins are paraded as entertainment in movies and on TV, the church needs to take a stand for moral purity of the marriage bond.

A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO MATERIAL THINGS Verses 5-6

5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

The conduct (Verse 5a). If we love God and others as we should, then we can also have a right relationship to material things. The word "conversation" today means dialogue between two or more persons. In 1611 A.D., when the KJV translation was made, it meant what the Greek word (tropos) means—"manner of life, behavior."

The words "without covetousness" come from the Greek word (aphilarguros) and means without fondness for silver or money. The exhortation is against covetousness in the form of love of money.

1 Timothy 6:6-10: KJV **6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.**

The contentment (Verse 5b). The word "content" comes from the Greek word (arkeo) which means to be possessed of unfailing strength, to be strong, to suffice, to be enough, and finally, to be satisfied, contented. The underlying thought is that one should be satisfied with that which meets our needs and should not desire an oversupply or over abundance.

The word "content" in this verse refers to the ability of the Christian to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit and to be independent of outward circumstances.

The words "such as ye have" are the translation of the Greek expression (tois parousin) which means the things which are present around a person, namely the circumstances.

Philippians 4:10-11: KJV **10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.**

A European believer once said, "We feel that Christians in America need more prayer than we do. We here in Eastern Europe are suffering, but you in America are very comfortable, and it is always harder to be a good Christian when you are comfortable."

Contentment cannot come from material things because they can never satisfy the heart.

Luke 12:15: **"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."**

The cause of contentment (Verses 5c-6).

The promise of God (Verse 5c) The reason why a child of God can and should obey these admonitions is now given. **".. for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."** The term "leave" comes from the Greek word (aniemi) and means to send back, to relax, to loosen, not to uphold, to let sink. The word is preceded by two negatives, which in the Greek, strengthens the negation. "I will by no means leave you."

The word "forsake" comes from the Greek word (egkataleipo) which means to leave behind in any place or condition. God will not leave His child in a state of defeat or helplessness in the midst of

hostile circumstances.

The profession that may be made (Verse 6). Verse 6 is a quotation from Psalm 118:6: "***The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?***" Note Hebrews 13:6 (NKJV), "**So we may boldly say: The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?**"

It was a source of great peace to the early Christians to know that they were safe from the fear of man, for no man could do anything to them apart from God's will and permission. It is important that we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Helper, and that we do not put our trust in material things. Contented Christians are people with priorities, and material things are not high on their priority list.

Conclusion

Enjoying spiritual fellowship is evidence of faith. The basis of fellowship is brotherly love. Where there is Christian love, there will also be hospitality. Love also expresses itself in concern for others. The home is the first place where Christian love should be practiced. If we love God and others as we should, then we can have a right relationship with material things.

Are you saved? Do you have the assurance that you will go to Heaven when this earthly is over? Do you have evidences to show that you are a child of God?

Chapter Forty-One

Evidence Of Faith Sharing In Spiritual Worship

Hebrews 13:9-16: KJV **9 *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. 10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.***

Introduction

Hebrews 10:38a declares, "***Now the just shall live by faith...***" That is, the believers shall live by faith. Believers are those who have trusted in Jesus Christ and have received salvation. They will live in such a way that their lives will have evidence that they are saved and belong to God.

Hebrews 11 gave some examples of individuals who lived by faith. Hebrews 12 gave some encouragement to live by faith. Hebrews 13 sets forth some evidence that should be in believers to show that they are saved.

The writer has shown that believers will show that they have faith by enjoying spiritual fellowship and by submitting to spiritual leadership. In this chapter, the writer points out that another evidence of faith is sharing in spiritual worship.

BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS CHRIST HAS DONE Verses 9-12

Worship must be according to truth. Therefore, if we are going to worship, we must be separated from false doctrine.

John 4:23-24: "***But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and***

Hebrews 13:9, "***Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.***"

Worship is at a new altar (Verse 10). A new covenant Christian is not involved in the ceremonies and furnishings of an earthly tabernacle or temple. But this does not mean that he is deprived of

the blessings of which they were types. A Jew under the Old Covenant could point to the temple, but a Christian has a heavenly sanctuary which can never be destroyed. The expression "we have an altar" (Vs 10) does not suggest a material altar on earth. That would contradict the whole message of this book of Hebrews. A new covenant Christian's altar is in heaven where Jesus Christ is our great high Priest. It is through Him that we offer our "spiritual sacrifices" to God (Verse 15). 1 Peter 2:5, ***"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."*** We may set aside places in our church buildings and call them altars, but they are not really altars in the Biblical sense. This is because Christ's sacrifice has already been made, once and for all, and the gifts that we bring to God are acceptable, not because of any earthly altar, but because of a heavenly altar.

The figure of eating at this altar (Verse 10) speaks of partaking of the blessings of the New Testament among which was fellowship with God which is made possible by the blood sacrifice which Jesus offered at Calvary. The figure of eating at the altar is taken from the peace offering in which the worshipper partook of the flesh of the sacrifice as a guest in God's house. God showed His friendship and good will toward the worshipper by reason of the fact that He put away his sin at the cross, and the worshipper put his faith in the Messiah as his great High Priest.

The word "right" is the translation of the Greek word (exousia) which has the idea of delegated right or authority. It was a technical term used in the law courts of a legal right. The expression "they.. ..which serve the tabernacle" refers not only to the priests but also includes the people who worshipped at the tabernacle. The whole thought of the discussion contrasts the privileges of the entire body of believers in the New Testament with those under the Old Testament.

The readers of this epistle were looking for a way to continue as Christians while escaping the persecution that would come from unbelieving Jews. The writer encouraged them to get out of the Jewish religious system and identify with the Saviour who died for them.

Worship is to Him who has paid our sin debt and completely satisfied the righteous demands of the Law of God. The bodies of the animal sacrifices for sin were burned outside the camp (Verse 11). The blood of those animals was brought into the sanctuary and offered for sin. Jesus died outside the city of Jerusalem in order that He might sanctify those who believe on Him (Verse 12).

BECAUSE OF OUR HOPE Verses 13-14

As believers, we have been sanctified. This means that our sins have been washed away by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The term "sanctify" (Greek hagiazo) means to make holy, to set in a state opposed to common or unclean; to deliver from that state of being unclean and put into a state corresponding to the nature of God; to set apart for God.

Our Lord, by becoming a sacrifice under the jurisdiction of the New Testament and as an outcast from Israel, set apart from the Old Testament and Israel, consecrated that person who put his faith in God.

The believer's hope is not in an earthly city. The writer exhorted his readers to leave the apostate Judaism and the temple sacrifices and the city of Jerusalem and bear the reproach of Jesus. This

would take them from the city of Jerusalem and share the message of salvation to others. Believers have not continuing city here on earth, but they "seek one to come" (Verse 14). The earthly city of Jerusalem would soon be destroyed. Therefore, the readers would not benefit by going back to that city and its worship system. The city that is to come is the New Jerusalem, which is described in Revelation 21.

BECAUSE OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY Verses 15-16

Our responsibility to God (Verse 15). To offer the sacrifice of praise to God. This is the fruit of our lips, that is, giving thanks to His name for His wonderful blessings.

Psalm 107:21-22: *"Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing."*

Psalm 116:17: *"I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD."*

This sacrifice of praise should be done continually. God is continually blessing us. Therefore, we must continually give Him praise and thanks.

Our responsibility to others (Verse 16). Our responsibility does not stop with our giving praise and thanks. We must have a lifestyle of doing good.

Psalm 34:14: *"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."*

Psalm 37:3: *"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."*

Luke 6:35: *"But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."*

Galatians 6:10: *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."*

Titus 3:8: *"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."*

We must not forget to share with others. *"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."* The term "communicate" (Greek koinonia) speaks of having things in common or sharing with others. The writer encouraged the believers to share their earthly goods with their fellow believers who were undergoing persecution and were in a state of poverty.

Hebrews 10:34: KJV *34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took*

joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Conclusion

Evidence that we as believers have faith is that we are sharing in spiritual worship. We worship because of what Jesus Christ has done. He has died for our sins. We worship Him because of His paying for our sins and saving our souls, giving us eternal life. We worship Him because He has given us hope of eternal life and has given us reason for us to live for Him. We have a responsibility to God and others to worship Him.

Is there a time when you recognized yourself to be a sinner before God and asked Him to save you? If you were to die today, do you know for sure that you would go to heaven?

Are you demonstrating your faith by participating in spiritual worship and service to God?

Chapter Forty-Two

Evidence Of Faith Submitting To Spiritual Leadership

Hebrews 13:7-9: KJV **7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. 8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.**

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

Introduction

If a person is saved and living by faith, there will be some evidence of that faith. In this chapter, the writer presented some evidence that should appear in our lives if we are really walking by faith and not by sight.

In the first six verses of this chapter, it was noted that one of the evidences of faith is that the believer enjoys spiritual fellowship. The basis of fellowship is brotherly love. Where there is Christian love, there will also be hospitality. Love expresses itself in concern for others. Also, the home is the first place where love should be practiced. If we love God and others as we should, then we will have a right relationship to material things.

In this chapter, we have another evidence of faith. It is seen in submitting to spiritual leadership. Three times the writer used the designation "them that have rule over you." This phrase refers to the spiritual leaders of the local churches. Each Christian has three responsibilities toward the spiritual leaders in the church.

REMEMBER THEM Verses 7-9

The identification (Verse 7). "Them that have rule" comes from the Greek expression (ton hegoumenon) which could be rendered "the ones leading." The verb means "to lead, lead the way, go first, be the leader." The fact that they have "the rule over you" signifies that they are leaders, those who guide others. This does not signify such spiritual superiority or authority as some men declare today. It simply means that we are to recognize the fact that God appoints pastors or overseers over the flock, the church.

1 Peter 5:2-3, **"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;**

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

The instruction. Remember them. The term "remember" (Greek *mnemoneuo*) means "to be mindful for, to call to one's mind." They are to be remembered because they have spoken the Word of God unto you. They are not to be remembered because of who they are, but because of what they said.

Follow them. Verse 7b, *"...whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."* The term "follow" (Greek *mimomai*) means "to imitate, to follow as an example."

1 Cor. 11:1: *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."*

Consider them in their example. The term "considering" is from the Greek word (*anatheoro*) which means "to observe attentively." The expression "end of their conversation" could be rendered the "outcome of their conduct." (NKTV). The exhortation is to remember their leaders who have spoken the Word of God and to follow their example. But while we do not worship people or give them glory, it is certainly right to honor them for their faithful work.

1 Thessalonians 5:12- 13: *"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves."*

These leaders probably had led the readers to Christ because they had spoken the Word of God to them. The readers could follow or imitate the faith of their leaders and consider its outcome or end. The lives of their leaders followed the example of Jesus Christ Who is *"the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever"* (Verse 8). Church leaders may come and go, but Jesus Christ remains the same, and it is Christ Who is the center of our faith.

The admonition (Verse 9). The warning (Verse 9a). The purpose of spiritual ministry is to establish God's people in grace and the Scriptures, so that they will not be blown around by every wind of doctrine. See Ephesians 4:11-14.

Ephesians 4:11-14: KJV *11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

Dr. John Hall said that no minister "shall have lived in vain if it can be written over his grave, 'He made people understand the Scriptures.'"

The wise counsel (Verse 9b). Some of the Hebrew believers were considering going back to the

Jewish laws that governed foods and other aspects of life. The writer warned them that these dietary regulations would not profit them spiritually because they never profited the Jews spiritually. The laws impressed the people as being spiritual, but they were only shadows of the reality that we have in Jesus Christ. See Colossians 2:16-23.

Colossians 2:16-23: KJV **16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. 18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.**

OBEY THEM (Verse 17).

The command (Verse 17a). Obey them that have rule over you. The writer exhorted his readers to adhere to the teaching of their leaders and to yield trustfully to their teaching. Submit to them. The expression "submit yourselves" comes from the Greek word (hupeiko) and means "to cease fighting, to give way under, to yield."

The concern of the leaders. "They watch for your souls or lives." The word "watch" comes from the Greek word (agrupneo) and means "to be sleepless, lie awake (through care or anxiety); hence, to be watchful of or very intent upon a thing." The idea is that the pastors or leaders, like watchful shepherds, watch in the best interest of their lives or souls. They do so under the constant pressure of a consciousness that they must one day give an account of their care of the flock to the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Obey them that the leaders, pastors, may discharge their responsibilities and perform these offices for you joyfully and not with grief or groaning. The term grief or groaning refers to the groaning when one resumes a thankless task, and with which he contemplates unappreciated and even opposed work.

Even for your own sakes, you should make the work of your rulers, pastors, easy and joyful, for otherwise it cannot profit you. Your unwillingness to listen to your leaders, pastors, means that you are out of sympathy with their teaching and that it can do you no good.

When a servant of God is in the will of God, teaching the Word of God, the people of God should submit and obey. This does not mean that pastors should be dictators. Some church members have a flippant attitude toward to pastoral authority, and this is dangerous.

1 Peter 5:1-4: KJV ***1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.***

One day every pastor will have to give an account of his ministry to the Lord, and he wants to be able to do it with joy. A disobedient believer will find out on that day that the results of disobedience are unprofitable, not for the pastor, but for himself. Therefore, obey them that have the rule over you because they watch for your souls or lives. Submit yourselves to them so that they may watch for your souls or lives with joy and not with grief or groaning. Being a disobedient believer is unprofitable for you all because it means that you are not listening to the Word of God which the pastors that care for your souls and lives are speaking to you.

GREET THEM Verse 24

Definition of greet. It comes from the Greek word (aspazomai) which means "to draw to one's self; hence to embrace, salute, greet."

The sign of respect and love for their rulers, leaders, or pastors. Every Christian should have respect for his pastor and be on speaking terms with him. We should never allow any "root of bitterness" to grow up in our hearts (Hebrews 12:15), because it will poison us and hurt the church. While it is true that each member of the church has an important part in the ministry of the church, it is also true that God has ordained spiritual leaders in the church to have the spiritual leadership and oversight.

Hebrews 12:15: KJV ***15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;***

Respect the leaders as men of God who speak the Word of God. When believers respect and follow the teaching of God's Word, it will encourage unbelievers to listen to their teachings also.

Conclusion

Submitting to spiritual leadership is evidence of faith. Believers are instructed to remember them that have rule over them. Believers are instructed to obey their teaching and to submit to their authority. Believers are called to obey the teaching of their leaders and not be carried away by divers and strange doctrines.

Chapter Forty-Three

Evidence Of Faith Experiencing Spiritual LORDSHIP

Hebrews 13:18-21: KJV ***18 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. 19 But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. 20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.***

Introduction

The emphasis of the last chapter of Hebrews is evidences of faith. Believers are instructed to live by faith. Chapter 11 gave examples of some who lived by faith. Chapter 12 gave encouragements to faith.

The question for believers today is "Are there evidences that you are living by faith?" Do those around you know by the way you live that you know Jesus Christ as your Saviour and that you are living for Him?

In this chapter, the writer set forth some evidences of faith. We have noted that those who live by faith are enjoying spiritual fellowship, submitting to spiritual leadership, and sharing in spiritual worship. In this lesson, we will look at the evidence of experiencing spiritual lordship.

HE IS THE GOD OF PEACE Verse 20

He gives peace to those who are justified.

Romans 5:1: ***"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."***

Ephesians 2:14: ***"For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."***

Colossians 1:19-20: ***"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell; And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."***

He gives peace to obedient believers.

Psalms 29:11: ***"The LORD will give strength unto His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace."***

Psalm 119:165: ***"Great peace have they who love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them."***

Isaiah 26:3: ***Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee."***

John 14:27: ***"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."***

John 16:33: ***"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."***

HE IS THE GOD OF PROVISION Verse 20

Note the things listed in Verse 20 which God has provided.

1. Peace
2. The resurrected Christ.
3. The blood of the everlasting covenant.
4. The everlasting covenant.
5. The Great Shepherd of the sheep.

Our Great High Priest is also our Great Shepherd. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ died for the sheep.

John 10:11: ***"I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."***

As the Great Shepherd, Jesus lives for the sheep in heaven today, working in their behalf.

Hebrews 13:20: KJV ***20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,***

As the Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ will come for the sheep at His return.

1 Peter 5:4: ***"And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."***

When Jesus was on earth, He worked for us when He completed the great work of redemption (John 17:4). Now that He is in Heaven, He is working in us to mature us in His will and bring us to a place of spiritual perfection.

John 17:4: KJV ***4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.***

He has given us the privilege of prayer (Verse 18).

Luke 11:9: "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

John 14:14: "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it."

John 15:7: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Matthew 18:19: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."

1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

HE IS THE GOD WHO MAKES US PERFECT Verse 21

The God of peace "makes you all perfect" in every good work to do His will. The verb "make perfect" comes from the Greek word "katartizo" which means to make folly ready, put in foil order, perfectly equip, prepare folly. The doctor knew the meaning of this word because it meant to "set a bone." To the fisherman, it meant "to mend a broken net." (Matthew 4:21). To the sailors, it meant "to outfit a ship for a voyage." To soldiers, it meant "to equip an army for battle."

Matthew 4:21: KJV 21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

Jesus Christ wants to equip us so that we may live the Christian life here on earth. He wants to set the "broken bones" in our lives so that we may walk straight and run the race before us successfully. He wants to equip us for battle and outfit us so that we will not be battered in the storms of life. In short, He wants to mature us so that He can work in us and through us so that which pleases Him and accomplishes His will.

How does He equip us? He uses the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

He uses prayer.

1 Thessalonians 3:9-10: "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; Night and day

praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?'

He uses the fellowship in the local church.

Ephesians 4:11-13: "And he gave some, apostles; some prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

He uses suffering to perfect His children, and this relates to what we learned from Hebrews 12 about chastening.

1 Peter 5:10: "But the God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablished, strengthen, settle you."

The basis of this marvelous work of maturing the believes is the "blood of the everlasting covenant." This is the New Covenant which was discussed in Hebrews 8. It is the covenant which is based on the sacrifice discussed in Hebrews 10. Because this New Covenant was a part of God's eternal plan of salvation, and because it guarantees everlasting life, it is called "the everlasting covenant". But apart from the death of Jesus Christ, we can share in none of the blessings named in the verses of this lesson.

HE IS THE GOD TO BE PRAISED Verse 21b
".. .to Whom be glory for ever and ever."

Psalms 67:3: "Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee."

Psalms 100:4: "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name."

Psalms 107:21-22, "Oh, that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing."

Hebrews 13:15: KJV 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

When we are experiencing the Lordship of Jesus Christ, we will find ourselves praising Him for His goodness and blessings.

Conclusion

The writer pleaded with His readers to "suffer" or bear with, endure the exhortation of this letter.

The writer reminded the Hebrew believers that God the Father has spoken to us by His Son Jesus Christ. Because God has given Jesus Christ to die for our sins, we have a better covenant, sacrifice, High Priest, and a better hope. The lost are instructed to acknowledge that God loves them, has provided salvation for those who believe, and gives eternal life. The lost must acknowledge that they are sinners and are not able to save themselves. When they call upon Him in faith, He will forgive their sins. Believers are instructed to live by faith and to so live for God that the evidence of their being children of God is obvious from the evidence produced.

Do you know that your sins have been forgiven? Are you walking in fellowship with Him?