The Book of Hebrews



*This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, … (Heb 6:19-20)*

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Introduction The Book of Hebrews

**I. Overview**

The book of Hebrews is a letter of great exhortations given to the first century Christians restoring their confidence in Christ Jesus and stimulating growth toward maturity in service to Him and their fellow brethren. The writer plunges immediately into the major theme of the book forgoing any introduction of himself or the purpose of his letter. Just within the first few verses, the superiority of Christ and His message is made very clear. The writer continues this theme throughout the majority of this letter. In a logical progression, He makes the case for Christ’s superiority over all aspects of God’s dealings with man in the past. Christ is a better spokesman for God, and is a better High Priest. His lineage is better than that of the Levitical priesthood; He is God’s Son. Christ is the mediator of a better covenant established by His own blood. And finally, Christ is the author and finisher of our faith so we as Christians should look only to Him for our salvation. Therefore, “*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*” (Heb 10:22)

**II. The Author**

The author chose not to revel himself within the content of this letter. Many speculations have been made as to whom it could be, but knowing would have no added benefit and would not change the value of the message. In fact, the author’s obscurity may have been intentional so as not to distract from the importance of the message and insure its endurance. The issue of canonicity has already been established, I believe through God's providence. We do, however, know some things about the Author which may be important to his credibility. He knew his readers very well (Heb 5:11-14, 6:9, 10:32-34) so much so that he desired to be with them (Heb 13:19). The readers most likely knew him as well since he asked for their prayers (Heb 13:18). The author knew Timothy and considered him a brother (Heb 13:23). As demonstrated from his extensive use and knowledge of the Mosaic Law, Levitical priesthood, and messianic prophecies, the author was {most likely} of Jewish decent. According to scholars, his knowledge of the Greek language and culture is evident as well demonstrated by his writings. Many authors have been proposed most notable Paul but others include Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, Silas, Philip, and Clement of Rome just to name a few. There are many good arguments made for each of these proposed authors especially Paul “*for you had compassion on me in my chains*” (Heb 10:34) but remember most of the other candidates knew Paul, traveled with him, and would have shared many of the same experiences including prison. However, the author remains anonymous despite the opinions of many. In fact, this discussion dates back as early as the second century. The focus of this letter is clearly on our Lord and the better covenant that He established with man.

**III. To Whom it was Written**

Just as the identity of the author is unknown, the exact identity to whom this letter was written is unknown as well. The actual title of Hebrews was not found in the manuscripts until the second or third centuries. There are, however, some obvious clues found within the text to whom these readers may have been. The main subject matter of the text and the argumentation used to prove the writers message are centered around the Mosaic law and all its implications. These subjects and arguments would generally be of interest only to those who have a significant Jewish background. The conclusion could be drawn that these readers are probably Jewish converts.

The location of these first readers is a mystery as well. The title or heading of this letter was not added until latter. Rome and Jerusalem are the two most popular locations noted. Early manuscripts dating back to the second and third centuries were the first to title the letter as "to the Hebrews". This may provide an important clue as to the location of its readers. Usually devout Hebrew speaking Jews were referred to as "Hebrews" (N. Lightfoot). The majority of these "Hebrews" were located in and around Jerusalem. It may be reasonable to conclude from these facts that the letter of Hebrews was written to "Jewish" Christian converts in or around Jerusalem, although there are no strong evidences for any of these conclusions. The book of Hebrews was written before the end of the first century due to the fact that the author knew Timothy (Heb 13:23) and desired to be with them (Heb 13:19). Since there is no mention or reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in the letter, it was most likely written before this event in AD 70. Many of the more conservative commentators suggest that the letter was written around 63-66 AD. However, many of these commentators also attribute the authorship to Paul during his first or second imprisonment in Rome.

**IV. The Purpose of the Letter**

The purpose of this letter appears to be obvious as presented in the arguments made in the text. The covenant of Christ is far superior to that of any other they have had in the past. The writer gives his readers many exhortations to remain steadfast and sure in this better covenant which has better promises. Christ is a better spokesman, a better High Priest, and a better covenant maker. He is better because He is God's Son, having His glory and express image. He sacrificed Himself freely so that the sins of man could be forgiven. Because He has no spot or blemish (sin), He could pass through the veil into the Most Holy of Holies; the true heavenly sanctuary, and now sits at His father's right hand making intercession for man. With these credentials and better promises, why would anyone want to turn back to an inferior covenant? Thus we see the theme the writer logically develops throughout the text. The readers, by this point, have already been taught the elementary principles of Christianity (Heb 5:12), although they need to be taught again, the writer forgoes laying again these foundations (Heb 6:1-3). As you study this letter, pay attention to the terms the author uses frequently to encourage his readers not to fall back into their former ways of the old covenant. He uses words like “better”, “eternal”, “once for all”, “much more”, “true”, and “hold fast” to showcase Christ’s superiority to anything else. Therefore, “*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*”(Heb 10:23).

Outline Structure The Book of Hebrews

**I. Problem: Turning back to old covenant, loss of zeal, discouragement, spiritual immaturity, and maybe even apostasy**

* Factors which may have contributed to the problem:
  + New Covenant (law)
  + New High Priest: (Jesus Christ)
  + New “religion” (one spiritual in nature 10:20)
  + Insecurity: tradition & lifestyle changes
  + Persecution
  + Spiritual Immaturity

**II. Solution: Reassurance; restore confidence (1:1-10:18), exhortation toward maturity and growth, and renew zeal for God’s promise (10:19-13:25)**

* How to approach this problem:

1. Substantiate claims with:

a. Witnesses (2:3, 13:7)

b. OT prophecies & history, (entire epistle)

c. Use of shadows, copies, patterns, and images of the real (8:5, 9:23-24, 10:1)

d. Mysteries reveled: Heb 1:1-2 “at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (2) has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son”,

**Rom 16:25-27**, Mark 4:11, 1 Cor 2:7, Col 1:26, et. al.

2. Prove: better covenant

a. Better covenant maker (7:22, 12:2)

b. Better way to remove sins (9:23, 10:4)

c. Better way to approach God (7:19, 10:19-22)

d. Better way to make man complete (9:9, 14, 11:40)

e. Better hope to secure God’s promises (6:19, 8:6)

3. Prove: better High Priest

a. God’s Son (1:1, 5)

b. Heir (1:2)

c. Through whom the worlds was made (with God before beginning) (1:2)

d. In God’s glory and image (deity) (1:3)

e. Purged their sin with His own blood (sinless) (1:3)

f. Serves as High Priest forever (6:20)

g. Sits at the right hand of God as mediator (1:3, 9:15)

4. Exhortation towards spiritual maturity and growth

1. Encouraged to grow (6:12, 12:5-11)

2. Continue in brotherly love (13:1)

3. Edify and build up the saints (10:23-25, 12:12)

4. Be holy toward all men (12:14)

5. Remain steadfast (3:12, 6:19)

6. Renew zeal for God’s promises (6:11-20, 12:1-3)

7. A faith that seeks a better homeland, so to live as strangers and pilgrims on this earth (Heb 11:13-14)

Hebrews Chapter 1 Lesson 1

**I. Jesus Christ is superior in every way (Heb 1:1-3)**

The writer of Hebrews moves directly into the heart of his subject matter within the first few verses of this chapter. He begins this epistle by introducing God as the primary source of this message. This would be important to the readers insuring them that the claims made in this epistle are from the one true God and not from man. From the time man was placed in the garden up until the days of Malachi, God spoke to man “*at various times*” (in many portions, or parts) revealing His will for man. Many of these *portions* included pieces of the *mystery* which would be revealed through His Son Jesus Christ (Rom 16:25-27). God also revealed His word “*in various ways*” to the fathers (those who were given charge over His people and/or those in roles of leadership) by the prophets (those who communicated God’s word). These “ways” included; direct revelations, dreams, visions, symbols, and nature itself (Rom 1:20). Angels also played an important role in delivering God’s message to His people. He will address the role of angels in the next section. But now “*in these last days*”, God has spoken to His people by His own Son who is due such honor. By the end of the third verse, the Hebrew writer has thoroughly established all the credentials of why Christ is due such honor. Christ is God’s Son, He is God’s heir, and He is in “*the brightness of* (God’s) *glory and the express image of* (God’s) *person*”. Christ is the creator and sustainer of the universe. He purged our sins and is now at the right hand of God. Jesus Christ is superior in every way thus He is due all authority including the authority over God’s covenant with man. The Hebrew writer will use these credentials as the basis of his arguments throughout the rest of the book.

1. Who is introduced first in this epistle? Is there any possible significance for this?
2. Who spoke in times past to the fathers? Who were the fathers?
3. In what ways has He spoken to man in the past?
4. When did God begin to use Christ as His spokesman?
5. Why is Christ a better spokesman?
6. Where does Christ now reside? What is the significance of this?

**II. Jesus is superior to the Angels (Hebrews 1:4-14)**

Now that the Hebrew writer has fully established Christ’s absolute authority, deity, and superiority, he now uses these qualities to demonstrate the superiority of Christ over that of the angels. The angels were viewed as prominent heavenly beings who served as messengers from God. Angels also were used by God to carry out His care for and wrath upon man. Since the readers of this letter knew these qualities of angels, the Hebrew writer begins his discussion of Christ’s authority over these heavenly beings in this section. He uses many of the arguments made in the first few verses to achieve this conclusion. The Hebrew writer also begins to incorporate many of the pieces or portions of prophetic information spoken about in verse one “at various times,” providing more evidence for these readers.

1. According to verse 4, what had Christ’s inheritance done for Him?
2. What question is asked in verse 5? What would be the conclusion of this question?
3. What were the angels commanded to do when Christ was brought into the world?
4. Angels were ministering spirits to God, but how is Christ’s position different as described here (7-9)?

1. What final comparison is made in verse 13?

Extra Credit

1. What are “these last days” in verse 2?
2. Does the Hebrew writer diminish the importance and role of Angels? Prove your answer using this first chapter.
3. How many times is the OT quoted in this chapter? What would be the significance? (Rom 16:25-27)

Hebrews Chapter 2 Lesson 2

**I. The Danger of Drifting (Heb 2:1-4)**

Angels relayed God’s messages in the past. Now that the authority of Christ has been established over that of the angels, the Hebrew writer warns his readers not to drift away from this message delivered by Him. In fact, they must give the more earnest heed or pay careful attention to Christ’s words due to His superiority. The Hebrew writer now uses an “a fortiori” argument (less to greater or “how much more” logical conclusion) to establish this point. If that which was spoken by the angels proved steadfast by God then “how much more” should we heed that which was spoken by Christ? There is absolutely no hope for our salvation if we neglect the teachings of God’s Son. These teachings (the gospel) were confirmed by those who heard and witnessed them. God’s affirmation of these teachings was confirmed by the use of miracles.

1. What were they to give a more earnest heed to? Why?
2. What were they in danger of?
3. Does this warning imply anything about the purpose of the letter? Discuss.
4. What would be the result of neglecting that which was spoken by Christ?
5. What additional evidence was given to affirm their testimony?

**II. Christ Became Flesh (2:5-9)**

The Hebrew writer now moves back to where he left off with the subject of angels. God intended to put “*the world to come*” in subjection to man and not under the subjection of angels. This “*world to come*” refers to this current time of salvation instituted by Christ (which should not be neglected). God was “*mindful*” of man, cared for him, made him a little lower than the angels, crowned him with glory and honor, and gave him dominion over this world (Psalm 8:3-8). In other words, God exalted man and gave him dominion over this world. But “now *we do not yet see all things put under him*”. Because of man’s rebellion, he lost this exaltation and dominion. These are now restricted by his sin. But now “*we see Jesus*”, who became flesh (lower than the angels), who suffered and died for man, become the complete fulfillment of Psalm 8:4-6 thus crowned with glory and honor. Jesus suffered and died so that by God’s grace He could pay the penalty of death required by all sinners (Rom 6:23).

1. Who was this world not put in subjection to?
2. Who did God intend to put this world in subjection to?
3. What did Jesus do by God’s grace? Explain

**III. Jesus our Savior (Heb 2:10-18)**

Continuing with the thoughts of verse 9, it was God’s plan, “*fitting for Him*”, to make “*the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings*”. In other words, the sufferings of Christ made His qualifications to bring men “*to glory*” complete (“*perfect*”). Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren now that they have been brought “*to glory*,” they are now a part of God’s family; they “*are all of one*”. The Hebrew writer now gives his readers more “*portions*” of prophetic information (Heb 1:1 “*at various times*”) providing more evidence of Christ’s superiority (Heb 2:12-13). Christ willingly took on the same nature of man, suffered as a man, and died as a man. But Christ conquered death therefore destroying him (the devil) who had the power of death. In other words, Christ destroyed Satan’s power of death over man. Man is no longer in bondage to death. Jesus is now introduced as their new High Priest. In order for Christ to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, he had to endure the same sufferings of man so that He could sympathize with man. As the high Priest offered atonement for the sins of man, Christ offered himself as their atonement (propitiation) for sin.

1. What is Jesus referred to in verse 10?
2. Why is Jesus not ashamed to call them brethren?
3. What commonality did Jesus have with His brethren? What was the result of this?
4. What benefit did the sufferings and temptations of Christ have for us?
5. Is it possible for us to drift away as well? How?

Extra credit

14. Is our status in relation to angels permanent? What about Christ’s current relationship to the angels?

Hebrews Chapter 3 Lesson 3

**I. Christ is Superior to Moses (Heb 3:1-6)**

The Hebrew writer continues with his theme that Christ is superior to anything else. He has already demonstrated that Christ is superior to the angels. He now moves on to the next logical conclusion: Christ is superior to Moses. Christ has already been introduced as a High Priest (Heb 2:17-18). Now He is introduced as an Apostle, one sent out by God to proclaim His message. As Moses was sent out to proclaim God's word, so now Christ has been sent out. Moses was a faithful servant but he was not God's Son. The argument is made; we now have a much better Apostle and High Priest because Christ is God's Son and the builder of what Moses proclaimed. In fact, Moses' testimony was "*a shadow of good things to come*" (Heb 10:1) which is here now. This is even more evidence for Christ’s superiority. Therefore, the Hebrew writer warns, "*hold fast*" with "*confidence*" your "*hope firm to the end*" because Christ is their Lord and Savior of whom Moses spoke of.

1. What two distinctions are given to Jesus?
2. Jesus is worthy of more glory than who?
3. Why was Jesus worthy of more glory? Explain.
4. What contrast is made in verses 5 and 6? What is the connection in verse 3?
5. What is the “house” referring to in verse 6? How do we enter this house?

**II. The Danger of Unbelief (Heb 3:7-19)**

Once again the Hebrew writer uses these “portions” of scripture the readers were familiar with to exhort them to remain faithful. Just like their forefathers who had to wander in the wilderness because they hardened their hearts, they too could fall short of their promised inheritance if they rebelled. This rebellion would consist of a “departing” back into Judaism or the way of the old covenant. Christ is God’s Son, His heir, and is superior to anything else; therefore, hardening their hearts toward His Son would be the same as departing from the living God. The Hebrew writer stresses that they should encourage one another daily while there is time, so that they may continue steadfastly in Christ’s teachings. The Israelites did not put their trust in God so they died in the wilderness without obtaining God’s promise of rest. Their disobedience and lack of confidence in God was a product of unbelief.

1. What were they in danger of hardening their hearts to?
2. What OT story is the Hebrew writer referring to? What had they done? What was their punishment?
3. What is this rest as inferred by the context?
4. According to verse 12, rejecting Christ was the same as rejecting who?
5. Why were they to “exhort” one another? How often? What should be the result?
6. How had they become “partakers of Christ” ?
7. What are they to have confidence in (14)? How long?
8. Why could they not enter His rest according to verse 19?
9. What are some ways we can exhort one another today? Will this have the same benefit?

Extra credit

1. What is the “heavenly calling” in verse 1?
2. What types of behavior are associated with unbelief? (consider how the Israelites behaved)

Hebrews Chapter 4 Lesson 4

**I. The Promise of God’s Rest (Heb 4:1-13)**

In the last chapter, we read how the children of Israel failed to enter God’s rest. This rest was a promise to the children of Israel as long as they were faithful to God. Of course they were not, so they could not enter His rest. This rest included the land of Canaan, which was promised to Abraham. The Hebrew writer now warns his readers that they too could fall short as the Israelites did and miss God’s promise of a rest. Here the Hebrew writer introduces a different type of rest. This is the type of rest that God had originally intended “*for we who have believed do not enter that rest*”. He proves this by making the argument “*if Joshua had given them rest, then God (through David) would not have afterward spoken of another day*”, “*Today if you w ill hear His voice …..*” (Psa 95:7-11). By the time of David, the Israelites were already in the land of Canaan. Therefore, there is another kind of rest the Hebrew writer is referring to. This (true) rest is like that of God’s when He rested on the Sabbath day after finishing His works. Since God promised this rest, “*there remains a rest*” open for His people. The Hebrew writer again admonishes them to be diligent so they can enter His rest and not “*fall after the same example of disobedience*”. This diligent obedience is very important since God’s word is living, powerful, piercing, penetrating, and knows the hearts of all men. They will all give an account to God just as their ancestors did.

1. What is the promise made? Why should they fear?
2. Why was the gospel of no profit to Israel? What was the result? Explain.
3. Describe the “rest” spoken about in Heb 3:7-11? Is this the same rest in Heb 4:3?
4. Does the Hebrew writer bring up another type of rest in verse 4? What does he compare this rest to?
5. Describe the argument made in verses 6-9.
6. Did Joshua give them rest?
7. What is promised in verse 9? Describe.
8. What warning is given to them in verse 11?
9. What is said about the word of God?
10. What will be required of every man?

**II. Come Boldly to the Throne (Heb 4:14-16)**

The Hebrew writer turns his attention back to the superiority of Christ. Now that they have a High Priest unlike any other, one who has passed through the heavens and is the Son of God, they are to “*hold fast*” to their faith in Him. Christ is not only a great High Priest because of His power, glory, and deity, but He is one who can also sympathize with them as well. He can have this compassion because He too was tempted in everyway as they were yet never sinned. Christ is superior in everyway! Therefore, come boldly or draw near to God’s throne of grace. It’s only through Christ that this access to the throne is possible. Before now the High Priest could only draw near to the throne and even then once a year under certain conditions. Now they all can approach God’s throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace in time of need. With these privileges, why would anyone consider turning back to the former ways? Thus, the purpose for this letter.

1. What reasons are given why Jesus is a better High priest? (list 3)

a.

b.

c.

1. What is our confession?
2. What can they do now but under the OT they could not? Why is this possible?

Extra credit

1. In what ways will our rest be similar to God’s (verse 9)?
2. From your study thus far, has the writer given any evidence for his comments in verses 12-13? List some that may apply.
3. What has changed so that we can “come boldly” to God’s throne? Was this always possible?

Hebrews Chapter 5 Lesson 5

**I. Christ is Superior as High Priest (Heb 5:1-10)**

The Hebrew writer has shown the superiority of Christ over the angels and that of Moses. He now shows how Christ is superior to that of the Aaronic type of Priesthood. He describes many qualities significant to the priesthood then goes on to describe how Christ fulfils or exceeds these same qualities.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Duties of a High Priest** | **Scripture reference: Heb. 5:1-4** | **Christ’s fulfillment** |
| He must be a member of the group he represents (he must be a man). | For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men |  |
| His role is to be the "interface" between men and their God | is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, |  |
| Offering sacrifices to God is his main job. | that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. |  |
| His understanding of man's plight enables him to treat men kindly when they make mistakes. | He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, |  |
| He must know from experience the problems that men face. | since he himself is also subject to weakness. |  |
| He offers the sacrifices to deal with the sin of the people he represents. | Because of it he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins, as for the people,….. |  |
| He himself must appear before God without sin. | so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. |  |
| He must be appointed by God, not himself. | And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. |  |

The Hebrew writer reminds them of another type of priesthood, that after the manner of Melchizedek. Melchizedek served as king of Salem, of whom Abraham paid tithes, and served as God’s High Priest (more will be discussed about Melchizedek in chapter 7). Christ serves as God’s High Priest in this manner. The Hebrew writer also reminds his readers of how Christ was made perfect through sufferings (Heb 3:10-the sufferings of Christ made His qualifications to bring men to glory complete or “perfect”). So now, “*having been perfected*”, Christ is the “*author*” of their eternal salvation. He was called by God to be their High Priest forever. Christ’s priesthood is superior to any other.

1. From what tribe of Israel did the priest come (Num 3:5-9, Heb 7:5)? What tribe was Jesus from (Heb 7:14)?
2. Why would the Hebrew writer mention Melchizedek here?
3. How are the qualities of a High Priest shown by Christ in verses 7 & 8?
4. What entitled Jesus to be the author of salvation? Explain.

**II. Spiritual Immaturity (Heb 5:11-14)**

The priesthood of Melchizedek, of whom they probably knew very little about or even nothing at all, was introduced in the last section. The Hebrew writer had a lot more to say about this type of priesthood but they were not spiritually mature enough to receive or even understand it. He scolds them for their spiritual immaturity and calls them slow learners. They are like newborn babes who need someone to feed them the food of a babe. They are inexperienced in God’s word of righteousness. By this time they should be mature Christians even having the ability to teach others. For those who are mature and have put their knowledge and understandings of God’s word to practice, can judge truth from error.

1. Why did he not finish telling them about the Melchizedekan priesthood?
2. What should they have been by this time?
3. What are “oracles” of God? What kind did they need?
4. How does he describe their immaturity? Discuss.
5. To whom does solid food belong? What does this quality allow them to do?

Extra credit

1. On the chart on page one, find those qualities that Jesus has satisfied as a High Priest according to verses Heb 4:14 and 5:5-10 and fill them in. (You may not be able to find all the items on the list.)

Hebrews Chapter 6 Lesson 6

**I. The Danger of Immaturity: Apostasy (Heb 6:1-8)**

At the end of the last chapter the Hebrew writer scolds the readers for their spiritual immaturity. He now encourages them to “go on to perfection” or to have complete maturity, to be “of full age”(Heb 5:14). He argues that they should not need to be taught the elementary principles of the gospel again; repentance, faith, baptism, lying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. The writer makes it clear that they should move beyond these first principles. He also warns them of the danger of apostasy (An abandonment of what one has professed or departure from one's faith or religion). Once they have been “enlightened” (illuminated; furnished with clear views) and have “tasted” (enjoyed with experience) God’s good word, and witnessed God’s miraculous power, to renew them again to repentance. In other words, after becoming a Christian and tasting God’s grace through the blood of His Son, and still turn their hearts from Him, then their hearts are so far removed from God that they will never desire repentance. It’s as if they crucify again the Son of God and put Him to open shame. The Hebrew writer makes the illustration of “cultivating” their hearts to receive God’s word. When their hearts have been cultivated so as to receive God’s word and they bear useful herbs, they will be blessed. But when their hearts do not receive God’s word and they bring forth useless thorns, they will be rejected and burned as the thorns.

1. What are the elementary principles listed here?
2. What does the writer say was impossible?
3. Why would this be impossible? Discuss.
4. What effect does this action have on their relationship with Jesus? What is the final result?
5. What kind of relationship with God is implied in verses 4 - 6a? What happened to this relationship?
6. Do these verses support the doctrine of once saved always saved?
7. Do these verses teach that if one falls away from God they can never return again? Explain.

**II. We Have an Anchor of the Soul: Hope (Heb 6:9-20)**

The Hebrew writer transitions from a stern warning of apostasy to a compassionate exhortation for spiritual maturity. God does see their good works and will give them credit. He now encourages them to continue in their good works until the end and not to become lazy. The writer also encourages them to be imitators (follow the examples) of those, who through faith and patience, have inherited the promises of God (more about faith in ch. 11). He continues to reassure them of God's absolute promises. He reminds them that God fulfilled His promise to Abraham. In fact, God so desired to show them (heirs of promise) the immutability of His counsel (unchanging purpose), that He confirmed it by two immutable things; by an oath and His promise. God's promises are immutable because, He cannot lie, and “*He swore by Himself*” and there is none higher than God by whom to confirm an oath. Therefore, this should be a great encouragement to lay hold of the expectations of heaven set before them. Since God’s promises are immutable, they can have hope. This hope is as sure as God’s promises; firm and stable. Therefore, this hope is their anchor for the soul. As an anchor reaches into the depths of the sea, their hope reaches behind the veil into the Holy of Holies where God Himself dwells. This place, the Holy of Holies, is where the High Priest would go once a year to make sacrifices for himself and the people (Lev 16). But now Jesus has entered behind the veil having become their High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

We are now beginning to see the developing concepts of shadows, patterns, and copies as they relate to God’s old covenant. The Hebrew writer will continue to develop these concepts to show how the old covenant served as a shadow or image of that which is real; the new covenant of Christ. In Galatians 3:23-25, Paul said that the law served as a tutor (schoolmaster) to bring us to Christ. (Also consider types & antitypes 1 Pet. 3:20-21; more on this subject in later chapters.)

1. What was the writer confident about?
2. What were they not to become? How were they to avoid this?
3. Why did God swear by Himself? What can God not do? What would you conclude about God’s promises?
4. What are the two immutable things?
5. How is our hope illustrated?
6. Can we become sluggish? How? How do you prevent this?

Extra credit

1. How is hope different from faith?
2. Extra bonus: Look up “schoolmaster” in a bible dictionary and discuss their role.

Hebrews Chapter 7 Lesson 7

**I. The Priesthood of Melchizedek (Heb 7:1-10)**

The Hebrew writer recounts Abraham’s meeting with Melchizedek (Gen 14:17-20). Abraham was returning from his victory over the kings who conquered Sodom and Gomorrah when he met up with Melchizedek. During this meeting Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils from his victory then Melchizedek blessed Abraham. As mentioned in lesson 5, Melchizedek was the king of Salem and served as God’s High Priest. Now the Hebrew writer brings out the superiority of Melchizedek’s priesthood to that of the Levitical priesthood. There is nothing mentioned in scripture about Melchizedek’s genealogy, who his parents were, nor when he was born and when he died, therefore he remains a priest continually, like the Son of God. It was Melchizedek who Abraham paid tithes to. Here the implication is; the greater receives tithes from the lesser. Although the priest of the Levitical priesthood received tithes from the people, it was from their father (ancestor) Abraham that Melchizedek received tithes. So, in a sense, Levitical priesthood paid tithes to Melchizedek through the ancestry of Abraham. Also, Abraham is blessed by Melchizedek; again the implication of the lesser is blessed by the greater. Therefore, one must conclude that the Melchizedekan priesthood is superior to that of the Levitical priesthood.

1. Who blessed Abraham?
2. What did Abraham give a tenth of?
3. What was Melchizedek without? Explain.
4. What was the significance of the Levites being descendants of Abraham?

**II. A Change of Priesthood (Heb 7:11-19 )**

The Levitical priesthood was not perfect nor the law which was under the priesthood, they could not deal sufficiently with the sins of man (Heb 10:1, Acts 13:39, Rom 8:3, Gal 3:21). Therefore, there needs to be a better way of dealing with sin; a better priesthood, one that is perfect, one that is endless, one like that of Melchizedek which is fulfilled in Christ. This priesthood is not one of weak fleshly requirements that were unprofitable, but one of power and endless life. This new priesthood does away with the old law it represents, provides a better hope, and a better way to draw near to God.

1. Why was there a need for another priesthood?
2. What other change was necessary?
3. What problem would the Jews have had with Christ serving as a priest?
4. Why was the first law annulled?
5. What did this new law bring in? Explain the significance.

**III. The Superiority of Christ’s Priesthood (Heb 7:20-28)**

Unlike the Levitical priest, Christ became their high priest by an oath of God. Because of this oath, Jesus has become a surety or “guarantor” (a bondsman; one who is bound, or who gives security, for another) for a better covenant (more about this covenant in ch. 8). Also, unlike the Levitical priesthood where many priests served because of death, Christ’s priesthood endures forever and is unchanging. Therefore, He is able to deliver from sin to the fullest degree possible (uttermost) those who draw near to God. He appeals to God on their behalf without ceasing. The Hebrew writer concludes his arguments of why Christ is a better High Priest by summarizing those essential characteristics of His priesthood that make it prefect, immutable, and everlasting (verses 26-28).

1. Give two reasons why Christ’s priesthood is better according to verses 20-21, 24. What advantage does this have?
2. What is the relationship between Christ and the covenant according to verse 22?
3. Why were there many priests from the Levitical priesthood? How is Jesus superior to the Levites in this respect?
4. What does the superiority of Christ do for us according to verse 25? How?
5. How is the frequency and nature of Jesus’ sacrifice different from that of the Levitical priesthood?

Extra Credit

1. List the characteristics of Jesus given in verse 26 and explain each.

Hebrews Chapter 8 Lesson 8

**I. Christ is the High Priest of the True Tabernacle (Heb 8:1-5)**

The Hebrew writer makes the point that now that Christ is their High Priest and seated at the right hand of God in heaven, He is worthy to be the mediator of a better covenant (Heb 8:6). He is worthy because He is the minister of the true sanctuary (most Holy place; “*behind the veil*” Heb 6:19 see notes) and the true tabernacle (not the copy erected by Moses) which is heaven. Since Christ is a High Priest, it is necessary for Him to offer sacrifices as well. The readers understood that He offered Himself as a sacrifice, but probably did not understand its significance by this point (Heb 5:12). Because Christ was not from the tribe of Levi, He could not serve as a High Priest while on this earth as a man. But since He is from another “tribe,” the order of Melchizedek, He can serve as High Priest from heaven where He now is enthroned. The Hebrew writer now directly speaks of the “old covenant” serving as a shadow, a copy, or a pattern, of the heavenly things (true tabernacle). Moses was instructed to “*make all things according to the pattern shown on the mountain*”. This “pattern” (type or image) is a copy of the real, in which Moses was allowed to see on the mountain, not the very thing (Heb 10:1). The old covenant including its visible objects, sacrifices, and ceremonies only represented a likeness (copy, shadow) of the true heaven.

The mysteries which God has kept secret are now revealed and made known by these prophetic scriptures (Rom 16:25, 26).

1. Where does Jesus serve as high priest? Where did the Levitical priest serve?
2. How is the tabernacle that the Lord erected different from man's? Explain.
3. Why could Jesus not serve as a priest here on earth?
4. What type of heavenly things did the Levitical priest serve? Explain.
5. What was Moses divinely instructed to do? How? What’s the significance?

**II. Christ is the Mediator of a Better Covenant (Heb 8:6-13)**

Since there was a change in priesthood, by necessity, there must be a change in covenants. For, the first covenant served as a copy or shadow of that which was real. Christ being the High Priest of the true tabernacle has now obtained a more excellent ministry (a service exalted in nature). He is now the mediator (intercessor) of this better covenant. Because this new covenant is superior and Christ is its negotiator, it is established on better promises (Gal 3:19, 20). The first covenant could not adequately bring men to God, it was weak and useless (Rom 8:3, Heb 7:18), it could not accomplish its purpose (Acts 13:39), it could not forgive sins (Heb 10:4,11). So, this is the reason for this new and better covenant. The Hebrew writer quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34 to demonstrate the fulfillment of this prophecy. Here we see once again, as we find throughout this letter, the Hebrew writer incorporating more portions of prophetic information spoken about in chapter 1 verse 1 “at various times” to substantiate his claims. The readers would be familiar with these OT scriptures and now they can have a complete confidence knowing that this new covenant is from God. When Jeremiah said “A new covenant”, he implied that the first was to become old. And now that Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, the old is “obsolete”.

1. What three things are better because Jesus is a better high priest? Tell how each are better.

1. Why is there a need for a better covenant?
2. What promise was made in verse 8? To whom? When was this promise made?
3. What would this promise mean to the reader of this letter?
4. When were they given this first covenant? What went wrong?
5. Where will God write His laws in the new covenant?
6. What final statement is made about the old covenant? What impact should this have on its readers?

Extra Credit

1. The author has by now given at lest two forms of evidence for his claims. What are they?
2. Compare and contrast the two types of sanctuaries implied in verse 2 and who ministered unto them.

Hebrews Chapter 9 Lesson 9

**I. The Earthly Tabernacle (Heb 9:1-10)**

In the last chapter, the Hebrew writer concludes that through Christ we have a better covenant so now the first covenant is “obsolete”. But, the first covenant did have its divinely appointed procedures of worship although its sanctuary was earthly (copy or shadow). The writer reminds his readers of the arrangement and the services preformed in this earthly tabernacle (verses 2-7). The entrance into the second part (Holiest of All: behind the veil) was restricted to only the high priest once a year (Day of Atonement). They could not enter without the shedding of blood first for themselves and then for the sins of the people. These restrictions signified “*that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing*”, these activities were only symbolic. The sacrificing of these animals could not remove sin (Heb 10:4) thus the high priests were not made “*perfect*” (clean from sin) in regard to their conscience so they entered only symbolically behind the veil. Since man could not enter the true Most Holy sanctuary (*Holiest of all*) because of sin, there needs to be one without sin in order to enter. So, until this One came, these carnal symbolic ordinances were imposed “*until the time of reformation*” (a making straight, restoring to its natural and normal condition). The answer to this reformation follows in the next verse, “*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation*”.

1. How many rooms did the tabernacle have? What separated them?
2. Who was the only one allowed in the second room? What was this room called?
3. How often did he go? What two sacrifices were required?
4. What was made manifest?
5. What was the problem with these sacrifices?

**II. The True Tabernacle (Heb 9:11-14)**

Now Christ has come as high priest of the true tabernacle. This tabernacle is not only greater but also perfect (complete) unlike the copy which was just described. This tabernacle is not made from a pattern by the hands of man but from God, “*For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, it is necessary that this One also have something to offer”* (Heb 8:3). Christ offered His own blood and not that of animals. Because He had no sin, He was able to enter the (true) Most Holy Place. Unlike those from the Levitical priesthood who had to enter the Most Holy Place on a yearly basis for himself and for the people, Christ entered once for all. This great sacrifice obtained for man an eternal redemption (deliverance from the penalty of sin). If this symbolic cleansing of sin by the blood of animals was good for that day (although imperfect-Heb 9:9), then the blood of Christ, who had no sin, is far more superior in that it completely cleanses all sin. Now that sin has been removed, they can now draw near to God (Heb 7:19) and serve Him.

1. Describe Christ’s tabernacle.
2. What was the blood of bulls and goats able to do? What was the blood of Jesus able to do?

**III. Christ: The Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15-22)**

Christ died for this reason; that all sin might be redeemed (to release by paying a ransom price). This includes all the sins in the past, at the present, and in the future (Rom 3:23-26). (This does not teach the continued cleansing of sin as some denominations teach, but that sin can be forgiven for those who seek forgiveness. Christ does not need to return again to cleanse future sin; His redemption is for all including the generations to come-next section.) Christ is now mediator for this new covenant. In other words, He intervenes and makes reconciliation on behalf of man so that “*those who are called*” or those who are drawn to God because of the gospel can receive the promise of heaven. Just like any other testament (rendered: “covenant”-NASV), this new testament is not valid until the death of its testator; Christ. The first covenant was ratified, but by the blood of animals. Christ ratified this new covenant by His own blood. God’s penalty for violating His law (sin) was death (the shedding of blood). Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission (of sin). God, for a time (Heb 9:9), accepted the blood of an animal in lieu of the transgressor. But now there is a better sacrifice which brought about a new and better covenant mediated by Christ.

1. What is Jesus the mediator of?
2. What was necessary for this new covenant to be valid?
3. What is necessary for the remission of sin?

**IV. Christ’s Sacrifice: Once for All (Heb 9:23-28)**

These true heavenly things required better sacrifices than the copies which were made with hands. Christ is this better sacrifice and has entered the true sanctuary (Most Holy Place) which is heaven, and He is now in the presence of God for us. Christ offered Himself once; one time for all times. He did not need to offer Himself many times because He offered His own blood without spot or blemish. This one time sacrifice is consistent with the lot of all men. Just as men die only once, then their judgment, Christ’s sacrifice was offered only once {for all times} to bear our sins. When He comes again He will make no new offering for sin; for His second coming will not be to bear the burden of our sins, but salvation for those who eagerly wait for Him.

1. How are the two types of heavenly things (tabernacles) described?
2. Where is Jesus now?
3. How many times did Jesus have to offer Himself?

Extra credit

1. How was Jesus able to enter the Most Holy Place? What did this do for man?
2. How is the “purifying of the flesh” different from “purging the conscience”?

Hebrews Chapter 10 Lesson 10

**I. Christ’s Sacrifice: Perfectly Sufficient for All (Heb 10:1-18)**

The Hebrew writer now brings his deliberation of the true heavenly things to a close by, once again, comparing the copies to that of the real. The law was a shadow (an image representing the real) of the new covenant of Christ. The sacrifices under the old covenant could not purge (cleanse) sin, they just reminded them of their sins. Because it was not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, Christ came to do His Father’s will and take away the sins of the world with His own blood. In doing this, Christ satisfied all the requirements of the law, fulfilling it (Matt 5:17-18), thus removing the first covenant and establishing the new (second). Now that sin has been sufficiently purged, man can be sanctified (to purify, set apart, renewing of the soul) so that he can now draw near to God. Christ’s sacrifice was perfectly sufficient to take away sin so that it was done once for all and for all generations. He now sits at the right hand of God. His enemies are completely subdued because of His position. The Hebrew writer now finalizes their confidence in Christ and the forgiveness of sin by reminding them of Jeremiah’s prophecy of God’s promise of a new covenant which was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:33,34; see notes ch. 8). Therefore, when sin is completely forgiven, there is no need for any more sacrifices.

The readers of this letter should by now have compete confidence in Jesus Christ as their savior who has delivered then from an inferior system of removing sin to a superior new covenant which was sanctified by His own blood. The Hebrew writer now turns his attention to the application of this message. For the remainder of this letter, he exhorts them to draw near to God with full confidence, to remain steadfast in this new living way; he encourages spiritual maturity and love, and continues his warning of apostasy.

1. How is the law compared?
2. What were these sacrifices unable to do? List two things.
3. What did God not desire and had no pleasure in?
4. Why did Jesus come into the world? What was the result according to vs. 9?
5. How were we sanctified? How thorough was this sacrifice?
6. What further evidence does the writer give them to ensure their confidence?

**II. Confidence to Draw Near to God (Heb 10:19-25)**

They can now have complete confidence (boldness) in the ability to approach God because Christ has entered the Most Holy place for them, through the veil by His own blood. He is now their High Priest (forever) who sits at the right hand of God (as mediator). This ability to finally approach God through His Son’s sacrifice is the “new and living way”. The writer now begins his appeal for them to make application of this new gospel in their lives. Having faith in Christ as our high priest, “*let us*” draw near to God with a sincere heart with all confidence knowing that they have been cleansed from sin. Having a faith that produces hope, “*let us*” hold firmly to what we believe about the promises of heaven without being shaken or moved (Hope as an anchor; see notes on hope ch. 6). Having confidence in our hope “*let us*” consider attentively and stir up (incite to action) one another to love and good works. The practical application of considering one another follows in the next verse (26). They should desire to be together and have fellowship with one another so that they have the opportunity to admonish, exhort, strengthen, comfort, and instruct one another. Why would you choose not to do this?

1. What were they encouraged to enter? How? Explain?
2. What did the veil represent? When was it removed for us (see Matt 27:50-51)?
3. Since Jesus is now our high priest what are we encouraged to do?
4. What kind of faith are we to have? What kind of hope?
5. What attitude should we have toward one another knowing all these things (24, 25)?

**III. The Danger of Drawing Back (Heb 10: 26-39)**

Now that they can draw near to God in full confidence knowing all truth, if they turn back to their former ways and forsake the gospel of Christ, there remains no sacrifice for sin. They will be judged and punished as an adversary- spiritual death. For if they were punished (put to death) for rejecting the Law of Moses, then even more so for rejecting the Son of God. Drawing back from this new covenant is the same as denying Christ, His great sacrifice, the work of the Holy Spirit, and God. The writer provides them a familiar quote form Deut. 32, God will judge and repay them for their unrighteous deeds. Therefore, be fearful! The writer now reminds them of how zealous they were when they first received the truth. They endured all sorts of persecution. They even comforted others who were undergoing the same struggles including the Hebrew writer himself. He pleads with them not to lose this confidence in Christ they once had. He exhorts them to remain patient and steadfast knowing in the end they will receive the promise. Therefore, do not draw back!

1. What is the result if we sin willfully?
2. How is rejecting Christ’s new covenant compared to rejecting Moses’ law?
3. List the types of persecutions they endured in the past. What did this indicate about their zeal?
4. Why should they continue to endure?

Extra credit

1. How shall the just live? How do you become justified?
2. What is this "day" in verse 25?
3. Is vs. 25 a command to assemble? Discuss.

Hebrews Chapter 11 Lesson 11

**I. The Nature of Faith (Heb 11:1- 3)**

In the previous chapter, the Hebrew writer emphasizes to his readers the roll of faith in their service to God. He concludes his remarks with a quote from Hab. 2:3-4 “*the just shall live by faith*” to provide further evidence of its importance. It is obvious that these brethren did not have a mature concept of faith as they should (Heb 5:12), or possibly no understanding at all. Many were once heavily steeped in their own traditions and rituals as pertaining to the old law (Matt 15:3-9), thus possibly losing the spiritual aspect of worshipping God. The writer now defines faith and demonstrates to his readers that faith has always been a necessary requirement in serving God. He uses the exemplary lives of those well known to them (Heb 11:4-40) to show that it was faith that made these righteous before God.

Faith is the substance (confidence, firm trust, assurance) of God’s promise of salvation, the evidence (proof, conviction) of God’s unseen existence, wisdom, power, and the heavenly realm. It was through faith that the “fathers” (Heb 1:1) received divine approval. The writer now makes the point, because of faith we can confidently know that the world was created by Him. God made what we see (the worlds) out of noting (things we don’t see-invisible) {deductive faith} therefore, we can have full confidence in what we don’t see; promise of heaven {inductive faith}.

1. Describe the two expressions which are used to define faith. What is the significance of each?
2. What is the relationship between the “seen” and “unseen” (not visible) in terms of faith?
3. **Exemplary Lives of Faith (Heb 11:4-40)**

The Hebrew writer now begins his discourse showing that faith is and was always necessary in the lives of His people so that they could be well pleasing to Him and righteous in His sight.

1. The Faith of those in the ancient world- (Before Abraham) Heb. 11:4-7

It was through Abel’s great faith in offering an acceptable sacrifice to God that his testimony still speaks (Heb 12:1). By faith Enoch served God so he was taken before death. As shown by these two great examples, it is impossible to please God without faith. The writer now applies the definition of faith to encourage their confidence in God; “*we must believe that He is*” {deductive faith}, and “*that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*” {inductive faith}. This was the type of faith shown by Noah {inductive faith} in that he acted with obedience to God for that which was “*not yet seen*”. Because of his faith, he became heir (acquired or obtained) righteousness before God.

1. The faith of Abraham, of whom the promises were made. Heb. 11:8-12

It was Abraham’s faith, their “father” to whom the promises were made, that accredited him for righteousness (Gen 15:6, Rom 4:1-3). Abraham’s first demonstration of faith in God was when he was called to leave his home and journey to a place all the while not knowing where he was going (the unseen). By faith both Sarah and Abraham trusted in God’s promise of a great nation through their seed even though they were too old to conceive (as good as dead).

1. A faith that sees the true homeland. Heb 11:13-16

These great heroes of faith were so firmly convinced of God’s promises that it is as if they actually saw them with their own eyes {inductive faith} (Jn 8:56) even though they died before there fulfillment. Because they embraced and sought after God’s promise of a real “homeland” (true tabernacle- heaven), they recognized that they were just foreigners (without the country or jurisdiction) and pilgrims (a wanderer; a traveler) during their stay here on earth. By the actions of their faith they made it clear that they were seeking a better land a “*heavenly country*”. Because of their great faith in Him, God is not ashamed to be called their God.

1. Faith as seen in the Patriarchs and Moses. Heb. 11:17-29

Abraham’s third great demonstration of faith came when he offered up Isaac. He knew it was through Isaac that God’s promise of the seed would come, but offered him anyway having faith that God would raise him from the dead. The writer goes on to remind the readers about the faith of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses’ parents, and Moses. Because Moses also sought for a better homeland, he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, denied the temporary pleasures of sin, and considered the reproach (defamation) of Christ more valuable than any of the treasures Egypt could offer. Moses’ great faith allowed him to see the unseen {inductive faith} including the deliverance from bondage in Egypt and the true homeland with God.

1. Faith as seen by many others. Heb. 11:30-40

It was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell down under the leadership of Joshua. Rahab knowing of God’s care and deliverance of Israel, by faith, trusted that she would receive the same. The writer recalls others who showed great acts of faith and spoke of many more who suffered all kinds of trials and persecutions even unto death. All these valiantly served God through faith in order to receive the same rewards that these readers were promised and should aspire to obtain.

1. How does Abel still speak? What’s the message?
2. What is required from us to please God? What must we believe?
3. What was unique about Noah’s faith? How should this affect our faith in God?
4. List three great acts of faith demonstrated by Abraham (11:8-19)
5. How was Abraham “as good as dead”? Who are these descendants in verse 12?
6. Were these “heirs of the promise” able to see the promise? Explain.
7. How did they view their lives at the moment? What did this indicate about the promise?
8. What proof is given about this promise (vs. 15)?
9. Why is God not ashamed to be their God?
10. Besides Abraham what other “heirs of promise” are listed?
11. What did Moses chose over the Kingdom of Egypt? What was this likened to (vs. 26)?
12. Our faith should be as strong as all these heroes of faith. Their faith allowed them to undergo sufferings beyond anything we could imagine today. List some of these sufferings they had to endure in verses 35-40. **How were they able to do this?**

Extra credit

1. Explain the difference between deductive and inductive faith. Discuss how these affect our faith.

Hebrews Chapter 12 Lesson 12

**I. Run the Race with Endurance (Heb 12:1-4)**

In the last chapter, the Hebrew writer chronicled the faiths of these “*great cloud of witnesses*” who had persevered to the end so that they could realize the promises of God. The testimony of these “*cloud of witnesses*” surrounds them now. In other words, the great examples of faith in the last chapter are a witness (testimony) for them. He now challenges his readers to apply the same kind of faith in their own walks of life. Using the analogy of an athlete, they are to remove any form of hindrance or sin which may cause them to fall short of their goals. They, like their predecessors, are to run with endurance (a patient enduring, perseverance) looking unto Jesus. Run as if Jesus is standing at the finish line waiting for the runner to cross since He is the author (captain; one who takes the lead) and finisher (perfecter: one that makes perfect) of our faith. The writer now brings the focus back to the sufferings of Christ. Jesus had joy knowing that His sacrifice on the cross, although cruel and disgraceful, would allow salvation for all men and allow Him to sit at the right hand of the throne of God. They are encouraged to endure not only as those “*great cloud of witnesses*” did, but also as Jesus endured so that they do not become weary and discouraged. He reminds them that they have not yet suffered as others (resisted to bloodshed-death) striving against sin.

1. Who are these witnesses?
2. Describe the analogy given of athletes and how it applies to this exhortation. List some examples.
3. How could Jesus find joy?
4. What had they not done yet?

**II. God Chastens Those He Loves (Heb 12:5-11)**

The likelihood of coming persecution and trials are evident and many times designed by God for their own good. The writer reminds them of this by quoting from Proverbs 3:11-12. God only disciplines those whom He loves. Knowing this, do not regard His discipline as a trivial thing nor be discouraged but know that you are loved and made better by it. Because God is treating them as sons, they will receive discipline. In fact, those who do not receive discipline are illegitimate and not one of His sons. If they were subject to their earthly fathers and respected their discipline, how much more should they respect that of God’s? Enduring God’s discipline may be unpleasant for the time but it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness (spiritual maturity).

1. What exhortation were they given as sons (5)?
2. Why should they accept this?
3. What should be the result of God’s chastening?

**III.** **Keeping the Paths to Heaven Straight and Clean** **(Heb 12:12-17)**

The writer now addresses the attitude they should have towards those who are (*spiritually*) weak. He admonishes them to renew again the courage of those who are discouraged and to lighten the load for those who are weighed down with heavy burdens by making the paths easy for themselves as well for those who struggle so they do not fall away but grow (*spiritually*) as a result. They are to show a spirit of kindness (peace) toward all men with an attitude that sets them apart from the world (holiness) even through persecution. They are to watch out for one another’s souls so that no one drifts away. He warns them to be on guard of those who could have a negative influence (idolaters, fornicators/immorality, or a godless person like Esau) which like a “root of bitterness”- Deut 29:18, may cause some to become defiled. Just as Esau could not regain his birthright after his fate was sealed (found no place for repentance), they too could lose their souls after their fate is sealed (fall short of the grace of God).

1. Discuss how they were to treat those who were weak.
2. How were they to treat all men?
3. What were they to be cautious of? What could be the result?

**IV.**  **A Greater Mountain: Mt. Zion (Heb 12:18-24)**

The writer now brings their thoughts back to the original purpose of his letter; Jesus the better way. He again contrasts the old physical images of worship to the new and better way in Christ Jesus. They are no longer required to look to a mountain which “can be touched” (physically Mt. Sinai; which could not be touched by them, blackened by fire, darkness, and full of fear). But now, they have a better place to come; the spiritual Mt. Zion. The writer symbolically describes Mt. Zion as a city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem in which they can now come. Unlike Mt. Sinai, they can have fellowship with (touch) Mt. Zion because the blood of Christ has cleansed them (12:24). This heavenly city includes an innumerable (joyful assembly) of angels, Christians who are citizens of heaven (church of the firstborn), God the Judge of all, all those who lived righteously from the time of Abel until the fulfillment of the law, and Jesus the Mediator of this new covenant whose blood sacrifice was better than that of Abel’s.

1. Contrast the two types of mountains.
2. What do these mountains represent?

**V.**  **The Last Warning (Heb 12:25-29)**

The writer now gives his last warning to the readers against turning back to their former ways. He instructs them not to refuse Jesus who now speaks to them from Heaven. If they (Israel) did not escape when they refused God (through Moses’ teaching) how much more shall they not escape if they refuse Him who gave His own blood and now reigns from heaven for them? God’s voice then shook the earth from Mt. Sinai, but now as promised in Hag 2:1-9, He will shake heaven and earth once more. This shaking will remove (destroy) all things that are physical in nature (the old covenant) including the old law, but the true spiritual things (God’s heavenly kingdom) will remain. Therefore, since they are now a part of God’s heavenly kingdom which can not be shaken, they should have gratitude (grace) and serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For God is a consuming fire; like that which Israel saw on the top of Mt. Sinai (Exo. 24:17 ).

1. What warning is given? Why?
2. What promise is quoted from Haggai 2:6?
3. What was the result of heaven and earth being shaken?

Extra credit

1. What could they do on the second mountain that could not be done on the first? Why?

Hebrews Chapter 13 Lesson 13

**I. An Exhortation to Love, Hospitality, Honor, and Contentment (Heb 13:1-6)**

The Hebrew writer now brings his exhortations to these brethren to a close. In concluding this letter, his major focus seems to be on their spiritual growth and maturity in the Lord. Since the writer was probably familiar with many of their situations and weaknesses, he takes the opportunity to address many of these as well. He, again, reassures their confidence in Christ and this message by reminding them of scripture which would have been familiar. The writer has already encouraged them to “*exhort one another daily, while it is called "today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*” (Heb 3:13) and to “*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works*” (Heb 10:24). He now reminds and reinforces this attitude by instructing them to continue in brotherly love. Coupled along with this attitude of brotherly love is an exhortation to show hospitality (love to strangers). This hospitality extends to those who are in prison and others who are mistreated. Their love for them is to be as if they were undergoing the same afflictions. And as in the case of Abraham (Gen 18), they may entertain angels while doing this. He reminds them that marriage is to be held in high esteem in all respects; God will judge those who are immoral. The writer encourages them to be content with what they have and not to covet. He encourages them to overcome covetousness by trusting in God. By quoting from familiar scriptures, he reassures them of God’s care; Joshua 1:5 “*I will not leave you nor forsake you*” and Psalms 118 “*the Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?*”

1. What request is made in verse 1? Had they been doing this anyway?
2. What may be a result of entertaining strangers?
3. Who were they instructed to remember? In what manner?
4. How were they to view marriage?
5. How was their conduct to be and not to be?

**II. Go With Him Outside the Camp (Heb 13:7-14)**

The writer encourages them to remember those who had lead them in the past and to look back upon how they lived their lives. In other words, imitate the same kind of faith these rulers had. He reassures their confidence in Christ by assuring them that the message which was preached from the beginning will never change (Heb 1:12). Therefore, they are not to be led astray by some new or different teaching contrary to that of Christ’s. They are now to be strengthened by God’s grace and no longer by old covenant customs or rituals (food) which did not profit them. The writer implies that they now have a better altar (sacrifice) than the one the priest served under the old covenant. Under the old law in the Day of Atonement, the high priest could not partake of the sacrifice after the sin offering was made (Lev 16). These sacrifices had to be taken outside the camp and burned. In like manner, Jesus was also taken outside the camp (gate) and crucified. He suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. So therefore, they too must go outside the camp and bear His reproach (1 Pet. 4:13). This is the writer’s final exhortation for them to completely remove themselves from the old covenant; they too must go outside the camp of “Jerusalem” leaving the old requirements of the law and follow Christ. This earthly city (Jerusalem) will not last, but that city promised to their father Abraham (Heb 11:10), to that “*great a cloud of witnesses*” (Heb 11:13-14), and to them will endure forever.

1. Who are those in verse 7?
2. What is said of Jesus in verse 8? Explain.
3. How does verse 8 support verse 9a?
4. Where did Jesus offer His blood for the people? Where should they go to be sanctified? What did this mean for them symbolically?
5. What future city do we seek?

**III. Spiritual Sacrifices of Praise and Service (Heb 13:15-25)**

Now that the old law is done away with, their sacrifices are to be spiritual in nature. Therefore, they are to continually offer sacrifice of praise to God with thanksgiving from the fruit of their lips. Coupled along with these sacrifices, the writer reminds them not to forget the sacrifice of doing good (service) and sharing (showing liberality) to those in need. With all these (spiritual) sacrifices, God is well pleased. The writer reminds them to obey and submit to their Elders making their (shepherding) as easy as possible since they are responsible for their souls. The writer gives his final salutation to the brethren with hopes of returning to them soon requesting their prayers for this reason. He assures them that he has written this letter with a pure conscience acting only in their best interest. His prayer for them is that the God of peace, who sent His Son to establish this new covenant make them complete (perfect) in doing His will and that they may be well pleasing in His sight. He appeals to them one last time to heed to the exhortations in this letter. He acknowledges that Timothy has been set free (possibly from prison) and hopes to come with him. He now gives his final greetings including regards from those in Italy.

1. How often are we to offer sacrifices of praise to God? Where do these sacrifices come from?
2. What other sacrifices are required other than praise?
3. Who is verse 17 referring to? How do you make their “job” joyous? How does it profit you?
4. What was the writer confident in?
5. What had he hoped to do soon? Had he done this before?

Extra credit

1. What is meant by “let the heart be establishing by grace, not with food” (9)?

**Helpful resources:** The Book of Hebrews

⮚ Jesus Christ Today: A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews. By Neil R. Lightfoot

⮚ A Commentary on Hebrews. By Robert Milligan

⮚ Hebrews: The Superiority of Christ. (workbook) By Robert Harkrider

⮚ Hebrews: A Bible Study Guide. (workbook) By David Holder

⮚ Jesus vs. Judaism: The Book of Hebrews (class material) By Jim Jonas, Embry Hills church of Christ

⮚ The Epistle to the Hebrews (class material) By Sewell Hall, Embry Hills church of Christ

⮚ The Book of Hebrews (workbook) By Johnny Stringer

⮚ Barns Notes By Albert Barnes