

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Chapter 1

God, having of old times spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners (**2 Kings 24.2; 2 Samuel 23:1-2; Isaiah 28:13**), 2 has at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son (**Mark 9:2-8**), whom he appointed heir of all things (**Psalms 2:7-8, Romans 8:16-17**), through whom also he made the worlds (**John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16**); 3 who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance (**Colossians 1:15, 2:8-9**), and upholding all things by the word of his power (**Colossians 1:17**), when he had made purification of sins (**1 John 1:7; Hebrews 9:14**), sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (**Matthew 26:64; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 8:1**); 4 having become by so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they (**Philippians 2:9-10**).

COMMENTS:

The Hebrews to whom these first four verses are written had indicated a disenchantment with Christianity, so the writer (whoever he may be) delivers a strong blow in its defense in this introduction to the letter. Tying the Lord Jesus with Old Testament prophets, and with New Testament revelations, he hopes to exalt Christ in his "fulness." He begins with Jesus as "The Prophet" (See **Deuteronomy 18:15-18**; and compare **Acts 3:19-23**), and continues in later chapters with pictures of him as both "Priest" and "King."

The relationship of Jesus to God, he asserts, is as a "Son," the "effulgence" of the "glory" of God, and "the very image of His substance." Controversies in the early days of Christianity pitted Gnostic detractors of the deity of Jesus against the language of Scripture. The Gnostics drew on Pagan philosophy to deny that Christ was one with the Father. Defenders responded to this error by formulating extraneous "creeds." Since the Scripture is sufficient for "doctrine," (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**), we see from these verses, and others, that it was unnecessary to include language in the enlarged Nicene Creed (381 AD) that said, "Being of one substance with the Father."

Jesus also served the "Purposes" of God as "heir, maker, and upholder" of "all things," and, by his priestly function, to obtain the "purification of sins."

Finally, Jesus is shown to fit into God's spiritual order by being placed "on the right hand of the Majesty on high," and by "inheriting a more excellent name [or, reputation]" than angels.

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain the phrase "divers portions and in divers manners": _____

2. In the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:2-8), who appeared with him, and what do you think was the significance of their appearance? _____

3. What did Jesus offer, in order to "cleanse us from sin?" _____

Chapter 1

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, "You are my Son, this day have I begotten you (**Psalm 2:7**, and compare **Isaiah 9:6**)?" And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son (**2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 89:34-36**)?" 6 And when he again brings in the first-born into the world (**Exodus 13:2; Romans 8:29**) he says, "And let all the angels of God worship him (See Comments on this verse below)." 7 And of the angels he says, "Who makes his angels winds (Gk: ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΑ PNEUMATA; compare **John 3:8**), And his ministers a flame of fire (**Psalm 104:4**)."

8 But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows (**Psalm 45:6-7**)." 10 And, "You, Lord, in the beginning did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands: 11 they shall perish; but you continue: and they shall all wax old as does a garment; 12 and as mantle shall you roll them up, as a garment, and they shall be changed: but you are the same, and your years shall not fail (**Psalm 102: 25-28**)."

13 But of which of the angels has he said at any time, "Sit on my right hand, Till I make your enemies the footstool of your feet?" (**Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:12-13**) 14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?

COMMENTS:

Using verse four to introduce the topic of this section, the writer shows the superiority of Jesus over the angels (continuing through Chapter 2). His first argument (vs. 5) is that no angel is ever called "Son" (This is an argument from the "silence" of the Scripture; the authority of what is *not* said). His quotation from **2 Samuel 7** suggests that some prophecies have dual fulfillments. The promise of an "everlasting" throne, made to David, was fulfilled in both his earthly dynasty and in Christ.

Furthermore, in vs. 6-7 the writer argues that Jesus is worthy of angel worship (compare **Revelation 5:11-12**), while the angels remain God's spiritual "winds (spirits) and a flame." (NOTE: The writer's quotation of the phrase "Let all the angels of God worship him" is from **Deuteronomy 32:43** in the Septuagint Version [designated LXX in many

commentaries]. This gave many early commentators some problems, because the phrase did not appear in any Hebrew text in their possession. However, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947, the text of Deuteronomy contained in them included the phrase, confirming its authenticity.)

In his next argument (vs. 8-9), the writer takes a portion of **Psalm 45** which addresses a king as "God." If the Psalm had not been a part of the Temple ritual, it might have seemed to be only a tribute to an earthly king. It would have been unthinkable, however, for a Jewish psalmist to address an earthly king as "God." Therefore, the Psalm must be treated as a prophecy of the marriage of the Messiah-King, Jesus (compare **Revelation 19:6-10**).

Next, in vs. 10-12, he takes a Psalm that is addressed to "Jehovah," and applies it to Jesus. Having proclaimed the creative and sustaining power of the "Son" in vs. 2-3 of his introduction, and having shown the deity of Jesus from the prophetic Psalm he quoted in vs. 8-9, he suggests that any passage describing the powers of deity can apply to both God and Christ at the same time!

Lastly, he draws a contrast between the Son who sits at the right hand of God till his enemies are defeated, to the simple task of angels, who only "do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation."

QUESTIONS:

1. What chapters of Hebrews contain the thesis that Christ is superior to the angels?

2. What argument does the writer of Hebrews make from what is NOT said? _____

3. He calls the angels "winds." What does this mean? _____

4. In Psalm 45, what phrase shows that the passage is not just a tribute to an earthly king? _____

5. What characteristics of deity are seen in vs. 10-12? _____

Chapter 2

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast (**Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19**), and every transgression and disobedience received

a just recompense of reward (Compare **Romans 2:2-6**); 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation (**Acts 13:38-41**)? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord (**John 18:37**), was confirmed unto us by them that heard (**Ephesians 3:1-5**); 4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will (**Mark 16:20**).

COMMENTS:

Here, in the middle of his contrast of the "Son" to the angels, the writer exhorts his readers to heed the words of Christ. He argues that if Christ is above angels, His word is more important than that "spoken through angels." The process by which the message of salvation is revealed is: (1) spoken by Christ (**Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16**); (2) confirmed in the message of the Apostles and Prophets (**2 Peter 3:1-2; Jude 17**); and (3) God helping to spread the word by signs and wonders (**Acts 8:5-7**).

QUESTIONS:

1. What should Christians do to prevent "drifting" from "the things that were heard?"

2. What truth demonstrates the importance of the "word spoken through angels?"

3. What three things demonstrate the importance of the "great salvation?" _____

Chapter 2

5 For not unto angels did he subject the world to come (See **1:6**--"Inhabited earth"), whereof we speak. 6 But one has somewhere testified, saying, "What is man, that you are mindful of him?

Or the son of man, that you visit him?

7 You made him a little lower than the angels;

You crowned him with glory and honor,

And did set him over the works of your hands:

8 You did put all things in subjection under his feet."

(**Psalms 8:4-6**, and compare **Genesis 1:28**)

For in that he subjected all things unto him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. 9 But we behold him who has

been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor (**Philippians 2:9-11, 3:20-21; Ephesians 1: 20-22a**, and compare **John 17:5**), that by the grace of God he should taste of death for every man. (**2 Corinthians 5:14-15**) 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things (**Colossians 1:16**), in bringing many sons unto glory (**Romans 8:18-21; 2 Corinthians 3:18**), to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings (**Hebrews 5:8-10**). 11 For both he that sanctifies and they that are sanctified are all of one (**Ephesians 2:4-6, John 17:19**): for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren (**John 20:17; Romans 8:29**), 12 saying,

"I will declare your name unto my brethren,

In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise." (**Psalms 22:22**)

13 And again, "I will put my trust in him (**Psalms 22:4-5, 8; 1 Peter 2:23**)." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me." (**Isaiah 8:18**, and compare **John 17:6**) 14 Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same (**Philippians 2:5-8**); that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (Compare **Revelation 12:1-12**) 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (**Romans 6:6-14, 7:24-25a; Galatians 4:21-31**) 16 For truly not to angels does he give help, but he gives help to the seed of Abraham (**Matthew 15:21-24**). 17 Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (1 John 2:1-2). 18 For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. (**Hebrews 4:14-16**)

COMMENTS:

Returning to his theme (the "Son" is higher than angels), the writer quotes **Psalms 8** to pick up the topic of "Subjection." This psalm speaks of the insignificance of man, but the writer offers an interpretation of its message in his argument of vs. 8-9, suggesting that all things have not been subjected to man, except in the person of Jesus, whose dominion is now over all the "inhabited earth." His exaltation, after his "taste of death for every man," is "becoming" to him. Man, however, is also exalted, and shares in the glory of Christ by being "one" with Christ, a "brother" who "sits with him in the heavenly places" (**Ephesians 2:6**). Confirmation of this brotherhood of the "Sanctifier" and the "sanctified" is seen in the strongly messianic **Psalms 22**, and related passages. We share the "flesh and blood" Jesus assumed when he came to minister to our spiritual needs. We also share in His death and resurrection, figuratively (**Romans 6:4**). Therefore, we have the opportunity to share also in the "glory" of Christ (**Romans 8:18-21; 2 Corinthians 3:18**).

The second benefit of the death and resurrection of Christ is the defeat of the Devil's "power of death." Deliverance from bondage (to the fear of death) is realized for man in

the victory of Jesus over his own death. This was good news for the Hebrew Christians, since their former system offered no permanent forgiveness of sins, without the sacrifice of Christ (see **Hebrews 9:15**). But it was "too light a thing," for the Lord to deliver the Hebrews. He was also a "light to the Gentiles" (**Isaiah 49:6**).

In the last verses of chapter 2, a future theme (the High Priesthood of Christ) is introduced. The later theme of the covenant of salvation is predicted in verses 1-4.

QUESTIONS:

1. After reading Hebrews 2 and Psalm 8, do you conclude that it is speaking of man in general, or of Jesus in prophecy? _____

2. What things have "not yet" been subjected to man? _____

3. When, do you think, was Jesus made "a little lower than the angels?" _____

4. When was He then "crowned with glory and honor?" _____

5. In what way does Christ "bring...sons unto glory?" _____

6. Through what did God "make the author of our salvation perfect?" _____

7. Why is Jesus not ashamed to call us "brethren?" _____

8. In Psalm 22, which says that the principle character "declares" God's name to His "brethren," what evidence do you find that this character is Jesus Christ? _____

9. Why did Jesus take on himself the nature of "flesh and blood?" _____

10. What group of people, do you think, were "all their lifetime subject to bondage?"

11. Christ was "in all things...made like unto his brethren," that He might "become" what? _____

12. What helps Christ "to succor them that are tempted?" _____

Chapter 3

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling (compare 2 Peter 1:4), consider the Apostle (John 6:29) and High Priest (Hebrews 8:1-2) of our confession, even Jesus; 2 who was faithful to him that appointed him (John 8:28-29), as also was Moses in all his house (Exodus 40:16; Numbers 12:7). 3 For he has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house has more honor than the house (Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:15). 4 For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God (Psalm 127:1a). 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant (Exodus 14:31), for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken (1 Peter 1:10-12); 6 but Christ as a son, over his house (Ro-mans 9:5; Colossians 1:13, 18-19); whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end (Revelation 2:18, 25; 3:7, 11). 7 Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith,

"To-day if you shall hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation (Deuteronomy 32:15-20),

like as in the day of the trial in the wilderness,

9 Where your fathers tried me by proving me, And saw my works forty years. (Numbers 14:20-34)

10 Wherefore I was displeased with this generation, (1 Corinthians 10:1-5; Jude 5)

And said, 'They do always err in their heart:

But they did not know my ways; (Romans 3:17-18)

11 As I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest."

(Psalm 95:7b-11)

12 Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God (2 Peter 3:17; Hebrews 10:28-31): 13 but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (1 Timothy 4:1-2; Romans 7:11): 14 for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end (See vs. 6): 15 while it is said,

"To-day if you shall hear his voice,

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

16 For who, when they heard, did provoke? nay, did not all they that came out of Egypt by Moses? 17 And with whom was he displeased forty years? was it not with them that sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness (See vs.. 8-9)? 18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that were disobedient? 19 And we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

COMMENTS:

The whole third chapter is a unit, in which the inspired writer builds the foundation for another argument in favor of faithfulness. He first establishes a contrast between the role of Moses and that of Christ, followed by an instructive contrast between the unfaithful followers of Moses and the greater incentives for faithfulness among disciples of Christ.

The writer commends the faithfulness of both Moses and Christ, but drawing a contrast between the "servant" (Moses) and the "Son" (Christ), distinguishing also between the "house" and the "builder of the house." He tells his readers of their privilege as the "house" of Christ the Son, but does not fail to show them that the continuation of this

privilege is based on continued faithfulness.

By bringing Moses into the discussion, he touches a responsive chord in the hearts of the Hebrews, because they honored Moses above all prophets. The reading of Moses had such a powerful appeal that with many Jews it was like a "veil on their hearts," to keep them from accepting anything novel, or different (2 Corinthians 3:12-16). The writer hopes, however, to persuade the Hebrews of the superiority of Jesus over Moses, so that they will appreciate their privilege and remain steadfast.

His quotation of Psalm 95 introduces a passage from which he will draw attention to "key words." We can apply the word "To-day" to every age since the "provocation" (vs. 13, and 4:7). The "provocation" was that 40 year period in which Israel provoked God during the wilderness journeys (see vs. 16). He will later identify the keyword "rest" in the 4th chapter, so we will comment on this later.

The writer counsels his readers in vss. 12-13 to take two steps to assure faithfulness. In vs. 12, it is "take heed," meaning that they should examine their hearts, inwardly. In vs. 13, it is "exhort one another," the outward action. They are also to view their forefathers in the wilderness as examples of unfaithfulness, so as to avoid the same pattern of unbelief and disobedience.

(NOTE: In verses 18 and 19 two terms are used which describe the condition of the Jews who provoked God in the wilderness. In the King James Version they are translated "believed not" and "unbelief," terms which seem to be identical. In the American Standard Version, however, they are translated "disobedient" and "unbelief" (this same distinction between the versions exists in John 3:36). The word in vs. 18 is based on the Greek word *apeiyew*, APEITHEO, while the one in vs. 19 is based on *apistia*, APISTIA. W. E. Vine says that APEITHEO "denotes...obstinate rejection of the will of God: hence, 'disobedience,'" while APISTIA means simply "unbelief." The American Standard Version consistently translates APEITHEIA "disobedience," but the King James Version

is inconsistent, translating it "believed not" in this place and in John 3:36, but "disobedience" in Ephesians 2:2, 5:6; Colossians 3:6, and elsewhere. The consistency of the American Standard Version helps to show the strong correlation between belief and obedience, a lesson that needs to be emphasized among those who hold to the doctrine of "salvation by faith only.")

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Jesus called the Apostle in vs. 1? _____

2. Do verses 3 and 4 place God and Christ on different levels in the work of "build-ing," do you think? _____

3. In what way, do you think, did Moses serve as "a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken?" _____

4. Does what the writer says in vs. 6 apply to local churches, as well as to the general "house" of Christ? _____ Explain your answer: _____

5. The writer of Hebrews says that the Holy Spirit was speaking in Psalm 95. David is identified as the writer of this Psalm in Hebrews 4:7, but who guided him in his words, according to 2 Samuel 23:1-2? _____

6. What provocative period of Bible history is referred to in Psalm 95? _____

7. What particular "generation" did not enter into God's rest, according to Numbers 14:28-30? _____ Who were the exceptions?

8. Which "brethren" are being addressed in vs. 12, the writer's brethren among the Jews who had not confessed Christ, or those who had? _____

9. What are the inward and outward actions commanded by the writer to keep them faithful? _____

10. "We are become partakers of Christ, if" what?

Chapter 4

Let us fear therefore (2 Corinthians 5:11), lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. (See 12:14-15; Romans 3:23) 2 For indeed we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they: but the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard (Exodus 6:2-9, and compare Romans 10:16). 3 For we who have believed do enter into that rest (Revelation 14:13); even as he has said,

"As I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest:"

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world (Genesis 2:1-2). 4 For he has said somewhere of the seventh day on this wise, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works (Genesis 2:3) ;" 5 and in this place again,

"They shall not enter into my rest."

6 Seeing therefore it remains that some should enter thereinto, and they to whom the good tidings were before preached failed to enter in because of disobedience, 7 he again defines a certain day, "To-day," say-ing in David so long a time afterward (even as has been said before),

"To-day if you shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts."

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken after-ward of another

day (Numbers 26:63-65). 9 There remains therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from his (1 Corinthians 15:58). 11 Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest (2 Peter 1:10-11) , that no man fall after the same example of disobedience (1 Corinthians 10:6-12). 12 For the word of God is living (Acts 7:38), and active (1 Thessalonians 2:13), and sharper than any two-edged sword (Compare Ephesians 6:17), and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit (Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:23), of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Romans 7:7; James 1:23-25). 13 And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Psalm 33:13-15)

COMMENTS:

Chapter four (to vs. 13) is the concluding argument for chapter 3. The writer makes his application of Psalm 95 by first showing his readers that their situation is similar to that of their forefathers. Each group had "good tidings" preached to them, making each accountable regarding their reception of it. The promise of rest in Canaan was not believed by the Israelites, causing the fall of that generation in the wilderness. But there remains a "rest" for the people of God, long after that first opportunity is past.

The writer draws a comparison of words from the creation of the world, showing how God "hallowed" the 7th day, the day He "rested" (in the Hebrew, the word for rest is שָׁבַת, SABBATH). Then he contrasts that rest with the failure of rebellious Israel to find rest in the land of Canaan. Since Psalm 95, through the inspiration of the Spirit, offers another opportunity for rest, we must not fail to gain it by following the pattern of Israel's disobedience. The Word of God being "living" and "active" we cannot escape either its discerning powers, or the all-seeing eyes of God.

(NOTE: In vs. 8, the King James Version says, "If Jesus had given them rest." In this text, based on the American Standard Version, the phrase is, "If Joshua had given them rest.")

In the Greek language, the names Jesus and Joshua are identical, prompting the translators of the King James Bible to mistakenly transpose Jesus for Joshua. The context must be observed, in order to translate this verse properly.)

QUESTIONS:

1. What other things may we "come short of" besides the promised rest, according to Hebrews 12:14-15 and Romans 3:23? _____

2. When Moses announced the "good tidings" to the Israelites in Egypt, what was their response, according to Exodus 6:9? _____
_____ Why? _____

3. From how many of His creative works did God rest, according to Genesis 2:1-3?

4. Whom does the writer of Hebrews identify as the author of Psalm 95? _____
_____ Approximately how long after the period of provocation did this author write? _____

5. Who was the other "faithful" Israelite who entered into the "rest" of Canaan with Joshua? _____

6. What things must we add to our faith, to "make our calling and election sure," and to have an "entrance into the eternal kingdom?" _____

7. Do you think that the word of God discerns our every thought and action in the same way that God does? _____ Explain: _____

Chapter 4

14 Having then a great high priest (Hebrews 5:6, 9:11-12), who has passed through the

heavens (Hebrews 7:26 and Ephesians 4:10), Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession (Hebrews 10:19-23). 15 For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that has been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 2:18). 16 Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace (1 John 5:14-15), that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need (Philippians 4:19).

Chapter 5

For every high priest, being taken from among men (Exodus 28:1), is appointed for men in things pertaining to God (Numbers 16:46), that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins (Leviticus 9:7): 2 who can bear gently with the ignorant and erring, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity (Numbers 12:1-11); 3 and by reason thereof is bound, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins (Hebrews 9:6-7; Leviticus 16). 4 And no man takes the honor unto himself (2 Chronicles 26:16-20), but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron (Exodus 28:3). 5 So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high priest (John 8:54), but he that spoke unto him,

"You are my Son, this day have I begotten you:" (Psalm 2:7)

6 as he says also in another place,

"You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Psalm 110:4)

7 Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear (Luke 22: 39-44), 8 though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect (Hebrews 2:10), he became

unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation (2 Corinthians 10:1-6); 10 named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard of interpretation (2 Peter 3:14-16), seeing you are become dull of hearing. 12 For when by reason of the time you ought to be teachers, you have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11a); and are become such as have need of milk (1 Peter 2:2), and not of solid food. 13 For every one that partakes of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for full grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. (1 Corinthians 3:1-2)

COMMENTS:

The writer had introduced the concept of the High Priesthood of Jesus in 2:17, but now he begins to discuss the subject in depth, carrying it forward into the 10th chapter. The passing of Jesus "through the heavens" (vs. 14) opens the way "through the veil" for us (10:19-23). These last few verses of chapter 4 set out the premise that being faithful to this High Priest has the great reward of finding "grace to help in time of need," from one who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Therefore, the elevation of Christ to the High Priesthood does not cancel the intimacy expressed in 2:11-16.

Chapter 5 must not be separated from the last part of chapter 4, since it continues the subject. In the first few verses, we learn a prime reason for the incarnation of Christ: as a man, he can be "taken from among men," and "appointed for men" to "offer both gifts and sacrifices." Jesus has "somewhat to offer" (8:3), but not like former High Priests, as we will learn in 9:11-14, and beyond.

Since Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi, nor descended from Aaron, the writer has to establish his credentials as a High Priest. He first demonstrates that He must be "called of God, even as was Aaron." The proof he offers is from the prophetic Psalms 2 and 110.

As his custom is, the writer only introduces the subject of the priestly "order of Melchizedek," planning to develop it more fully in chapter 7. Before this, however, he urges his readers to take a close look at the priest to whom they owe allegiance. His "supplications with strong crying and tears" in Gethsemane were pleas to "remove this cup," his approaching death, but they were coupled with the submissive addenda, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). The writer says that Jesus was "heard for his godly fear," but God did not remove the suffering. He is our best example of humble submission to God's will, when it must take precedent over our own. Though we may agonize in prayer as Jesus did, even to "sweating" like "great drops of blood" (Luke 22:44), God may have a different end in view for us. Everything we do, therefore, must take into account the will of God (see James 4:13-17). Jesus' sacrificial death could not be removed from God's scheme of redemption, since by it He "learned obedience," it "perfected" Him, and it enabled Him to be the "author of eternal salvation" to all those who were obedient to Him.

The writer then shames the Hebrew Christians for their lack of growth. He attributes this failure to being "dull of hearing," the same trait which had kept so many of their brethren in the flesh from confessing the name of Christ (Matthew 13:13-15; John 12:37-43; Acts 28:17-28). One goal of growth, as we see, is to become a teacher, but if we have no "experience of the word of righteousness," to the point that we cannot "discern good and evil," we must return to the "rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God." This will enable us, "by reason of the time," to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

QUESTIONS:

1. Verse 14 of chapter 4 says Jesus "passed through the heavens." Where does this place him, according to 7:26 and Ephesians 4:10? _____

2. What sort of "infirmities" are implied, by which Jesus may be "touched?" _____

3. Why can we "draw near with boldness unto the throne of Grace?" _____

4. What is the basic difference between our High Priest, Jesus, and the High Priests who served The Law? (see 4:15, 5:1-3, 9:7) _____

5. How long would Jesus serve as "High Priest after the order of Melchizedek?"
_____ Why had there been many successive High Priests before Jesus?
(see 7:23-24) _____

6. What incident in the life of Jesus is alluded to in 5:7? _____

7. What should the Hebrew Christians have accomplished, "by reason of the time?" _____

8. What is the trait of the Christian who still needs to be fed "milk?" _____

9. What qualifies a Christian to eat "solid food?" _____

Chapter 6

Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ (Hebrews 5:12), let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Thessalonians 1:9), and of faith toward God (Acts 20:21; Philemon 5), 2 of the teaching of baptisms (Matthew 3:11; Acts 19:1-7), and of laying on of hands (Acts 6:6, 8:17-18, 13:3), and of resurrection of the dead (Acts 4:2, 26:22-23), and of eternal judgment (Acts 17:31, 24:25). 3 And this will we do, if God permit. 4 For as touching those who were once enlightened (Hebrews 10:32) and tasted of the heavenly gift

(Romans 5:16-17), and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:6; Acts 2:38-39), 5 and tasted the good word of God (1 Peter 2:2-3), and the powers of the age to come (Ephesians 1:18-20), 6 and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (2 Peter 2:20-22). 7 For the land which has drunk the rain that comes often upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receives blessing from God: 8 but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned. (Isaiah 5:1-7)

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak (Philippians 2:12-13): 10 for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and the love which you showed toward his name, in that you ministered unto the saints, and still do minister (Acts 4:32-35; Hebrews 10:34). 11 And we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence unto the fulness of hope even to the end: 12 that you be not sluggish, but imitators of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (James 5:7-11).

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, since he could swear by none greater, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." (Genesis 22:9-18) 15 And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise (Hebrews 11:8-13, 33). 16 For men swear by the greater (Genesis 31:53): and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation. 17 Wherein God, being minded to show more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, interposed with an oath; 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:1-2), we may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: 19 which we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and stedfast and entering into that which is within the veil (Hebrews 10:19-20); 20 into which as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 9:11-12)

COMMENTS:

After the rebuke of 5:11-14, the writer turns to identify the "rudiments" which the growing Christian can grow beyond. These "foundations" may need to be laid elsewhere, to new prospects, but the Christian needs to "press on to perfection." There is danger, however, for those who have attained the spiritual blessings of verses 4-5, if they "fall away," because these very blessings are the ones that are most useful to maintain our faithfulness. After experiencing these blessings, the "impossibility" of "renewing them again unto repentance" is based on the fact that they have rejected the very things which should persuade them to be faithful. No additional argument is effective to restore one who has done this. God expects that the soil (or, soul) He has nourished will bring forth a fitting harvest. If it doesn't, it is "nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned" (compare Luke 13:6-8).

After this warning, the writer turns to a positive tactic, expressing confidence that they are not like the ones he has just described (vs. 9), basing his confidence on the righteous remembrance of their good works by God (compare Matthew 25:31-40). The diligence he endorses in vs. 11 has already been expressed in other words in 3:6, 14 and 4:11. Imitation of faithful "role models" will also be a help in this effort.

As the chapter closes, the writer reminds his readers that the promise of God to bless all the nations of the world through the seed of Abraham, Christ, is reinforced with an oath, even though when God speaks anything, he cannot lie. In any plain statement, God's words are always true (See Romans 3:4), but to give "strong encouragement" to the "heirs of the promise," he added an oath. Our "sure and stedfast hope" is both a "refuge" and an "anchor of the soul," founded on the confidence that Christ has already "entered for us" "within the veil" as a "forerunner."

QUESTIONS:

1. What things make up the "foundation" which the writer of Hebrews would not "lay

again?" _____

2. From what did the Hebrews have to turn to serve the living God, according to 9:14?

_____ From what did the Gentiles turn, according to 1 Thessalonians

1:9? _____

3. What things had been experienced by those in vs. 4-5, before they "fell away?"

4. Why is it impossible to "renew them again to repentance" after having had these experiences? _____

5. Is Isaiah 5:1-7 a good scriptural example of vs. 7-8? _____

6. What work showed love toward the name of God? _____

7. Since God does not lie, was it necessary for him to swear an oath to Abraham?

_____ Why did he do it, then? _____

8. Does Hebrews 11:13 contradict Hebrews 6:15? _____ Why? _____

9. What figurative "veil" has Christ entered as a "forerunner" for us? _____

Chapter 7

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham divided a tenth part of all (Genesis 14: 18-20) [being first, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, King of peace (Psalm 85:10; Isaiah 32:16-17; Romans 5:1); 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God], abides a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth out of the chief spoils. 5 And they indeed of the sons of Levi that receive the priest's office have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law (Numbers 18:21-24), 26 that is, of their brethren, though these have come out of the loins of Abraham (1 Chronicles 1:34, 2:1-2): 6 but he whose genealogy is not counted from them has taken tithes of Abraham, and has blessed him that has the promises (Romans 4:13, 20-22). 7 But without any dispute the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there one, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. (See vs. 3) 9 And so to say, through Abraham even Levi, who receives tithes, has paid tithes; 10 for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

11 Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it have the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be reckoned after the order of Aaron (Hebrews 8:7)? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. 13 For he of whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from which no man has given attendance at the altar (Numbers 3:10, 18:7). 14 For it is evident that our Lord has sprung out of Judah (Matthew 1:1-2, 16); as to which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. 15 And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after

the likeness of Melchizedek there arises another priest, 16 who has been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life (Revelation 1:17-18): 7 for it is witnessed of him,

"You are a priest for ever, After the order of Melchize-dek." (Psalm 110:4)

18 For there is a disannulling of a foregoing commandment, because of its weakness and unprofitableness (Hebrews 10:1-4; Romans 8:3) 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God. 20 And inasmuch as it is not without the taking of an oath 21 (for they indeed have been made priests without an oath; but he with an oath by him that says of him,

"The Lord swore and will not repent himself, You are a priest for ever);" (Psalm 110:4)

22 by so much also has Jesus become the surety of a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6). 23 And they indeed have been made priests many in number, because that by death they are hindered from continuing (Numbers 20:23-28): 24 but he, because he abides for ever, has his priesthood unchangeable. 25 Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him (John 14:6), seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them.

COMMENTS:

The writer of this epistle now develops the theme first mentioned in 5:6-10, and again in 6:20, and gives the sense of David's prophecy in Psalm 110:4. It is worthy of note that Melchizedek is mentioned in only three verses of Genesis, and one verse in the Psalms. Yet, the writer draws from these few verses a major doctrinal point about the High Priesthood of Jesus. He asserts that Melchizedek is the spiritual superior of Abraham

and Aaron in several ways. (1) He received tithes from Abraham; (2) he blessed him; (3) he received tithes of Levi [including Aaron] through Abraham; (4) his priesthood is permanent, while Aaron's is not; (5) his priestly order is passed to Christ by an oath, though the Levitical priesthood was not; and (6) it displaces the order of Aaron through a change in the Law. In verses 2-3, the writer shows his respect for the "silence" of the Scripture. In the Pulpit Commentary, the expositor of Hebrews, J. Barmby, says that the writer of Hebrews "is persuaded that even the omissions from the narrative had been arranged by the Holy Spirit. From this passage, therefore, we learn our duty, not only to survey the Bible in its broad landscapes of truth, and to study its general structure as the literary record of a supernatural revelation, but, alongside of that, to subject individual passages, as we have opportunity, to microscopic analysis. The omissions about Melchizedek are so important that ver. 3 reads almost like a riddle. Such omissions respecting a personage so exalted are contrary to oriental custom. The points which the Holy Spirit has studiously concealed about Melchizedek are...framed so as to exhibit in him as striking as possible a prefiguration of Christ." Since the Scripture says nothing of Melchizedek's "genealogy, beginning of life, or end of days," we can see the "likeness" to Christ (see vs. 15). Genealogies of Christ are given us (Matthew 1; Luke 3), but only serve to confirm Him as the fulfilment of genealogical prophecies (Genesis 22:15-18; 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Micah 5:2, etc.).

Christ's earthly parentage is played down in this argument, since his advent into the world was extraordinary (fathered by the Spirit, and miraculously born of a virgin). What is emphasized more is the eternal nature of Christ, having no "beginning" and no "end." This demonstrates the permanency of the Order of Melchizedek in contrast to the temporal Order of Aaron. Aaron, and all his successors died, but Christ, the writer argues, "is able to save to the uttermost...seeing he ever lives to make intercession..." (vs. 25).

The very prediction of this new order of priests by the prophet David implies the

imperfection of that of Aaron. But, there is a chain of events that must transpire, in order for the new Order of Melchizedek to be put in place. Verse 12 tells us that such a change must involve "a change also of the law," since the Law of Moses forbade anyone other than the family of Aaron to serve at the altar (Numbers 3:10). While the old order stood, even Christ could not be a priest (see 8:4). So, If we now "have such a high priest" (8:1), it follows that the old Law has been taken out of the way (see 10:9-10). It would be just as impossible, legally, for any descendant of Aaron to serve as a priest now, as it was for Jesus to serve in this way before the "change of the Law." The stipulations of the Law of God must be obeyed implicitly.

This argument contains an important lesson on the interpretation of Scripture. When the revelation of God has specifically commanded a certain thing (such as the limitation of priesthood to direct descendants of Aaron), other "specifics" are excluded. This must even apply to one so exalted as Jesus. Only a divine change of the law can get around the difficulty. Since we are assured that the New Testament, like the Old, is unchangeable (Deuteronomy 12:32; Galatians 1:6-9, and other passages), no specific command or explicit example can be treated as inclusive, only exclusive. No prohibition needs to be spoken by God beyond the specific revelation. So, in this application, since Moses, guided by the Holy Spirit, had specifically commanded that Aaron's family (from the tribe of Levi) must provide the priests, a man from the tribe of Judah (as Jesus was) was excluded from the priesthood, as long as that law remained in effect. Another divine order, establishing a new covenant, and canceling the former one, had to be put in place, before he could serve (Hebrews 10:1-10).

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the meaning of the name Melchizedek? _____

_____ What is the meaning of his title, King of Salem?

2. According to Isaiah 32:16-17, is peace possible without righteousness? _____
3. What traits of Melchizedek are supplied by the writer of Hebrews from "missing" information? _____

4. To whom is Melchizedek compared, because of these traits? _____
5. Who was "commanded to take tithes of the people?" _____
6. To whom did they pay tithes, according to the writer of Hebrews? _____
_____ How does the writer prove his assertion? _____

7. When David prophesied that "another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek," what does this imply about the "Levitical Priesthood?" _____
_____ But what change must come to allow for this new order of priests? _____

8. Could men from other tribes besides Levi serve as priests while the Law of Moses was valid? _____ Why? _____

9. By what "power" was Christ made a priest after the order of Melchizedek? _____

10. Why was there a "dis-annulling of a foregoing commandment?" _____
_____ What was brought in "Thereupon?" _____

11. According to verse 21, what makes the new order of priesthood more valid than the old? _____
12. Why were there many high priests under the Old Law? _____
_____ Why is Jesus able to "save to the uttermost?" _____

13. How many verses in the Old Testament provide information about Melchizedek?

14. Can the Holy Spirit teach us important things by "omission" as well as "revelation?"

15. Is it lawful to interpret the "silence" of a Scripture? _____

16. If we now have Jesus as our High Priest, what does this fact tell us about the Law (of Moses)? _____

17. What is the effect of specific commands? _____

18. Does this rule of interpretation apply to "one so exalted as Jesus?" _____

19. Does this rule apply to those under the New Testament? _____

Chapter 7

26 For such a high priest became us, holy (Acts 4:27), guileless (1 Peter 2:21-22), undefiled (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5-6), separated from sinners (Ephesians 4:10), and made higher than the heavens; 27 who needs not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:6, 15): for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself (Hebrews 9:12). 28 For the law appoints men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appoints a Son, perfected for ever-more (Hebrews 5:1-10).

Chapter 8

Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this. We have such a high priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (Romans 8:34b), 2 a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man (Amos 9:11-12, and compare Acts 15:16-18). 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is necessary that this high priest

also have somewhat to offer. 4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, seeing there are those who offer the gifts according to the law (Hebrews 7:11-14); 5 who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things (Hebrews 9:1-10), even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, "See," he says, "that you make all things according to the pattern that was shown to you in the mount." (Exodus 25:40) 6 But now he has obtained a ministry the more excellent, by so much as he is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted upon better promises (Hebrews 9:15-17). 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have sought for a second (Hebrews 10:1-4; Romans 7:22-8:4). 8 For finding fault with them, he says,

"Behold, the days come, says the Lord,

That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah; (Isaiah 55:3; Acts 13:34)

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

In the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth
out of the land of Egypt; (Deuteronomy 5:1-3)

For they continued not in my covenant,

And I regarded them not, says the Lord. (Deuteronomy 11:13-17)

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel

After those days, says the Lord;

I will put my laws into their mind,

And on their heart will I write them:

And I will be to them a God,

And they shall be to me a people: (Ezekiel 11:19-20)

11 And they shall not teach every man his fellow citizen,

And every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord!' (Jeremiah

9:4-6, 23-24)

For all shall know me,

From the least to the greatest of them. (John 6:44-45; Isaiah 2:2-4)

12 For I will be merciful to their iniquities,

And their sins will I remember no more." (See Jeremiah 31:31-34,
and compare Hebrews 10:1-4.)

13 In that he says, "A new covenant," he has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and grows aged is nigh unto vanishing away. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

COMMENTS:

The last three verses of Chapter 7 lead into subject of Chapter 8, the functions of this new divine High Priest. His qualities are extolled in vs. 26. His moral superiority over all the High Priests who preceded him is shown in vs. 27-28.

In Chapter 8, the writer continues by showing that our High Priest, Jesus, is at the right hand of God, to minister in the "sanctuary" of the "true tabernacle" (Compare 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:5, and Ephesians 2:19-21). Like the priests of old, Jesus must also have "somewhat to offer," but this will be shown more explicitly in Chapter 9. In this chapter, the "ministry" of Jesus is emphasized, extending to being the "mediator of a better covenant" (vs. 6). The faultiness of the Old Covenant necessitated a New Covenant, promised by the prophet Jeremiah (vs. 8-12, see Jeremiah 31:31-34). It would not be "according to the covenant" made with the ancestors of the Jews at Sinai. It would be different in three ways.....

(1) In contrast to the "law written on stones," it would be written "in tablets that are hearts of flesh" (see 2 Corinthians 3:1-6).

(2) It would not be necessary to "teach every man...saying, 'Know the Lord.'" Members of the first covenant made with Abraham entered it in infancy through circumcision

(Genesis 17:9-14). When the Law of Moses was given from Mt. Sinai, it was an enlarged covenant God made with the descendants of Abraham, and included circumcision (Leviticus 12:1-8). Therefore, those in that Old Covenant had to be taught from infancy to "know the Lord." But, those who entered the New Covenant would be old enough to be "taught of God" (John 6:45), so that all would know God, "From the least to the greatest."

(3) The final difference given by Jeremiah is in the matter of forgiveness. The Old Law had the ritual of Atonement, which was performed annually, implying that there was "a remembrance made of sins year by year" (See Hebrews 10:1-4). Under the New Covenant, sins that are forgiven are not remembered any more. That is, they are "blotted out," not just covered for a year till the next Feast of Atonement.

The final argument of the chapter confirms a reasonable assumption about anything that is old. In the great scheme of God, all that is old is near to perishing (see Hebrews 1:11 and Isaiah 51:6).

QUESTIONS:

1. What four spiritual qualities do we see in the "high priest" who "became us?"

2. Why did the High Priests under the Old Law have to offer first for themselves, before offering for the people? _____

3. Of what is Jesus a "minister?" _____ What does this represent? _____

4. Even though the priests of the Law served "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things," what was Moses warned to do? _____

5. According to Hebrews 8:6, why is Jesus' ministry "the more excellent?" _____

6. Why was a "place sought for a second" covenant? _____

7. The "New Covenant" would not be "according" to what, according to Hebrews 8:9?

_____ Why? _____

8. What are the three changes God made in the New Covenant?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Chapter 9

Now even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world. 2 For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein were the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place. 3 And after(,) the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; 4 having a golden altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold (Exodus 26:31-35, 40:5; Numbers 3:38), wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (Exodus 25:16, 40:20, 16:33; Numbers 17:10; but compare 1 Kings 8:9); 5 and above it, cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally. 6 Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services (Exodus 30:7-8; Leviticus 24:5-9); 7 but into the second the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offers for himself, and for the errors of the people (Leviticus 16:1ff): 8 the Holy Spirit this

signifying, that the way into the holy place has not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is yet standing (Leviticus 16:17); 9 which is a figure for the time present (Hebrews 10:19): according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect (Hebrews 10:1-2), 10 being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation (Matthew 5:17-18, and verses below).

11 But Christ, having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation (Hebrews 10:1-2), 12 nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5), entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (See verses 24-26). 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh (Numbers 19:1-10): 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews 6:1; 1 Timothy 3:15)? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 8:6), that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Isaiah 53:4; Romans 4:23-25), they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4). 16 For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. 17 For a testament is of force where there has been death: for it never does avail while he that made it lives (Galatians 3:15). 18 Wherefore even the first covenant has not been dedicated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to youward." (Exodus 24:3-8; Leviticus 14:50-51) 21 Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the

ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. (See Josephus, Antiquities, Book III, chap. 8, section 6.) 22 And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission (Leviticus 17:11).

23 It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these (Hebrews 10:1); but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true (See vs. 11 above, and Hebrews 8:5); but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us: 25 nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; 26 else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages has he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (See vs. 12, above, and Hebrews 7:27.) 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this comes judgment (Revelation 20:12-13); 28 so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation. (John 14:3; Philippians 3:20)

COMMENTS:

In the preceding chapter, the repeated use of the word "first," in reference to the "old" covenant (8:6-7, 13), gives the writer of Hebrews his opening in this chapter. He begins by describing in some detail the furniture and arrangement of the Tabernacle erected by Moses, "according to the pattern (8:5)." The interesting thing about this description is the reference to two tabernacles, or two sections of the one tabernacle. The "first" one is said to have only the "Candlestick" and the "Table" for the showbread. However, in this "room" marked by the walls of the Tabernacle on three sides, and the veil that divided the tent, there was another item, the Altar of Incense. The writer, however, places this altar as a part of the "second" holy place, even though it stood before the veil, outside

the room occupied by the Ark of the Covenant, and was served "continually" (daily) by the priests. Though this interpretation of the arrangement is not repeated elsewhere in the Bible, it has support from such passages as Exodus 40:5, which says, "...set the golden altar of incense before the ark of the testimony..."

The writer says that the Ark contained three items, but 1 Kings 8:9 shows that in the period of Israel's apostasy, it contained only one, even though the Jews were told that the other two things were to be kept there "throughout their generations."

The Tabernacle being the sole responsibility of the priests descending from Aaron, the writer first shows in vs. 6 the daily and weekly tasks of the priests, and then turns to the peculiar function of "the High Priest alone," in vs. 7. He tells us that while the first Tabernacle was in use, no one else was permitted to be inside it while the High Priest offered the atonement blood (Leviticus 16:17). By this, the Holy Spirit implied that the "way into the Holy Place" was not yet revealed. The writer will soon reveal, however, how we can "have boldness to enter," through the "blood of Jesus" (10:19f). A "reformation" must come, however, before the ineffective "gifts and offerings" made in the first Tabernacle are replaced with a new system.

Beginning in vs. 11 with the phrase "good things to come," the writer shows that Christ begins this reformation by perfecting the sacrifice. He offers his own blood, not that of animals, and this sacrifice is so potent that it needs to be made only "once for all," and obtains "eternal redemption." He does not disparage the effectiveness of the "blood of bulls and goats," and the cleansing power of the "ashes of a heifer," when applied according to the Law to purify those who were ceremonially unclean, but he shows that Christ's blood cleanses the "conscience" rather than the body, and separates it from "dead works," that is, from the ineffective duties of the Old Law.

To have a vehicle for administering this more powerful cleansing, Christ is made the "mediator of a new covenant," and uses the blood of His death not only to redeem men from transgressions in both the old and new regimes, but also to dedicate his new

covenant in a manner like that used by Moses in the dedication of the book of the Law, the priests, the Tabernacle and its "vessels." (NOTE: the confirmation of this last part of the dedication is not confirmed in Old Testament Scripture, but from oral tradition, such as recorded by Josephus [see the reference in vs. 21]. This may be why the writer hedges on his comments, and writes, "I may almost say all things.") Blood played such a prominent part in the rituals of the Tabernacle that very little was done "apart" from it. Verses 23-26 form a kind of summary for the chapter, touching on a number of points, but verse 27 speaks of the return of the Lord, holding out the prospect of reward for the faithful, a topic to be more fully developed in chapters 11 and 12.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was in the "first" tabernacle, according to the arrangement shown in this chapter? _____

2. What was the arrangement of the "second?" _____

3. What was inside the Ark of the Covenant? _____

4. What were some of the "continual" services done by the priests in the Tabernacle of Moses' day? _____

5. What was signified by the fact that the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place once in a year, and all others were forbidden? _____

6. Could the "gifts and offerings" of the Old Law perfect the worshipper? _____
_____ Why? _____

7. How much more effective is the blood of Christ than that of animals, in the matter of "cleansing?" (give the example in the text) _____

8. Whose transgressions were redeemed by the death of Christ, according to verse 15?

9. When is a testament in force? _____

_____ After it is "confirmed," can it be changed or nullified (see Galatians 3:15)?

10. With what substance were the things of the Tabernacle worship dedicated? _____

11. If "copies of the things in the heavens" are cleansed, what must be used to cleanse the "heavenly things themselves?" _____

12. If the sacrifice of Christ was no better than those of the Old Testament, what would Christ have to do? _____

13. Though we learn an important truth in verse 27, is it the main point of the close of the chapter, or is verse 28? _____

Chapter 10

For the law having a shadow of the good things to come (Hebrews 9:11), not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw near (Leviticus 16:29-30). 2 Else would they not have ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a

remembrance made of sins year by year (Hebrews 8:12). 4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he comes into the world, he says,

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,

But a body you did prepare for me;

6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure:

7 Then I said, 'Lo, I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me)

To do your will, O God.'" (Psalm 40:6-8)

8 Saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offering and sacrifices for sin you desired not, neither had pleasure therein" (things which are offered according to the law), 9 then he has said, "Lo, I am come to do your will." He takes away the first, that he may establish the second (Hebrews 8:6-7). 10 By which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (John 17:19; Hebrews 12:24; Matthew 26:28). 11 And every priest indeed stands day by day ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, things which can never take away sins: 12 but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 henceforth expecting till his enemies be made the footstool of his feet (1 Corinthians 15:25-26). 14 For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after he has said,

16"This is the covenant that I will make with them

After those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws on their heart,

And upon their mind also will I write them;" (Hebrews 8:10)

then he says,

17 "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (Hebrews 8:12)

18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. (See vs. 26)

19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 and having a great priest over the house of God; 22 let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience (Leviticus 16:15-16): and having our body washed with pure water (Leviticus 16:4, 23-24), 23 let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for he is faithful that promised: 24 and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the day drawing near (Romans 13:11-13; Luke 21:28).

26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins (James 4:17), 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries (Numbers 15:27-36). 28 A man that has set at nought Moses' law dies without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6-7): 29 of how much worse punishment, do you think, shall he be judged worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that said, "Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense." And again, "The Lord shall judge his people" (1 Peter 4:17-18). 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Psalm 76:7-8; Luke 12:5).

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after you were enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings; 33 partly, being made a gazing stock (or, spectacle) both by reproaches and afflictions (Acts 8:1-3); and partly, becoming

partakers with them that were so used (Acts 4:23-31). 34 For you both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions (Acts 4:32-35), knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one (Hebrews 11:13-16). 35 Therefore do not cast away your boldness, which has great recompense of reward. 36 For you have need of patience, that having done the will of God, you may receive the promise (Hebrews 6:11-12).

37 "For yet a very little while,

He that comes shall come, and shall not tarry. (John 16: 16-22)

38 But my righteous one shall live by faith:

And if he shrink back, my soul has no pleasure in him." (Habakkuk 2:3-4; Septuagint)

39 But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul (1 Peter 1:9).

COMMENTS:

The inadequacy of the "continual" atonement offerings of the Old Law is discussed by the writer of Hebrews in the first four verses of the chapter. Because of their repetition annually, it is implied that "there is a remembrance made of sin" every year. This stands in contrast to the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:34 (see 8:12).

So, Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Psalm 40:6-8, providing a solution to God's dissatisfaction with the efficacy of "Sacrifice and offering." Several times in the Old Testament, inspired writers express the need for personal righteousness as a fitting substitute for (or, augmentation of) sacrifice (Psalm 50:13-14, 51:16-17; Isaiah 1:11-17; Jeremiah 6:19-20; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8). However, in Psalm 40, the message is different. It speaks of the replacement of sacrifice, and its atoning function, through the obedience of Christ (see 5:8-9). In His death, Jesus "takes away the first (covenant), with

its provisions for atonement, that he may establish the second," which provides sanctification to all who come to Christ for atonement. His single "sacrifice for sins for ever" has "perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This does not imply the popular Calvinistic idea of "once saved, always saved," but rather that salvation is for all sinners, alien or believer, without additional sacrifices for sin. The writer makes this clear by quoting again from Jeremiah's prophecy of the "new covenant," which provided that sins, once forgiven, would never again be "remembered."

This provision gives us "boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus." We can follow our High Priest "through the veil...his flesh." We must be properly prepared for this entrance, however, just as the High Priest of old was sprinkled with sanctifying blood (Exodus 29:21), and "washed with pure water" (Leviticus 16:4, 23-24). With such a privilege, under our High Priest, we have the three-fold exhortation of vss. 23-25. Our own exhortations of others are based on the nearness of the "day" of vs. 25, which may be interpreted to mean either the second coming of Christ, or the coming of the destruction of Jerusalem, which would destroy the vestiges of Judaism.

This is followed by a warning against "willful" sin. The precedent for this warning is found in Numbers 15:27-36. Moses says that the "unwitting" sinner, or the one who makes an ignorant mistake, has provided for him the remedy of a "sin-offering." But the man that sins "with a high hand," or in full knowledge of his error, is not provided with a sin offering (compare Luke 12:47-48). The judgment of God for this willful sinner of the Old Testament is that he "shall be cut off from among his people." This implies a death penalty, and the example included in the reference tells of the stoning of a man who violated the sabbath. It is still true that willful sin is worthy of "severe punishment," but the punishment is in the hands of God, not men, and we "know" Him as one who can exercise severe judicial "vengeance."

The close of the chapter is a "call to remembrance" of the circumstances of the life the Hebrew Christians after they were "enlightened." The persecutions, the demands on

their substance made by the poor in the church, and their exposure to the critical eyes of men, all were outweighed by the knowledge that they had "a better possession and an abiding one" (compare 13:14). The writer urges them to have two qualities, boldness and patience, in order to continue in a state of faithfulness, and "receive the promise." The writer reinforces his admonition by a "free" quotation of a portion of Habakkuk 2, based on the Septuagint version. As in 6:9-11, he expresses confidence in their good sense to remain faithful (vs. 39).

QUESTIONS:

1. What evidence is presented here to show that annual atonement sacrifices cannot "make perfect them that draw near?" _____

2. Since God does not "desire" sacrifice and offering, of the Old Testament type, what is suggested as an alternative? _____

3. What contrasts are drawn in verses 11-12 between the functions of Old Testament priests, and Christ? _____

4. What is the Holy Spirit's "witness" which confirms the fact that "one offering ...has perfected for ever them that are sanctified?" _____

5. What serves as the "veil" of the holy place through which we can enter with "boldness?" _____

6. What actions of sanctification are we told to perform, which are similar to those with prepared the High Priest for his functions? _____

7. In verses 23-25, what things are we urged to do? _____

_____ Which of these do you think is the most important? _____

8. To what precedent does the writer of Hebrews point, when he says that no sacrifice for sins "remains" for the willful sinner? _____

9. What punishment was prescribed under the Law of Moses for one who "set" it "at naught?" _____

10. What, do you suppose, would be the "worse punishment" for the sinner described in vs. 29? _____

11. What qualities are needed to help us remain faithful, besides "calling to remembrance the former days?" _____

Chapter 11

Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen (See vs. 27 below, and Psalm 27:13-14). 2 For therein the elders had witness borne to them. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which appear (Psalm 33:6; Acts 14:15). 4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it he being dead yet speaks (Genesis 4:1-8). 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for he

has had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God (Genesis 5:21-24, and compare John 8:28-29): 6 and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that comes to God must believe that he is (Jeremiah 23:23-24), and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him (Luke 6:35). 7 By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Genesis 6:1-8:22). 8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed to go out unto a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing to what place he went (Genesis 12:1-4). 9 By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own (Acts 7:5), dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise (Genesis 26:23-24, 28: 13-15): 10 For he looked for the city which has the foundations, whose builder and maker is God (See vs. 14-16 below). 11 By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive seed when she was past age, since she counted him faithful who had promised (Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7): 12 wherefore also there sprang of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of heaven in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore, innumerable (Genesis 15:1-6). 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (1 Chronicles 29:15; Psalm 39:12). 14 For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. 15 And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly (Philippians 3:20): wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 13:14) 17 By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yes, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son (Genesis 22:1-18); 18 even he to whom it

was said, In Isaac shall your seed be called (Genesis 21:12): 19 accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from which place he did also in a figure receive him back. 20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come (Genesis:27:1-40). 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff (Genesis 47:29-48:22). 22 By faith Joseph, when his end was nigh, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones (Genesis 50:24-26). 23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw he was a goodly child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment (Exodus 1:15-2:10). 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt (Psalm 84:10; Hebrews 13:13): for he looked unto the recompense of reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king (Exodus 2:14): for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible (Exodus 2:11-22). 28 By faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn should not touch them (Exodus 12:1-36). 29 By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians attempting to do were swallowed up (Exodus 14:21-31). 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been circled about for seven days (Joshua 6:1-21). 31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with them that were disobedient, having received the spies with peace. (Joshua 2:1-21, 6:22-25).

32 And what shall I say more? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms (Psalm 44:2-8; 1 Chronicles 18:1-2), worked righteousness, obtained promises (2 Samuel 7:11-13), stopped the mouths of lions (Daniel 6:16-23), 34 quenched the power of fire (Daniel 3:19-28), escaped the edge of the sword (1 Samuel 19:9-24), from

weakness were made strong (Judges 16:23-30), waxed mighty in war (Judges 7:15-8:12), turned to flight armies of aliens (Judges 4:4-16). 35 Women received their dead by a resurrection (2 Kings 4:17-37): and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection (an example of this is found in the Apocrypha, 2 Maccabees 6:18-31): 36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, moreover of bonds and imprisonment (1 Kings 22:1-28): 37 they were stoned (1 Kings 21:13; 2 Chronicles 24:21), they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword (1 Samuel 22:11-19): they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (2 Kings 1:7-8) 38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth (1 Kings 19:1-9). 39 And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, did not receive the promise (See vs. 13 above.), 40 God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect (Revelation 6:11).

COMMENTS:

Of the 40 verses of this chapter, only a few (1-3, 6, 13-16, 39-40, ten verses in all) discuss the "doctrine" of faithfulness.

Verses 1-3 demonstrate the essential meaning of faith. It is "giving substance to" something intangible, the existence of which is the basis of our confidence and "hope." Or, it is a "conviction" that something we do not see, and cannot prove by the senses, really exists. The example given is in verse 3. We have the declaration of "Moses and the prophets" that the "worlds have been framed by the Word of God," and that the things that are "seen have not been made out of things which appear." Such declarations may seem illogical, or even unreasonable, but we give "substance" to the truth of these things by our faith.

Starting with the faithful action of Abel, a long list of faithful people are shown to have

been moved to action by faith in God's word. Verse 6 is a comment on the statement that Enoch "had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing to God." But it is "impossible" to be "well-pleasing," without the sort of active "faith" described in this chapter. Therefore, we can broaden the general idea of Enoch's "walk with God" by presuming that Enoch was specifically obedient in ways that were similar to those taken by the other men of faith who are mentioned with him. His "act of faith" may have been based on his work as a prophet (see Jude 14-15).

Verses 13-16 express the endurance of faith needed in every child of God. Our faithfulness should not depend on whether we "receive the promises" during our lifetime. Abraham was promised possession of the Land open to his view in every direction, but he never owned any of it, except a small portion for burying his dead, the cave of Machpelah. However, he received the promise through his constant faith, because his descendants occupied it several hundred years after Abraham's death (see Hebrews 6:13-15). A materialistic view of our reward is short-sighted. Like the worthies of old, we should desire a "better, that is, a heavenly" possession. "By faith," we know that we have such a "city," prepared by a God who is unashamed to receive us to Himself.

Verses 39-40 repeat the assertion that the faithful may not "receive the promise" immediately, but their destiny is said to be joined to ours.

Besides these doctrinal revelations regarding the essence of faith, all the rest of the chapter presents illustrations of the principle of active faith. As James tells us that "faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26), so in this chapter we can observe the variety of ways in which faith can work.

The works fit the circumstances of the characters. Some actions are ritualistic, such as the "offering" of Abel (vs. 4); Some are abstract, such as the "walk" of Enoch with God (vs. 5); some are physical, such as Noah's construction of the Ark (vs. 7); some of the actions are deliberative, such as the "accounting" of Abraham (vs. 19), and the "refusing

and choosing" of Moses (vs. 24-25).

In only one instance does it seem that the faithful person is passive rather than active. This is the case of Sarah, who "received power to conceive seed" (vs. 11). Yet, even in this instance, the faith of Sarah must have moved her, in spite of her great age, to participate in the physical act which resulted in her conception.

It is interesting to note that some of the things accomplished "by faith" were dependent on their purpose. In one instance, they might "escape the edge of the sword (vs. 34)," but in another they might be "slain by the edge of the sword (vs. 37)." In either case, faith was present to help them endure whatever trials tested them.

We are often motivated to emulate heroes, and the writer of Hebrews evidently hopes that these examples will be sufficient to stir a renewal of faith in his readers. Yet, he has one more example to give them in the first part of chapter 12.

QUESTIONS:

1. What example does the writer of Hebrews give to illustrate his definition of faith as a "conviction of things not seen?" _____

2. What is Abel doing now, because God bore witness that he was righteous? ____

3. What works can we presume that Enoch performed in his "walk" with God, in view of other things found in this chapter? _____

4. What two things are to be included in the faith of one who "comes to God?" ____

5. What "moved" Noah to "prepare an ark to the saving of his house?" _____

6. What things did Abraham do in his faith in verses 8-10? _____

_____What did he do in verses 17-19? _____

7. What promise of God made Sarah laugh? _____

_____Did the promise come true? _____

_____Why? _____

8. According to verses 13-16, how did those who "died in faith, not having received the promises," view themselves while on earth? _____

_____When men "say such things," what are they making "manifest?" _____

_____What would they have had "opportunity" to do, if they had not had this attitude? _____

_____What do they desire? _____

9. What action of faith was common to Isaac and Jacob? _____

10. What did Joseph foresee which caused him to give "commandment concerning his bones?" _____

11. Whose faith is commended in verse 23? (see Exodus 6:20) _____

12. What contemplative actions of faith are attributed to Moses in verses 24-27? _____

13. Does verse 27 contradict Exodus 2:14? _____ Explain your answer:

14. Whose faith is commended in verses 29 and 30? _____
15. What immediate reward did Rahab receive for helping the spies to escape from Jericho? _____
16. According to the references given by verses 33-38, who "subdued kingdoms?" _____ Who "obtained promises?" _____ Who "stopped the mouths of lions?" _____ Who "quenched the power of fire?" _____ Who "escaped the edge of the sword?" _____ Who "in weakness was made strong?" _____ Who "waxed mighty in war?" _____ Who "turned to flight armies of aliens?" _____ Who "received the dead by a resurrection?" _____ Who "had trial of mocking's" and "imprisonment?" _____ Who "were stoned?" _____ Who were "slain with the sword?" _____ Who "went in sheepskins...destitute...wandering in deserts... and in caves?" _____
17. According to verses 39-40, why did these faithful people not receive the promise?

CHAPTER 12

Therefore let us also, seeing we are surrounded with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame (Hebrews 13:13; 1 Corinthians 1:23), and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that has endured such contradictions of sinners against himself (Matthew 26:65-68, 27:20, 38-44), that you do

not grow weary, fainting in your souls (Galatians 6:9). 4 You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin (1 Peter 3:17-18): 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which reasons with you as with sons,

“My son, do not lightly regard the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when your are reprov'd of him;
6 For whom the Lord loves he chastens,
And scourges every son whom he receives.” (Proverbs 3:11-12)

7 It is for chastening that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not chasten (Deuteronomy 8:1-6)? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have been made partakers, then you are bastards, and not sons (Proverbs 13:24). 9 Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence (Proverbs 23:13-14): shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits (Revelation 22:6), and live? 10 For they indeed chastened us for a few days as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness (1 Peter 1:13-16). 11 All chastening seems (for the present) to be of grief rather than joy; yet afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that have been exercised thereby (James 3:18; Philippians 1:9-11; Proverbs 15:5, 10). 12 Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees (Isaiah 35:3-4); 13 and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed (Proverbs 4:25-27).

14 Follow after peace with all men (Romans 14:19), and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8): 15 looking carefully lest there be any man that falls short of the grace of God (Romans 3:23); lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled (Ephesians 4:31-32); 16 lest there be any fornicator (1 Corinthians 5:1-8), or profane

person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright (Genesis 25:27-34). 17 For you know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears (Genesis 27:30-38).

18 For you have not come to a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet (Exodus 19:16-19), and the voice of words; which voice they that heard pleaded that no more word should be spoken to them (Exodus 20:18-21); 20 for they could not endure that which was enjoined, "If even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned (Exodus 19:12-13);" 21 and so fearful was the appearance that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake (Deuteronomy 9:19):" 22 but you have come to mount Zion (Psalm 2:6-7; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:1-6), and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Galatians 4:21-31), and to innumerable hosts of angels (Revelation 5:11; Matthew 26:53), 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven (Luke 10:20; Revelation 3:5, 20:15), and to God the Judge of all (Acts 17:30-31, but see John 5: 21-29), and to the spirits of just men made perfect (Hebrews 11:40), 24 and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, etc.), and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel (Hebrews 9:13-14, 11:4). 25 See that you do not refuse him that speaks. For if they did not escape when they refused him that warned them on earth (Hebrews 10:28), much more we who turn away from him that warns from heaven shall not escape (Hebrews 2:1-4): 26 whose voice then shook the earth (Exodus 19:18): but now he has promised, saying, "Yet once more will I make not only the earth to tremble, but also the heaven (Haggai 2:6-7)." 27 And this word, "Yet once more," signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain (2 Peter 3:7-13). 28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Daniel 2:44), let us have grace, where-by we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a

consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Psalm 50:3).

COMMENTS:

We now see the writer's purpose for listing the "heroes of faith" in chapter 11. They are to be used as examples of working faith for the Hebrew readers of this letter. He alludes to the athletic custom of training with weights, then laying them aside to compete in the race (vs. 1), but he counsels them to treat Jesus as the ultimate example of faith. As the "author and perfecter" of our faith, Jesus demonstrates the role that anticipation plays in faith. In a pattern similar to the cases in chapter 11, He looked beyond the pain and shame of the cross to the "joy" of accomplishing his destiny, and the reward of sitting at God's "right hand." His patience in the face of opposition (vs. 3-4) is especially pertinent to the needs of the Hebrews, whom he reminded, also, of the role of "chastening" in helping those who are faltering. He uses the book of Proverbs for confirmation of this point, but also alludes to the Law (Deuteronomy 8:1ff). He shows that the absence of parental chastening indicates (in the best case) a lack of love (Proverbs 13:24), but also (in the worst case) that the neglected person is not a true son. God, who chastens us for our good, and with much better purpose, expects to receive a "reverence" more sincere, and more devoted, than we give to our "fathers in the flesh." Certainly, the "peaceable fruit" which results from chastening should be an incentive to "lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees" (vs. 5-13).

The writer then turns his application outward, commanding his readers to pursue peace with men, while they are developing holiness within (vs. 14). But, as members of the body, they need also to guard against the "short-fall" of others, those who have been overwhelmed by "bitterness," or "fornicators," or those who are "profane," like Esau. To his Hebrew readers, who prided themselves as descendants of Jacob, the comparison of some of them to Esau, who "despised his birthright" (Genesis 25:34), should have chastised them enough to stiffen their resolve to treat their Christian heritage more

highly (vs. 15-17).

In the third paragraph of the chapter (vs. 18-29), the writer draws a vivid contrast between their heritage as Jews, and their privileges as Christians. First, he contrasts two mountains, Sinai and Zion (which he uses figuratively, in the same manner that Paul contrasts the two Jerusalem's of Galatians 4:21-31). Sinai is de-scribed in negative, fearful tones, with "fire, blackness, darkness, tempest," and with frightening sounds and voices and commands (vs. 18-21). But when they became Christians, they were delivered from this historical glimpse of the experience of their fathers, and were brought to the "Zion" of the New Covenant, God's city, the "heavenly Jerusalem." Their associations would now be with numberless hosts of angels, the firstborn saints enrolled in heaven, a Just God, perfected men, and with the great mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus.

The blood offered upon the cross "speaks better than (the blood offered by) Abel." And, when we have a heavenly "speaker," it is imperative to hear him. From the words of prophets who "warned on earth" there was no escape, because they spoke for a God "whose voice then shook the earth." But now, that same God has vowed the shake all things shakeable, so that His unshakeable Kingdom may remain. In view of the durability of the Kingdom, we must be durable in our service to God "with reverence and awe."

QUESTIONS:

1. Who are the "cloud of witnesses" which "surrounds" us? _____

2. Describe a modern custom in sports which would be similar to the expression, "Lay aside every weight...and let us run...?" _____

3. Since Jesus is the "author and perfecter of our faith," what example of trust in God did

he set before us, according to vs. 2? _____

4. In "striving against sin," had the Hebrews gone as far as they could? _____ How far had Jesus gone? _____

5. (Multiple choice) Is chastening (1) punishment, (2) trials, or (3) reproof? _____

6. Whom does the Lord chasten? _____ Should we do the same?

_____ Why? _____

7. Is a "son" being treated properly, if never chastened? _____

8. Whom should we "reverence" more, when we are chastened, our earthly fathers or the "Father of spirits?" _____

9. Though chastening seems more grievous than joyous, what does it yield? _____

10. What two things are we to follow, according to vs. 14? _____

11. What sort of people are we to guard against, according to verses 15-16? _____

12. What mountains are described in verses 18 and 22? _____ What contrasts are shown regarding them? _____

13. What is it that "speaks better than that of Abel?" _____

14. Is the reasoning of verses 25-26 like that of 2:1-4? _____

15. What unshakeable thing will survive God's shaking of the earth and heaven?

16. What should we do, according to verse 28? _____

Why?

Chapter 13

Let love of the brethren continue (Romans 12:10). 2 Do not forget to show love to strangers (Matthew 25:35): for thereby some have entertained angels unawares (Genesis 18:1-3, 19:1-2). 3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them (vs. 23 below, and Hebrews 10:34); them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in the body (Hebrews 10:33). 4 Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge (1 Corinthians 6: 9-10; 7:1-2). 5 Be free from the love of money; content with such things as you have (Philippians 4:10-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-10): for himself has said, "I will in no wise fail you, neither will I in any wise forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6) 6 So that with good courage we say,

"The Lord is my helper; I shall not fear:
What shall man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6)

7 Remember them that had the rule over you (see also vs. 17, 24), men that spoke the word of God to you; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the (Hebrews 6:11-12; Philippians 3:17) same yesterday and today, yes and for ever (Hebrews 1:12; 2 Corinthians 1:18-20, and compare Malachi 3:6). 9 Be not carried away by various and strange teachings (2 Peter 3:17-18): for it is good that the heart be established by grace; not by meats (Romans 6:14), wherein they that occupied themselves were not profited (Hebrews 9:9-10). 10 We have an altar, whereof they that serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp (Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:12, 9:11, 16:27). 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that

he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered outside the gate (John 19:19:20). 13 Let us therefore go forth unto him outside the camp, bearing his reproach (Romans 15:3; Isaiah 53:3-6). 14 For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come (Hebrews 11:16; Revelation 21:1-2). 15 Through him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God (1 Peter 2:5), that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name (Hosea 14:1-2). 16 But do not forget to do good and to share: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:10). 17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this is unprofitable for you (1 Peter 5:5).

18 Pray for us: for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to live honorably in all things (2 Corinthians 8:21, 13:7). 19 And I exhort you the more exceedingly to do this, that I may be restored to you sooner.

20 Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus (John 10:11; 1 Peter 2:25), 21 make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 6:9-11)

22 But I exhort you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation: for I have written unto you in few words (1 Peter 5:12). 23 Let it be known to you that our brother Timothy has been set at liberty; with whom, if he comes shortly, I will see you.

24 Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

COMMENTS:

The final chapter of this epistle contains various exhortations, and summations. Vs. 1-6 deals with specific needs in the life of the faithful Christian. He is to love both the brethren and strangers (vs. 1-2). He is to have empathy for those imprisoned, and those in adversity, since he is also "in the body" and runs the same risks (vs. 3). The Christian is to maintain sexual purity by honoring the God-given purpose of marriage (vs. 4). The dangers present in covetousness (vs. 5-6) are revealed in many New Testament passages (Luke 12:15; Colossians 3:5).

In the next paragraph, another sort of exhortation begins with vs. 7. Christians are to "remember, consider, and imitate" the faith and careers of those whose former "rule," or guidance involved speaking the word of God to them. This is in addition to the submission to be given to their present "rulers" (vs. 17). The stability to be found in the unchangeable "sameness" of Jesus (a trait of deity) should also contribute to our own stability. The writer, in an allegorical fashion, then recalls to the minds of his readers that the "grace" found in the New Covenant is more "profitable" than the Old Testament system, in which the eating of "meats" contained no spiritual profit. He points to the fact that some "sin-offerings" under the Law of Moses were eaten by the priests under rigid rules, but the bodies of the animals used for the yearly atonement offerings by the High Priests were taken "outside the camp" and burned whole (Leviticus 6:25-30). This is a "sign" of Jesus, whose atonement offering for sin by his "own blood" was outside the city of Jerusalem. Since the sins of the Israelites in the Old Testament were transferred to the animals they offered, the animals received the "reproach" of sin. We are exhorted to be unashamed, when we follow Jesus, figuratively, "outside the camp, bearing His reproach." Lastly, the Hebrews were urged to tie their hopes to "New Jerusalem," not the one which would not "abide" (compare Galatians 4:21-27).

With this exaltation of Jesus as High Priest and sacrifice, combined, the praise sacrifices of "confessing lips" which we make are therefore offered to God through this exalted Christ. To this should be added the sacrifices of good deeds and sharing. Then, in a

third exhortation, we should give joyful submission to the leadership, because they "watch in behalf of our souls." This will make their task easier, and also be profitable to us.

After some personal appeals (vs. 18-19), the writer pronounces his blessing (vs. 20-21; and compare Numbers 6:22-27). His final exhortation (vs. 22) covers an essential part of his entire effort to restore the Hebrew defectors to Christ. He says, "Bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words." The Bible is a small book, compared to some of the expansive advisory works of men. Yet, because of its divine authorship, it contains all that we need for salvation. It is not self serving, then, for the writer to exhort compliance with his vital volume. In spite of its brevity, it contains very important material to keep us from "falling away." Every writer of the New Testament pleaded for a hearing in some form or another (Examples: 2 Thessalonians 3:14; 2 Peter 1:19). Even Christ made repeated appeals to his hearers (Matthew 7:24-27, etc.). At any moment when our faith is weak, and we are in danger of falling away from the faith, we should "bear with the word."

QUESTIONS:

1. What Old Testament men "entertained angels unawares?" _____

2. What, do you suppose, is involved in "remembering them that are in bonds" and those who are "ill-treated?" _____

3. What should Christians hold in "honor?" _____ What should be "undefiled?" _____ Of what should they be "free?" _____
With what should they be "content?" _____
_____ Why? _____

4. According to vs. 7, who are we to "remember?" _____
_____ According to verse 17, who we to "obey?"

5. What "meats" in vs. 9 were not "profitable?" _____

6. What, do you think, is the "altar" of which others cannot eat? _____
7. Which animals offered under the Old Testament were "burned outside the camp?"

8. How does Jesus compare to these sacrifices? _____

9. When we go "outside the camp" to Jesus, what do we bear? _____

10. What "Abiding City" is to be sought? _____
11. What sacrifices are we to offer, according to vs. 15-16? _____

12. Is the blessing of vs. 20-21 a "priestly blessing" like the one in Numbers 6:22-27?
_____ Why? _____
13. Why should we apply the last exhortation of Hebrews (vs. 22) to ourselves? ____

THE END