



# **HIGHLIGHTS**

**IN**

# **HEBREWS**

A series of lines radiating from a point on the left, connecting the word 'HIGHLIGHTS' at the top to the word 'HEBREWS' at the bottom. Some lines are solid, some are dashed, and some are a combination of solid and dashed.

**A STUDY GUIDE AND WORKBOOK  
FOR  
CLASSES AND INDIVIDUALS**

**WITH QUESTIONS FOR EACH LESSON**

**HIGHLIGHT THOUGHTS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION**

**HEBREWS 1- 13**

**INCLUDING INTRODUCTION AND BOOK OUTLINE**

**BY: REG GINN**

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# **HEBREWS**

**A WORKBOOK FOR CLASSES AND INDIVIDUALS**

**Hebrews 1-13**

**Fifteen Lessons**

**Class Questions and Topics for Discussion**

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## About **Highlights in Hebrews**-- for Teachers and Students

This study of Hebrews is not a commentary, nor is it intended to be. Neither is it a scholarly work to unearth new meanings from an old epistle. Instead, it is simply a book designed for interested students to use in seeking an uncomplicated but sound understanding of the more apparent lessons to be learned from this marvelous New Testament letter.

While **Highlights in Hebrews** will not serve as a commentary from which to extract the more obscure and/or language-related expositions of the text, an effort has been made in the written discussion to give some attention to meanings and applications of most verses. It is hoped that the student will have at least a basic understanding of the book's message when his/her study of these lessons has been completed.

An outline format has been followed in the lessons. This should foster clarity and the completeness of each textual investigation of the passages studied. To conserve space, the Bible text of Hebrews is not included in the study book. The student should have his/her Bible open as each lesson is prepared. References are from the New King James Version, unless otherwise indicated.

The study is divided in each lesson according to the topic(s) treated by "the writer" [occasionally referred to as "Paul (?)"]. This arrangement should assist in the comprehension of the overall message of Hebrews, its various sub-parts, and the transitions made from one part to another. Each section under investigation is further divided into numbered "points" to assist in understanding a particular section. Verse citations from the Bible text follow the "points" that are related to those particular verses.

Study questions follow each lesson. Questions are designed to emphasize the most significant ideas in the text. Verse citations are given to assist in lesson preparation. Questions may be used for "homework" assignments, for class discussion, or both.

**"Highlights in Hebrews"** is a collection of ideas at the end of each lesson. These thoughts are closely related to the text, but are intended more for the purpose of practical application than for textual exposition. The thoughts suggested can be used as a "springboard" for class discussion that might "bring home" to students certain personal meanings of things taught in the epistle. This, of course, is the ultimate goal of Bible study.

Several addenda are inserted at various places in the book. These may be used for additional study related to a particular lesson or to the study as a whole at the discretion of the teacher or students. The same is true of several "preliminary investigations" within the lessons. May the study of these lessons help in some way to increase your knowledge and appreciation of God's word. May study always draw us nearer to the God from whom all knowledge comes.

--Reg Ginn

# HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS

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**Scripture quotations/references in this study are from the NKJV unless otherwise noted. This version should be used by the student if possible.**

## **Foreword to Highlights in Hebrews**

Hebrews is at once both simple and profound. Its central message is not at all difficult to understand: God now guides men to salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus and His gospel have replaced all other systems and all other personnel used previously by God in directing the religious conduct of the nations.

The message of the book is directed primarily to certain Hebrew converts who seemed to be discouraged enough about their “new religion” to consider a return to things viewed as attractive in the Law of Moses. The author seeks to persuade them to rethink their position and to renew their loyalty to a “better way.”

The “milk of the word” could be easily digested by all but the dullest of minds. The “meat,” however, was another matter. It might prove less digestible to readers who were unwilling to give serious consideration to the rather intricate argumentation and reasoning of the author. The book is filled with his comparisons and contrasts, both express and implied; historical references; citations from Old Testament scripture; and logical conclusions based on the analysis and synthesis of facts familiar to the general Jewish population. The writer’s challenge to his immature and unstable brethren was to “grow up” and to exercise their [religious] senses to make good decisions about their [religious] future.

The same challenge faces us as we study Hebrews today. While most of us have different national and spiritual backgrounds than the original recipients of the letter, our knowledge of Jewish history and religion in the Old Testament makes it possible for us to comprehend, with some mental effort, the argumentation used and the conclusions reached in the book.

Furthermore, students of Hebrews are able to glean numerous worthwhile lessons for their own practical application to the Christian life in the Lord’s church. Within a different context, much of what first-century Hebrew Christians needed is still what we need today if we are to succeed in remaining steadfast in our faith. The book should be read to gain an insight into the Mosaic Law that probably is unavailable elsewhere. But more than that, Hebrews provides us with a “mother lode” of rich spiritual treasure that can ground us further in the *present truth* and inspire us to pursue excellence in our service to God as never before. To that end, “leaving the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection...” (Hebrews 6:1).

--Reg Ginn

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**Outline of Hebrews**

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**HEBREWS: ‘In Pursuit of Perfection’**

**I. The PERFECT PERSON (Hebrews 1:1-4:13):**

(Who Jesus Christ IS and why He is capable of leading us to spiritual perfection)

- A. God’s new Spokesman. 1:1-3
- B. Perfection of the new Spokesman. 1:4-4:13
  - 1. Superior to angels as spokesmen. 1:4-2:18
    - a. The nature of angels.
    - b. Angels as messengers--examples.
    - c. Angels are inferior messengers when compared to Christ:
      - (1) In name (nature). 1:4,5
      - (2) In position (worship). 1:6-14
        - (a) Implication for our obedience. 2:1-4
      - (3) In redemption. 2:5-18
        - (a) His destiny as Redeemer. 2:5-8
        - (b) His humanity as Redeemer (suffering). 2:9-13
        - (c) His victory as Redeemer (over Satan and death). 2:14,15
        - (d) His compassion as Redeemer (for the tempted). 2:16-18
  - 2. Superior to Moses as spokesman. 3:1-4:13
    - a. The greatness of Moses as a leader and prophet.
    - b. Moses as a messenger-- examples.
    - c. Moses was an inferior messenger when compared to Christ:
      - (1) In position (authority). 3:1-6
      - (2) In security (protection). 3:7-19
      - (3) In assurance (prospect of reward). 4:1-10
        - (a) Implications for our obedience. 4:11-13

**II. The PERFECT PERFORMANCE (Hebrews 4:14-10:39):**

(WHAT Jesus Christ DOES for us as we strive toward spiritual perfection)

- A. On the part of CHRIST. 4:14-10:18
  - 1. Perfection of His PRIESTHOOD. 4:14-8:6
    - a. A sympathetic priesthood. 4:14-5:9
    - b. An authoritative priesthood. 5:10,11
      - (1) (Digression): implications of His sympathy. 5:12-6:12
      - (2) Priestly authority (resumed). 6:13-20a

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- c. An unrestricted priesthood (like Melchizedek). 6:20b-7:21
  - (1) Not limited by geneology. 7:1-19
  - (2) Not limited by mortality. 7:20-25
  - (3) Not limited by human weakness. 7:26-28
  - (4) Summary/preview of Christ's priesthood:
    - (a) Authority (8:1); (b) Tabernacle (8:2); (c) Covenant (8:4,6); (d) Sacrifices (8:3).
- 2. Perfection of His COVENANT. 8:7-13
  - a. Imperfection of the first covenant. 8:7-8a
  - b. Promise of a new and better covenant. 8:8b-12
  - c. Replacement of the Old with the New. 8:13
- 3. Perfection of His SANCTUARY. 9:1-11
  - a. The earthly sanctuary described. 9:1-5
  - b. Functions of the earthly sanctuary. 9:6-10
  - c. A better sanctuary now enjoyed. 9:11
- 4. Perfection of His SACRIFICE. 9:12- 10:18
  - a. A personal sacrifice. 9:12-15
  - b. A purifying sacrifice. 9:16-24
  - c. A permanent sacrifice. 9:25-28
  - d. A perfecting sacrifice. 10:1-18
- B. On the part of ***CHRISTIANS***. 10:19-39
  - 1. Let us draw near.... 10:19-22
  - 2. Let us hold fast... 10:23-39
    - a. By considering one another. 10:24,25
    - b. By avoiding willful sins. 10:26-31
    - e. By remembering our investment. 10:32-35
    - d. By patiently enduring. 10:36-39

### III. The ***PERFECT PROSPECT*** (Hebrews 11:1-13:17)

The possibilities available to the seeker of spiritual perfection)

- A. The reward of faith. 11:1-40
  - 1. The reality of faith to the believer. 11:1
  - 2. The reward of faith *then*: "a good testimony." 11:2, 39
    - a. Examples from the elders. 11:3-38
  - 3. The reward of faith *now*: perfection in Christ. 11:39,40



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- B. The demands of faith. 12:1-7
  - 1. Persistent obedience. 12:1,2
  - 2. Endurance of sinners' hostility. 12:3,4
  - 3. Acceptance of God's chastisement. 12:5-11
  - 4. Renewal of spiritual strength. 12:12,13
  - 5. Pursuit of peace with God and man. 12:14-17
- C. The comfort of faith. 12:18-29
  - 1. The uneasiness of Old Testament service. 12:18-21
  - 2. The easiness of Christian service. 12:22-24
  - 3. The relationship between comfort and responsibility. 12:25-29
- D. Other requirements of our prospect. 13:1-6
  - 1. Kind treatment of others. 13:1-6
  - 2. Respect for gospel teaching. 13:7-13
  - 3. Praise and thanksgiving. 13:14-16
  - 4. Obedience to elders. 13:17

### IV. Final Thoughts and Admonitions (Hebrews 13:18-25)

- A. Request for the prayers of others. 13:18,19
- B. Prayer for the perfection of saints. 13:20,21
- C. Challenge to accept the encouragement of the gospel. 13:22-25

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**Introduction**

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**HEBREWS: *'IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION'***

1. The study of any Bible book will seek to answer these questions:
  - a. Who wrote it? This information allows us to compare/contrast the content with that of books by same author or with that of books by different authors.
  - b. To whom was it written? The personal and immediate circumstances in which the recipients were engaged may have a bearing on the terminology, examples, argumentation, etc., of the book.
  - c. Why was it written? (What was its purpose?) This most important factor may determine the approach taken, the tone used, and the content included in the book.
  - d. When was it written? Relation of the book to the historical context may give insight into the particular appropriateness or urgency of the content dealt with in the book.
  - e. From where was it written? The author's personal surroundings sometimes reflect added meaning to certain portions or statements contained in the book.
2. Can you give examples of how these factors are reflected in one or more books of the N. T.?
3. Some of these questions about Hebrews cannot be answered with any certainty; others can be addressed more certainly.
4. **Who wrote Hebrews?**
  - a. There have been many answers suggested: Clement of Rome (an early church leader); Barnabas; Silas; Mark; Apollos, and others. Many (if not most) scholars have agreed for various reasons that Paul the apostle is most likely the author.
  - b. The case for Paul's authorship of Hebrews:
    - (1) Many of the "church fathers" (early leaders) attributed the book to Paul. It is thought that they had an opportunity to know the facts better than most.
    - (2) The internal evidence of Paul's authorship:
      - (a) The style of writing.
        - [1] Paul's habit of digressing from his main thought to another and back to his first topic is seen in Hebrews. (See Romans 2:12-16; 5:12-18 and Hebrews 1:4,2:1; 5:10,7:1).

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[2] Also, Paul's use of similar analogies such as "runners" and "fighters" occurs in Hebrews as well as in other letters (See Hebrews 12:1,2; Galatians 2:2, 5:7; and 1Cor. 9:24-26-- Hebrews 10:32; 1Timothy 6:12).

(b) The author's friendship with Timothy.

[1] Timothy was a close companion of Paul for a number of years (Acts 16:3).

[2] Timothy was with Paul in prison and was included in the salutations of the "prison epistles" (See Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon).

[3] Paul planned to dispatch Timothy to Philippi when he knew "how it goes with me" (Philippians 2:19-24) and to come with him "shortly" if he could.

[4] Hebrews records that Timothy "has been set free." Paul hoped soon to "be restored" to the brethren in the company of Timothy (Hebrews 13:19,23).

[5] Paul greeted the Hebrews "from Italy" [Rome?] (Hebrews 13:24).

(c) The Hebrew writer used the word "mediator," employed only by Paul elsewhere (See Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24 and Gal. 3:19,20; 1Timothy 2:5).

c. A negative argument against Paul's authorship: Why did Paul not identify himself since he always did so in other letters? A possible answer: He had good reason not to, since he had already raised resentment among both converted and unconverted Jews when he abandoned a strong position in support of the Law. Paul wished to persuade the Jews to receive the message of Hebrews without prejudice against him personally and so deliberately omitted his name from the book's introduction.

### **5. To whom was the book written?**

- a. No salutation is affixed to the letter. It begins simply, "God, who at various times..."
- b. "To the Hebrews" was attached at an early date after its writing.
- c. It is generally agreed that it was addressed to Jewish Christians in Palestine (perhaps in the Jerusalem church) who were discouraged about the Christian life.
- d. Internal evidence suggests strongly that Jewish Christians received the letter:
  - (1) It assumed that the recipients were familiar with Jewish history, e.g.:
    - (a) Hebrews 3:5-- Moses as a faithful servant for Israel;
    - (b) Hebrews 4:8-- Joshua as the leader of Israel into Caanan;
    - (c) Hebrews 11:4-40-- Heroes of the Jewish faith are cited;
    - (d) Hebrews 12:1-18-- Details of the giving of the Law to Israel
  - (2) It assumed familiarity with the Jewish Law, e.g.:
    - (a) Hebrews 4:4-- The reason for Jews keeping the sabbath day;
    - (b) Hebrews 5:1-4-- Function of the Jewish high priest;
    - (c) Hebrews 7:14-- Restrictions on qualifying for the priesthood;
    - (d) Hebrews 10:28-- Punishment by stoning under the Law.
  - (3) It assumed familiarity with Jewish ceremonial activities, e.g.:

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- (a) Hebrews 8:5; 9:1-6-- The appointments of the tabernacle for Jewish worship;
- (b) Hebrews 10:1-4-- Repetition of sacrificial offerings;
- (c) Hebrews 10:19-22-- Rituals of cleansing in the tabernacle worship.

**5. Why was the book written?**

- a. To show the unquestioned superiority of the New Covenant over the Old. The **NEW COVENANT** had:
  - (1) A **better** spokesman and lawgiver (1:4);
  - (2) A **better** salvation (6:9);
  - (3) A **better** priesthood (7:7);
  - (4) A **better** hope (7:19);
  - (5) A **better** covenant (7:22; 8:6);
  - (6) **Better** promises (8:6; 11:40)
  - (7) **Better** sacrifices (9:23);
  - (8) A **better** possession (10:34);
  - (9) A **better** country (11:16);
  - (10) A **better** resurrection (11:35);
  - (11) **Better** blood (12:24).
- b. To encourage wavering Jewish Christians to be faithful to Christ:
  - (1) Hebrews 4:11— “...be diligent...”
  - (2) Hebrews 6:11.- “...show...hope until the end...”
  - (3) Hebrews 9:28-- “...eagerly wait for Him ...for salvation.”
  - (4) Hebrews 10:23-- “...hold fast...our hope...”

**6. When was it written?**

- a. The temple service seems to have been in place at the time of writing (8:4; 10:11).
- b. The temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Hebrews must have been written prior to that date (See 10:24,25 [“the day”]?), possibly between A.D. 63 and A.D. 65.

**7. From where was it written?**

- a. It probably was sent from a Roman prison prior to Paul’s release (13:19,24).

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## Christ-- the Better Angel

**Introductory Statement:** To Jewish Christians, many of whom were discouraged and struggling with their faith in the New Covenant, the writer of Hebrews sent this central message: “Don’t give up on Jesus and His gospel!” Some Jews were jealous for the Law because its delivery from God had utilized angels in some capacity (See Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53). It was also associated with Moses, the great leader who had administered it among the nation. The author’s task is clear: remind wavering saints that they enjoy “better” things under Jesus’ law that were never available under the Law of Moses, and convince them of the folly of choosing “worse” rather than “better.”

**Verses 1:1, 2a:** Announcing God’s “New Angel” (Messenger)...

1. No other N.T. book begins with such directness and authority: **God!** “Going to the top” should arrest the attention of readers [Jews particularly]. Note this difference from the openings of other books. Announcing a book’s content, author, subject, or scope [as in other books] might or might not impress. But-- God-- Surely, whatever He has to say is worth listening to! **vs. 1**
2. God’s initial message is His most vital message: He has changed His spokesman! He is now “broadcasting” on a different frequency, and we must now change stations if we are to receive the message He intends for us.
3. God’s messages had previously been sent: (1) at different times [during both Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations]; (2) in different ways [e.g., in “visions of God” (Ezekiel 1,2ff); in a “still, small voice” (1Kings 19:12,11); “face to face” (Exodus 33:11), by Urim and Thummim (1 Samuel 28:6), etc.); and (3) to different “prophets” but NOW [in this final time-slot (“last days”)] He speaks only through ONE spokesman-- His Son! Let all other voices be still! Listen to God’s “New Angel” [Messenger]! **vs. 1, 2a**

**Verses 1:2b-3:** Qualifications of this “New Angel” (Messenger)...

1. He is the appointed “heir” of all things-- “heirs” are the “closest relatives.” Jesus is the “Son” of God in a way that no other can be (See John 1:14).
  - (a) Christians are “heirs,” but not of “all things” associated with the nature, power, authority, and judgment of the Father. Only Jesus Christ holds that distinction (See 1Corinthians 15:27,28).
2. He is the “Maker of the worlds” (See Genesis 1:1,26; Colossians 1:16). The “Potter” has the right to shape the “clay” (See Jeremiah 18). **vs. 2b**

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3. He is of the same Nature as the Father. He possesses *every* divine attribute necessary to direct men to eternal life (See Colossians 2:9; 1Timothy 6:15,16). **vs. 3a**
4. He upholds everything by the power of His word. The same *word* (His will) that can oversee man’s total *physical* existence through natural law can also successfully guide man’s *spiritual* quest for salvation through religious law (See Romans 8:28-30). **vs. 3b**
5. He has earned the right by His great sacrifice to speak for God (See Philippians 2:5-11).

### Verses 1:4-14: The “New Angel” is Better Than the “Old Angels” (Messengers)...

1. His name (Greek- “onoma”: “all a name implies” [Vine’s Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words]) is “so much better” than that of “angels” (spiritual beings who delivered revelations to men-- See Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53; also, Addendum, “Bible Angels”). **vs. 4**
2. His “name” was conferred by the Father because of the special relationship between them.
  - (a) This relationship was foretold by O.T. prophets-- Psalm 2:7 and 2Samuel 7:14. **vs. 5**
  - (b). No angel (not even Michael or Gabriel) shared such a relationship with God.
3. The differences between the role of Christ and the role of angels. **vs. 6-14**
  - a. Differences should have been obvious to readers of the Psalms. Quotations from five Psalms emphasize the great contrast between the **Son** of God and the **angels** of God.
  - b. The angels occupy a **secondary** role in God’s plan of salvation.
    - (1) *Psalm 97:7*-- They are worshipers rather than worshiped. **vs. 6b**
      - (a) Angels by nature are unworthy of worship. (See Revelation 22:8,9; Colossians 2:18).
    - (2) *Psalm 104:4*-- They are expeditors rather than initiators. **vs. 7**
      - (a) They are capable of executing God’s work speedily and irresistibly [“a flame of fire”] (See Isaiah 66:15).
    - (3) *Psalm 110:1*-- Their ministry focuses on saints this side of eternity. **vs. 14**
      - (a) They dispense God’s Providence to assist saints in overcoming obstacles to their salvation [including death] (See 1Corinthians 15:24-26).
  - c. The Son enjoys the **primary** role in God’s plan of salvation.
    - (1) *Psalm 97:7*-- He is worthy of worship even by angels. **vs. 6b**
      - (a) Only **God** is the object of worship (See Acts 10:25,26; Revelation 22:9).
      - (b) The resurrection [“again... into the world”] declared His worthiness. **vs. 6a**
    - (2) *Psalm 45:6,7*-- His service to saints is performed here and hereafter. **vs. 8a**
      - (a) His power to help us emanates from His throne and His scepter. **vs. 8**

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- (3) *Psalm 102:25-27*-- His eternal plan for man’s salvation is absolutely unchangeable. **vs. 10-12**
- (a) His physical creation has changed and will change again (See Genesis 1:1,2; 2Peter 3:10,12). **vs. 10- 12a**
- (b) Only His unchangeable self assures an unchangeable purpose in Christ and an unchangeable hope in man (See Hebrews 13:8). **vs. 12b**
- (4) *Psalm 45:6,7*-- His reign cannot be flawed by sin and weakness. **vs. 8b,9**
- (a) Christ had demonstrated His love for righteousness and His hatred for sin (See 1Peter 2:21-23). **vs. 9a**
- (b) Some angels had fallen to temptation and sin (See 2Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
- (c) The Father endorsed His worthiness to reign and to redeem. **vs. 9b**
- (5) *Psalm 110:1*-- His complete victory over every spiritual enemy is certain. **vs. 13b**
- (a) Humanity’s trust cannot be misplaced in divinity (See 2Timothy 1:12)!

**vs. 2:1-4: Truth and Consequences...**

1. We *must* (by choice, not compulsion) give **more** attention to what God’s “**New Angel**” has said to us than to any previous pronouncement by an “**Old Angel**” (messenger). **vs. 1**
2. God has required obedience to every word of lesser messengers in *past* ages. **vs. 2**
  - a. No one escaped punishment for disobedience: e.g., Lot’s wife (Genesis 19:17,26); Zecharias (Luke 1:8-20).
  - b. The Law of Moses was “appointed [administered] through angels” (Galatians 3:19).
    - (1) Punishment always followed disobedience:
      - (a) For individuals-- one who gathered sticks on the sabbath (Numbers 15:32-36).
      - (b) For the Jewish nation-- captivity resulted from rebellion (See Jeremiah 44:23).
    - (2) God’s retribution was “just” [fair]. Ample warning preceded each test of faith.**vs.2**
3. God requires obedience to every word of His greatest messenger in this *present* age. **vs. 3**
  - a. Christ gave up heaven to deliver God’s message to earth (See Hebrews 10:9).
  - b. Christ’s apostles “confirmed” the message of the “Better Angel” (See 1John 1:1-5).
  - c. God also “confirmed” the message by signs, wonders, miracles, and spiritual gifts (See Mark 16:15-20). **vs. 4**

## \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson Two\*\*\*\*\*

1. **God has changed His Spokesman for the New Covenant. He speaks now only through His Son and not through “modern” prophets or through angels. Nor does He reveal His will by means of dreams, apparitions, or any such things.**

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2. Jesus Christ, God’s “Better Angel” (Messenger), is totally qualified to serve as the New Spokesman for the Father. He does not need someone else (e.g., Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen White, Judge Rutherford, or Muhammad) to speak for Him or to improve on His message.
3. There is little question that men would listen carefully today to some revelation that came from an angelic being. How strange that these same men will pay no heed to Jesus-- a messenger from God who is far more important than any angel.
4. Three witnesses have testified about the importance and urgency of God’s latest and last message from heaven:
  - a. Jesus Christ, who first delivered the message;
  - b. The apostles, who represented the message to others as being true and complete;
  - c. God, who confirmed the truth of Jesus’ gospel by signs and miracles.
5. The inevitable conclusion: To refuse to accept God’s last and greatest messenger is to reject every messenger God has sent and to deny the integrity of the God who sent them (See Matthew 10:40).

Notes and. Comments:



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**Chapter 1**

1. What three variables characterized God’s communication with men in “time past”? (vs.1)
2. What certainty now prevails about God’s communication in “these last days”? (vs. 2)
3. List the qualifications of Christ as God’s “new spokesman.” (vs. 2-4)
4. What is the basic meaning of “angel”? (Consult a dictionary if necessary) Why can Christ be called a “better angel”?
5. What is the fundamental reason that Christ is a “better angel” than “the angels”? What does “a more excellent name” mean? (vs.4)
6. What is the first specific difference given between Christ and angels? (vs. 5-6a)
7. Give the next difference as cited from O. T. scriptures. (vs. 6,7)
8. What qualities “entitled” Christ to His eternal throne? (vs. 8,9)
9. Still another feature of Christ’s nature assured Him of everlasting authority over all creation. What is it? ( vs. 10-12)
10. The function of angels is focused on what group of people? (vs. 14)

**Chapter 2**

11. What two conclusions are stated about heeding God’s messengers? (2:1-4)
12. What consequence occurs when we ignore these conclusions? (2:1-4)

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*Bible Angels (Messengers)*

**JESUS CHRIST:** The “Angel [Messenger] of the Lord”

1. He spoke to Hagar about her descendants (Genesis 16:10-12). She acknowledged His Person (verse 13).
2. He followed [“one going in the same way”--Vine] the Jews in the wilderness (1Corinthians 10:4).
3. He prepared the way for the occupation of Caanan (Exodus 23 :20-33).
4. He was called “My Presence” (Exodus 32:34; 33:14; Isaiah 63:9).
5. He spoke to Moses from a burning bush (Exodus 3:2, 4, 14; John 8:58).
6. He spoke to Moses from the mercy seat about Levitical ceremonies (Numbers 7:8,9).
7. He was the “messenger [angel] of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1).
8. This was the role of Christ as the “Preincarnate Messiah” [numbers 1-7, above].
9. He now speaks for the Father to men (Hebrews 1:3; John 12: 49,50; John 1: 1,14).

**ANGELS (Heavenly Beings):** “Angels [Messengers] of the Lord”

1. Who are they?
  - a. Spiritual beings (Matthew 22:3).
  - b. Created beings (Colossians 1:16).
  - c. Existed as “sons” before the world created (Job 38:4-7); not spirits of dead people.
  - d. Occupy different ranks, roles (1 Thessalorians 4:16; Jude 9; Daniel 8:16; Luke 1: 19,26).
  - e. Positioned [ranked] above humans (Psalm 8:5).
  - f. Possess: intellect (1Peter 1:12); will (Galatians 1:8, 2Peter 2:4, Jude 6); and emotions [like men] (Luke 15:10).
  - g. Some sinned long ago and received punishment from God (2Peter 2:4).
2. What messages have they brought from God? Some examples are:
  - a. One angel: Elijah must preserve his own life (IKings 19:5ff).
  - b. Two angels: Lot must flee from Sodom (Genesis 19: 15ff.).
  - c. Three angels: Abraham would have a son and a nation (Genesis 18:10, 18). [Note-- Who was the “third” angel? (Genesis 18: 2, 3, 4, 17, 22ff, 33; 19:1)]
  - d. Many angels: Encouraged Jacob on two occasions (Genesis 28:12; 32:1,2).

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**MOSES:** An “Angel [Messenger] of the Lord”

1. No prophet like Moses since his time [except Jesus] (Deuteronomy 34:9-12).
2. What messages did he deliver? Some examples are:
  - a. To Pharaoh: God will deliver His people from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 9:1).
  - b. To Israel: God has a Law-- obey it (Deuteronomy 27:10)!
  - e. To Israel: Speeches of encouragement and admonition on the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy chapters 1-33).

**MEN (Apostles and Others):** “Angels [Messengers] of the Lord”

1. John the Baptist (Malachi 3:1).
2. Paul (Galatians 4:14).
3. Messengers of [to] local churches (Revelation 2:1, 8, etc.).\*

\* Some view these “angels” as the “spiritual essence” of the Asian churches; others as the human messengers who delivered the messages to the churches..

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## Christ-- the Better Liberator

**Introductory Statement:** The writer has argued in chapter one that Christ's divinity makes Him far superior to angels as God's spokesman. In chapter two, it is Jesus' humanity that qualifies Him to become God's agent for liberating man from the bondage and dread of sin and death.

### Verses 2:5-8: When God Became a Man...

1. The "world to come" [the world of God's handiwork, vs. 7b] was not subjected to angels because it was not intended for them (See Psalm 115:16). Nor was it suited to them. It was for man that the physical creation was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). It was to man that dominion over the earth was given (Genesis 1:26-30). This action by God testified of the high value and the lofty expectations He placed on man. Only to the creature "made in God's own image" was the responsibility for the earth given, at once both a signal honor and a sober responsibility. No such tribute was ever accorded to any angel spirit. **vs. 5**
2. The prophet David reflected in Psalm 8:4-6 on God's *continued confidence* in man's potential and His devotion to man's well-being in spite of man's failure to prove himself worthy of such divine support. "You *take care* [present tense] of him..." **vs. 6b**
3. Man's nature is "lower" than the nature of angels because of our susceptibility to the ailments, sorrows, and temptations of the physical body. Still, man [and not angels] was given the "glory" and "honor" of having the physical creation placed under his control and responsibility and of receiving God's confidence that he can overcome his obstacles. **vs. 7**
4. "All things" literally were not subjected to man, only the **physical** creation (See Psalm 8: 7,8 for the limitation). The **spiritual** realm of temptation, sin, and death for sin has ever been both a challenge and a struggle for mankind in the flesh. We can mount a faithful *resistance* to sin, but we can never have sin under our *control*. And since we cannot avoid sin by our own efforts, we cannot avoid death for sin (See 1John 1:8). **vs. 8a**
5. God's purpose is that even sin and death will one day be "put under" man, but "not yet." This can occur only in God's order when His plan for the world has ended (See 1Corinthians 15:20-26). **vs. 8b**
6. Jesus was made a **man** and not an **angel** in His preparation for human redemption! It was as **man** and not as **angel** that He could best serve the spiritual needs of humanity. **vs. 9a**

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**Verses 2:9-11: Why Like a Man and not Like an Angel?...**

1. We “see” [understand through rationality] that “all [spiritual] things” are not yet put under man. That is a *discouraging* realization. But-- we also “see” [understand by faith] **Jesus** as the **one** who can change defeat into victory! God’s grace toward dying man sent Jesus to “taste” death because we in our sin would “eat” death eternally. (See John 3:16). **vs. 9**
2. Jesus was made a *man* [“a little lower than the angels,” vs. 7] and not an *angel* so that He could be both spirit and flesh (See John 1:14). Flesh is essential to redemption because only flesh can die, and physical death has always been a necessary part of God’s plan for *spiritual* cleansing (See Hebrews 9:22). The “suffering of death” was impossible for angels. **vs. 9**
3. The death of humiliation became a death crowned with glory and honor when Jesus was raised to life as man’s Savior and as the King of God’s kingdom (See Acts 2:30)! **vs. 9**
4. God’s plan for Jesus to die on the cross was “fitting” because of His determination to salvage the creature intended to glorify Him through imitation of His nature [“*for whom*” are all things] (See Matthew 5:48). His concern for man because He had made man [“*by whom*” are all things] dictated that He do whatever was necessary to save man. **vs. 10**
5. If “many sons” were to be rescued from their sins, the spiritual Christ would be their *only* possible Savior. He had to be made “perfect” [complete] with a body of flesh that could suffer death on the cross. **vs. 10**
6. The human nature of Jesus enables us to share a commonality with Him that is not possible to share with angels. We are “all of one” [nature] with Him and we can be considered by Him as “brethren.” We can never be “brethren” with angels. **vs. 11**

**Vs. 2:12-18: What Did He Do that Angels Could Not?**

1. He leads us into **sonship** with the Father. His human bond with us drives Him to wish to share with His “brethren” advantages similar to those He enjoys as God’s Son. He is unashamed to “recommend” us to His Father as eligible to be His fellowservants. **vs. 11, 12**
2. As a *brother*, Jesus will lead us to the **salvation** planned for us from eternity:
  - a. He will “declare God’s name” and “sing His praise” so the brethren/congregation will be led to direct their **love** toward God (See Psalm 22:22).

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- b. He will declare His trust in the Lordship of the Father as an example for **faith** in us (See 2Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 8:17).
  - c. He will live spiritually with those who have been **born again** as “children” into the family of God (See Isaiah 8:18; John 3:3-5; 1Timothy 3:15).
  - d. Thus, Jesus as the “perfected” Savior (vs.10) will guide us to salvation through:
    - [1] **Love** and appreciation for the Almighty God;
    - [2] **Faith** and trust in that God;
    - [3] **Obedience** to that God in baptism (See Mark 16:16; 2Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 3:27);
    - [4] **Living faithfully** “in Christ” and in God’s family [the church] (See Romans 12:10, etc.). **vs. 12, 13**
3. He will serve us in securing the **remission** of all sins we commit while we are “the people” of God.
    - a. Having lived in the flesh, Jesus is able to be a sympathetic and caring High Priest and to be faithful in making the “propitiation” for our sins [this matter will be discussed at length in later chapters].
    - b. No angel had anything to offer as a “propitiation” for sin. Only the “precious” blood of Jesus in the flesh could atone for man’s unrighteousness (See 1Peter 1:18,19). **vs. 17**
  4. He is able to understand human **temptation** and to help us through every trial of our faith only because he was tempted as a man and overcame temptation as a man (See Matthew 4:1-11; 1Corinthians 10:13). Angels are incapable of such sympathetic behavior. **vs. 18**
  5. The “children” of God have all *fallen* before sin in consequence of living in flesh and blood (See Romans 3:23). Jesus, by the same consequence, was empowered to die on the cross and to *destroy* the devil’s power of sin and death, exercised freely until that time. **vs. 14**
    - a. “Release” from the ever-present bondage of sin and the accompanying fear of death is now available because a “**man**” and not an “**angel**” has died. **vs. 15**
  6. What a compliment it is to humankind that Jesus *chose* to give His life to benefit man rather than angels.
    - a. Angels have sinned, but seemingly no redemption is available to them (See 2Peter 2:4).
    - b. This choice reflects God’s deep love and concern for all men (See John 3:16). **vs. 16**

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 3      “Christ--the Better Liberator”**  
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**\*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS\*\*\*\*\***

1. God’s focus of love and concern in this present age is on man, not angels.
2. God demonstrated great confidence in man’s potential when He gave him dominion over the whole of creation.
3. Man, in spite of his control over the rest of God’s creation, could not in his humanity control his own practice of sin. But the Father allowed the Son to overcome sin and death in humanity’s behalf.
4. Jesus lived as divinity *and* humanity on earth in order to be able:
  - a. To die in his flesh on the cross to become the physical offering for sin;
  - b. To possess appropriate understanding of and sympathy for man’s weaknesses;
  - c. To employ His physical body as an example to men who live and serve God in a physical world.
5. Jesus identifies with us as brethren because of His dual nature. Accordingly, He can offer appropriate assistance to men in becoming and living as God’s children in His family [the church].
6. Any lack of confidence in Jesus as Lawgiver, Messenger, or Redeemer because of His human nature is totally unfounded. It is only *because* of that nature that He is able to satisfy completely the requirements of all three roles.
7. One conclusion is obvious: angels are INFERIOR to the SON as a sacrifice for sin because He possesses human as well as divine qualities and they don’t.

**Notes and Comments:**

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- “Christ-- the Better Liberator” LESSON THREE**  
**Hebrews 2:5-18 QUESTIONS**

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1. What is “the world to come”? (See chapter 1:2) To whom has this world been subjected? To whom has it not been subjected? (vs. 2:5,8)
2. Who was the “one” who had testified about man’s position in the physical world? (vs.6)
3. What are the blessings God gave to man [despite his weaknesses], according to Psalm 8:4-8? (vs. 6-8)
4. What change occurred in God’s plan for man’s dominion over earthly things? (vs.8b) What caused the change? (See Genesis 1:25-28; 3:17-19)
5. What repeated phrase connects Christ’s nature to that of man? (vs.7,9)
6. What is man’s greatest physical enemy not yet “put under” his control? (vs.8; See 1Corinthians 15:25-28) Who accomplished this “putting under” for man? (vs. 14)
7. How was Jesus able to bring many sons to glory [salvation]? (vs.9b,10) How was He made “perfect” through suffering? (See chapter 5:8,9)
8. Three O.T. scriptures confirm that Jesus chose to identify with men rather than with angels as “brethren” in the process of redemption. What point does each passage make? (vs. 12-14)
9. What characteristic did Jesus have to possess in order to “destroy” death and the devil’s control over death? (vs.14,15)
10. Why did the writer claim freedom for “Abraham’s seed”? (vs.16) Did God give special treatment to the Jews?
11. What O.T. person is related to Jesus in “propitiation for the sins of the people”? (vs. 17)
12. How can Jesus now be a “better angel” for men than “the angels”? (vs. 18,16)



## Christ-- the Better Apostle

**Introductory Statement:** In chapters one and two, the writer has established the vast superiority of Jesus to any angel as God's messenger of truth and salvation. Now, he turns to the relative worth of Jesus and Moses as leaders of God's people. He argues strongly that Christ Jesus, the God/man of the gospel, is by far the **Better Choice!** Then, he offers a stern warning to N.T. saints about the severe consequences of making the wrong choice in this matter.

### Verses 3:1-6: A Servant and a Son...

1. These brethren were acknowledged to be "holy" and "partakers of the heavenly calling" (See Matthew 11:28-30). As "partakers" they shared in the hope of the gospel. Yet, the book shows that they were spiritually deficient in understanding and in being committed to that gospel. They had only "tasted" the full reward of God's grace. Their present need was to grow (See 1Peter 2:3; 2:2). **vs. 1a**
2. The solution to their deficiency was to "**consider**" [examine the facts and judge] Jesus as (1) the *Apostle* and (2) the *High Priest* of their "confession" ([previously professed by word and life]. The role of apostle ["one sent"] will be examined immediately. That of high priest will be reserved for later discussion beginning at 4:14. **vs. 1b**
3. Our "confession" of Jesus as the Christ requires that we not be ashamed of Him in His various roles (See Mark 8:38). He is unashamed of *us* if we are faithful to our calling (See chapter 2:11).
4. The leadership ["apostleship"] of both Christ and Moses was characterized by faithfulness. Each was "appointed" by God as a "steward" [manager or supervisor] over His house, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New. Stewards are required to be faithful (See 1Corinthians 4:1,2). Two differences immediately appear in their stewardships: (1) Mose accepted his apostleship *reluctantly* (See Exodus 3:10, 11; 4:13); Jesus *gladly* accepted the task (See Philippians 2:5-7). (2) Moses served *in* God's house; Jesus was *over* God's house as the Son and heir (vs. 6). Thayer: the Greek *oikos* ["house"] in these verses by metonymy means "all the persons forming one family; a household" (Lexicon). **vs. 2**
5. Moses' glory as a great "apostle" in the O. T. house of God was eclipsed by the glory of Christ as the "builder" of that house [family]. Christ planned and Moses executed the development of the plan for the nation of Israel. The architect of any project receives more credit for its excellence than the craftsmen who piece it together, as important as they may be to its successful completion. **vs. 3**

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6. God’s [Jesus’] accomplishments far outshine those of any man who might be honored for his service. Glory goes to God [Jesus] and not to Moses for any greatness enjoyed by Israel during its years as the people of God. **vs. 4**
  
7. Moses’ faithful work resulted in the initiation of many O. T. things that would serve as a “testimony” [i.e., *a shadow; a pattern*] of things “to come” through Jesus in the church. Thus, the tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices, etc., foretold the *substance* of their gospel counterparts (See Romans 15:4). **vs. 5**
  
8. The Son [Jesus] rules over His own house [some versions omit "own"]. He has all the power and authority to secure our salvation, but He expects us to accept Him as our Head in the house [church] and to maintain our confidence and hope in Him always. **vs. 6**

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**TWO MEN-- TWO MISSIONS**  
(Hebrews 3:1-6)

Moses

1. **Apostle** [“sent”] to the Jews (vs.1)
2. **Appointed to his mission** (vs.2)
3. **Faithful to his mission** (vs.2)
4. **Glory for faithful service** (vs. 5)
5. **A servant** (vs. 5)
6. **A part of another’s household** (vs. 2)
7. **A part of the house another built** (vs. 3)
8. **His work was a testimony** [shadow] of better things to come (vs. 5)

Jesus

1. **Apostle** [“sent”] to the world (vs.1)
2. **Appointed to His mission** (vs. 2)
3. **Faithful to His mission** (vs. 2)
4. **More glory for faithful service** (vs. 3)
5. **A Son** (vs. 6)
6. **Over (own)[God’s] household** (vs. 6)
7. **Builder of the house** (vs. 3)
8. **His work is a declaration of better things now here** (vs. 5)

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**Verses 7-19: A Lesson from the Past...**

1. A serious warning for the recipients is drawn from Psalm 95:7-11. There, David calls upon his subjects to show *gratitude* to the God who had been so good to the nation of Israel to that time. Here, the writer challenges their *judgment* about the consequences of behavior that questions the wisdom and providence of God. His provisions had been directed to physical Israel through His “apostle” Moses; now they are offered to spiritual Israel in the Person of Jesus Christ, His “**better**” Apostle. **vs. 7,8**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 4

## “Christ-- the Better Apostle”

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2. God’s patience with Israel was exhausted when it became obvious that forty years of proving them through numerous miracles and chastisements was inadequate to convince them of His righteous intentions toward them. The writer adds “*always*” to David’s conclusion that the people “go astray in their hearts,” perhaps adding this rebellion against the leadership of Jesus to their already long list of transgressions. **vs. 9, 10**
3. The reason for the repeated failures of the Jews to trust in God’s wisdom was simply that they “have not known [understood and approved] My ways.” This always is the underlying cause of disobedience (See 1Corinthians 2:14). **vs. 10**
4. The extent of the Jews’ O.T. disobedience is characterized in Numbers 14:22 as having tested God “ten times” [repeatedly] in the wilderness in spite of His “glory and signs.” Recall some of these trespasses:
  - (a) At the Red Sea (Exodus 14:10-12)-- “...to die in the wilderness...”
  - (b) At Marah (Exodus 15:22-26)-- “What shall we drink?”
  - (c) In the Wilderness of Sin (Exodus 16:1-3)-- “...to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”
  - (d) At Massah and Meribah (Exodus 17:1-7)-- “...to kill us...with thirst?”
  - (e) At Sinai (Exodus 32:1-29)-- “Make us gods that shall go before us...”
  - (f) At Taberah (Numbers 11:1-3)-- “...the people complained...”
  - (g) At Kibroth Hattaavah (Numbers 11:4-35)-- “...our whole being is dried up...”
  - (h) At Kedesh Barnea (Numbers 14:1-4)-- “...to fall by the sword...”
5. No wonder God’s wrath was aroused against Israel, and He swore, “They shall not enter My rest.” **vs. 11**
6. Just as the Jews’ hearts turned from belief to unbelief in Moses, God’s apostle to them for *physical* deliverance, our hearts can commit the same fatal error about Jesus, God’s apostle to us for *spiritual* deliverance (See Galatians 5:4). **vs. 12**
7. Spiritual Israel must learn the lessons not learned by physical Israel: [1] confidence in God must be maintained “to the end;” [2] when unbelief develops, we “depart from the living God;” [3] the remedy against falling into sin is to “exhort one another daily...” **vs.6, 12,13**
8. “Partaking of Christ” occurs “in His house” [the church] (vs.6, 14) as we *hold fast* our confidence and hope *to the end* [compare verse 6 with verse 14]. **vs. 14, 15**
9. How widespread is the danger of rebelling against God? All who heard; all who were led by Moses from Egypt [excepting Joshua, Caleb, and Eleazer]; all who sinned and whose

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“corpses fell in the wilderness”; *all* who did not obey; ***ALL*** of these testify to the answer: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Corinthians 10:12). **vs. 16-18**

10. Unbelief in our apostle [Jesus] will as surely keep us out of our spiritual rest in heaven as unbelief in their apostle [Moses] prevented the Jews from entering into physical rest in a land of promise. **vs. 18, 19**

\*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Four\*\*\*\*\*

1. **“Partaking” of salvation’s blessings is never absolute. We must continue to grow in the knowledge of the gospel and in our undiluted commitment to it. We never stand still-- we either grow stronger or we grow weaker!**
2. **Jesus will be ashamed in judgment of saints who have failed to maintain both their confidence in Him and their hope of heaven through Him “until the end.”**
3. **Although both served faithfully, Christ’s apostleship is worthy of much more glory than the apostleship of Moses. Moses was sent to be just a *servant* in God’s household. Not only was Christ instrumental in the building [formation] of the O.T. house [the Jewish nation], but He also was sent to become the controlling *Son* over God’s N.T. house [the church] in whose building He also played an essential role.**
4. **All that Moses did as God’s apostle to the Jews was *temporary* and pointed toward the *permanent* provisions of the gospel age through Jesus, God’s apostle to the world.**
5. **The Jews’ unbelief tried God’s patience throughout the forty years of wilderness wanderings. While it is usually unwise to attach “always” to anything, the writer considered it safe to so label the continual disobedience of national Israel.**
6. **People “go astray in their hearts” and fall into rebellious behavior because they do not “know” [endorse] God’s ways over their own.**
7. **Unbelief virtually destroyed the entire nation of Israel. It will just as surely have the same result in the church today if we are not diligent and persevering in our obedience, confidence, and hope.**

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ADDENDUM: Moses and Jesus Christ

Moses as a Servant (Hebrews 3:5)

Christ as a Son [Heir] (Hebrews 3:6)

- 1. Owned nothing
- 2. Heir to nothing
- 3. No authority of his own
- 4. Controlled nothing absolutely
- 5. Followed the will of another

- 1. Owns everything with the Father
- 2. Heir to everything
- 3. All authority given to Him
- 4. Controls all things absolutely
- 5. Imposes His own will on others

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MOSES ----- a n d ----- JESUS

Similarities

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He lifted up a serpent on a pole for physical salvation (Numbers 21:9; John 3:14).</li> <li>2. He “gave” physical bread [manna] to satisfy physical hunger (Exodus 16:15,31).</li> <li>3. He was initially rejected as the leader of God’s physical Israel (Exodus 2:14).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He was lifted up on a cross for spiritual salvation (John 3:14).</li> <li>2. He gave “true” spiritual bread to satisfy spiritual hunger (John 6: 32,33).</li> <li>3. He was rejected as the leader of God’s spiritual Israel (Matthew 21:42).</li> </ul> |
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Differences

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He promised a <i>final</i> prophet from God (Deuteronomy 18:15,18).</li> <li>2. He brought God’s <u>Law</u> only to the Jewish world (John 1:17).</li> <li>3. His Law required <i>perfect obedience</i> by the Jews (Romans 10:5).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He <i>is</i> the <i>final</i> prophet from God (Acts 3:22-26).</li> <li>2. He brought saving <u>grace</u> and <u>truth</u> to the whole world (John 1:17; Mark 16:15).</li> <li>3. His law requires <i>perfect faith</i> by all men (Romans 10:11).</li> </ul> |
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1. What two “positions” does Jesus now occupy in God’s plan? (vs. 1)
2. What is the basic meaning of “apostle”? [Consult a dictionary if necessary] Why is Christ called the “Apostle” of our confession? (vs. 1)
3. Who else is considered in this chapter to have been an “apostle” to God’s people? (vs.3) Why is this an appropriate designation? (vs. 16)
4. Moses served primarily as a \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ house (vs.5), but Jesus speaks as a \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_ house (vs. 6).
5. What word best describes the work of both Jesus and Moses as “apostles”? (vs. 2)
6. Within the context of the two “houses,” why is Jesus a “better apostle” than Moses? (vs.3,6)
7. What condition is attached to our family membership and the reception of family privileges? (vs. 6, 14) How did this condition apply to God’s O. T. family? (vs. 7-12)
8. Why would Christians today depart from God’s service? (vs.12) How did this danger affect the people of Israel? (vs. 8-11)
9. One good safeguard against apostasy is stated in verse 13. What is it?
10. Who bore the blame for the Jews’ failure to realize God’s promise? (vs. 16,18) What lesson does this carry for Christians now? (vs. 19)

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## Christ-- the Better Rest-Giver

**Introductory Statement:** The larger part of chapter four involves a discussion of the “rest” first introduced in chapter three. Since God’s promise of a rest like the one He enjoyed following the creation was never realized by O.T. Israel. N.T. Israel should know that the promise is still available to people of faith. Moreover, they must understand that the final rest will only follow a life of diligent obedience as prescribed in the gospel which had first been delivered to them by God’s “Better Angel” and “Better Apostle.”

### (PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION):

1. “Rest” is first glorified when the Creator “rested” following the original creation (See Genesis 2:2).
  - a. God was not “tired” and in need of rest following strenuous exertion-- as *we* are!
  - b. Neither did He need to be relieved of bothersome cares and anxieties-- as *we* do!
  - c. He simply ceased from the creation work of the previous six days.
2. God planned and “preached the gospel” of rest for man on **THREE LEVELS**: [1] Individual; [2] National; [3] Eternal.
3. He provided a **physical** “rest” for the benefit of *all* His O.T. people:
  - a. He gave a weekly [sabbath day] rest to men and animals under the Law to ensure their physical well-being (See Exodus 31:15).
  - b. He provided rest to the land to enhance its productivity (See Leviticus 25:4).
  - c. He dedicated the seventh day of the week for man’s physical rest, since in the distant past He had rested on that day from His own activity (See Genesis 2:3).
  - d. Sabbath-keeping was altogether a function of Law-keeping (See Exodus 20:8).
    - (1) No *separate* reward was offered for its observance.
    - (2) Physical punishment was exacted upon violators of the sabbath. (See Exodus 31:14; Numbers 15:32-36).
    - (3) Jews would keep this sabbath only “throughout their generations” (Exodus 31:16).
4. He offered a **national** “rest” for the benefit of His chosen people.
  - a. There could be rest for them from the harshness of Egypt (See Exodus 6:7).
  - b. There could be rest for them from their enemies in the Promised Land (See Deuteronomy 12:10).

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- c. This rest for Israel was tied to their trust and obedience as a nation:
  - (1) The people left Egypt under strict instructions from the Lord (See Exodus 12).
  - (2) Rest in Caanan would come by driving out other nations (See Numbers 33:50-55).
- 5. He promises **eternal** rest to the world through His Son Jesus (See Matthew 11:28-30).
  - a. This is the only *rest* which is like *God’s rest*!
    - (1) His rest never ended--He created no more.
    - (2) The dead in Christ rest [forever] from their labors (See Revelation 14:13).
  - b. This rest is *totally* dependent on obedience to the Lord (See Hebrews 5:9).

#### Verses 4:1-10: “The Gospel of Rest”-- Preached to Many, Believed by Few...

1. The various “rests” in the O.T. point to our promise of a heavenly rest. Thus, the gospel [“good news”] promise of rest in the next world as the reward for our faithfulness in this world has been “preached” to all generations. That promise is still valid! **vs. 1, 2**
2. Our greatest fear in this life should be that we might not enjoy that promise of heaven in the life to come. Just having the *facts* about God’s rich provisions is of no benefit to those who fail to place *faith* and unwavering *trust* in those facts. **vs. 1, 2**
3. God’s [eternal] rest is now and has always been [“from the foundation of the world”] available [in prospect] to all [obedient] believers. In every age, God has been pleased to forgive the sins of humbly submissive persons (See Hebrews 9:15). **vs. 3**
4. God did not connect the *seventh day sabbath* to man’s receiving “His rest.” Jews did not have the same degree or length of “rest” that God experienced following the creation. They rested partially, except for “emergencies,” and they rested only to resume their labors following the sabbath. God rested completely, never to end that rest [from creating]. Only in the eternal bliss of heaven will any man experience rest as God did. **vs. 4**
5. God’s purpose “remains” that faithful people will be given *real rest* and “some must enter it.” His purposes are not thwarted by man’s rebellion against those purposes (See Isaiah 55:10,11). There have been some faithful people in all ages, and those are they in whom the promise of “His rest” reaches fruition. **vs. 5, 6**
6. A “certain day” is the time for “hearing His voice” and “not hardening the heart” in order to entertain the prospect of receiving *rest* from God (See Psalm 95:7,8) This was **not** the seventh-day sabbath rest, which had been given hundreds of years before David issued this challenge to Israel. It was **not** the day when the Jews entered Caanan. It is “**TODAY**”



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[any time] when God offers rest to faithful believers. **vs. 7**

7. Not only had Moses failed to be a rest-giver to his people [through their fault, not his] ,but his successor, Joshua [“Jesus” (KJV) is a bad translation], did not deliver the perfect rest for which the Hebrews longed. People fell in the wilderness for *unbelief*. Joshua’s followers later languished in Caanan because of the *same* sin. God obviously pointed to “another day” when believers could truly have “His rest.” That day came when Jesus promised the weary, “Come unto me...and *I will give you rest*” (See Matthew 11:28). **vs. 8, 9**
8. Saints who have received God’s rest [either *actually* in death or *prospectively* in promise] have rest from every earthly care. (See Revelation 14:13; Matthew 11:28). **vs. 10**

#### Verses 4:11-13: “Keep your heart with all diligence...”

1. “Therefore...” Life’s most valuable lessons for the future can be those learned from the mistakes made in the past. Here, readers are warned about falling [away] from trust in the “Better Rest-Giver” and placing that trust [again] in a rest-giver [Moses] who never *could* and who never *can* offer what they need-- rest for the soul. **vs. 11**
2. If Paul wrote Hebrews, he sends the same warning to these vacillating Jews as he had sent to equally unstable members in Galatia: “You can fall, and you will fall if you seek to be saved by any part of a law that never could save anyone” (See Galatians 5:4). **vs. 11**
3. “Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23) and, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). Diligence must be maintained in the heart if we are to display it in our behavior. Constant attention to the word of God will keep our hearts committed to that level of belief that will guard us from a fall from grace. **vs. 12**
4. It is the word spoken through the “Better Angel” [messenger] by which we will finally be judged (See John 12:48). That word is powerful and is altogether suited to:
  - a. Instruct the heart so that its commitment to truth can be guarded jealously.
  - b. Judge the *invisible* “thoughts and intents” of the heart as well as the *visible* actions of the body for which the heart is responsible. **vs. 12**
5. **Two** instruments of judgment will determine our eternal destiny:
  - a. The **eyes** of God, who observes and takes note of “all things” that we do;
  - b. The **word** of God, which measures the goodness or badness of each “thing.” **vs. 13**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 5 “Christ-- the Better Rest-Giver”

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6. Certainly, even those Jews whose disloyalty to Jesus and to the gospel was still only mental and who had not yet *openly* made a move away from the truth were put on notice. Whatever had influenced them toward the Law was a dangerous influence and would surely lead them into apostasy and spiritual destruction (See Galatians 5:7). **vs. 13**

### \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Five\*\*\*\*\*

1. The deep love that God has for His creatures is evident in His provision for their rest. Rest was important to Him, and it is essential both to our physical bodies and to our spiritual well-being.
2. Rest was offered to Israel on both an immediate and a long-term basis. Rest on the sabbath and rest in Caanan gave *temporary* relief from their burdens. Yet, only a *permanent* rest could satisfy their *real* need. Permanent rest was to be a spiritual rest that was clearly foreshadowed by the physical rest offered by the sabbath rest and in the rest experienced in the land of Caanan.
3. Not many shared in the benefits of the first two “rests” God provided. Unbelieving hearts stood in their way. And the great sadness of that was in the fact that only by meeting God’s requirements for the enjoyment of a temporary rest could people meet the requirements for the permanent rest to be enjoyed in heaven.
4. The same thing is true of our own hope. We must faithfully discharge our responsibilities as Christians while we enjoy rest (freedom) from sin and anxiety on earth if we are ever to receive the eternal “rest” in heaven.
5. Christians in the gospel age have a distinct advantage over the Jews of the Mosaic time with regard to staying focused on Jesus as the rest-giver. They had God’s word about being faithful, We have both the same word *and* the examples of the evil consequences that came to people who disregarded the word. Surely, we ought to learn better than to fall away as others have.
6. Faith is the all-encompassing principle upon which reward or punishment is dispensed by the all-knowing God. It is the only credential we can possess that will admit us into heaven to “rest” with Him.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 5 “Christ-- the Better Rest-Giver”

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### ADDENDUM -- THE JEWISH SABBATH AND THE REST IN CAANAN:

#### Seventh-day Sabbath-Keeping [“Rest”] Was:

1. For the good of man and beast;
2. A test of faithfulness to observe a *certain* day of *God’s* choosing;
3. A figure of the rest to be provided in Caanan and of rest realized in Caanan;
4. A figure of rest in heaven like God’s rest following creation;
5. *Not* an assurance of rest in Caanan or in heaven, despite diligent observance of all sabbath regulations;
6. *Not* related in any way to our promise of heavenly rest (Colossians 2:14-18);
7. A demonstration that *faithful obedience* to His *complete* will is God’s only requirement for receiving heavenly rest (Matthew 11:28-30).

#### Facts About the Sabbath Day:

1. The Sabbath was not kept before the Law was given.
  - a. It was “made known” to the Jews at Sinai. Nehemiah 9:13, 14
  - b. Specific punishments had not been prescribed for violations before Sinai. Numbers 15:32-36
2. The Sabbath was given only to the Israel present at Sinai. Deuteronomy 5:3, 6, 12
  - a. It was a *sign* of the Jews’ heritage as the people of God. Exodus 31:13, 17
  - b. It was a *covenant* imposing obligations upon the people of God. Exodus 31:16
  - c. It was a *memorial* to the people of God of His blessings to them. Deuteronomy 5:15
3. The Sabbath was removed at the cross.
  - a. Its removal was prophesied. Hosea 2:11
  - b. We cannot now be judged [condemned] for not keeping it. Colossians 2:14-17
  - c. The whole Law [including the sabbath] has “passed away.” 2Corinthians 3:7, 11

#### HOW “THE PROMISE” WAS NOT “MIXED WITH FAITH” (Hebrews 4:1,2)

1. The promise of a fruitful land was first given in Exodus 3:8 and repeated as late as Numbers 13:2.
2. Twelve spies were dispatched to *confirm* the realities of the promise. Numbers 13
3. Faith was displayed by only two of the twelve.
4. Two returned a good report [“gospel”]. Numbers 14:7-9
5. The people’s reaction was devoid of faith in God’s power. Numbers 14:1-4, 10
6. A curse was imposed immediately for their unbelief. Numbers 14:21-23, 29ff
7. Repentance without consequences could not restore the promise to the unbelievers. Numbers 14:39, 40, 44, 45

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1. Did God abandon His plan for rest because of Israel’s unfaithfulness? (vs. 1) Is His plan for rest still conditional? (vs. 1, 6, 9) What are the conditions [if any] of “rest”? (vs.7,6)
2. What was preached to both the Israelites and Jewish Christians? (vs.2, King James Version) What was the message to both groups that made it “good news”? (vs.3)
3. How is the lesson taught in Hebrews 4:2 and 3:18 repeated in James 2:24?
4. What are the “works” finished “from the foundation of the world”? (vs.3,4)
5. Was the “rest” promised to Israel the same rest enjoyed each sabbath day? How do you know? (vs. 6; Exodus 16:29,30)
6. What was the connection between God’s rest, the sabbath rest, the Caanan rest (See Deuteronomy 28:1-14) and the promised rest for the faithful? [Extra credit!]
7. Who said that God still promised rest to the faithful long after the Israelites proved unfaithful? (vs. 7)
8. Two great leaders [“apostles”] were given to Israel in pursuit of “rest.” Who were they? (vs. 3:16; 4:8) Did either succeed in this mission?
9. In what sense have some “entered His rest”? (vs. 10,11; 1 Thessalonians 5:8)
10. What is the determiner of whether or not we enter the eternal rest? (vs.12,13)

## Christ-- the Better High Priest

**Introductory Statement: Having proved Jesus to be a better “angel” [messenger] of God and a better “apostle” [one sent by God to perform a special task], the writer now focuses on Jesus’ superiority as God’s High Priest to the high priests who served Israel in the Old Testament. He had introduced that concept in chapter three, verse one, but just now is ready to look in detail at that role of Jesus . This discussion of the high priesthood covers parts of three chapters, as indicated above.**

### **(PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION):**

1. God selected one of Jacob’s sons, Levi, to become head of the priestly tribe. From him came Aaron, the first high priest under the Law (See Exodus, chapters 28 and 40). The high priest was to serve as the “chief operating officer” of the Jewish religious organization, responsible for the performance of numerous special activities in behalf of the people.
2. Among the responsibilities of the high priest, five were most significant:
  - a. He had oversight of the sanctuary, its activities, and its personnel (See 2Kings 12:7ff).
  - b. He offered sacrifices for the nation on sabbath days and on other holy days (Josephus).
  - c. He consulted the Urim and Thummim to determine judgments (See Numbers 27:21).
  - d. He presided over the Sanhedrin in later Jewish history (See Acts 5:21).
  - e. His **most important role**, however, was to present offerings to God for the people on the Day of Atonement [tenth day of the seventh month] each year. Only he could offer these all-important sacrifices (Leviticus 16).
    - (1) He alone passed through the veil of the tabernacle [temple] into the Holy of Holies;
    - (2) Within the veil, he offered the sacrifice of a bull for his own sins;
    - (3) Then, he offered the blood of a goat in behalf of the people of Israel;
    - (4) Finally, he sanctified a second goat and loosed it into the wilderness, signifying God’s acceptance of the previous sin offering and the “disappearance” of sin.
3. The dress of the high priest was unique among the priests. In addition to the linen garments of the regular priests, he wore other special clothing (See Exodus 28):
  - a. A robe which was long and worn under the ephod [vest]. It was fringed with pomegranates and with bells which could be heard by the people when he moved about to perform his duties in their behalf;
  - b. An ephod [vest] over his upper body. The front and back were joined together with two onyx clasps, each of which was engraved with the names of six Israelite tribes;

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- c. A breastplate worn outermost and to the front, with the name of each tribe inscribed on a precious stone. To the breastplate was attached a bag which contained the urim and thummim. These were a device [perhaps dice?] used for receiving God’s judgments about national matters;
  - d. A miter [cap/turban] bearing a golden plate with “Holiness to Jehovah” written on it;
  - e. This official costume was not worn inside the Holy of Holies (See Leviticus 16:4,23,24). [Might this remind the high priest that he, too, was only a *man* needing forgiveness?]
4. The office of high priest was filled by the succession prescribed under the Law. However, an exception was allowed if physical handicaps occurred (See Leviticus 21:16-22). Also, politics sometimes altered the succession, e.g., Abiathar and Zadok (1Kings 2:26, 27, 35); Annas and Caiaphas (Luke 3:2; John 18:13). See the **Addendum**, “Succession to the High Priesthood,” following Lesson 6.

#### Verses 4:14-16: A High Priest on Our Side...

1. The readers were urged in chapter 3:1 to “**consider**” Jesus as their High Priest. A fair consideration would remove any doubt of His excellence when He is compared to past high priests under the Law. The corruptions of the high priesthood in later Jewish history would serve to emphasize the contrast. Everyone would surely realize how desirable it is to have a *perfect* High Priest in the person of Jesus.
2. The writer connects God’s judgment in verses twelve and thirteen with Jesus’ high priesthood in verse fourteen because of the work of the O.T. high priest as judge over the people by the urim and thummim. God has now placed judgment in the hands of His Son (See Acts 17:31). So, we need to trust in the fact that our eternity is in the hands of a “great” [just] High Priest. **vs. 14**
3. Jesus is a “*great*” High Priest for Christians because:
  - a. His position is absolute; it is His unchallenged inheritance (See chapter 1:4). He is God’s only Son and there can be no obstacle to His qualifications or appointment;
  - b. He possesses a spotless character. Many past high priests were corrupt; all were sinful. Jesus had *no* sin and needed to make *no* sacrifice for Himself as others did;
  - c. He has an empathetic nature. He can sympathize as no other high priest could because He has endured and conquered all kinds of human temptations without falling to any;
  - d. He enjoys an eternal existence. His priesthood is not subject to any interruption or inconstancy. Such circumstances often marred the tenure of O.T. high priests. **vs. 14**
4. These qualities of Jesus are discussed in this chapter and in later chapters of the book.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 6 “Christ-- the Better High Priest”

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5. Jesus has already “passed through the heavens” into *heaven*, just as the O.T. priest went through the temple veil into the Most Holy Place. There He now represents us before the Father. This fact should encourage us to “hold fast” to our previous confession of Him when we first became Christians (See Acts 8:37). **vs. 14**
6. Jesus was tempted in every *area* of human sin: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (See 1John 2:16 and Matthew 4:1-11). He understands *perfectly* our struggle when we are tempted and promises to help us if we want help (See 1Corinthians 10:13). *Other* high priests may fail to have deep feelings for us, but *He* never will! **vs. 15**
7. The work of Jesus as High Priest will ensure that our eternal judgment will be tempered with mercy. Furthermore, as a high priest like Melchidezek (chapter 7), He sits as King on His throne. We are confident *now* to seek mercy and grace in time of need. **vs. 15, 16**

### Verses 5:1-11: By Appointment Only...

1. The appointment of an O.T. high priest was necessary for the Jews’ spiritual benefit. Without him, essential “gifts”[non-bloody] and “sacrifices” [bloody] could not be offered. Similarly, our human condition dictates the need for someone to represent us to God. **vs. 1**
2. The high priest’s appointment commissioned him to sacrifice only for those sins committed in ignorance or through weakness. The Law offered no relief for the *presumptuous* sinner (See Numbers 15:22-31). The high priest could not represent one who deliberately rebelled against the Law. Perhaps it is such sinners who cannot be “renewed to repentance” today (chapter 6:4-6). **vs. 2**
3. The priest’s own experience with sin should have made him extremely sensitive to the importance of his priestly responsibilities. He *first* sacrificed for himself, *then* for the people. What he needed, they needed, too! Every high priest might not be duly impressed [“can,” not “must,” have compassion], but the procedure certainly gave the opportunity. **vs. 2, 3**
4. What an *honor* to receive such a responsible position among one’s fellows! It was a position not subject to the petty politics of human beings. Only God should decide who would fill the office. This He did by “calling” the high priest through the Law’s specifications for that position. Only the one who met the qualifications could serve. **vs. 4**

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5. Neither was Christ’s appointment capricious. The Father had planned long before (Psalm 2:7) that His Son should serve as High Priest over the ordinary priests in His temple [the church]. It was the Father’s will, not His own, that placed Jesus in “charge” of N.T. sacrifice and service. **vs. 5**
  
6. Jesus’ appointment was necessarily made by exception to the usual qualifications of the Law. Like Melchizedek, Christ qualifies by *nature*, not by *regulation*. This time, God’s *oath* supplanted His *Law* for the priesthood. **vs. 6**
  
7. Even though Jesus’ appointment was in accord with God’s eternal plan, the appointment did not become effective before He could become fully qualified to fill the position of High Priest. God no more intended that we should suffer under an unqualified advocate than that the Jews should do so. He ensured with ample *guidelines* that they were properly represented; He made just as certain that through His ample *wisdom* we would be, too.
  
8. Jesus was “perfected” [qualified] to become our High Priest only after He had “learned” by personal *human* experience how difficult it is to meet severe temptation without sin. His “prayers, cries, and tears” for relief from the crucifixion indicate how completely He learned that lesson. His experience also taught Him that even severe temptation is *not impossible* to overcome. We can just as surely obey Christ as He obeyed the Father (See Matthew 7:21). He serves in this as our example of obedience (See Matthew 3:13-17). The human perspective qualifies Jesus to serve us as our High Priest in a way not possible otherwise. It seems that the adage, “we learn by doing,” also applied to Him. **vs. 7-9**
  
9. The need for our Priest to mix compassion with justice (verses 2 and 9) was achieved by a *special* appointment. Appointment by the Law could not assure that the high priest would possess or exercise these desirable qualities. Christ’s *nature*, tempered by His human experience, furnishes that assurance. **vs. 10**
  
10. A fuller discussion of Christ as a priest like Melchizedek will be forthcoming after a digression (chapter 5:12- chapter 6:12) to censure readers for their spiritual lethargy, which was directly responsible for their present lack of commitment to the gospel. It is difficult for people who have failed to grow in the knowledge and appreciation of Jesus to understand just what He means to us as our High Priest (See 2Peter 3:18). **vs. 11**



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**Verses 6:13-20: A Promise and an Oath...**

1. The writer resumes the discussion of the exceptionality of Jesus’ priesthood by reminding “dull” Jewish readers that God had established Abraham, rather than someone else, as the progenitor of their nation by the sheer power of His will without other justification. He first *promised* (Genesis 12:1-3), then *swore* (Genesis 22:16-18) to confirm the promise of Abraham’s greatness. **vs. 13, 14**
2. God kept His promise, made and sworn, after Abraham displayed patient obedience. **vs. 15**
3. An oath is generally considered the most compelling reason to accept the testimony of men about important issues. Man’s best appeal for confirmation is to a *higher* authority, and the validity of his oath is measured by the quality of his authority. **vs. 16**
4. God’s *promise* that Jesus would become High Priest of the new temple [the church], offering His own blood for our sins, should require no confirmation for the believer. However, confirmation was issued in the form of God’s own oath to perform what He had promised to do. He not only *promised* the high priesthood of Jesus, but also *swore* that it would occur. Since He **cannot lie** about anything (See Deuteronomy 32:4), and since His promise and His oath about Abraham were matters of cherished Jewish history, saints now should place at least as much hope in His promise and His oath concerning the role of Jesus in our salvation today? **vs. 17, 18**
4. Our [only] hope of redemption, which we all need to “anchor” the soul against the strong winds of confusion and discouragement, is the assurance God has given us: Jesus has gone into the “Presence” [O.T.-- Most Holy Place; N.T.-- heaven] to appear before Him as the sacrifice for our sins. **vs. 19**
5. Hope about forgiveness is impossible unless we accept Jesus’ high priesthood. *Only* the high priest was authorized by the Law to seek atonement by blood in the previous age; *only* another great High Priest can pursue that same goal in this present age. **vs. 20**
6. Jesus entered heaven as a “forerunner.” He goes ahead of us. We will follow Him there **if** we embrace His Person and His place in our lives. **vs. 20**

## \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Six\*\*\*\*\*

1. **The Jewish high priest was the most important figure in the religious organization provided by the Law. God’s entire arrangement for redemption would have been disrupted**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 6 “Christ-- the Better High Priest”

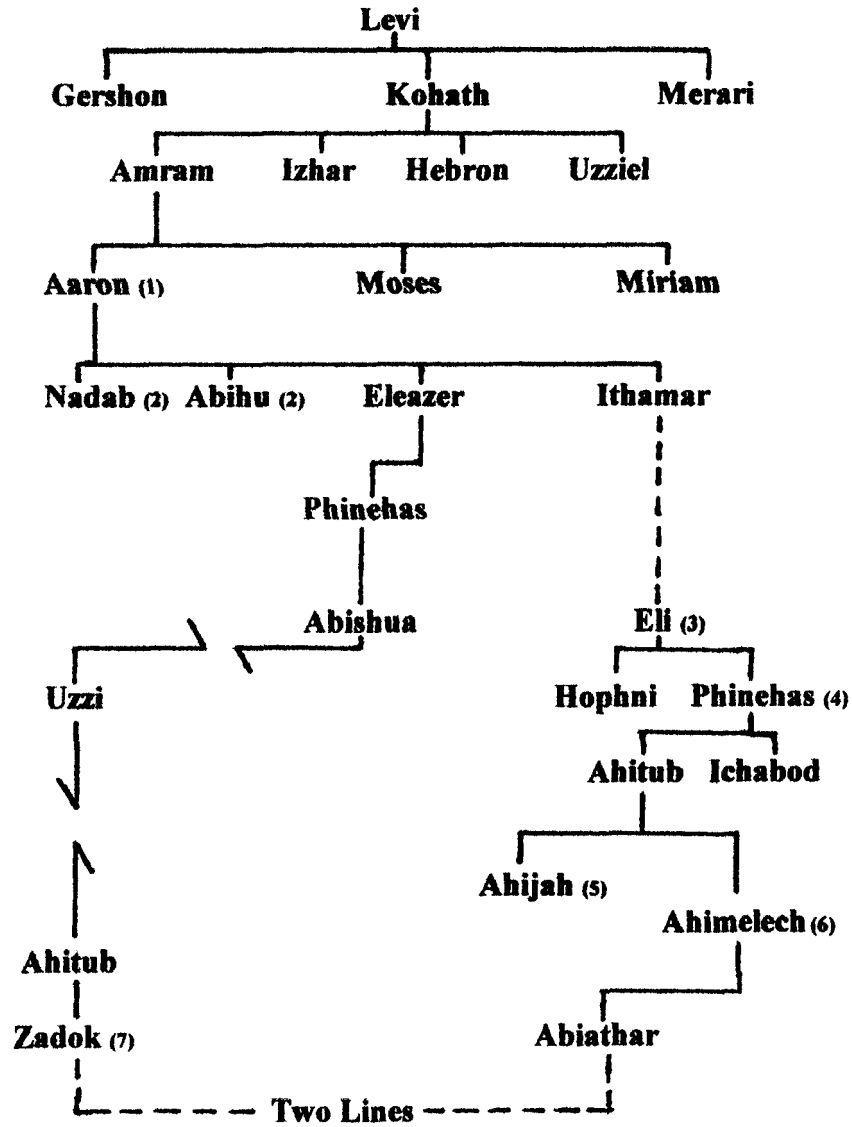
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without the priest’s presence and performance. The New Testament plan is likewise of no use to us without Jesus in His Person and performance as High Priest.

2. God’s plan in its totality is unassailable. It requires only a fair *consideration* by *unbiased* searchers to be seen as good and true in its *every* aspect.
3. Jesus’ superiority to the O.T. high priests can be understood by anyone who is not “dull of hearing.” His credentials are impeccable in every area. We should not dare depend on any less excellent high priest for our eternal salvation!
4. We may never fully *comprehend* the human/divine nature of Jesus Christ. But we must surely *appreciate* it and *depend* upon it when we realize our need for His sympathy and compassion for us as we struggle against the varied temptations of this world.
5. Our High Priest can only ask forgiveness of those sins of ours that are accompanied by repentance, confession, and prayer. “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”
6. God reserves the right to make all appointments within His eternal plan. He “appointed” high priests under the Old Law. He appointed Jesus under the New Law. Who would dare question anything appointed by Him for our salvation?
7. God’s appointments always come through qualification. Just as O.T. priests met certain criteria; just as Jesus qualified before He served; just as elders and deacons meet qualifications; just so must N.T. priests [Christians] satisfy specific requirements both in beginning and in continuing their service as priests (See 1Peter 2:9,10).
8. Sometimes it is very difficult to obey God. Hard choices have to be made. Still, our temptations are not so strong as Christ’s were. He gave us a perfect example of what it means to do God’s will and not our own.
9. Why should men harbor any doubt about the perfection of Jesus’ priesthood? God made the choice of His Son and then swore by Himself that He had made the right choice. When any man chooses to follow a leader other than Jesus, he makes a disasterously *wrong* choice!

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ADDENDUM: JEWISH SUCCESSION TO THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD



- Key: (1) First High Priest under the Law of Moses  
 (2) Killed by God for disobedience  
 (3) Succeeded Abishua or Uzzi (Josephus)  
 (4) Served during lifetime of Eli because of Eli's old age (Josephus)  
 (5) Wore an ephod in Shiloh (1Samuel 14:3)  
 (6) Served at Nob (1Samuel 22:9)  
 (7) Installed by default of Ahimelech's house

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**Chapter 4**

1. What was the most important function of the high priest under the Mosaic Law? (See Leviticus 16:2-10, 15,16) When did he do this? (See Leviticus 16:29,30,34)
2. Can you connect the teaching in chapter 4:12,13 with that of chapter 4:15,16? [Clue: this relates to why we need Jesus as our High Priest.]

**Chapter 5**

3. From what does the “compassion” of a human priest originate? (vs.2) What is the reason for the “sympathy” of Jesus as High Priest? (See chapter 4:15)
4. What are the two “orders” of the High Priesthood named in chapter 5? (vs. 4,10)
5. What basic qualification is common to both orders? (vs. 4,10)
6. It appears that a second requirement was made necessary for Jesus to become our High Priest. What was it? (vs.7- 9)
7. Why was it difficult for the Hebrew readers to understand easily about the priesthood of Jesus? (vs.11)

**Chapter 6**

8. What was God’s first promise confirmed with an oath? (vs.13-16)
9. What was the second promise so “confirmed”? (See chapter 5:6 and read Psalm 110:4)

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10. Give two possible meanings for the “two immutable things” which give “strong consolation” to the people of God. (vs. 18)
  
11. What purpose does our hope serve? (vs.19)
  
12. Jesus has gone into “that which is within the veil” (vs.19, American Standard Version). The Revised Standard Version calls it the “shrine behind the curtain.” The New King James labels it “the Presence behind the veil”. All these terms refer to which part of the tabernacle? The work of what person ["official"] was performed there? (vs.20)

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## Christ-- the Better Destination

**Introductory Statement:** The writer began his discussion of Jesus Christ as the High Priest of the New Covenant in chapter four and continued it through much of chapter five. Fearing that some readers might be unable to understand his comparison of Jesus' priesthood to that of Melchizedek because of their "dullness of hearing," he digresses to warn them about the seriousness of failing to reach toward perfection in the Lord. Following this digression, he resumes his lesson about Christ as our High Priest toward the end of chapter six.

### Verses 5:12-14: Everyone Needs to Grow Up...

1. Everyone begins the Christian life as a "babe" to some extent, much in the same way as he enters a physical family as a baby. In both estates he is largely limited in his knowledge and capabilities. He must depend upon the help of others to provide an environment conducive to his development into a mature individual. At least two things are essential for both physical and spiritual growth-- **proper food** and **proper exercise**. The absence of either will stunt one's growth and retard his usefulness and productivity.
2. Enough time had elapsed since their conversion for these "dull" Christians to develop into useful servants in the church. They should have expanded their understanding of the gospel enough to be able to teach others, but apparently they had failed to do so. Unlearned teachers are dangerous to the truth (See James 3:1), but we are obligated ["ought"] at some point to teach, privately if not publicly. **vs. 12a**
3. These individuals had retrogressed rather than progressed. They had once learned the "first principles" of truth, but they had lost much of the appreciation with which they had regarded those principles. "If you don't *use* it, you *lose* it," is especially true of our handling of opportunities to grow in Christ. **vs. 12a**
4. Once again, these sluggish saints could tolerate only "milk," such as the plain facts and simple lessons of the gospel. Their spiritual lethargy had ill-equipped them to comprehend the profound "solid food" of the gospel like the writer's lesson about Christ and Melchizedek. **vs. 12b**
5. Some things in the gospel are "harder to understand" than other things (See 2Peter 3:16). Nevertheless, our duty is to delve as deeply into God's now-revealed "mystery" (See Romans 16:25, 26) as we are able. Continuing to partake only of "milk" will leave us "unskilled" in the *word* and deny us the measure of *righteousness* that diligent study and application of the word would afford. **vs. 13**

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6. The mere passing of years does not bring “full age” to a Christian. Only by the prolonged *exercise* of our [spiritual] “senses” are we able to deal with the solid food, or meat, of the gospel. The capacity to recognize the more subtle differences between good and evil results from possessing the **heavenly wisdom** for which James tells us to pray (See James 1:5) and which provides us with the ability to “see things as God sees them.” This desirable skill accrues to us, at least in part, from a never-ending study of the word and from the store of practical experience we acquire from applying the word to the varied life situations we face over a lifetime. **vs. 14a**
7. The writer seems here to suggest to these “dull” disciples that they have become discouraged about the N. T. truth simply because they could not tell the difference between what was truly “good” for them-- the religion which is centered in Christ-- and what was “evil” [Vine: “useless”]-- the Old Law and its bondage of sin. **vs. 14b**

### Verses 6:1-3: Fixing the Problem of “Dullness”...

1. **Leave** the doctrine [ASV] of “elementary” [“first”-ASV] principles of Christ. While no part of the truth should ever be abandoned or allowed to fall into disuse, neither should the “milk” of Christ’s teaching become the totality of what we know or the sole determinant of how we behave in our lives as Christians. We do not depend less but rather more on the alphabet as we read the great works of literature. And so it is also with the first principles of the truth. **vs. 1a**
2. **Go on** to the “perfection” that is achieved when babes “grow up” in Christ. **Perfection** [“completeness”] is the *goal* of every growing disciple (See Colossians 2:10). It is a *destination* reached only by people who sacrifice everything else in exchange for the excellence of the salvation and high priesthood of Jesus (See Mark 8:34). **vs. 1a**
3. The “first principles” of Christ’s doctrine are fundamental to our struggle toward perfection as “full-age” church members. Never really understanding them or appreciating them for their essential nature will prevent spiritual maturity for us. We must not “drift away” from them (See chapter 2:1) and fall into a need for reindoctrination [“laying again the foundation”]. **vs. 1b**
4. The author chooses here to list some of the foundation principles upon which these negligent Jews had once placed value. These were the things upon which they had come to rest in the interruption of their journey toward the destination of perfection in Christ. Some might yet try to embrace these “first principles” if *Jesus* could be left out of them.

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Of course, that was impossible. Anything enjoyed within the **text** of the gospel is of no benefit whatever when viewed within the **context** of the Law (See Galatians 2:16):

- a. **Repentance from dead works.** Changing the mind and will from what is wrong to what is right is essential (See Acts 11:18; 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). We must not cling to dead works that offer no promise of life in the Lord. Godly sorrow, arising from an awareness of having abused the love shown us in the sacrifice of Christ, prompts the desire in a sinner to change his loyalties to the Lamb of God (See 1John 4:19). **vs. 1b**
- b. **Faith toward God.** This is the beginning point. “Without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Hebrews 11:6). It is impossible to believe God (or to believe *in* [trust] God) without *equal* faith in Jesus, for God has testified that Jesus is His Son (See 1John 5:9). **vs. 1b**
- c. **Baptisms.** The apostles taught that there is only one baptism that bears on man’s salvation (Ephesians 4:5). *Every* convert in the New Testament was baptized in water for the remission of sins (See Acts 2:38, etc.). This baptism was in the “name” of Christ, and without His authority behind it, baptism is a meaningless act (See Acts 19:4,5). It was desirable for Christians to understand the roles of Holy Spirit baptism [for the apostles and the first Gentile converts] and of the baptism of fire [for the wicked] (See Matthew 3:11). It was also important not to place their hope of salvation in the exercise of miraculous powers but in simple obedience to gospel commands. **vs. 2**
- d. **Laying on of hands.** Perhaps some of these people had been given gifts of the Spirit by the laying on of apostolic hands. Perhaps they had only heard about those who had. Whatever the case, spiritual powers were the *gift of Christ* (See Ephesians 4:7,8) and had never been nor could ever be enjoyed under the Law. **vs. 2**
- e. **Resurrection of the dead.** The dread of the tomb has haunted man since his entrance into the world. Most religions have offered hope of some kind of life after death with an accompanying reward. These Jews had entertained such a hope while practicing the rituals of the Law (See Psalm 139:8), but Christ’s was the only religion that provided, through His resurrection, a *demonstration* of the reality of that hope in others. **vs. 2**
- f. **Eternal judgment.** Man’s innate longing for fair treatment dictates the need for a final judgment whereby all wrongs are righted and all right things are rewarded. Jewish law in its statutes and practices pointed to the ultimate resolution of worldly affairs in an



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eternal separation of the good and bad. Human judges, even high priests, can never offer judgment comparable to the judgment of Jesus (See Acts 17:3 1). **vs. 2**

- g. God holds our destiny in His hands. If we reach the goal of perfection in Christ, it will be only because His mercy spares us to take advantage of our opportunities to become more fully what He expects Christians to be (See James 4:14,15). **vs. 3**

**Verses 6:4-8: “With God, all things are possible”??**

1. These Hebrews had already been warned not to allow an “evil heart of unbelief” to cause them to “depart” from God (chapter 3:12). Other passages suggesting difficulty in receiving forgiveness are:
  - a. Blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Mark 3: 28, 29);
  - b. Sinning a sin "unto death" (1John 5:16);
  - c. Failing to take advantage of certain spiritual opportunities (Hebrews 6:4-6).
2. We understand that any sin repented of, confessed, and prayed about can be forgiven by the grace of God (See Acts 8:16-24). We also understand that a heart probably can become so hardened by the “deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12,13) that its shell of unbelief cannot be broken through so that the apostate will be moved to take those steps necessary for forgiveness.
3. Two possibilities present themselves here:
  - a. These persons under consideration were in the process of deserting their commitment to the Christ of the gospel and returning to a religious system which they had every reason to believe was vastly inferior, though more popular and convenient for them at this time. Such a gross violation of the conscience indicates that any return to rationality is unlikely, and their restoration is “impossible” without their reformation.
  - b. These defectors from the faith had possessed or had personally witnessed the proofs of the gospel in the signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (See chapter 2:4). No honest heart could deny the power of such phenomena. There is no hope for one who will deny the undeniable. What more can convince him? **vs. 4-6**
  - c. In either case, these persons are guilty of the very same sins that crucified Christ some years before. They, like the Jerusalem Jews of the Gospels, sought to destroy God’s messenger because they would not tolerate His message. **vs. 6**
4. They are likened to a plot of ground that is given every opportunity to bear good fruit.

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and to be blessed for its cooperation with nature and with the farmer who nurtures it. However, through no fault of either nature or farmer, the land produces “thorns” rather than useful herbs. Someone else has sown bad seed (See Matthew 13:24,25) which crowds out the good (See Luke 8:14). Consequently, weak disciples can be discouraged and misled even to abandon their dearest possession— the hope of heaven! **vs. 7, 8**

**Verses 6:9-12: Expecting a Better Destiny...**

1. Paul (?) was confident that these people would not make the terrible mistake that was now looming before them. Perhaps his misgivings were lost in an intense desire for them to choose the **better destiny** of heaven. **vs. 9**
  
2. Full of doubts as they were, the vacillators had managed to continue in the performance of some “good works.” Their motivation might have been just a sense of human responsibility toward their fellows, rather than any conviction of duty toward Christ [Note-“toward” His name, not “in” His name]. Nevertheless, such activities maintain a connection with the spirit of Christ and might possibly be the spark to ignite faith in the doer of kind deeds (See Matthew 5:45; James 1:17). God would surely support anything that might fan the flame. **vs. 10**
  
3. Diligence is necessary to accomplish any worthwhile goal. It is useful in caring for the physical needs of the saints, but it is also indispensable in caring for the spiritual needs of their souls. That is the “good part” (See Luke 10:42). Our greatest danger, perhaps, is in becoming “sluggish” and indifferent toward those “things that accompany salvation.” **vs. 11, 12a**
  
4. Our faith-models have gone before to show us how worthwhile are patience and perseverance in the journey from earth to heaven, It is not an easy road to travel, but it holds out vast rewards to men who travel with Christ to reach the **“better destination.”** The writer will elaborate more extensively on the examples of these “heroes of faith” in chapter eleven of this letter. **vs. 12b**

**\*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS\*\*\*\*\***

1. Flagrant sins are not all that will keep us out of heaven. Allowing ourselves to become “dull of hearing” and indifferent to the serious responsibilities of membership in God’s family will just as surely result in the same outcome.

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2. God is tolerant of the fact that a certain amount of time is necessary for each of us to reach a reasonable level of spiritual maturity. Those time lapses are as different as individuals are different. His patience will wear out, however, when we do not use the time we have to good advantage in the work of the Lord.
3. Absorbing the endless truths of the Scriptures is a never-ending challenge for the Christian. “Solid food” can be assimilated by the spiritual man only after the “milk” has been thoroughly digested. The house cannot be built properly until the right foundation has been laid. A prudent student will continue to review and appreciate the “first principles” of the gospel, lest he forget their indispensability.
4. “No pain, no gain” is a truism with regard to becoming able to understand and to use the solid food of New Testament teaching. Serious study calls for serious dedication and serious time, but the end result is more than reward enough for the effort required.
5. If heavenly wisdom consists of being able to “see things as God sees them,” and if no one knows how God see things except by His word (1Corinthians 2:11), how can His people expect to make wise decisions about right and wrong until they have absorbed themselves in intensive, ongoing Bible study-- private and public?
6. It is the implications, as well as the facts, of the “first principles of the gospel of Christ” that require skillful discernment between right and wrong. There are not always easy answers to hard questions. Feeding on “solid food” often enables us to make difficult judgments that would otherwise be impossible for us to make.
7. While it is admirable for kind-hearted people to do good deeds of kindness for others, we must always remember that Jesus warned, “Apart from me you can do nothing.” Many good-deed-doers may be sadly disappointed in the judgment because they have ignored the need to serve within the parameters of Christ’s stated authority (Matthew 7:21-23).
8. We must never conclude that we are all alone on the stressful and wearying journey to our heavenly destination (See 1Corinthians 10:13). Many others have successfully reached their goal by faith. We can, too, if we want to reach it badly enough.

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- “Christ-- the Better Destination” LESSON SEVEN**  
**Hebrews 5:12-6:12 QUESTIONS**

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**Chapter 5**

1. In what way did the author reprove the Hebrews for their lack of spiritual progress? (vs. 11,12)
2. What stage of spiritual growth is suggested by the need of “milk” instead of “solid food”? (vs. 12; also, see 1Peter 2:2)
3. Connect the meaning of “good and evil” (vs. 14) with the criticism of the Hebrews in verses 10, 11, 12.

**Chapter 6**

4. List the “elementary principles” of Christ [Christian teaching] (vs. 1,2)
5. The spiritual status of the Hebrews was similar to that of people to whom Peter wrote. What were some of the similarities? (vs. 1-6 and 2Peter 3:14-18)
6. How difficult would it be to “renew again” those who had fallen away from the blessings of gospel redemption? (vs. 4-6)
7. Why were the apostates so unlikely to be moved again by the attractions of the truth? (vs. 6)
8. What illustration does the writer use to emphasize the danger faced by those who are unresponsive to their spiritual opportunities? (vs. 7,8)
9. What particular doctrine(s) may be intended as the measure of Christian "perfection"? (vs.7-1 1)
10. What are some ways in which we can “exercise our senses” in reaching perfection?

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## Christ-- the Better Warranty

**Introductory Statement:** Even casual students of the Law understood that the priesthood was restricted to individuals who met the criteria specified in the Law. They knew, further, that Jesus could in no way satisfy some of those requirements for priestly service. How, then, could He be recommended to them as being suitable as their high priest, when He was unqualified to perform even as a priest? The writer turns again in this chapter to the *exceptional* priesthood of Melchizedek to solve this problem.

### (PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION):

1. The writer has already stated twice before that Christ's high priesthood was different. He was "called by God" (chapter 5:10) and "became" (chapter 6:20) High Priest after the order ["fixed succession"-Vine] of Melchizedek. The discussion that follows had earlier been characterized as "solid food" not readily appreciated by those "dull of hearing."
2. This examination of Christ's priesthood, as prefigured by that of Melchizedek, reveals at least six advantages His priesthood had over the traditional Jewish priesthood:
  - a. It is a **more honorable** priesthood than the Levitical priesthood (7:3-10);
  - b. It offers **perfection** for the people, while the Levitical priesthood could not (7:11-19);
  - c. It is **divinely warranted**; the Levitical priesthood was not (7:20-22);
  - d. It possesses a **continuing stability**; the Levitical priesthood was changeable (7:23-25);
  - e. It has a high priest with **perfect character**; Levitical priests were flawed (7:26-28);
  - f. It is a **current and active** priesthood; the Levitical priesthood is obsolete (8:1-6).

These contrasts are developed throughout this passage as the writer supports Jesus' ministry as the "great High Priest" of the "heavenly tabernacle."

### Verses 7:1-10: Why Settle for Second Best?...

1. **Christ, as seen in Melchizedek, is MORE HONORABLE than Abraham, father of the nation of Israel. vs. 1,2**
  - a. Melchizedek was a *KING*: of righteousness [Hebrew- "Malki" (king) "tzedeq"(righteousness)] and of peace [Hebrew- "Salem"].
    - (1) His kingdom most likely was Jerusalem ["Jebu/Jeru-Salem" (See Psalm 76:2)].
    - (2) He was a priest of the true [Most High] God.
    - (3) He blessed Abraham, who had rescued Lot from four other kings (See Genesis 14).
    - (4) He received a tithe of the plunder from Abraham.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 8 “Christ-- the Better Warranty”

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b. Christ is a *KING*: of righteousness (See Psalm 45:6,7; Hebrews 1:8) and of peace (See Isaiah 9:6).

(1) His eternal kingdom is the *heavenly* Jerusalem (See Revelation 21:2, 5, 10).

(2) He now serves as the High Priest of our confession (See Hebrews 3:1).

(3) He blessed Abraham [in the person of the “third angel”] (See Genesis 18:13,14).

(4) He received refreshment from Abraham as a guest of honor (See Genesis 18:5-8).

(5) These similarities are not coincidental, proved by the use of Melchizedek’s priesthood as a type of Christ’s. Both were **honored** by Abraham, the greatest of the Hebrews and the “father of the faithful” (See Romans 4:11).

### 2. Christ’s priesthood, as seen in Melchizedek’s priesthood, is MORE HONORABLE than the priesthood of the Levites. vs. 3-10

a. Their priesthood was not limited by geneology. It was based on *what you are* [personal worthiness] and not on *who you are* [family connection] as was true of the Levitical priests (See Leviticus 10:1,2,9; 1Samuel 2:12-17). Neither Melchizedek nor Jesus had any Jewish tribal geneology. **vs. 3, 6**

b. The effectiveness of their priesthood was not measured by the calendar. No limits were specified for their time of service (See Numbers 8:24-26). Melchizedek and Christ both were “made” priests [by God, not Law] and their priesthoods “remain” uninhibited by the Law’s restrictions on “beginning of days” [when they could begin] and “end of life” [when they ceased to serve] as God’s high priests. **vs. 3**

c. The greatest of Hebrew men, Abraham, *actually* honored the priesthood of Melchizedek by recognizing its elevated status in giving a tithe to Melchizedek. *Representatively*, Levi, the progenitor of all priests; Aaron, the first high priest; and all other high priests honored Melchizedek’s priesthood through Abraham’s action. Christ’s priesthood similarly is worthy of the greatest respect from everyone, since it is like [“according to the order of”] Melchizedek’s (See chapters 5:6; 6:20). **vs. 4, 7, 9, 10**

d. Melchizedek was endowed with gifts of *choice*. No law required Abraham to share this bounty. Choice indicated endorsement of the priest as inherently worthy of the gift. The Levitical priests received tithes only because of the Law’s “commandment.” No personal worthiness was implied in those gifts (See Numbers 18:24). Devotion to Jesus is based on His personal superiority over all others (See chapter 1:4). **vs. 1, 5**

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- e. The high priesthood of Melchizedek was related to *life* [“he lives”] and thus to what brings life to men-- righteousness. He served as a priest *because* of God’s system which rewards men as the consequence of their obedience. The Levitical priesthood, however, was tied to *death*. The priests all were “mortal men” [they died spiritually like others because of their sins] who served *under an exception* to that system. The high priest under the Law first offered a sacrifice for his **own** sins and then one for the sins of the people (See Leviticus 9:7). Of course, Melchizedek, for all the mystery surrounding him, was an imperfect human. Still, the writer’s focus is on his strength and not on his weakness. This identifies his priesthood with that of Jesus, who actually “did no sin” (See 1Peter 2:22). **vs. 8**
  
- f. It was in *response* to Melchizedek’s blessing that Abraham offered his tithe. This is a strong indication that Melchizedek’s priesthood operated on the basis of *beneficence* rather than *obligation*. Jewish priests were under law to serve their brethren, regardless of their personal feelings toward them. Jesus exhibits a concern toward men who need His service as High Priest that is even deeper than Melchizedek’s (See Philippians 2:5-8).

### Verses 7:11-19: A Change is in Order...

1. **Christ’s priesthood, as seen in Melchizedek’s priesthood, offers a PERFECTION that was unavailable through the priesthood of the Levites.**
  - a. The Law of Moses provided for a regimen of sacrifices and offerings to secure whatever measure of forgiveness was possible (See chapter 5:1). However, a “reminder” of sins occurred every year (See chapter 10:3), and there was *no actual* remission. A *real need* existed for a different kind of priest, like Melchizedek, who would be unhampered by the inadequacies of the law [of sacrifices]. A priest of the “order of Melchizedek” was clearly preferred to any priest of the “order of Aaron.” **vs. 11**
  
  - b. No change of priestly specifications could be made without a corresponding change in the Law that imposed those specifications. If one embraces the concepts of forgiveness and redemption, he must also acknowledge the removal of the Law that made the reality of those concepts impossible. How foolish it would be for people to return to a religious system that denied the enjoyment of the very things they most desired! **vs.12**
  
  - c. Specifically, the Law required all priests to be of the tribe of Levi (See Deuteronomy 21:5). Jesus was of Judah and therefore was disqualified. Since Levites could not satisfy the “need” (vs. 11) of the Jews, why should anyone object to another kind of

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priest with different credentials who could fill that need? The priesthood of a “law of a fleshly commandment” rested its promise in the *power* of fleshly men to live and to succeed, but that priesthood had failed. Why not now accept a **new** law and a **new** priesthood that received *real power* from a *divine and endless life*? **vs. 13-16**

- d. After all, God Himself had promised just such a priest for His people (Psalm 110:4). This would fulfill His eternal plan for salvation which was centered in Jesus (See Ephesians 3:11). **vs. 17**
  - e. God’s plan called for the inseparable **perfection** of **priest** and **people** (See Matthew 5:48). Correspondingly, the Law made *imperfect* priests and people. If God’s will was to “be done on earth,” a perfect priest must be accompanied by a perfect (and new) law. Only in this way could sinful man “hope” to “draw near to God.” **vs. 18, 19**
2. The Law was “weak and unprofitable” because it failed:
    - a. To accomplish the ultimate purpose of all religion-- the salvation of its participants;
    - b. To provide priests suitable to the accomplishment of that goal;
    - c. To provide suitable sacrificial blood that merited the forgiveness of sins;
    - d. To offer any lasting sense of security or stability in the spiritual realm. **vs. 18**
  3. On the other hand, the Law was profitable in many ways:
    - a. It gave the Jews a *true* picture of the nature of God as opposed to idols;
    - b. It kept the Jews physically and spiritually dependent on God;
    - c. It preserved the bloodline of Jesus and validated the foreknowledge of God by broadcasting numerous prophecies to be fulfilled at a later time;
    - d. It offered a higher moral ground for Israel and nurtured a unique sensitivity to moral religion.

### Verses 7:20-22: How Good is the Warranty?...

1. **Christ’s priesthood, as seen in Melchizedek’s priesthood, provides a **DIVINE WARRANTY** that far surpasses any warranty offered by the Levitical priesthood.**
  - a. Christ’s priesthood was generated from (1) a **promise** and (2) an **oath** of God. Since it is impossible for God to lie in either promise or oath, we can certainly depend on the validity of whatever He has promised and sworn about. We are ***guaranteed*** that God’s unrelenting will is for His Son Jesus to serve us as our High Priest, even if He must serve under different “regulations” than the Levitical priests. **vs. 20, 21**



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- b. The “warranty” of the “better covenant” is a *performance bond* that assures the “buyer” that the guarantor will do exactly what He promises to do. When we “buy into” N. T. religion, we know that God has not only *promised* to save us but also has *sworn* that He will fulfill His promise. We have a “double barreled” guarantee! **vs. 21**
2. Only **perfection** could warrant salvation under the Law. Yet, God nowhere promised or swore that any man could be saved through *perfect service* under the Law. Rather, He warned that whoever “stumbles in one point, is guilty of all” (James 2:10).
3. The Person and the Power of Jesus Christ offer a “Better Surety [Warranty]” of a “Better Covenant.” The new covenant is **better** [more dependable] than the old because of the warranty. The warranty of the new covenant is **better** because it issues from an *infallible divine source*, whereas the warranty of the old covenant was no better than the incapability of *fallible men* to give salvation to sinners. **vs. 22**

### Verses 7:23-25: Change is NOT Always What We Need...

1. **Christ’s priesthood, as seen in Melchizedek’s priesthood, furnishes a STABILITY made impossible under the Law because of changes imposed upon the Levitical priesthood.**
2. The principal reason for lack of continuity in the Aaronic priesthood was the physical death of the priests and their necessary replacement by others whose performance might or might not imitate that of their predecessors. **vs. 23**
  - a. Various counts are given of the frequency of change in the Jewish priesthood, ranging up to eighty-one high priests from Aaron to the time of Jerusalem’s fall.
3. Jesus exercises the “power of an endless life” (verse 16). He has “staying power” that men cannot bring to the priesthood. “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). He has *always been*, and He *will always be!* **vs. 24**
4. We need never question whether or not Jesus will be “on the job” to represent us before God when we most need Him. He “ever lives” to intercede *for* us. No matter how long this era of Jesus’ priesthood may last, He will be available “to the uttermost [time of the judgment]” to *save us* (See Luke 12:8). **vs. 25**
5. Not only was physical death the enemy of continuity under the Levitical Law, but other things also interfered:

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- a. Physical deformities and other irregularities could prevent the service of priests;
- b. High priests on service were sometimes removed by rulers in charge of the nation;
- c. In later Jewish history, numerous changes for political reasons were made in the priesthood by nations that exercised control over the Jews.

### Verses 7:26-28: “No Stream Can Rise Above Its Source”...

1. **Christ’s priesthood is centered in a priest of PERFECT CHARACTER, whereas the old covenant priesthood was composed of sinful human beings.**
2. Jesus is just “such a High Priest” as is “fitting” [needful] to offer “full service” for us:
  - a. He fills the need we have for a priest who can perform perfectly;
  - b. He fills the need we have for a priest who possesses a flawless character in every way;
  - c. He fills the need we have for a priest who sets the right example for us to follow;
  - d. He fills the need we have for a priest with adequate authority to act in our behalf. **vs.26**
3. It is the **flawless character** upon which the writer focuses in this section:
  - a. He is **holy**-- He is totally “separated” from such pursuits as might have distracted the Levitical priests from their spiritual service. He only *seeks to save* (See Luke 19:10).
  - b. He is **harmless**-- The faithful have nothing to fear from Him. Any harm we suffer here or hereafter must be attributed to our weakness, not His. This was not always the case with the Levitical high priests:
    - (1) Aaron led Israel into the idolatry of the golden calf (See Exodus 32:4);
    - (2) Eli tolerated harm to the Jews at the hands of his wicked sons (See 1Samuel 2:29);
    - (3) Caiphas encouraged the Jews in their guilt of crucifying the Lord (See John 18:14).
  - c. He is **undefiled**-- Purity is a necessary characteristic of the Deity. Jesus was able to live in a sinful world without sinning. We need never fear that The Almighty might reject our petitions because of some impurity in our Advocate.
  - d. He is **separate from sinners**-- As High Priest, Jesus will serve as the judge of the world. As a judge, He is altogether capable of separating Himself from sinners. He will pronounce to the unrepentant, “Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”
  - e. He is **higher than the heavens**-- His position is unique among heavenly beings. He is the Father’s only-begotten. He is **better** than the angels; His **name** is more excellent than theirs (chapter 1: 4). His authority to save is “inherited.” It cannot be taken from Him, nor can His intercession be supplanted by that of a lesser being. **vs. 26**

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4. The Jewish High Priest proclaimed his own spiritual weakness when he offered sacrifices daily [and especially on the Day of Atonement] for his own sins as well as for those of the people. The spiritual strength of Christ is evidenced in the fact that the only sacrifice He ever offered was not for His own sins but for the sins of others. He was the [one] Lamb that can take away the sins of the world.” Not all the lambs of all the priests could do that (See chapter 10:4). **vs. 27,28**
  
5. The character of the Levitical priests was not necessarily improved because they were appointed as priests. Their weaknesses persisted and could affect their work, but they were appointed anyhow, since there were none better to choose from. Jesus, however, had already demonstrated perfection before His appointment as High Priest (See chapter 5:8, 9). God’s choice was based upon the certainty of that perfection. God was confident that His choice was better than any choice of high priest made under the Law, and He was willing to swear to the perfect suitability of Jesus for that office. **vs. 28**

**\*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS\*\*\*\*\***

1. The superiority of Jesus’ priesthood over the priesthood familiar to Jewish Law-keepers was clear and overwhelming. His advantage rested not on *one* fact, but on *many*. Only the very “dull of hearing” could fail to recognize the differences between old and new.
  
2. There are many things that we would like to know about Melchizedek that God has not chosen to tell us. He appears suddenly upon the scene of Biblical history and just as quickly disappears. Perhaps he would be virtually unnoticed had the Hebrew writer not compared his rather obscure priesthood to the all-important priesthood of Christ. Surely, Abraham’s contact with just such a priest as Melchizedek was not coincidental. The likenesses between Jesus and Melchizedek are much too significant for that.
  
3. The basic difference between the priesthood of Jesus and the priesthood of the Levites lies in the difference between merit and systematic succession. Christ deserved his appointment to the priesthood. The earlier priests only succeeded to the office by virtue of their physical birth. Perhaps that suggests that it is through [relative] spiritual worth and not because of some “automatic” entree that we are allowed the privilege of serving as ordinary priests in the temple [the church] of Christ.
  
4. An old adage says, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” There is wisdom in that expression. God would not have “fixed” the Levitical system had it been in good working order.

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But it had both “built in” deficiencies [it was never intended to provide more than a limited access to God] and serious flaws that were man-inflicted. It needed “fixing,” and God “fixed” it with a better priesthood, a better sacrifice for sins, and a better ongoing representation for sinners to the throne of the Almighty.

5. Confidence in the worthiness of any organization or undertaking can extend only as far as the quality of those involved in it and the strength of the warranty behind it. Who can doubt that the New Covenant is much “better” than the Old Covenant because it offers a “better” High Priest to control it and a “better” warranty of divine rather than human power to accomplish its purpose?
6. The constant changes experienced within the Levitical priesthood were *not good* for the confidence of the people who depended completely on the performance of the priests. On the other hand, the great changes made by God when He abolished the O.T. priesthood and the Law within which it functioned were *very good*! Those changes give us assurance that we are not placing our hope in a system that can offer no real hope of salvation.
7. It is often devastating to discover that leaders in whom we have trusted have serious character flaws or have even been guilty of heinous crimes. How disappointed Israel must have been in some of their priestly leaders. We will never have to face any such disappointment in *our* High Priest. His character is flawless and His performance is perfect in every way. What a comfort to know that He will never “let us down.”

Notes and Comments:

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1. What two “positions” did Meichezedek hold? (vs.2,3) Jesus also had a third “office” in addition to these. What was it? (see chapter 1:1,2)
2. In what points were Jesus and Melchezedek both different from the Levitical priests? (vs. 3)
3. What did paying tithes and giving blessings indicate about status in early Bible days? (vs.6,7)
4. Two men are said to have paid tithes to Melchezedek. Who were they, and when did this action occur? (vs. 2,9,10; also, see Genesis 14:18-20)
5. How was the priesthood “changed,” and what other important change did this necessitate? (vs. 11,12; 13-16)
6. What exchange did God make to give His people a “better hope”? (vs. 18,19)
7. What were two important features of Jesus’ priesthood that made it superior to the Levitical priesthood? (vs. 20-24)
8. The “surety” of Jesus’ priesthood also lends security to two other things. What are they? (vs. 22, 25)
9. What are some of the "better" qualities of our High Priest? (vs. 26)
10. Two expressions describe the work of Jesus and the Levitical priests: (1) “Offer up sacrifices” (vs. 27) and (2) “offered up Himself” (vs. 27). Which one better describes Jesus’ work? The work of the Levitical priests? Why?

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## Christ-- Priest of a Better Covenant

**Introductory Statement:** In chapter 7:12, the Hebrew writer tied together the Law and the Levitical priesthood. Each rested upon the other. One could not exist without the other. If either should be removed, the other must be taken away also. Obviously, the priesthood must be changed if sins were to be forgiven, and the Jewish mind would find it difficult to deal with the abrogation of the priesthood. The idea of annulling the entire Law was even harder for Israel to grasp. Yet, in chapter eight, the writer plunges into the pronouncement that God *has already* made both changes through the work of Jesus. *“We have such a High Priest...[and]...A new covenant.”*

### Verses 8:1-6: Our High Priest is the “Real Thing”...

1. God had planned from eternity the work of Jesus as High Priest (chapter 7:17):
  - a. He had made legal preparation for His plan by, [1] removing a contrary plan (7:18) and, [2] bringing in a new plan (7:19);
  - b. He had provided for the personal preparation of Jesus to be a perfect high priest (7:22,28).
  
2. The **“main point”** [to which we have been led] in this discussion of high priesthood is-- “We HAVE such a High Priest.” God has kept His promise and fulfilled His oath--Jesus is now on duty! He has the Father’s complete endorsement, for He sits at the *throne* of authority. **vs. 1**
  
3. God had planned not only for His Son to occupy the position of High Priest but also He had carefully predetermined the Son’s functions as High Priest:
  - a. He is a Minister [“servant”], as were other high priests under the Law. However, He serves both in heaven [“the sanctuary”] and on earth [in the church-- the “true tabernacle”] in His work as Mediator between God and man (See 1Timothy 2:5). Levitical priests served God and nation in a tabernacle made and handled by men. Jesus serves in a spiritual tabernacle [church] not controlled by men at all (See Daniel 2:34). **vs. 2**
  
  - b. He “has something to offer” to God on behalf of sinners. The basic reason for any priesthood is to perform rituals or offer sacrifices to a higher power for the benefit of the worshipers. Old Testament priests offered the ineffectual [to forgive sin] blood of bulls and goats (See Hebrews 10:4). Jesus offered His own “precious” blood for the forgiveness of sins (See 1Peter 1:18,19). His sacrifice “works”-- theirs didn’t! **vs. 3,**  
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## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 9 “Christ-- Priest of a Better Covenant”

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- c. Jesus and His priesthood are the “**real things.**” Moses made the things of the old tabernacle by God’s *specific pattern*, because everything was intended to point forward to something else of greater importance under the law of Christ. The “earthly things” were only “**copies**” and “**shadows**” of the “heavenly things” to come. They were temporary and “unreal.” The things they represented, which are now enjoyed **in the Lord’s church** [the “true tabernacle”], are lasting and “real.” Jesus’ High Priesthood is not the least of such “**real heavenly things.**” **vs. 5**
  
- d. Jesus’ initial and fundamental work as High Priest was performed when He offered up Himself in heaven as the atonement for our wickedness. However, His work was not *finished* when that act had been completed. He now serves us on a *continuing basis* as the sole Mediator of the “**better**” covenant. All of our petitions are carried to the throne of God by Him. and all of God’s blessings [“better promises”] in response to those petitions flow back to us through Him. This great work of mediation is a “**better ministry**” than the service of earlier priests. They were limited in what they could do for others. He isn’t! **vs. 6**

### (PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION): COVENANTS

1. A covenant is “an agreement between persons or parties.” In law, it is “an undertaking or promise of legal validity” (Webster).
2. Covenants may be *unilateral* and *unconditional*, or they may be *bilateral* and *conditional*. Unilateral covenants may give promises by one party without requiring any action by recipients. Bilateral covenants contain mutual promises by two or more parties.
3. Some Bible covenants were unilateral, e.g., God’s promise to not destroy the earth again by flood (Genesis 8:21,22; 9:9ff). No action was required by those receiving the promise.
4. Most Bible covenants were bilateral. Promises were dependent upon action by recipients:
  - a. Noah’s personal deliverance from the flood (Genesis 6:18, 22);
  - b. Abrahams’s seed would become great in their own land (Genesis 15:18, 5, 6);
  - c. Israel would claim God as their own God always (Genesis 17:7, 9).
5. The Old Covenant [Law] was once a “new covenant” (See Deuteronomy 5:1, 3).
  - a. It was established between God and the nation of Israel *only* (See Exodus 19:5).
  - b. Its promises (See Exodus 19:5, 6) depended on Israel’s obedience (See Exodus 19:8).
  - c. Israel’s disobedience negated God’s obligation to perform (See Deuteronomy 8:19,20).
  - d. Although not obligated, God dispensed numerous blessings upon Israel *outside* of the covenant [Law] of Moses, i.e., in spite of Israel’s disobedience to the covenant.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson 9 “Christ-- Priest of a Better Covenant”

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- c. The Mosaic covenant contained numerous reminders of Israel’s obligations:
  - (1) The Law was *written* in a book to promote understanding (Exodus 24:7);
  - (2) The Law was “sanctified by blood” to emphasize its significance (Exodus 24:8);
  - (3) Salt was included in offerings to stress God’s preserving power over them (Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; Ezekiel 43:24).
  - (4) Circumcision signified a pledge to “cut away” unrighteousness (See Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 4:11).
  - (5) The sabbath drew attention to God’s physical care. (See Exodus 32:13-17).
6. Israel’s primary obligations to God were clearly published (See Exodus 34:10-28):
  - a. They were to avoid and oppose idolatry in every form;
  - b. They must keep all the feasts appointed by Jehovah;
  - c. They should dedicate all their firstborn (man, beast, and produce) to the Lord;
  - e. They must observe the restrictions of every sabbath day.
7. The nation of Israel frequently violated *every one* of its obligations to God!
  - a. Only God’s mercy and forbearance rescued them from His wrath (See Exodus 34:6-9).

### Verses 8:7-13: First is not Always Best...

1. We expect that old things will be replaced with new things when the old aren’t working well. The covenant of Moses was *not* “faultless” but “faulty.” Perfection, not fault, was needed to overcome sin and give salvation. The first covenant was *not intended* to be “perfect” [suitable] for salvation. It had nothing in it *to secure* perfection. It never *promised* perfection to even the most obedient Jews, and it was totally unable *to make* perfect any party to the covenant. **vs. 7**
2. The priesthood was a perfect example of the uselessness of the Law to secure salvation for the Jews. Chapter 7:11 has already cited that truth. Not only did every Jew need a new and better priesthood because the old one could not secure the forgiveness of sin but also the nation badly needed an entire new law, since the old one had become a law of death to them (See Romans 7:18-25).
3. God had not “found” [discovered] fault in the Law. It was still serving its intended purposes just as it had since first given:
  - a. It taught Israel about the goodness and mercy of God;
  - b. It stressed the necessity of obeying the true God and Him only;
  - c. It focused on Israel’s total dependency on Jehovah for all physical and spiritual health;



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- d. It magnified the awfulness of sin and rebellion toward God (See Galatians 3:19);
  - e. It led sincere Jews to Jesus as the Messiah and to salvation (See Galatians 3:24). **vs. 7**
4. While there was no change in the Law that would have prevented it from doing what it was intended to do, there was a continual change in the people who were supposed to obey the Law. They “waxed worse and worse” in breaking the Law. There was much fault to be found in them [the people], and there was great need for a covenant that could take away that fault! **vs. 8**
5. Jerermiah, among other prophets, had announced the advent of such a covenant long before [Paul’s(?)] time. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, God promised relief to both “Israel” and “Judah,” since the first covenant had been made with the whole nation before its division. Now, of course, these physical distinctions no longer exist; the new covenant is with “all [spiritual] Israel” (See Romans 9:6; 11:26). **vs. 9**
6. This new covenant would be unlike the old one given at Sinai:
- a. It would not require perfect obedience to be considered compliant (See James 2:10);
  - b. It would offer both grace and justice instead of justice only;
  - c. It would provide a sin-sacrifice worthy to atone for all of men’s transgressions;
  - d. It would enable men to enjoy a continuing personal access to God through the service of a new Mediator between God and man. **vs. 9**
- 7.. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two covenants was in *communication*.
- a. The terms under Moses were taught to “neighbor” and “brother” long after they entered into the covenant by physical birth. Christ’s law is taught prior to birth into His kingdom. No one commits to the new covenant involuntarily. And voluntary commitment is always a better basis for conforming to the rules. **vs. 10, 11**
  - b. Moses’ Law was put before the people in many places and in many ways. It was written on doorposts (Deuteronomy 11:20); on phylacteries (Deuteronomy 11:18; Matthew 23:5); on large rocks (Deuteronomy 27:2,3); in a book (Exodus 24:4; Nehemiah 8:1); and, most importantly, on tables of stone in the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:16). Moreover, the law was to be discussed incessantly among family members (See Deuteronomy 11:19) and taught to the people by the priests (See 2Chronicles 15:3).
  - c. Despite wide distribution, familiarity with the Law declined over time until a wide-spread lack of knowledge plagued the Jews during the days of their kings (See Hosea 4:6). Christ’s new covenant must become part of the *heart* as well as the *mind*.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-Lesson 9 “Christ- Priest of a Better Covenant”

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Understanding coupled with an emotional commitment can foster a lifetime of faithful perseverance that hardly seemed possible within the Mosaic system. **vs. 10, 11**

8. God’s mercy was strong toward Israel under the Law. He never quit loving them even when they quit loving Him. Nevertheless, He *could not* express the same degree of mercy then as now, for mercy could not interfere with justice (See Romans 11:22), and justice demanded a severe penalty in the absence of satisfaction for sin. Until Jesus as High Priest laid a full atonement before the Almighty’s throne, mercy was limited to short-term circumstances. Sins under the Law were “remembered” each year when the high priest offered a sacrifice for the people’s sins in the Holy of Holies. Jesus’ sacrifice of blood enables God to “forget” our sins and to “remember” them no longer [to regard them as if they were never committed]. **vs. 12**
9. The old covenant had its uses (see above, number 3), but its purposes were now completed and it was of no further benefit to the people of God. The very fact that a “new” covenant appeared meant that the other covenant was “old.” Since both covenants could not coexist, one had to go. Obviously, the second law would not have been imposed if the first law had been intended to remain. So, the first was *old* and *obsolete*, and the time had come for it to disappear forever. **vs. 13**
10. The expression, “is ready to vanish away,” does not imply that the time had not fully arrived for the Law to be forgotten. Paul clearly declared that Christ “*has* taken it out of the way” (Colossians 2:14). It was a “done deal!” However, there appears to have been a period of “toleration” in the early church when converted Jews were allowed to observe the trappings of the Law, *as custom*, if they could differentiate between what was allowed as custom and what was required of them as Christians (See Acts 21:15-26). This toleration, too, would cease, so the Law was “ready” to vanish away in every way.

### \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Nine\*\*\*\*\*

1. Perhaps the writer is still concerned that the “dull of hearing” had not followed his argumentation about the priesthood of Jesus and Melchizedek, thinking it to be much too complex for their spiritual understanding. So, he drives to the “main point” as if to say, “If you don’t get anything else, know this...” They could know the *what* if they failed to grasp the *why*: We have such a High Priest-- understand that if you can, but believe it, regardless. Your eternal destiny rides on that truth.

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2. Even accepting Jesus as a priest among priests through an exception to the Law would offer no advantage to the Jews. If He served only on earth as other priests did, He would offer the same ineffectual gifts and sacrifices that the others offered--with the same unsatisfying results. But those priests heralded the coming of a *different* kind of priest-- a heavenly being who can serve man in heaven as well as on earth. The real need was not for another priest, but for a better priest who had a better sacrifice to offer.
3. A “mediator” works between parties to effect a resolution beneficial to both. Man in his imperfection cannot deal directly with the perfection of Almighty God. Still, he can approach the Father by means of the Son, who is able to understand and sympathize with the human condition. How frightening to face God without sympathetic representation! How comforting to know that our High Priest is ready and able to plead our worthless cause to the Perfect One.
4. It should have been no surprise to observant and thoughtful Jews that the first (old) covenant was to be taken away and replaced by a new one. Everything about it spoke to its ineffectiveness and temporary nature. For centuries, warnings had been issued to the nation that it stood in violation of the requirements of its covenant with God. And yet, many Jews, even some in the church, were still attracted to the Law and its priesthood. It was for them a “bitter pill to swallow” to be told that their old religious system was gone entirely.
5. Religion for the practioner of the Law was too often a matter of “have to” rather than “want to.” The new covenant, while expecting humble compliance with the commands of the gospel, places great emphasis on the heart as well as the head. Christians must never make the mistake made by Israel-- relying on a religion that is more of the page than of the heart.
6. The Law of Moses could be characterized as a religion “better told than felt.” It was generously communicated but grudgingly followed. It was advertised in many places but only respected in a few places. The new covenant was to involve the whole man--his heart as well as his body.
7. We are all too familiar in our industrialized society with “planned obsolescence” by manufacturers. This tactic is usually not popular with consumers. However, God had planned the obsolescence of the Old Law long before it was actually replaced by a New Covenant. He had something far better to offer the “consumer.” It was a great favor to

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-Lesson 9 “Christ--Priest of a Better Covenant”**  
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the religious “public” when He chose to make it possible through Jesus for us to improve our spiritual environment in ways we could never have imagined.

Notes and Comments:

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- “Christ--Priest of a Better Covenant” LESSON NINE**  
**Hebrews 8:1-13 QUESTIONS**

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1. What was the “main point” being taught by the writer in this part of Hebrews? (vs. 1,2)
2. Both kinds of priesthood under discussion had the same basic function. What was it? (vs. 3)
3. What could Jesus not do for men if the Mosaic Law were still in force? (vs. 4)
4. Levitical priests served the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ things that are served by Jesus as priest. (vs. 5)
5. Christ’s ministry is \_\_\_\_\_ than the ministry of O.T. priests. He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_, which rests on \_\_\_\_\_ . (vs. 6)
6. What is a covenant? (Consult a dictionary if necessary) List some essential features of a covenant:
7. What role does Jesus fill in the New Covenant? (vs. 6b)
8. Was the Old Covenant between God and Israel a conditional or unconditional covenant? (See Deuteronomy 29:9; 30:15-20)
9. What was the problem with the Old Covenant concerning the forgiveness of sins? (See James 2:10 and Hebrews 10:4)
10. How could the Old Covenant be “faulty” if a perfect God gave it? (vs. 7,8) (See Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalms 18:30; 19:7)

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- “Christ--Priest of a Better Covenant” LESSON NINE**  
**Hebrews 8:1-13 QUESTIONS**

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11. What is the difference between “the house of Israel” and the “house of Judah”? (vs. 8)
  
12. Why did God make a different kind of covenant with His New Testament people? (vs. 9)
  
13. Where did God write the laws of the Old Covenant? (See Exodus 34:1; Deuteronomy 6:9; 27:8; Joshua 1:8, etc.)
  
14. Where did God promise to write the laws of the New Covenant? (vs. 10) Does this mean that the *written* word is not God’s law? (See 1Corinthians 14:37)
  
15. When would the people in the New Covenant be taught about the Lord? (vs. 11) How is this different from the Old Covenant? (See Deuteronomy 4:8,9)
  
16. A third difference between the two covenants is expressed in verse 12. What is it? (See Hebrews 10:4,14)
  
17. What did God say to show that the Old Law was to be replaced? (vs. 13)

**COMPARE THE COVENANTS-----**

	<u>OLD</u>	<u>NEW</u>
<b>1. Where written:</b>	_____	_____
<b>2. When learned:</b>	_____	_____
<b>3. Forgiveness of sin:</b>	_____	_____

## Christ and the Better Sanctuary

**Introductory Statement:** Three things were central to the ongoing practice of religion within the Law of Moses: (1) priests; (2) a sanctuary in which services could be performed; and (3) sacrifices offered to Jehovah. It would be encouraging to wavering Jewish converts to know that Christ's role as High Priest in the new covenant involves the *same* three things: (1) Jesus serves them as a priest; (2) He works for them both in the *true* tabernacle [the church] and in the *heavenly* sanctuary [heaven]; (3) He had offered for their sins the most precious of all sacrifices, His own blood. In chapter seven, Jesus' work as priest was examined in depth. Now, in chapter nine, the focus will be on the place of sacrifice, the heavenly sanctuary. Finally, also in chapter nine and extending into chapter ten, Jesus' sacrifice, the atoning blood, will be proclaimed as sufficient to obtain complete forgiveness for the sins of *all* men.

### Verses 9:1-5: A Place Dear to Their Hearts...

1. Chapter 8:2 identified Jesus as a "minister of the *sanctuary* and of the *true tabernacle*." As such, He has important work to do, and there must be a place in which to do that work. There were two such places for priests to work under the Law: (1) the *Holy Place* where ordinary priests went about their daily tasks of service and sacrifice; (2) the *Most Holy Place* where only the High Priest could take the ultimate sin-offering for himself and for the people. Men not appointed to this highest priestly office were not allowed there.
2. "Tabernacle" refers either to (1) the entire tent where worship was conducted under the "ordinances of divine service," and which consisted of two areas, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (vs. 2,3,6,7) or, (2) the first or outer part of the structure (See chapter 13:10,11). The "sanctuary" can be either (1) the *first* or outer part of the entire tabernacle [the Holy Place] (vs. 2) or, (2) the *second* or inner part of the tabernacle [the Most Holy Place] (See chapters 8:2; 13:10,11). In this section, it is not so much the terminology used to identify the *two places* where priestly service was performed that is important. It is the existence of those two places that prefigures the existence of two *other* places where priestly service is **now performed**-- on *earth* [in the church] by ordinary priests [Christians] and in *heaven* by our High Priest, Jesus the Messiah.
3. There were plenty of activities in the "first part" of the tabernacle to keep common priests busy. The first covenant was filled with ordinances about rituals to be performed daily, twice daily, weekly, and monthly in the "earthly sanctuary." **vs. 1**
4. The *first part* of the earthly tabernacle had several appointments related to the service of

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 10 “Christ and the Better Sanctuary”

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ordinary priests: (1) a lampstand with seven lamps to furnish light for the priestly service; (2) a table on which was placed showbread for the priests to eat; (3) the altar from which priests took burning incense to accompany their offerings. **vs. 2,4**

Note One: The writer’s placement of “which had” in verse 4 is confusing. It would appear that the altar was *inside* the Holy of Holies, when in fact it was just *outside* (See Leviticus 16:12; Exodus 40:5,6,26,27 for clarification). The High Priest always took incense from this altar *into* the Most Holy Place when he offered the atonement blood. Perhaps the fact that the altar of incense was so closely associated with the once-a-year sacrifices prompted the author to speak of the altar as *belonging* to the area of the tabernacle where the offering was made.

Note Two: It is important that, while the writer does not specifically make such applications, we should not overlook the *apparent correspondence* between the sanctuary furniture and certain things that have been placed within the “true” tabernacle [the Lord’s church].

- [1] Lampstand [seven lamps]-- gave light for priestly duties-- represents God’s complete [ “seven”] word by which we common priests “see” how to perform our duties (See Psalm 119: 105; 1Peter 2:5,9).
- [2] Shewbread [twelve loaves]-- gave actual or representative nourishment as the common priests did their duty in the tabernacle-- represents the spiritual food of truth which enables us to execute our responsibilities in the church. Some especially see the Lord’s Supper in the eating of shewbread (See Acts 20:32; 1Corinthians 11:29,30).
- [3] The smoke of incense-- gave a pleasing and encompassing aroma to the sacrifices it accompanied-- represents the humble pleas of N.T. priests to be heard by God as they offer prayers to Him (See Revelation 5:8; 8:3,4).

- 5. [Paul (?)] does not mention two other items of furniture used by the priests who offered animal sacrifices under the Law: the *brazen altar*, upon which the animals were slain and burned, and the *laver* or bath of water in which the priests washed themselves prior to the offering of animal sacrifices. These objects were *outside* the tabernacle proper, and the writer chooses not to include them in this discussion of the tabernacle service. His focus is on what occurred *within* the “earthly sanctuary” and on how people presently in the “true tabernacle” [the church] are affected by the spiritual counterparts of tabernacle worship. **vs. 1**



## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 10 “Christ and the Better Sanctuary”

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6. The “second veil” separated the two parts of the tabernacle. The first veil was the one that closed the open [east] end of the structure. Boards formed the other three sides. The room behind the second veil was the Most Holy Place, where only the High Priest was permitted to go to serve God. **vs. 3**
  
7. Only *one* object, the most important of all, was located within the “second part.” The golden altar [box] with the mercy seat on its top was the place where God’s Presence was manifested to the High Priest when he sacrificed there annually. It was there on the mercy seat that the priest offered the blood of atonement for his own sins and for those of the nation. Two figures of cherubim stood above the altar to impress upon the priest the heavenly glory that attended the conduct of service within the Holy of Holies. **vs. 3-5**
  
8. Inside/beside the ark were *three* objects intended to remind the priest and all the people of Israel about *three* immutable truths involved in their relationship to the Almighty:
  - (1) The golden pot of manna, which reminded them of how bountifully God had provided for their needs at all times. God’s PROVIDENCE is always dependable.
  - (2) Aaron’s rod which had been used by God to affirm His right to control Israel in all things. God’s AUTHORITY must never be challenged.
  - (3) The two tables of stone upon which God had written His commandments. God’s LAW is the only guide by which His people can be properly directed. **vs. 4**

### Verses 6-11: An Important Lesson From the Holy Spirit...

1. All common priests were allowed into the Holy Place. That was where their “services” were performed. No service could be offered outside the tabernacle, just as no *acceptable* service today can be executed outside the “true tabernacle” [the church] (See Matthew 20:1,2; John 15:5). **vs. 6**
  
2. Entrance into the “second part” was limited in several ways:
  - a. Only the High Priest was authorized to enter;
  - b. He could enter only “once” a year. Actually, he went several times on the same day to offer his sacrifices, but this was considered as “once” (See Leviticus 16:11-15);
  - c. No other priest could accompany the High Priest when he went in;
  - d. Blood offerings had to be carried by the High Priest into the Most Holy Place;
  - e. Distinct offerings were made (1) for himself and (2) for all the other people;
  - f. Forbearance could be sought only for sins of ignorance (See Leviticus 4:2ff). **vs. 7**
  
3. The Holy Spirit taught Israel [by law, not by miracle] a vital lesson by imposing these

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 10 “Christ and the Better Sanctuary”

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prohibitions on the Most Holy Place. Mortals, even priests and high priests, could not go in, except by God’s own limited permission. They should have learned that without a change in the way that men can approach God, they had no hope of doing so. The door was closed! “Perfection” [forgiveness] of the conscience was impossible! **vs. 8**

4. Unfortunately, most Israelites did not learn the Spirit’s lesson about the urgent need for change. Evidently, the temple was still standing and the old ordinances were being observed in it even while Hebrews was being written [“are offered”]. Since the temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., such practices would have continued only until that date. This places the origin of Hebrews prior to A.D. 70 [five to seven years earlier]. **vs. 9**
5. The “conscience” of worshippers could not be free from the guilt of sin while they depended on human priests to represent them to God. The Law provided only physical ordinances and practices to achieve physical blessings. It could do nothing to improve man’s spirit or to secure his relationship to God. A time of **reformation**, which had occurred before now [A.D. 63-65], would offer changes for the *spiritual man*. **vs. 10**
6. This profound change **CAME** when Jesus came as High Priest, and not before or after. He built the “greater and more perfect tabernacle” [His church], and He represents its priests [members] in heaven to the Father that they might receive “every spiritual blessing” through Him (See Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:3).
7. No such change was possible as long as man’s approach to God was made through a physical tabernacle [“made with hands”] of “this creation” [by the Law]. **vs. 11**

### \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Ten\*\*\*\*\*

1. **Jesus has been characterized as “our man in heaven.” Although He is now seated beside the Father in heaven, His presence is continually felt in His church. He has not left us alone. Whenever we meet together to worship or when we try to comply with His will, He is with us to encourage and support our efforts to be faithful (See Matthew 18:20; 28:20).**
2. **Ordinary priests of the Law performed many important services in the form of sacrifices, offerings, and ritual activities. Yet, there was *one* service that they could not provide. Only one man, the high priest, could seek the ultimate benefit-- by offering an atonement sacrifice for the sins of the nation. So, also, we can glorify God in the church**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 10 “Christ and the Better Sanctuary”

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by our numerous activities of worship and work. But, we cannot do anything about sin except to utilize the service of our High Priest as He lives in the presence of Jehovah.

3. The similarities between the furniture and appointments of the old tabernacle and those things included in the “true” tabernacle are impressive. These likenesses show that God’s eternal plan is unified and continuous in all its parts over the ages . The tabernacle was made by His “pattern,” and its features are reflected in the “better things” now enjoyed in the church of Christ.
4. In spite of *three* significant items placed in the ark of the covenant to remind the Jews about God’s Law, His Authority, and His Providence, the nation continually forgot all *three* lessons. They suffered consequently in various ways. Their mistakes of disobedience were “written for our learning,” but we often ignore our warnings about sin in exactly the same way as Israel did theirs.
5. The writer of Hebrews suggests how limited the influence of the gospel over the Jewish nation must have been. At the time the book was written, the rituals of the Law were still being practiced and the animal sacrifices were still being offered in the temple. That was more than thirty years after Jesus’ death “nailed” such activities to the cross. The experience of gospel teachers with the practitioners of the Law testifies to the accuracy of Jesus’ observation, “Many are called, but few chosen.”
6. The O.T. tabernacle was built by God’s own “pattern.” It featured beautiful woods, costly fabrics and coverings, and precious silver and gold. Nevertheless, its physical appeal pales into insignificance when compared with the spiritual appeal of God’s “more perfect” tabernacle. In the church, no man who chooses to draw near to God is restricted by rules and regulations which he cannot possibly satisfy. “And whosoever desires, let him take of the water of life freely.”

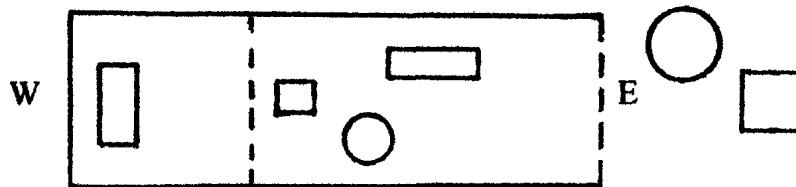
### Notes and Comments:

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- “Christ and the Better Sanctuary”**  
**Hebrews 9:1-11**

**LESSON TEN**  
**QUESTIONS**

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1. What is a “sanctuary”? (Consult a dictionary if necessary.)
2. By what other terms is the Mosaic sanctuary called? (vs. 2; also, see Exodus 25:9 [ASV, marginal reading]; 40:35; 38:21; 34:26). (Extra Credit!)
3. Which *part* (vs. 2) of the whole sanctuary was also called “the sanctuary”? It was the \_\_\_\_\_ Place (See Exodus 26:33; 28:43).
4. The other part (division) of the tabernacle was known as the “\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_” (vs.3, KJV and NKJV). It is also called the “\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_” [ASV, others].
5. Each part of the tabernacle was entered through a \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 3; also, see Exodus 26:31,32; 26:36,37 ["screen"]).
6. Label each item in the Mosaic tabernacle (vs. 2-5 and Exodus 30:1-10; 40:1-7):



7. The ark (box) of the “covenant” contained three things. What were they? (vs 4) They might represent the three basic features of God’s covenant with Israel. How?  
 God’s Law                      God’s Mercy (Blessings)                      God’s Authority
8. What did the priests (plural) do in the Holy Place? How often? (vs. 6) What did the high priest do in the Most Holy Place? How often? (vs. 7)
9. What lesson was taught about remission of sins by the differences between the activities in verse 6 and those in verse 7?
10. When is the “present time” (vs.9), and when is the “time of reformation” (vs.10)?
11. Are the “good things to come” and the “more perfect tabernacle” to be enjoyed on earth or in heaven? How do you know? (vs. 11)

## Christ-- The Better Sacrifice

Introductory Statement: The crucial fact that Jesus has been made the High Priest of the New Covenant is introduced in chapter two, verse 17, and is repeated in all subsequent chapters of the book [except chapter eleven]. This is the central truth of Hebrews. The inadequacy of the services performed both by the common priests and the high priest is emphasized in the first part of chapter nine. The Jews' great need was for a priest who could represent them to God and successfully secure a forgiveness that was impossible through the Law. The role and service of Jesus as that [high] priest is the pervasive topic of discussion in these verses of chapters nine and ten.

### Verses 9:12-14: Better Blood = Better Blessings...

1. Christ came as High Priest to provide "good things" within the church (verse 11). Blood sacrifices were the instruments by which Israel had always obtained God's favor. Life for life was still to be the price of redemption. Now, however, it would not be the relatively valueless blood of dumb animals upon which hope would rest. Instead, the "precious" blood of the sinless Christ would settle the debt of sin carried on man's record by Almighty Jehovah. **vs. 12**
2. "Eternal" redemption was obtained by Jesus' blood. Only a temporary "rolling forward" of accountability for sins was possible through the blood of animals (See chapter 10:3). **Real** redemption followed one act of sacrifice by the Christ, while under Moses' Law numerous goats [plural] and calves [plural] were necessary over time [one of each yearly]. The singularity of Jesus' action will be revisited by the writer at the end of chapter nine and during much of chapter ten. **vs. 12**
3. The *efficacy* of Jesus' blood offering is in contrast to that of animal sacrifices. The Law offered ceremonial purifying [rescue from being "cut off from the people"] from physical uncleanness when transgressors were sprinkled with a special bloody mixture (See Numbers 19:9). But in everyday rituals and in the crucial offerings of animal blood on the Day of Atonement, that procedure was powerless to bestow spiritual cleansing on man. **vs. 13**
4. The offering of animal blood [life], a component of an inferior Law (See chapter 8:6), prompted God to bless [spare] man's *body* from sin's penalty. It follows, then, that the offering of His own Son's blood [life] would move Him to bless [redeem] man's *spirit* by removing the guilt of sins from his "conscience." After all, Jesus' offering was part of the perfect plan crafted from eternity

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past by the Godhead. It can cleanse us for serving the living God and for maintaining the salvation made possible only through the death of the Prince of Life.

**vs. 14**

**Verses 9:15-23: Making up for “Lost” Time...**

1. The “reason” Jesus is the Mediator of God’s New Covenant is that He is the **only** possible candidate for that position. Since no creature could rescue man’s spirit from transgressions during the first covenant, sinners under that Law were as much in need of the cleansing blood of Christ as sinners are who live during the time of the New Testament. Under *both* Testaments, all who are "called" to obedience and who respond adequately will receive eternal life *only* through the mediation of Jesus and the blood of His cross. This fact alone justifies the writer’s insistence that his Jewish readers would make a disasterous mistake by giving up their trust in “better blood” and returning to trust in an inferior kind. **vs. 15**
  
2. The essential element necessary for the giving and receiving of things of value through a will is *death*. Only when the death of the giver [testator] has occurred can bequests be transferred. The Mediator of the New Covenant (verse 15) is also its Testator, who is pleased to extend the blessings of mediation to heirs of the Covenant. The testator’s death ratifies the testament. Salvation for both past and present faithful men depends entirely on the cross. A never-having-died testator [Christ] would be unable to convey His “property” [salvation] to would-be heirs of both covenants. **vs. 16,17**
  
3. The limited blessings of the Old Covenant were bestowed only after the deaths of beasts had taken place. That covenant was “dedicated” ["initiated"--Vine] and gave its benefits to Israel after blood had been shed. Of course, the death of the testator of the Old Law [Christ] was only *represented* in the death of animals. The absence of the testator’s actual death prevented the first testament from serving as the final law to forgive sin. But it could be changed, and it was changed for a **better law** that would be enforced as the ultimate plan for man’s salvation. The death of the New Cove- nant’s testator was *actual*, and the law [testament] He gave is final and cannot be changed! **vs. 18**
  
4. Exodus 24:5-8 briefly records the dedication [initiation] of the altar service. All that pertained to the rituals of sacrifice, including the people who would benefit from the rituals, were sprinkled with the consecrating blood. Even the book containing these regulations was dedicated in similar fashion. This description in Hebrews of those events provides more details than appear in Moses’ original account. **vs. 19-21**

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5. Both *people* and *things* depended on blood [death] under the Law. Things were cleansed with blood, and the shedding of blood was attached to the [limited] “remission” available to people. If the writer refers here to actual “remission,” he is comparing the cleansing available under the old covenant with that offered by the new. The blood of animals could only “purge” [give ceremonial cleansing] by the Law. Christ’s blood provides full “remission” [complete forgiveness] by the New Testament. **vs. 22**
6. It was “necessary” that animal blood [“these”] be employed in the limited atonement of the Old Law. That was the only blood that could be offered at that time for [in the place of] man. But it was not always to be so. The blood that gave ceremonial cleansing to the *copies* of the Law was not *precious* enough to secure purity for the things that constitute the *heavenly* order today [including the church]. Christ is a far **better sacrifice** than any other. He alone is adequate for the task of N.T. atonement. **vs. 23**

#### Verses 9:24-28: Unselfishness Personified...

1. Physical Israel could only approach Jehovah through the persons of the priests. Their nearest approach was made only once each year by the *high* priest. Now, the *new high priest* enjoys an *unobstructed* audience with God. He has gone into heaven itself to give direct and permanent representation on behalf of spiritual Israel. **vs. 24**
2. High priests of the Law “often” [yearly] visited God’s Presence at the golden altar. Each meeting soon ended, and the next one was always a year away. Every entrance into the Holy of Holies required animal blood, so sacrifices had to be repeated “often.” With Jesus it is different. He has sacrificed Himself just “once” and has appeared just “once” in the “true sanctuary” [heaven] with His atoning blood to put away sin “once” [permanently]. His blood was precious enough that it did not need to be shed frequently to cover the sins committed from man’s beginning until the cross and thereafter. The power of **one unselfish** sacrifice (See Philippians 2:5-8) was adequate to remove the entire mountain of guilt accumulated by past sinners and to assure sinners of the future that never again must men wait for a sacrifice that could forgive them. **vs. 25, 26**
3. Jesus could bear the image of humanity only if He died once, not many times. Thus, it was appropriate for Him to make His unselfish sacrifice just one time. Unlike the high priests of the Law, it was not His *own* sins that He took before God, but the numberless sins of *many others*. Unselfishness personified! **vs. 27,28**

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4. A subtle warning is advanced by the writer when he cites the great unselfish sacrifice of Jesus for the sins of others. Though He died, we have *not* seen the last of Him as was true when Jewish priests died. Christ will appear again to judge [condemn] those who refuse the gift of “such a High Priest” and have squandered their opportunities for **better things** through Him. He will offer them no other way of escape from their sins. The *one* price has been paid. Only to faithful men who have “eagerly awaited” His coming will He bring eternal salvation at His appearing. **vs. 27, 28**

### Verses 10:1-18: Once is Enough...

1. The Law’s repetition of atonement sacrifices from year to year served as an object lesson to thoughtful Jews that such offerings were without closure. Forgiveness was withheld from the participants, and they maintained their inner consciousness of guilt. The same ritual had to be repeated over and over again as a continual reminder of the *imperfections* of the whole system of Mosaic religion. That imperfect Law “shadowed” something much **better** and should have moved the Jews to desire the “realities” of the perfect law. **vs. 1-3**
2. If anything under the Law could be appealing enough to God to persuade Him to forgive sin, it would have been the impressive ceremonies executed by the high priest on the Day of Atonement. But high priests could offer *nothing that* worthwhile, not even the blood of the best bulls and goats available to them. **vs. 4**
3. David is quoted from Psalm 40:6-8 to confirm that a drastic change about atonement was part of God’s eternal plan for man’s redemption. The Law’s offering for sin could not satisfy God’s requirement, so another *kind* of sacrifice was needed. The “book” of the Law forecast the appearance of Jesus (See Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22,23) to make the changes necessary to “please” God to the point of granting complete forgiveness. One change involved the Son’s death for sin, but He could not die without a human body being prepared for Him. He *came* in that body to accomplish God’s will for man-- abundant life (See John 10:10). **vs. 5-7**
4. In the same prophecy, the grand mission of the Messiah is announced: “I have come to do Your will, O God.” But God’s will was for man to be saved. That was impossible so long as animals were all that were offered to Jehovah for His “pleasure.” He required something **better**. A new plan [covenant] with a new priest and a new sacrifice was called for. But any change in the priestly elements of the first plan [covenant] demanded a change of the whole Law (See chapter 7:12). The “first” covenant must give way to



**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 11                    “Christ-- the Better Sacrifice”**  
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the “second.” God’s will has been executed, and man can now be “sanctified” by one sacrifice. **vs. 8-10**

5. The amazing grace of Jesus’ sacrifice to forgive *all* sins stands in contrast to the multitudinous daily sacrifices under the Law that together could not merit enough grace to forgive even *one* sin. Jesus did His work in a single act and then *sat down*, confirming that “It is finished” (See John 19:30). He has done His part. Now, it is our part to “destroy the works of the devil” by opposing sin and the proponents of sin with the power of the gospel (See 1John 3:8). He graciously “waits” for us to succeed in our mission (See 2 Peter 3:15) before He appears a second time (chapter 9:28). **vs. 11-13**
6. “Holiness” [sanctification] by the Law required constant renewing. The stain of past sins could never be washed away by animal blood. Contrariwise, Jesus’ blood washes perfectly clean-- then, now, and in the future-- whenever men seek sanctification. **vs. 14**
7. Israel should have had the *expectation* that a covenant would be given to them to finally relieve them of guilt. Their prophet Jeremiah had spoken about this through the Spirit long before it occurred (See Jeremiah 31:33). Hearts [feelings] and minds [understanding] would be implanted with the laws of the new covenant. This covenant would promise something the old one could not-- the *permanent* removal of guilt from the hearts and minds of *obedient* subjects. **vs. 15-17**
8. Once is enough. No need to search any further for the remedy for sin. Ungodly men may now drink deeply of the remedy provided and thus experience godliness for the very first time. **vs. 18**

\*\*\*\*\***HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS- Lesson Eleven**\*\*\*\*\*

- 1. The best that men had to offer for sin was to sacrifice their unblemished livestock. But those valuable animals were not nearly valuable enough to secure what worshipers needed and wanted. However, God had a sacrifice available whose value was equal to the high price of sin. He gladly paid that price because He loved the sinner.**
- 2. The Father was willing to give, and the Son was willing to be given for man’s forgiveness. Man must be willing to receive the gift, even at a personal sacrifice. The cost to him on earth will be far less than the cost of the sacrifice made *for* him in heaven.**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 11 “Christ-- the Better Sacrifice”

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3. A guilty conscience is difficult to live with. Imagine there being no rest from a conscience that continually reminded us of our sin and of impending punishment for that sin. A life of *doom and gloom* would not be pleasant. How appealing it should be to learn that God has a plan by which our consciences can be perfectly free from all guilt!
4. Second choices usually are inferior choices. There was only one possible candidate for first choice as a Redeemer from sin. No animal, and no other man, could meet the requirements to become the satisfaction for our guilt. Only Jesus, the God/man of the new covenant, could measure up to our needs and to the Father’s requirements. Apart from Him, all hope for eternal life is lost.
5. How bittersweet must have been the approach to God by the high priest of the Law when he entered the Holy of Holies. How awesome to witness the shining Presence of Jehovah! Yet, how disappointing to realize that this manifestation was not the real God. And what was more, the human priest had to wonder if he would *ever* stand in the actual presence of Deity. Jesus, on the other hand, as High Priest went immediately into heaven, unencumbered by the restrictions of the old system, to dwell forever in God’s company.
6. Christ came in the “likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). That likeness would have been severely altered had He died for sin more than once. One death was sufficient to achieve remission for us. But we must take notice that if we reject the glorious benefits made possible for us by His death, there “no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” This is it! It is His way or no way!
7. Can you image how many sins must have been committed by sinful people from Adam to the death of Jesus on the cross? Multiply the bad things in our own lives by all the people who have lived before us (and [hopefully] we have sinned less than some!), and we can begin to comprehend just how wonderful it is that one act by Jesus has made it possible for every sin ever committed by every person to be forgotten forever by a God who knows about them all.
8. It is stated that God “did not desire, nor had pleasure” in the animal sacrifices of the Law. Of course, He had commanded those rituals and He must have been pleased when men obeyed His laws. However, He wanted salvation, not survival, for His people, and animal blood could not provide that. He must have been like any loving parent who sees

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 11      “Christ-- the Better Sacrifice”**

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his child trying hard to do something the parent wants him to accomplish, but he can't. The child's efforts become a source of *pain* rather than *pleasure* to the parent.

9. Jesus is *waiting*. He waits for the time to come again. He waits for the time when the impact of His great sacrifice has run its course. He waits for the power of His cross to overcome every enemy that stands in its way. But He also waits for us to do our duty and to engage heartily in the fight against sin and error in the world. It is only through strenuous effort on our part that the rewards of what He did on His part will be realized in our lives and in the lives of others.

Notes and Comments:

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**Chapter 9**

1. The high priest offered the blood of which animals in the Most Holy Place? (vs. 12,13)
2. For whom was the blood of these animals offered? (See Leviticus 16:6, 11, 15)
3. Describe the process by which the “water of purification” was prepared. (vs 13; see Numbers 19: 2-9)
4. What was the only way in which “transgressions under the first covenant” could be forgiven? (vs. 14,15; also, see chapter 10:4)
5. Both testaments (covenants) were dedicated [“purged”] with \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 18); the first was cleansed with the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the second with the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (vs. 19-21 and vs. 12).
6. Why can’t the thief on the cross be used to illustrate salvation in the gospel age? (vs.16,17,22; also, see Luke 23:42,43,46; Leviticus 17:11)
7. What were the exceptions to the rule stated in verse 22? (See Numbers 31:22-24 and Leviticus 16: 26,28)
8. By what were the copies of heavenly things cleansed? (vs. 23,19) By what were the heavenly things purified? (vs. 23,26; also, see Lev. 16:9)
9. Christ and the O. T. high priest both offered a sacrifice for sin. Show how these sacrifices were different:

	<u>O. T. Sacrifice</u>	<u>N.T. Sacrifice</u>
Who offered it?	_____	_____
Where offered?	_____	_____
What offered?	_____	_____
When offered?	_____	_____

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- “Christ-- the Better Sacrifice” LESSON ELEVEN**  
**Hebrews 9:12-10:18 QUESTIONS**

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10. What final likeness to humanity did Jesus demonstrate in His service as our High Priest? (vs. 27,28)

**Chapter 10**

11. Why was it necessary for the high priest to offer a sacrifice for sin every year? (vs. 1-4)

12. What did the Father do for the Son that His will might be done? (vs. 5)

13. Why did God not take any pleasure in sacrifices offered according to the Law? (vs.8,4)

14. What was the will of God that Jesus came to do? (vs.9, 10) What effect did that have on the two covenants [testaments]? (vs. 9)

15. Why is it said that Christ “sat down” at God’s right hand? (vs.12, 14, 17, 18)

16. The offering of Jesus’ blood is adequate to accomplish two things: (1) The immediate availability of forgiveness and, (2) what ultimate event(s)? (vs. 13; also, see IJohn:3:8; Revelation 20: 10; 1Corinthians 15:25,26)

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## Christ and the Better People

**Introductory Statement:** At this point, the writer has used most of the first ten chapters of Hebrews to establish the basic and vital truth that Jesus is Spokesman, Leader, and High Priest of the New Covenant. Now, he turns to reminding these Christians about the serious obligations that these facts place upon them. The foolishness of abandoning their faith in “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” should be unthinkable. Wavering saints are urged to “keep on keeping on” in response to God’s gift of such a Savior as Jesus.

### Verses 10:19-23: Get Close and Hold On...

1. “*Therefore*” is a key word in Hebrews. It is a term that calls for a conclusion or an action based on facts or evidence previously given. Some examples of its use are:
  - a. Chapter 2:1-- Jesus is **better** than angels-- *therefore*--listen to what He says;
  - b. Chapter 2:17-- Only Jesus could die for man’s sin-- *therefore*-- God gave Him a body;
  - c. Chapter 4:1-- Eternal rest is still available-- *therefore*-- be sure to obtain it;
  - d. Chapter 7:25-- Christ never changes-- *therefore*-- He can save us to the uttermost;
  - e. Chapter 9:23-- Forgiveness requires blood-- *therefore*-- Jesus’ sacrifice is essential.
  - f. Other verses containing “therefore”: 1:9; 3:1; 3:7; 4:9,11,16; 6:1; 7:11; 9:18; 10:5.
  
2. Verse 10:17 gave God’s *promise that He would forgive sins*; verse 10:18 assures us that now *there is remission of sins through Christ*. *Therefore*-- since you *know* what is right, *do it!* *Therefore*-- let us draw near to God and hang on!
  
3. This exciting truth is good reason for Christians to have “**boldness**” about setting their expectations on heaven. People who were not priests could not enter the tabernacle *at all* (See Numbers 18:7). Priests who were not a high priest could go into the Holy Place but were prohibited from the Most Holy Place. The high priest could enter there only within severe restrictions. “**Boldness**” about the tabernacle was unknown in Israel. **vs. 19**
  
4. We can have boldness [confidence] because we have a High Priest who has *consecrated* [dedicated/initiated--Vine] a *new* way not previously open and a *living* way secured not by dead animals but by a living-again Messiah. Both the “veil” of mystery that prevented Israel from viewing the Presence of God in the tabernacle and the “veil” of Christ’s physical body had to be removed before free access to God could be available. Both were torn away when Jesus died on the cross (See Matthew 27:51; Colossians 2:14). No longer must men depend upon the concealed actions of a frail human priest. Now we can see clearly [by faith based on solid evidence] the *goal* of heaven and the *way* [Jesus] to that

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 12 “Christ and the Better People”

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goal. We have been given the awesome opportunity to “*draw near*” in heart and relationship to our Father in heaven. **vs. 20, 21**

5. Our confidence in the availability of heaven is based on our *faith* (See chapter 11:1-ASV). This same faith has led us to repentance [dedication to God/Jesus] and baptism [washing]. Under Moses’ Law, persons were dedicated to God by the sprinkling of blood and oil; our consciences are cleared of evil [guilt] by our dedication [turning] to God’s service. Priests washed themselves in the great laver before sacrificing animals or entering the tabernacle; we are cleansed from sin in baptism before entering into service to God in the church (See Exodus 30:18-21; 1Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16). **vs. 22**
6. Once we have “drawn near” in our commitment to God by means of Jesus Christ as our High Priest, we must “hold fast.” God promised salvation, and He is totally dependable. But His lifeline is of no benefit to us if we take hold and then let go (See 2Peter 2:20,21), and *wavering* is just one step away from *abandonment*. Beware! **vs. 23**

### Verses 10:24,25: We’re All in This Together...

1. Discouragement is the ever-present enemy of struggling Christians. Apostasy is not only *possible* (See Galatians 5:4) but *likely* when we try to “go it alone.” One distinct purpose in the banding together of individual saints in local congregations is to provide mutual support and protection against spiritual stagnation or complete desertion of saintly duty. It is only if we “consider” and “stir up” one another to discharge our mutual responsibilities that we will be able to “hold fast” to our hope without wavering in doubt. No one can willfully go to heaven *alone*! We all need the help of others. **vs. 24**
2. The assembling of disciples is an **essential** means by which we “exhort one another.” This common need of encouragement can be fully supplied only when Christians come together and share in common worship. Not even *one* service of the church, to say nothing of *many*, will be “forsaken” when God’s people understand the indispensable purpose of every gathering. Forgetting that strength comes by others will make us weak. **vs. 25**
3. “The Day” was often applied to the time when Jerusalem would be destroyed by Romans [A.D. 70]. That “day” would bring terrible consequences to any Christian who had deserted the other saints and their assemblies. He would not be sheltered by Jesus’ promised protection (See Mark 13:14-20). Since *close* communion was fundamental to faithfulness, and faithfulness to survival, the assembly was doubly important to these Jewish disciples. Indeed, they were “all in this together.” **vs. 25**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 12 “Christ and the Better People”

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4. Not only would “the Day” separate the faithful from the unfaithful in terms of physical consequences, but it would end their options about returning to the temple services. The temple, its high priest, and its sacrifices would all be gone. The opportunities offered to them through the church, its High Priest, and Jesus’ blood sacrifice would all remain as blessings for the steadfast. **vs. 25**

### Verse 10:26-31: What Can You Expect?

1. Christians who deliberately forsake their obligations to Christ have “sinned willfully” and have placed themselves in the unenviable position of forsaking the **only** Savior that God has provided to the lost or will ever provide. It may also be possible that such raw rebellion will place one outside the limits of redemption (See chapter 6:4-8). Decisions about being faithful [including our attendance at assemblies] are *serious* decisions! If one closes the door to “The Way,” there is no other door and no other way of escape! **vs. 26**
2. Those who choose to be unfaithful to Christ are against Him (See Matthew 12:30). They are “adversaries” whose hopes of heaven have been *exchanged* for something entirely different. They can *expect* [“to look for as due”] their judgment to be harsh, their Lord’s indignation toward them to be “fiery,” and their ultimate end to be “devoured” (See 2Thessalonians 1:8). How badly they have treated themselves in this exchange! **vs. 27**
3. Moses’ Law was to be treated by Israel with deep respect, even though it offered only temporary and limited rewards for obedience. Violators were dealt with mercilessly (See Deuteronomy 17:2-7). Rebellion against Christ’s law will be treated with less, not more, mercy in the judgment. **vs. 28, 29**
4. Consider how “willful sinning” [including forsaking the assemblies] is regarded by heaven, even when we do not realize the seriousness of our behavior:
  - a. It embodies “*trampling underfoot*” the Son of God;
  - b. It counts the sanctifying blood of Jesus to be a “*common* [unimportant] *thing*”;
  - c. It “*insults*” the Spirit of grace. **vs. 29**
5. How could God do otherwise than to give “**much worse**” [eternal] punishment for N. T. apostates than the physical consequences He imposed for sin under the Law? God will exact His vengeance-- He will “repay”-- He will “judge” [condemn] even **His people** when they choose not to be His people (See John 15:5,6). **vs. 29-31**



## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 12 “Christ and the Better People”

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### Verses 10:32-39: Keep On Keeping On...

1. Like all sinners, these weak Christians, as unconverted sinners, had once been blind to the attractions of the gospel. Then, the glorious light of truth had “illuminated” their minds and hearts (See 2Corinthians 4:4), and they could “see” the importance of paying whatever price was necessary to inherit salvation. Heaven was worth sufferings, humiliations, reproaches, and tribulations for themselves, and they weren’t ashamed to identify with others who were being ill treated. Some unspecified encounter with the writer [Paul (?)] while he was imprisoned testified to their loyalty to Jesus in a time when they were much more devoted to Him. Losing their possessions for Christ’s sake had been unimportant to them, for they knew that those things could be exchanged for things far more precious (See Matthew 19:29). **vs. 32-34**
2. These people had made a significant investment of themselves in the way of the Lord. How sad it was to see them “cast away” the confidence and hope that enlightenment had given them and to witness their return to a religious system that offered no real reward. “No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). **vs. 35**
3. Perseverance is a hard lesson to learn. So many things interfere with duty. But, receiving the “promise” [life based on our faith] happens after doing the will of God, not before. Even the physical lives of these Jewish Christians, threatened with impending attack by Rome’s military might, would depend on whether they had faith enough to follow Jesus’ instructions about fleeing when He “came” [through the instrument of pagan conquerors] (See Luke 21:20,21). Many saints who “drew back” into unbelief would be destroyed in Jerusalem along with never-converted Jews. **vs. 36-38**
4. A simple choice lay before all wavering disciples-- not just the choice between survival or death, but the choice of drawing back to perdition [hell] or believing to save their souls. People with good judgment would have little difficulty in doing the right thing. Those so “dull of hearing” might. The writer’s implication is as clear as the choice: “Keep on keeping on”-- if you expect to be saved! **vs. 39**

### \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Twelve\*\*\*\*\*

1. **Conclusions based on facts must not be ignored. If God’s promise to forgive sins was made in dependence on our faithfulness, then the essentiality of faithfulness is not to be questioned. We must hold tight to God’s extended hand or slip away and be lost.**

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 12      “Christ and the Better People”

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2. Can saints "fall" from grace? These did. Even though they had once been *close* to their Lord, now they needed to “*draw near.*” God was just as faithful to keep His promise to them as ever. Who had moved?
3. “Boldness” toward God and heaven is not the same as arrogance. No man can lose his humility and remain as grateful as he should for the grace that saves an otherwise helpless soul. Boldness in the Christian is the confidence he has that God will not turn him away when he seeks promised blessings with an absolute humility of heart.
4. Jesus cautioned that “apart from me you can do nothing.” Jewish men of Levi’s tribe had first to be sprinkled [dedicated] and washed before they were allowed to serve in the tabernacle as priests. We, too, must become dedicated to God through faith and repentance, and we must be washed clean from sin in baptism before we can be priests in the “true” tabernacle [the Lord’s church]. Service outside that tabernacle is vain.
5. “Do I have to attend every service of the church?” is like asking, “Do I have to be faithful to be saved?” “Holding fast” depends on encouragement from others. We deny ourselves a large measure of encouragement when we deliberately stay away from brethren who love us and who want to help us go to heaven.
6. How foolish is a man who throws away valuable stocks or bonds to be burned in the furnace? How much more foolish is the disciple who throws away the most precious investment he will *ever* have? “What will a man give in exchange for his soul?”
7. Every child must learn that meat and vegetables come before dessert. In the same way, God’s reward is promised to us only *after* we have taken up our cross and followed Him faithfully until the end.
8. What a simple choice we have to make between life and death-- salvation and damnation. But how complicated it often seems to make such simple choices! So many things are involved. So much might have to be sacrificed. We need to learn to *see things as God sees* them and thus see them for what they are really worth to us. Perhaps then the price we must pay for doing right would not seem nearly so high.

Notes and Comments:

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1. What advantage over O.T. Jews in entering “the Holiest” is enjoyed by N. T. Christians? (vs. 19)
2. What two terms describe the way consecrated for us into heaven by Jesus, our High Priest? (vs. 20)
3. “Drawing near” to God’s throne of grace (See chapter 4:16) requires four things of us. What are they? (vs. 22)
4. Why should we be able to “hold fast” without wavering? (vs. 23)
5. We have an obligation to our brethren to “stir up” \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. What is a good way to accomplish this? (vs. 24,25)
6. Those guilty of willful sins can look forward to what consequences? (vs. 26,27)
7. Contrast the punishment of lawbreakers under the Law and that of willful sinners under the law of Christ (vs. 28,29)
8. Of what three actions are willful sinners guilty? (vs. 29)
9. List the things suffered by the Hebrew Christians following their “illumination.” (vs. 32-34)
10. What is the “great reward” (vs. 35) and the “promise” (vs. 36) for those who do not “draw back”? (vs. 39)

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## Christ and the Better Faith

**Introductory Statement:** We come now to the most familiar chapter of Hebrews, the chapter that extolls the virtues and rewards of faith in God. The basic problem of the readers to whom the book is directed was their wavering faith. At some earlier time, they had manifested enough faith to obey the commandments of the gospel. They had engaged in the activities of believers for a time and had entertained a hope of the heavenly reward. Unfortunately, an undermining influence had eroded their faith, and some of them were considering going back into the very system of Judaism which they had left in the beginning. Perhaps the stirring examples of their faithful forefathers would prompt these saints to re-examine their position and to determine that their most urgent need was the need to strengthen their own faith in Jehovah God.

### Verses 11:1-3: What is This Thing Called “Faith”?

1. The last verse of chapter ten declared that the way to eternal salvation is by **FAITH**. We gain entrance into heaven by no other credentials. Yet, the writer seems unsure that all his readers understand the practical implications of real faith in God. He will define “faith” for them, and he will give them numerous examples from their own history of people who understood it and who proved their understanding by their response to it.
2. The **definition** is first: “Faith” is “substance” and “evidence.” Not hard realities that can be measured by the physical senses, but things that are just as real as reality because they are real to man’s spiritual senses [“seeing,” “hearing,” “handling” heavenly things]. Faith has two components:
  - a. Accepting the reality [“evidence”] of things we have not seen personally;
  - b. Accepting the reality [“substance”] of things for which we have no logical reason to hope. **vs. 1**
3. The **recommendation** is next: “Faith” is the means by which every luminary [“elder”] in Jewish history came to be highly regarded both by God and man. What faith did for *them* in the past, it can do for *us* in the present. **vs. 2**
4. Every man’s most fundamental confrontation with faith involves what he believes about the origin of the universe. It must be “by faith” that we accept the Genesis account. Any theory that begins with *matter* instead of *God* is not rooted in the faith that comes from what God has said about where everything started. Only the power of God could originate, and only the power of God can preserve what He originated. **vs. 3**

**Verses 11:4-7: How Faith Worked Early On...**

1. In the examples that follow, the writer emphasizes the **two** basic features of saving faith:
  - a. Faith accepts as true and necessary whatever God communicates;
  - b. Faith responds in action to whatever God communicates.
  
2. The writer reaches back as far as possible for his first example of such faith. Unhappily, he cannot speak of the *first generation* on earth, for Adam and Eve provide a warning rather than an example to imitate. However, Abel, one of the *second generation*, early on displayed a healthy faith, and that faith prompted God to recognize his “righteousness.” Further, Abel continues even until now to testify to doubters that God accepts and blesses the “gifts” that are brought to Him in faith (See Genesis 4:3-7). **vs. 4**
  
3. While Abel speaks *from the dead* about the value of faith, Enoch speaks *apart from death* (See Genesis 5:18-24). He speaks eloquently of the rewards that come to those who please God when they “walk with God” by faith. **vs. 5**
  
4. These two faithful men were not examples of the *exceptional* but of the *universal*. None of their age or of ours can please God without displaying faith in Him and His word. We must “believe that He is” and embrace Him in His unlimited power and perfect character. We must also believe that He “rewards [only] those who diligently seek Him.” **vs. 6**
  
5. For good measure, another ancient example of faith is cited in Noah, who for 120 years (Genesis 6:3) labored physically and spiritually (2Peter 2:5) to save people from a destruction no one had any reason to anticipate except from God’s warning. Noah had faith when virtually no one else did. God condemned unbelievers to death and gave Noah life after most people ignored His warning and only a few [eight] listened and acted. **vs. 7**

**Verses 11:8-22: How a Big Man Set the Example...**

1. There was no “bigger” name in Jewish history than Abraham’s. History began with him, and his example was revered among his descendants. The “father of Israel” was required to fit into the same mold of faith as all others before God could use him to fulfill His plan to separate a people for His special purposes. God’s promises were exceedingly generous (See Genesis 12:1-7). Some important *physical* blessings would be:
  - a. Abraham’s descendants would become a great nation of people;
  - b. His name would receive deep respect because he would be a blessing to others;
  - c. God would treat people according to how they treated Abraham;

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- d. Abraham’s descendants would inherit the land to which he journeyed;
  - e. Most importantly, the Lord’s most significant spiritual blessing would issue from the patriarch: Salvation from sin would come one day to the whole earth!
2. Abraham realized that more than physical consequences were involved in his reaction to God's instructions. He "waited" for the “heavenly city” where the faithful will live. **vs. 10**
  3. His reaction was expressed in action. He “obeyed,” “went out,” “sojournd,” “dwelled,” and “waited.” All of this was by faith (See Genesis 12). **vs. 8-10**
  4. Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob imitated the faith that first was in Abraham. Sarah, “past age,” trusted in the Lord to give her a child (See Genesis 18). Isaac blessed his sons according to his trust in the promises God had made (See Genesis 27). Jacob trusted in Jehovah’s plans for the tribes of Israel and shared those plans with his sons (See Genesis 48,49). One of those sons, Joseph, trusted enough in the original promises made to Abraham that he arranged to be carried from Egypt to be buried in the land of promise. Each of these notable characters had faith enough to please God apart from the Law. **vs. 11,12; 20-22**
  5. These individuals never actually received [all] God’s promises, but their faith rested in a God who one day would give all the promises to their people. They could have returned to Ur of Chaldees, but they sought a better country prepared by God for the faithful. In return for their trust, the Lord approved the spiritual relationship between Himself and each one of them. **vs. 13-16**
  6. Perhaps the most positive proof of the power of faith was exhibited when Abraham was willing to kill his own son. The sacrifice of Isaac directly conflicted with his expectation of the promises being fulfilled through Isaac. Nevertheless, he trusted that God could work it all out. By faith he received his son from the dead "in a figure." This "figure" might have been intended to relate to the later resurrection of Jesus. **vs. 17-19**

**Verses 11:23-29: Following in Their Footsteps...**

1. Moses was the second giant of Jewish history. He, too, was successfully used by Jehovah because of his faith and not because of his close connection with the Law. Whatever advantage he had with God came through his faith and not simply by keeping the ordinances of the Law. Moses’ history was rich in faith:

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- a. His parents hid him from certain death at the hands of Pharoah by faith;
  - b. He chose affliction with God’s people by faith;
  - c. He led Israel out from Egypt in the face of great danger by faith;
  - d. He insisted on compliance with the Lord’s Passover instructions by faith;
  - e. He took the Israelites through the Red Sea under "impossible circumstances ” by faith.
2. It was Moses’ *faith*, not his *lawkeeping*, that the Hebrews should imitate. **vs. 23-29**

### Verses 11:30-38: A Potpourri of Faith-- Specific and General...

1. The writer continues to cite examples of deep faith in God from Jewish history. Most of the instances recorded are familiar to students of the Old Testament. They come largely from the period of judges when Israel was subject to many dangers from the nations of Caanan. This was the time when the destruction of God’s chosen people would have been certain on any one of numerous occasions had it not been for the direct support of Jehovah, who caused them to triumph over their enemies. But God’s help was never given arbitrarily. Faith was always required of the overcomers.
2. Specific acts of unusual faith are mentioned: [1] Israel at Jericho’s walls (Joshua 6); [2] the pagan harlot Rahab who protected Israelite spies (Joshua 2); [3] Gideon who tore down Baal’s altar at God’s direction (Judges 6); [4] Barak who, in the company of Deborah, defeated the hosts of Caanan (Judges 4); [5] Samson who utilized his God-given strength to destroy many Philistines (Judges 16); [6] Jephthah who kept his vow to the Lord at the expense of his daughter (Judges 11); [7] David whose faith made him a “man after God’s own heart” (1Samuel 13:14); [8] Samuel who opposed Saul and anointed David in his place (1Samuel 15,16); and [9] the “prophets” whose names and deeds are not identified but who demonstrate a vast reservoir of faithful obedience. **vs. 30-32**
- 3 As a group, these and other Old Testament characters *through faith* accomplished significant things and displayed remarkable traits as they served Jehovah. Some of the faithful acts we can attach to particular persons; others we cannot. Some *possibilities* are:
  - (a) Subdued kingdoms-- Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, etc.;
  - (b) Stopped the mouths of lions-- Samson, Daniel;
  - (c) Quenched the violence of fire-- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego;
  - (d) Escaped the sword-- David, Elijah;
  - (e) Received strength out of weakness-- Samson;

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- (f) Women received their dead-- widow of Zerephath, Shunnamite mother;
  - (g) Imprisonment-- Jeremiah. **vs.32-36**
4. Many of the examples cited by the writer are unidentifiable to us. Perhaps Jews who had an intimate acquaintance with their own historical roots could more easily put tags on faithful individuals than we can. **vs. 33-37**
  5. Some of the faithful persons being honored in this passage possibly came from later Jewish history, perhaps some citations extending into the early New Testament period. However, it is not *when* that is important to this catalog of worthy people; it is *what*. The point is obvious: in all ages God has required all people to manifest faith and trust in Him, regardless of the cost, before they could receive His blessings and rewards. The present company of wavering Jews was no exception. They, too, must maintain faith in God and His Son if they were to inherit the eternal promises of the New Covenant. **vs. 35-38**

**Verses 11:39,40: No More Waiting...**

1. All the wonderful things done by all these wonderful people of faith did not alter the fact that “the” promise [salvation through the High Priesthood of Jesus] could not have become a reality until the Messiah died on Calvary. Great deeds were able to manifest the faith of the doers, but only *one* deed could secure the promise of heaven. When Jesus Christ gave His life and offered His blood before God as the price for sin, that one deed was enough. **vs. 39**
2. Jewish Christians could enjoy right then the long-awaited “perfection” [fulfilment] of God’s promise of salvation. Their ancestors had served and looked ahead to their reward of faith over long periods of time-- with no visible results. Now there was no more waiting! One sacrifice by one High Priest had turned *anticipation* into *realization* for all the faithful of all ages. Surely, enjoying salvation is better than waiting for it! **vs. 4**

**\*\*\*\*\* HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- LESSON THIRTEEN\*\*\*\*\***

1. It is important that people understand exactly what “faith” is, if faith is to be the basis upon which we are to be saved or lost. Hebrews highlights the fact that real faith has always been accompanied by action. No man in any age has been saved by “faith only” without works of obedience to the Lord.



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2. Each person’s influence, for good or bad, lives on after he is dead. Like Abel, we all “speak” through the memories others have of us long after our physical tongues have fallen silent. Our examples of faithfulness, or of faithlessness, can go on and on beyond any contacts we have with other people in this world.
3. Faith and trust in God’s will are not always easy to impart to the faithless. For 120 years, Noah preached that God had planned the destruction of the world. After all that time, he was only able to make believers out of seven other members of his own family. Still, an obedient faith saved every believer!
4. Abraham’s faith in Jehovah was also grown in the hearts and minds of his family. His wife, son, grandson, and great-grandson Joseph demonstrated the same trust in God’s will that had been planted in the great patriarch. God had accurately foreseen that Abraham would be a good person to begin with in His redemption plan because he would “command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice...” (Genesis 18:19).
5. Some of the Bible characters listed as faithful in this chapter were not always so faithful. A few of them were possibly more unfaithful than faithful at times. Nevertheless, it is because of what we know about their correct responses to God’s will that allows them to serve as good examples for all of us.
6. As the writer points out earlier in Hebrews, people under both covenants were totally dependent on Jesus’ sacrifice for the forgiveness of their sins. In God’s eternity-to-eternity plan for the redemption of the faithful, everything points to the cross-- forward in the Old Testament and backward in the New Testament. Any effort to leave Jesus out of that plan destroys all the spiritual aspirations of all men of all time.

Notes and Comments:

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS    “Christ and the Better Faith”    LESSON THIRTEEN**  
**Hebrews 11:1-40    QUESTIONS**

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1. “Now faith is the \_\_\_\_\_ of things hoped for, the \_\_\_\_\_ of things not seen.” (vs.1)
2. What did the elders in the O.T. obtain by their faith? (vs. 2)
3. What can we understand by faith about the origin of the “worlds”? (vs. 3)
4. A number of people in the O.T. are cited for acting “by faith.” Match each person to an action by writing his/her number in the appropriate blank **[one item has no match]**:

(1) Abel (vs.4)	_____	offered his only son
(2) Enoch (vs. 5)	_____	blessed his sons
(3) Noah (vs. 7)	_____	blessed his grandsons
(4) Abraham (vs. 8)	_____	bore a child
(5) Abraham (vs.9)	_____	hid a child
(6) Sarah (vs. 11)	_____	left Egypt
(7) Abraham (vs. 12)	_____	passed through the sea
(8) Abraham (vs. 17)	_____	circled a city
(9) Isaac (vs. 20)	_____	offered an acceptable sacrifice
(10) Jacob (vs. 21)	_____	suffered with God’s people
(11) Joseph (vs. 22)	_____	went out
(12) Moses’ parents (vs. 23)	_____	protected the spies
(13) Moses (vs. 25)	_____	had innumerable descendants
(14) Moses (vs. 27)	_____	was translated
(15) Moses (vs. 28)	_____	directed his own burial
(16) Israelites (vs. 29)	_____	pleased God
(17) Israelites (vs. 30)	_____	prepared an ark
(18) Rahab (vs. 31)	_____	kept the Passover

5. A general truth about faith gives two requirements for “coming to God.” What are they? (vs.6).
6. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were given promises never fulfilled in their lifetimes. What were they? (vs. 13; see Genesis 12:1-3,7; 26:3,4; 28:13,14)
7. What exchange was made by these men in order to have a “city” prepared for them? (vs. 13-16)



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## Christ-- the Better Finisher

**Introductory Statement:** The first ten and one-half chapters of Hebrews are devoted for the most part to teaching [or re-teaching] some basic truths about the role of Christ in the New Covenant. The remaining chapters deal principally with encouraging those Jewish Christians who had never really learned or who had forgotten the spiritual implications of those truths. It was essential that they renew their dedication and vigor toward the gospel and forget their thoughts and inclinations about returning to the doctrines and rituals of the Mosaic Law. They had left that Law some time before in favor of the “present truth.” Others before them had made more difficult sacrifices in order to please God. They also must “hold fast” to the Christ and to His law whatever the cost. They must “finish the course” as Jesus had done for their eternal salvation.

### Verses 12:1, 2: Don't Bring Any Baggage...

1. These doubting Christians were carrying a lot of religious “baggage.” They were attracted to the rituals of the Law that were still being observed in the temple in Jerusalem. They had apparently become discouraged by opposition from unidentified parties. They had “drifted away” from gospel truths once considered vital to salvation (See chapter 2:3). The “sin” of unbelief lay heavily on their minds. How could they “hold fast” if they failed to get rid of what was pulling them down? **vs. 1**
2. There was a “race” to be run (See 1Corinthians 9:24-27). Its course had been “set [marked out] for them by the Lord in His own example of faithfulness to God (See 1Peter 2:21-24). Jesus has plainly “staked out” both the *starting point* [the gospel He “authored”] and the *finish line* [the free access into heaven He provided] of our race. Numerous “heroes of faith” (chapter 11) had also run successfully. Our own race must be one of *endurance* even at great cost to us. Finishing it will bring great joy. **vs. 1, 2**
3. This race is not without reward. Even Jesus derived “joy” in its running because, by its triumphant but painful completion, He could offer salvation to the lost. Furthermore, the crown of victory was His when He was seated in glory on the victor’s throne as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” **vs. 2**

### Verses 12:3-11: “Thanks, I Needed That”...

1. The suffering from some undisclosed opposition had done serious damage to the

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shaky faith of these Hebrews. They had *maximized* the problems attached to their lives as Christians and *minimized* the value of persevering despite those problems. They needed to [seriously] “consider” the Savior who had suffered for them even to bloodshed, a much greater price for faithfulness than they had paid as yet. **vs. 3**

2. They had forgotten a lesson fundamental to their perseverance. Since, “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2Timothy 3:12), it is imperative to understand the purpose of such suffering. Is it to punish the faithful for their faithful living? Of course not! Our unpleasant experiences serve as “chastening” [correction/ discipline/ teaching] to make us better and to help us to endure more severe experiences when they come along. Chastening is the Lord’s “therapy.” It hurts, but it will help us to get past whatever obstacles are hindering us and to begin functioning again as we should. **vs. 5, 6**
3. Difficulties may simply be welcome proof to us that God really cares about us. Good fathers discipline their children because they love them and desire their improvement. We understand and appreciate the human motivation behind such discipline, even when human error may occur in its administration. Why can’t we be grateful rather than resentful when our loving Father sees fit to teach us through discipline the essential lessons of holiness that we might never learn in any other way? **vs. 7-11**
4. Doubtful saints among the Hebrews should be encouraged rather than discouraged about their problems. Just “hang on” and let God’s wisdom handle everything for you! **vs. 11**

#### Verses 12-17: What’s Next?...

1. If you can see what God has in mind for you, even when you must undergo things that appear to be undesirable, then “straighten up” and focus again on where you are headed in your spiritual race. Don’t try to take “detours” or “shortcuts,” because there *are* none. Seek the Lord’s healing (See 1Peter 2:24), get your “second wind,” and get in the race again. **vs. 12, 13**
2. Our race will be completed only if we respect the guideposts of our course.
  - a. Pursue Holiness: “You shall be holy; for I am holy”(Leviticus 11:44). We cannot “see” God without it (See Revelation 22:4). Ungodly practices will cause us to stumble and suffer defeat. But seeing the Lord [sharing in His beauty] now and eternally does not come easily. We must “look diligently” or grace will be denied us. **vs. 14, 15**
  - b. Pursue Peace with all men, saints and sinners alike. Our race is difficult enough with-

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 14 “Christ-- the Better Finisher”

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out making trouble for ourselves with strife and turmoil. Opposition from sinners and distractions from saints will make it much harder to run our best race. **vs. 14, 15**

- c. Avoid the “roots of bitterness” along the way. Our “little sins” tend to multiply and get bigger. Problems we cause in the church can develop into serious consequences. Some things may become so “bitter” that they are not soon repaired, if ever. Just as Esau forfeited his birthright for a small benefit, spiritual “fornication” or “profanity” can cause souls to be lost--including ours! If we lose our focus, we may also lose any opportunity to re-enter the race for heaven. **vs. 15-17**

### Verses 12:18-24: Pictures Then and Now...

1. Encouragement should come to the Hebrews from God’s expressions of concern for their spiritual well-being (See verses 5-11). Likewise, God’s *presentation* of Himself to them in the New Covenant should cause them to feel much better about remaining a part of that covenant and forgetting the old one. Jehovah in the Old Testament was a God surrounded by terrible and fearsome things. In the New Testament He is portrayed by things of significant beauty and attractiveness. **vs. 18-24**
2. Sin is a **separator** between God and man (See Isaiah 59:2). Since the Law offered Israel no relief from sin, it was appropriate that the people should be reminded constantly of their **separation by sin** from Jehovah. The temple veils served that purpose when the Jews sought to worship. The phenomena accompanying the first giving of the Law spoke volumes about the same fact. At Sinai, the Lord was presented in: (a) a mountain not to be touched; (b) fire; (c) blackness and darkness; (d) tempest; (e) trumpet sound; (f) fearsome spoken words; (g) threat of death for man and beast (See Exodus 19). Later, Moses expressed great fear at the Lord’s anger when Israel made a golden calf (See Deuteronomy 9:19), in spite of his close contact with God previously. **vs. 18-21**
3. God is pictured to people of the New Covenant in an entirely different light. Sin has no power over faithful saints today. There is no need for the children to be separated from their Father when forgiveness can tear down the veil of sin that hangs between them and the forgiving God. The Almighty is represented to us in an impressive Mount Zion, a beautiful city (See Revelation 21), innumerable angels, and a loyal and adoring assembly attached permanently to their Benefactor by a “registration” in heaven. He is a just Judge who “perfects” just men. He rules in company with Jesus, who loves mankind enough to have “sprinkled” His blood to secure a level of forgiveness not possible by the blood of animals, such as those offered by Abel [before the Law] and [by implication] by priests under the Law. **vs. 22-24**

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**Verses 12:25-29: Gone-- and Good Riddance...**

1. Some were “dull of hearing” and had ignored the urgency of Jesus’ message in the gospel. Perhaps they had forgotten what had happened to those who ignored the instructions of the Law. Violators did *not escape* severe retribution. God’s word through the human agency of Moses and others was compelling. His word through the divine agency of Jesus is more so. Escape for the disobedient is impossible (See chapter 2:3). **vs. 25**
2. The seriousness with which men should have regarded the Law spoken from Sinai was emphasized when Jehovah literally shook the mountain [“earth”] in preparation for giving His word (See Exodus 19:18). The comparative respect that should now attend the word of the heavenly gospel is characterized in the shaking of *both* “heaven” and “earth.” The impact of the Law was limited [“earth/mountain”], but the gospel’s influence, like leaven in meal (See Matthew 13:33), is to be felt world-wide and forever. **vs. 26**
3. The quotation in this passage originated from Haggai 2:6 and related primarily to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and to other positive events for the Jewish nation in the years following the captivity. Secondarily, it foretold of glorious developments for spiritual Israel following the inauguration of the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. The religious *status quo* had been “shaken” when the Law gave special treatment to the nation of Israel. God “shook” the religious establishment even more drastically by a gospel which gave very special treatment [full access to God] to all nations. **vs. 26**
4. This “second shaking” was the **last** [“once more”] time God would change His law for man (See Jude 3). It would be enough to *remove* the “made” [temporary] things of the Law. This removal of Mosaic practices [perhaps in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Roman army] would allow for the growth of the kingdom and the spread of the gospel without the opposition of a bitter and vindictive Jewish nation. **vs. 27**
5. The practice of the Law was just then “being shaken” or being removed. Mosaic rituals continued to function until the temple was destroyed [see a similar reference to the old covenant in Hebrews 8:13]. The temple had been erected [“made”] by man and was subject to removal. The new temple [church] was built by Christ (See Matthew 16:18) and was impervious to physical opposition. It will “**remain!**” **vs. 27**
6. These Christians were in a “kingdom which cannot be shaken” because it depends upon *heavenly* and not *earthly* things for its continuance. It is sustained by: (a) the **love** of God; (b) the **mercy** of God; (c) the **divine plan** of God; (d) the **forgiveness** of God; and

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS-- Lesson 14 “Christ-- the Better Finisher”

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(e) the **power** and **providence** of God. We can enjoy all this **grace** of God if we will only serve Him and “hold fast” to what we have in the New Covenant. **vs. 28**

7. God’s *final* warning to these unsteady saints is simple but stern: “God is a consuming fire.” The things of the Law were “being removed” by the Lord. The people who were placing their confidence in those things would likewise be “removed.” **vs. 29**

### \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Fourteen\*\*\*\*\*

1. The religious “baggage” of the Law resulted in confusion and discouragement for many Jews who obeyed the gospel. Many seem not to have been fully converted to the fact that New Testament religion was not dependent on Old Testament religion. But it was totally new and different. Similarly, people today often embrace the gospel without fully understanding that it, too, is different from the traditions and human practices to which they were exposed in the churches of men. Like the Hebrews, they have hurtful problems about dedication and perseverance in their “new religion.”
2. Jesus is both “author” and “finisher” of our faith. He “starts” us in the race to heaven with the guidance of His word about salvation and Christian living. He stands at the “finish” of our race to receive us into heaven where He has already gone as our High Priest to make our coming possible.
3. It is hard for us to remember that our suffering on earth may be God’s way of disciplining us to make us better and more understanding people. Like any therapy, spiritual chastening may not be pleasant, but it can be very helpful if we handle it properly. The bad times we face can either make us stronger and more capable of service to God or make us bitter, resentful, and even vulnerable to losing our faith and usefulness.
4. “Roots” of bitterness can cause great damage to individuals and to churches if they are allowed to grow into great plants which the “heavenly Father has not planted.” Such plants will be “rooted up” if allowed to grow until judgment, but meanwhile the Lord’s cause can be heavily damaged by these personal and doctrinal deviations from the truth. May we never allow ourselves to participate in activities that will undermine the health of the body of Christ!



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5. God’s anger at Israel’s sin caused Moses to be afraid. How much more angry can we expect Him to be toward those who “trample God’s Son,” “vulgarize the blood of salvation,” and “insult the Holy Spirit”? Yet, that is what Christians do when they turn away from the truth and join themselves to religious error or immoral living.
  
6. How comforting it is to know that we are now associated with things that “cannot be removed.” We need not have any fear from those who attack our faith or who seek to undermine our efforts to serve in the kingdom. We “have come to” [we partake of] a just God, a loving Savior, a saving blood, and a heaven-built church. Only our own desertion from those “immovable” things can cause us to be “removed.”

Notes and Comments

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS      Christ-- the Better Finisher”      LESSON FOURTEEN**  
**Hebrews 12:1-29      QUESTION**

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1. Who are the “witnesses” who surround us? (vs. 1; see chapter 11).
2. What four things must we do to assure a successful “race” for heaven? (vs. 1,2)
3. What two roles does Jesus fill in our salvation by faith? (vs. 2)
4. How does Jesus’ suffering differ from our own? (vs. 3,4)
5. What lesson about “chastening” had been forgotten by the Hebrew Christians? (5-8)
6. What illustration does the writer use to emphasize the need to accept God’s chastening? (vs. 9, 10)
7. What are the short-term and long-term effects of chastening? (vs. 11; also, see James 1:2-4)
8. What body parts are used to indicate physical distress, and what remedy for spiritual distress does each part suggest? (vs. 12, 13)
9. What negative attitude about God’s chastening must be guarded against? (vs. 15) Who serves as an example of this reaction? (vs. 16,17)
10. What “terrifying” details of receiving the Law made the Israelites conscious of God’s unapproachable nature during the O.T. dispensation? (vs. 18-2 1)
11. Our access to God is now more open than in the O.T. What persons and things make this fact evident? (vs. 22-24)
12. In what two ways has God spoken to men? (vs. 25; see chapter 1:1,2) What warning is inherent in being aware of this truth? (vs. 25; see chapter 2:1-4)

**HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS “Christ-- the Better Finisher” LESSON FOURTEEN**  
**Hebrews 12:1-29 QUESTIONS**

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13. When did God’s voice “shake the earth”? (vs. 26; see Exodus 19:18) When did God’s voice “shake not only the earth, but also heaven” once more? (vs. 26,27; consider Acts 2:17-21 and Acts 11:15).
  
14. One kingdom was “shaken” [taken from God’s people] and another kingdom was given which “cannot be shaken” [taken from God’s people]?. What are these two kingdoms? (vs. 27,28).
  
15. What characteristic of God serves as a warning to us as it should have to the Israelites? (vs. 29; also, see Deuteronomy 4:24; Numbers 11:3; 2Kings 1:10, 12).

PICTURES IN HEBREWS

1

MT. SINAI



God's Presence

**HIDDEN**

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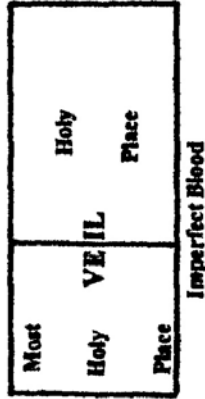
"Don't Touch"

(Hebrews 12:20)

Separated by: Man's Sin  
 Law in Effect: Not Remove Sin  
 Purpose of Law: Remind of Sin  
 Lesson to be Learned: "Sin Prevents Access to God"

2

THE TABERNACLE



God's Presence

**HIDDEN**

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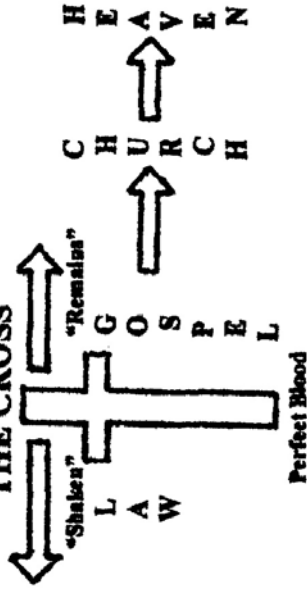
"Don't Enter"

(Hebrews 9:3,8)

Separated by: Man's Sin  
 Law Practiced: Not Remove Sin  
 Purpose of Practice: Remind of Sin  
 Lesson to be Learned: "Sin Prevents Access to God"

3

THE CROSS



God's Presence

**REVEALED**

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"Draw Near"

(Hebrews 10:22)

Separated By: Nothing--Sin Removed!  
 Law in Effect: Sin Removed Completely  
 Purpose of Law: Forgive Sins  
 Lesson to Be Learned: "Sins Forgiven Open Access to God"

## Christ-- the Better Altar

**Introductory Statement:** There are two parts to man's salvation: Heaven's part and man's part. Most of Hebrews has been devoted to emphasizing the many things that heaven has done for us that we could not do for ourselves. In this last chapter of the book the writer turns to those things that men can do that heaven will not do for them. It is essential that God has provided us with a better covenant, a better Priest, a better sacrifice, and a better assembly of saints. But all these blessings would mean nothing if we should fail to be faithful and obedient to those who made them possible. We have an "altar" from which the unsaved may not "eat," but its spiritual nourishment gives us strength only if we choose to partake of it. It is good that the profound truths of Hebrews are "topped off" with these practical reminders about some of the responsibilities we bear and from which we must not "slip away."

### Verses 13:1-7: What Must I Do?...

1. "Drawing near" to God was essential for these faltering saints. Mutual support and encouragement would be necessary for them to do this. They had been admonished earlier not to forsake assembling with other Christians (chapter 10:25). Now it is "brotherly love" that is prescribed to help them remain faithful. There is no better remedy for discouragement. We all need to *give* it; we all need to *receive* it (See 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). **vs. 1**
2. The writer had dealt earlier with the high regard these Jewish brethren had for angels, an attitude that seems to have interfered with their acceptance of Jesus as God's spokesman. Christians should always be hospitable toward all categories of men simply because they love all men. Their awareness of strangers might be enhanced if they remembered that angels had in the past appeared in human form (See Genesis 18) and that they still were being "sent forth" to "minister for those who will inherit salvation" (chapter 1:14). **vs. 2**
3. Some degree of persecution was being experienced by the "body" of Christ. The writer himself had apparently been at one time imprisoned for the faith. Others now suffered the same fate, and some disciples were "mistreated" in other ways. All members of the *one body* suffer and rejoice together. "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it..." (1 Corinthians 12:26).
4. Wavering faith often spawns a wavering morality. Perhaps some of these people had become unmindful of their marriage obligations. Or, maybe this is only a warning to be careful about matters important to the Christian life. At any rate, the sanctity of marriage

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is high on God’s list of things necessary to “drawing near” and “holding on.” **vs. 3**

5. It is clear that the Hebrew Christians at one time had “endured a great struggle with sufferings” (chapter 10:32). They had sustained extensive loss of property because of their religion (10:34). Some may have decided that recovering their previous financial position was preferable to further possible losses in the future. “Covetousness” is a tribute to the “god” of material things and blinds us to the fact that God, not “idols,” will take care of us in the things that really matter in this world and in the world to come (See Colossians 3:5). Our concern should not be with any futile assault on us by other men but with the fatal assault that we can make on ourselves by abandoning the truth! **vs. 5, 6**
  
6. Those who “rule over you” ["had the rule"--ASV] are probably the inspired teachers of the gospel. They “ruled” by “speaking the [ruling] word of God to you” (See 1Thessalonians 2:13). The "issue of their life" [ASV] testifies to their personal devotion to what they were teaching others, and we should imitate that faith [conviction] in our own lives. Many of them had died for Jesus. The least we can do is “hold fast.” **vs. 7**

**Verses 13:8-14: Eating From the Right Table...**

1. These verses constitute a last call for those who were unsettled in their faith to “settle down” and “hold fast” to something that can bring a focus and a sense of spiritual direction that they did not presently enjoy. The stability of the New Covenant was centered in a *person* and in a *practice*.
  
2. The *person* is Jesus. Whereas the lives and the practices of priests serving the Law were transitory, the life and the service of our new High Priest are eternal. He was pleased to be heaven’s agent to provide care for God’s people during the first two dispensations [“yesterday”] (See 1Corinthians 10:1-4). He serves in these “last days” (chapter 1:1) as our spokesman, leader, High Priest, etc. ["today"]. His care for the people of God will never end ["forever"] (See Revelation 22:3-5). His **person** is dependable. **vs. 8**
  
3. The *practice* is the “new” religion of Jesus. The Old Covenant and its rituals would be completely gone in a few years [A.D. 70], but the particulars of Christ’s New Covenant would “remain” (chapter 12:27,28). His **practices** are dependable. **vs. 8**
  
4. It was futile to seek comfort in persons and practices that were unstable. The “various and strange [alien to Christ’s religion] doctrines” of Judaism involved the “foods” of the

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tabernacle--sacrificed meat, grain, and showbread (See Leviticus 10:12-15; 24:5-9). At best, they related only to the cleansing of the flesh, but New Covenant “grace” was food for the soul and offered spiritual cleansing (chapter 9:13,14). The *outer* man was nourished by the “table” of the Law. Christ’s “table” feeds the *inner* man. **vs. 9**

5. A **better** altar [“table”] sustains the souls of Christians than the altar [“table”] from which the priests of the former covenant fed. That **better** altar is Jesus (See John 6:53-56). Those who choose to “serve the tabernacle” of course have no right to [or expectation of] the spiritual sustenance provided to His faithful disciples. **vs. 10**
6. Under the Law, priests could not eat the flesh of any animal whose blood had been offered for sin (See Leviticus 6:30). That flesh was burned “outside the camp” (See Leviticus 16:27). Like those animal sacrifices, Jesus was a *sin* offering, and His body also was carried “outside the gate” [of Jerusalem] to be crucified. But there is a difference. Those offerings could not be eaten. We can go “outside the camp” [leave Judaism] and “eat” of His flesh and blood [His Person]. His flesh is *spiritual* “food indeed” (See John 6:53-56) to give us the *spiritual* strength we must have to endure. **vs. 11-13**
7. Religious stability is also found in the “continuing city” to be inherited by all persevering saints. The Jews still “had” their city [Jerusalem] for a while, but its destruction was near. Christ’s city has *foundations* that “cannot be shaken” (chapter 11:10). Unlike the “holy city” of Jerusalem, it is as steadfast as He expects our commitment to be. **vs. 14**

#### Verses 13:15-22: More Things to Remember...

1. Since God is faithful (chapter 10:23) to do what He has promised, let us strive to keep the promise [of faithfulness] we once made to Him. Let us *first* do that by always being mindful of His great blessings and giving Him thanks for what He has done for us. This action is a “sacrifice of **praise**,” i.e., a surrender of *pride* in ourselves. **vs. 15**
2. Doing “good” and “sharing” were also important to their sense of oneness with other Christians. It is not so easy to be “carried away” (verse 9) when we have a sense of really belonging to the whole body (See 1Corinthians 12:27). Giving away what we have is a sacrifice of **property**, i.e., a surrender of *trust* in ourselves. **vs. 16**
3. If we can accept the fact that to be faithful we need one another, submission to elders in a local church becomes important. Elders are in place to “shepherd,” “guard,” “tend,” and

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otherwise assist all members over the bumps and around the curves of the road to heaven. They are charged with responsibilities toward us for which they will “give account.” Our faithful behavior is not designed merely to give “joy” to the elders. Their joy springs out of their love and concern for our spiritual well-being. They cannot help being glad when we obey Christ in ways that are “profitable” and not “unprofitable” for us. **vs. 17**

4. The writer [Paul (?)]wished to be “restored” very soon to his brethren, perhaps from a prison cell(?). Praying was possibly the only thing that they could do for him in his situation, but that was especially important to him. He considered himself to be worthy of their concern, and he was not reluctant to urge them to respond to his request. **vs. 18,19**

**Verses 13:20-25: In Conclusion...**

1. The same power of God that raised Jesus can also “work in you” [through the gospel-- 1Thessalonians 1:13] and motivate you to “do His will” and to be “well pleasing in His sight.” The **word of God** is the **power of God** to save (See Romans 1:16). **vs. 20,21**
2. One final plea-- “*bear with the word of exhortation.*” If the Hebrews should ignore or reject what they have been told in this letter, then they were “dull” indeed. It was all intended for their good. The writer has confidence that his “few words” are enough to persuade them to be loyal to Jesus if they will just be honest and consider carefully what he has said. **vs. 22**
3. Further encouragement about God’s providential care for his faithful children is seen in the release of Timothy (from prison?). God’s concern for one child is the same concern He has for all His children. **vs. 23**
4. Finally, “greet” [through your love and prayers] all who are trying to help you to **better** serve the Lord-- elders, teachers, and other saints who share with you the benefits and the responsibilities of following Christ. **vs. 24**

Note-- the reference here to Timothy’s release and to the letter apparently coming to them from Italy may lend support to Paul’s authorship from a Roman prison.

5. The last word-- “**Grace.**” What more precious bequest could be made to help weak saints inherit eternal life? Grace is all that will see any of us through the struggles and trials of this world into a world totally free of such pitfalls. **vs. 25**



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## \*\*\*\*\*HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--Lesson Fifteen\*\*\*\*\*

1. “Brotherly love” is important. Our love toward others must be expressed in our sub-  
mission to their needs in preference to our own. But “Godly love” is equally important. Our love for God is expressed only when we submit to Him and keep all His commands.
2. Who knows when or if we might have an opportunity to “help” an “angel”? Perhaps we should remember that *every person* to whom we can offer assistance is, in a sense, God’s “angel” (messenger) to help us recall just how blessed we have been and how welcome should be every opportunity to imitate God in giving simply because we love.
3. The steps involved in falling away from the Lord are very much like a row of dominoes. Just one rebellious act makes another one easier. The first disobedience leads to another, and to another, and so on until the fall is complete. Abandoning our interest in Bible study, attendance, prayer, etc., often leads to vacating our moral principles as well. Or, morals may fall first. Regardless, “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”
4. Covetousness is a sinister threat to our spiritual health. It can easily be the culprit that is responsible for our becoming unfaithful to the Lord. It can also be the unconscious but underlying reason for our “going through the motions” of serving Christ. When we think more about serving because of “what’s in it for us” than we do about serving to please our Savior, we might well have fallen victim to a subtle form of coveteousness.
5. It is very sad when people place their trust in the “city” of this world. Money, fame, power, and reputation will all pass away either during life or at death. All that will remain is spiritual, not material or worldly. The “continuing city” of God’s salvation must be where we choose to live.
6. The Christian’s only hope for faithfulness is found in the word of the Lord. Those who neglect to “bear with the word of exhortation” are like a sick man who refuses to take the medicine prescribed by the doctor for his illness. Never forget that the Bible offers the sole remedy for our disease of sin. “Bear with it!”

Notes and Comments:

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1. The writer encouraged the Hebrew Christians to demonstrate their love to three classes of people. Who were they? (vs. 1-3)
2. Covetousness is to be avoided by disciples (vs. 5). How are verses 5b and 6 connected with avoiding covetousness?
3. How should church members “remember” those who have [“had”-- ASV] the rule over them? (vs. 7) How was this “rule” exercised? (vs. 7; also, see Galatians 6:16; Philippians 3:16)
4. The constancy of “the faith” (See Galatians 1:23) springs from what trait of its author? (vs. 8; see chapter 12:2)
5. “Various and strange doctrines” fail to do what for those occupied with them? (vs. 9)
6. What [or who] is the altar from which Law-keepers cannot eat? (vs. 10; see John 6:53-57) Why not? (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11)
7. Leviticus 6:30 regulated the disposal of animals whose blood was offered as a sin offering. What did (does) this mean to those who would “partake of Christ”? (See chapter 3:14)
8. What “city” would not continue? (vs. 14; see John 4: 21) What is the continuing city? (Chapter 11:16; also, see Revelation 21: 2,10)
9. What kinds of sacrifices do Christians offer to God? (vs. 15,16)
10. Through what can we be made “complete” to do God’s will? (vs.20, 21)

HIGHLIGHTS IN HEBREWS--                    ADDENDUM-- CONTRASTS AND CHOICES  
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Hebrews is a book of Contrasts and Choices. Some things were “better” than other things. The Hebrew Christians were expected to make the choices that were “better.”

“Choose ...whom you will serve...”

**“WORSE”**

**“BETTER”**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Angels as messengers (2:2)                | 1. Christ as God’s new Messenger (2:3)       |
| 2. Moses as a servant in the house (3:5)     | 2. Christ as a Son over the house (3:6)      |
| 3. Joshua as leader of physical Israel (4:8) | 3. Jesus as leader of spiritual Israel (4:9) |
| 4. No rest for unbelievers (3:19)            | 4. Rest for believers (4:3)                  |
| 5. Seventh-day Sabbath (4:4)                 | 5. Another day (4:8)                         |
| 6. Dullness of hearing (5:11)                | 6. Exercised senses (5:14)                   |
| 7. Milk of the word (5:12)                   | 7. Solid food of the word (5:12)             |
| 8. Remaining with first principles (6:1)     | 8. Going on to perfection of word (6:1)      |
| 9. Become sluggish (6:12)                    | 9. Imitate the faithful and patient (6:12)   |
| 10. Levitical priesthood (7:11)              | 10. Melchizedek’s priesthood (7:15,16)       |
| 11. Levitical high priests (7:28)            | 11. Christ’s High Priesthood (7:28)          |
| 12. First Covenant (8:7)                     | 12. Second Covenant (8:7)                    |
| 13. Earthly tabernacle (9:1,2)               | 13. Perfect tabernacle (9:11)                |
| 14. Blood of animals (10:4)                  | 14. Blood of Jesus (9:12)                    |
| 15. “Draw back” to perdition (10:39)         | 15. Believe to save soul (10:39)             |
| 16. Covenant of fear (12:21)                 | 16. Covenant of grace (12:28)                |