

Introduction: To the Hebrews

Recipients

Since the 2nd century, this book has been known as “To the Hebrews,” and this tradition provides the best evidence of the book’s intended recipients. The author does not identify a particular church or the city of its original recipients. Neither word, “Jew” or “Gentile,” is found in the book. However, the author does identify himself with the recipients (“we”), calling them “brethren” of Christ (2:11, 17) and “holy brethren” (3:1). Some might assume that the references to the Hebrew “fathers” (Heb 1:1; 3:9; 8:9) are enough to dictate a Jewish audience (but see a similar generic use of “fathers” in 1Cor 10:1; 1Pet 1:18; and 2Pet 3:4). Furthermore, the author’s claims of Christ’s superiority to Moses and the Levitical priesthood, and also, of the help offered to Abraham’s descendants, would generally be of more interest to Jews than to Gentiles.

In any case, the recipients were well-known to the author. The author expected that (by then) they should be teachers (5:12); he was confident that they would do better than those who fall away (6:9); he remembered their good works and labor of love (6:10) and the persecution which they had already endured (10:32; 12:4); he asked them to pray for him (13:18); and he looked forward to visiting them (13:19, 23). The author wrote to these believers to encourage them to go on to maturity and become teachers and to imitate those who by faith had obtained God’s promise and His rest. He also warned them not to neglect the Word of Christ, not to fall away from the doctrine of the New Covenant, and not to count as unholily Christ’s blood of the Covenant.

Most interesting is the comparison of the Old Covenant spoken to the Israelites with the New Covenant spoken by Christ to His disciples. Indeed, the book’s opening thought introduces a change in dispensations: whereas God spoke to the fathers in times past, He has now spoken to us by His Son (Heb 1:1-2). Through Christ, God is changing everything, making things “so much better” (1:4). The book’s recipients are directed to see the rebellious Israelites as examples of what they must avoid if they are to inherit God’s promises (3:7-4:13; 6:1-12; 10:28; 12:25-29). The first, “old” Covenant could not make its adherents “perfect/mature” (9:9; 10:1), but Christ through the everlasting New Covenant can (10:14; 13:20-21). The first Covenant required continuous, yearly sacrifices and provided only limited access to God’s presence in the Holy of Holies (9:10); now that the time of reformation has come, Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, has through His blood provided all believers access to God’s presence in the heavenly Holy of Holies (9:15; 10:16-22).

After surveying the book’s contents, one can safely assume that its original recipients were Jewish believers (Hebrew Christians) who through the blood of the New Covenant (Christ’s sacrifice) were given the privilege of access to God the Father. These Jewish believers had faced persecution (probably in Palestine) and many had gone to live among the Gentiles in other places (such as Galatia). The author is warning these Jewish believers not to return to the Old Covenant since its sacrifices are no longer effective to atone for their sin. If they return to the Old Covenant, they will not be pleasing God and will not enter God’s rest, losing the inheritance which they would have received under the New Covenant as partakers with Christ.

Author and Date

For the modern reader, the identity of the author of Hebrews is now uncertain. With meager internal evidence available, only a few tentative assertions can be made as to its authorship and date. The author was thoroughly familiar with Hebrew history, traditions, and Scriptures. The author also had knowledge of Timothy’s recent release from prison and his future plans (13:23). This knowledge, along with the greeting “from the Italians” (13:24), supports the theory that the book was initially sent from Rome. The date of its authorship must therefore be during the ministry of Timothy in the latter half of the First Century. The author refers to a time when his audience was persecuted while he was in chains. This very likely refers to Nero’s persecution, beginning in AD 64, directed toward Christians but not yet toward the Jews. A further suggestion of an early date comes from the author’s apparent lack of information concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in AD 70. If Jerusalem and the Temple had already been destroyed, this historical fact would have conclusively proved the author’s argument that the Old Covenant and its rites had been superseded. Thus, the best theory is that the author was very familiar with Jewish heritage, was an associate of Timothy, living in Asia or near Rome, and was writing before AD 70. Later in the First Century, Clement of Rome quoted from Hebrews in a letter he wrote to the Corinthian church. This fact provides extra-biblical evidence that the book must have been written earlier than AD 95. The wide-spread tradition of the early church was that Paul was the author.

Purpose

The Book of Hebrews was written to explain the extensive change from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, God's most recent revelation which came by His Son, the Christ. This change is seen first in the prophetic message delivered by the Son of God: that it is better than the Old Covenant given through the angels and the prophets. Second, the change was necessary because the Son of God was made a High Priest, superior to the Levite priests who served under the Old Covenant. Third, the change is evident in that the Son of God mediated a better (New) Covenant under which He ministers and through which they have access to God.

Because of the change to the New Covenant, the author warns believers not to return to the Old Covenant for these reasons: **1)** if a believer neglects the greater salvation offered by the New Covenant, he will suffer punishment greater than the Israelites who disobeyed the Old Covenant (2:1-4); **2)** if a believer has a stubborn heart which stops believing and refuses to obey God, he is departing from the living God (3:12) like the Israelites who refused to go into the Promised Land (3:18-19), and likewise he also will not enter into God's (ultimate) rest (4:4:1-13); **3)** if a believer becomes dull of hearing instead of going on to perfection (5:11-6:3), and he falls away from God (6:6), it is impossible for him to renew the New Covenant because Christ cannot be crucified again (6:4-8); **4)** if a believer sins willfully after receiving knowledge of New Covenant truth, since there is no more sacrifice for sin, there remains only a certain expectation of judgment (10:26-31); **5)** if a believer falls behind in the grace of God, he will become bitter and will end up defiling other believers (12:15-17); **6)** since the Israelites who refused God when He spoke on the earth at Mount Sinai did not escape punishment, if a believer turns away from God when He spoke from Heaven through Christ, he certainly shall not escape punishment (12:18-29).

Background

To understand the background of the book, one must begin with the change of circumstances of the first Jews who accepted the crucified and risen Christ. For the first ten years or so, the early church was composed exclusively of Jews and Jewish proselytes, that is, until the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10, about AD 40). The apostles understood that the New Covenant promised by God (Jer 31:31-34) was ratified by Christ's blood (Lk 22:20; cf. Mt 26:28). Notably, God's promise to "pour out [His] Spirit on all flesh" was the distinctive sign marking the commencement of the New Covenant (Acts 2:16-21, 38-39). Therefore, confusion arose after Cornelius' conversion because the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles converted to Christ. Although initially surprised, those who heard Peter's account "glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life'" (Acts 11:18).

Certainly, it was not new or surprising that Gentiles could be converted and become righteous before God by being justified by faith (i.e. Job and Naaman). Previously, if a Gentile believer was to receive God's covenant blessing, he would have to become a Jewish proselyte. Thus, what was surprising to these Jewish believers is that, without the Gentiles becoming proselytes, the Holy Spirit "fell on them as upon us [Jews] at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). Since the Jews thought that God's promise was exclusively for the houses of Judah and Israel (Jer 31:31), they also assumed that the Holy Spirit, as a sign of the New Covenant, would be a gift exclusively for the Jews. So, before this event, the disciples had "preach[ed] the word to no one but the Jews only" (Acts 11:19). However, soon after the events at Cornelius' house, when some evangelists traveled to Antioch and preached to the Greeks ("Hellenists"), "the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:21).

About this same time (around AD 45 according to church tradition), Matthew, the apostle, wrote his gospel which recorded Christ's new commandments and His final commission to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you" (Mt 28:19). Thus the Greeks were included in the church assembly, and very significantly, "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

Why were the Gentile believers at Antioch called "Christians"? First, and most obviously, because they acted like "little christs," earning them a label which was probably intended to be belittling. Second, these Gentile believers could not be called "Jews," because they had not become proselytes submitting to the Law of Moses. The fact that Gentile believers were not coming under the authority of the Old Covenant nor "circumcis[ed] according to the custom of Moses" (Acts 15:1) caused dissension in the church and became the issue of a church counsel in Jerusalem (Acts 15, about AD 50). After hearing some evidence presented by Peter and Paul, the church leadership in Jerusalem concluded that the Gentiles believers did not have to submit to the Old Covenant by being circumcised or by keeping the Law of Moses (Acts 15:24-29).

Even Peter had been somewhat slow to appreciate the shift from the Old Covenant dispensation to the New Covenant. Initially, when the Lord revealed to him that the dietary commands of the Old Law had been abolished, Peter refused to accept the divinely-revealed change until he had seen the vision three times (Acts 10:9-16). The Lord gave these visions to Peter to prepare him to accept the Gentiles' inclusion into the New Covenant without requiring that they become Jewish proselytes (i.e. Cornelius and his house, Acts 10:34-48).

When Peter stood before the Council of Jerusalem, he explained what he knew concerning the changes under the New Covenant. A significant change under the New Covenant is that the previous distinction between Jew and Gentile is no longer important and that both will be saved in the same manner:

“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they” (Acts 15:7-11).

By giving the Holy Spirit to both Jew and Gentile, God recognized both as partakers of the New Covenant. Peter, knowing the Jews' expectation, makes a notable switch during his testimony at the Jerusalem Council: they expected him to say “the Gentiles will be saved in the same manner as the Jews;” instead, surprisingly, he says, “[the Jews] shall be saved in the same manner as [the Gentiles].” Peter's announcement had huge implications about this dispensational change, many of them not yet fully understood by these early church leaders.

How will the Jew and the Gentile be saved? Of course one becomes a child of God, without keeping the Old Covenant Law, simply through belief in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, Peter is not referring to initial salvation, he is referring to “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Pet 1:5), “the end of your belief—the salvation of your souls” (1Pet 1:9). Unfortunately, in James' conclusion before the Council of Jerusalem, he stops short, failing to proclaim that Jewish believers were no longer under the Old Covenant Law. However, soon after, when he writes his epistle, he explains that all believers are under a new Law and should “so speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty” (Jas 2:12).

Some of the Jewish believers, especially the Pharisees, were not happy that all of their long-held traditions were suddenly no longer required in order to please God. Their customs were not to be enforced upon other believers. In spite of the decision of the Council of Jerusalem, the Judaizers taught that the Law commanded in the Old Covenant should be carried over into the New Covenant. Apparently, in Galatia the Judaizers had great success in convincing many Gentile believers to endeavor to keep the Old Law.

In much of his writing, Paul tries to correct the erroneous doctrine spread by the Judaizers. He describes the Judaizers as “deceitful brethren secretly brought in who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage” (Gal 2:4). In Galatians, Paul asserts that there is only one gospel of Christ applying to both Jew and Gentile (Gal 1:6-9). He explains that when he took Titus, a Gentile believer, to Jerusalem, he would not yield to the pressure from the Judaizers to have Titus circumcised “that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal 2:5).

Then Paul gives an example of how James, Peter, and John, the leaders (“pillars,” Gal 2:9) of the church, understood this truth intellectually, but in practice were sometimes hypocrites. “Now when Peter had come to Antioch . . . before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy” (Gal 2:11-13). Paul confronted Peter to his face. Why? because Peter was to be blamed for living as the Gentiles lived when the Judaizers were absent, and then leading others in this hypocrisy when the Judaizers were present. Paul explains: “But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?’” (Gal 2:14). The truth of the gospel is that “a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified” (Gal 2:16).

After having made the point that the Law of Moses cannot justify anyone, Paul does not stop. He presses the issue, informing those who are justified by Christ that if they also seek to keep the Old Law then they will be “found sinners” (Gal 2:17). “For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I, through the law, died to the law that I might live to God” (Gal 2:18-19). How had Paul died to the

Old Law? He explains, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal 2:20). If Paul were to endeavor to be righteous by keeping the Old Law, he would be setting aside the grace of God: “for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain” (Gal 2:21). For everyone who believes, Christ has ended the Old Law as the way of being righteous before God (Rom 10:3-4).

Paul continues his discussion with the “foolish Galatians” who have been “bewitched” by the deceitful doctrine of the Judaizers so that they are not obeying the truth (Gal 3:1). Paul reminds them that everyone who does the works of the Old Law is under its curse (Gal 3:10). Paul also explains the superiority of God’s promise to Abraham over those of the Law of Moses (Gal 3-4). To conclude his discussion, Paul begins by warning the Galatians not to follow the Judaizers: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing” (Gal 5:1-2). By going back to the Old Law, a believer comes under bondage to the Old Law; he is estranged from Christ and falls from grace (Gal 5:3-4). Instead, believers “have been called to liberty . . . through love, [they are to] serve one another” (Gal 5:13). “If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law” (Gal 5:18). In fact, believers are to “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ” (Gal 6:2).

The exact phrase “Law of Christ” is infrequent in the New Testament Scriptures (Gal 6:2; cf. 1Cor 9:21). Logically however, if the Old Covenant is called “the Law of Moses,” then the New Covenant would be called “the Law of Christ.” This fact helps to explain how a believer who is being “led by the Spirit” of the New Covenant is “not under the Law” of the Old Covenant. Along this same line of reasoning, in Romans, Paul writes that believers are to walk according to “the Law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ,” which has freed us from “the law of sin and death” (Rom 8:1-2).

Contents

Finally, the stage has been set for the book of Hebrews and its contribution to this discussion concerning the change from the Old Covenant economy to the superior New Covenant economy. The book of Hebrews informs its audience that, in so many ways, Christ and the New Covenant are better than Moses and the Old Covenant; (see list on page 10). In fact, even the punishment of those who do not keep the New Covenant will be greater than the punishment of those who did not keep the Old Covenant (Heb 10:29; cf. 2Pet 2:21).

Hebrews begins with a short description of the dispensational change: the word which God had spoken in past times through the prophets is compared to the word which God has spoken in these last days through His Son (Heb 1:1-2).

In the book’s first detailed comparison, Christ is described as having a message superior to God’s previous messengers. First of all, the Son of God has delivered a more recent message than the OT prophets. Secondly, He is better than the angels who delivered the words of the Old Law to Moses (Heb 1:2-2:2).

The first warning in the book of Hebrews concerns disobedience to the New Covenant (Heb 2:1-18). If disobedience to the Old Law (the word spoken through angels) brought a just recompense (punishment), then how shall we escape a greater punishment if we neglect great salvation of the New Covenant (God’s word spoken through His Son)? The Son has opened the way to this “so great salvation” by becoming human (“a little lower than the angels”), suffering and dying on the cross, experiencing death for everyone (Heb 2:9). Consequentially, Christ will destroy the power of sin and death which holds men in bondage; then He will restore man’s rightful, God-ordained dominion over everything God has created on the earth (Heb 2:8-18; cf. Gen 1:26-28).

Thirdly, Christ, the builder of God’s house, is superior in rank to Moses who was only a servant in God’s house (Heb 3:1-6). Thus, the second warning focuses on the disobedience of the Israelites led by Moses. The New Covenant believer is cautioned not to disobey like these Israelite believers who were under the Old Covenant. If he does, he likewise will not enter God’s rest (Heb 3:7-4:13). Finally, God’s rest which is promised to partakers in Christ is better than the rest the Israelites entered in Joshua’s day.

In the second detailed comparison, Christ’s priesthood under the New Covenant is shown to be superior to Aaron’s priesthood under the Old Covenant (Heb 4:14-7:28). Christ’s priesthood is superior because Christ came from Heaven, and He became human so that He can sympathize with human weaknesses. Christ’s priesthood is superior because God the Father appointed Him to a priesthood. Also, His prayers are heard by God the Father. Christ was perfected through obedience and suffering, whereas Levite priests were characterized by human weakness and sin—the Old Covenant could perfect no one. Evidently, the priesthood of every Levite

ended at his death, Christ's priesthood is everlasting. Christ is the Author of everlasting salvation to all who obey Him. Thus, believers are warned that, if they are to inherit, they must become mature (perfect) instead of remaining babies (Heb 5:12-6:20). Also, Christ is the Forerunner of our hope, showing us the way into God's presence. Finally, since Christ's "never-ending" priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, it is better than the priesthood of the Levites under the Old Covenant (Heb 7:1-10).

In the third detailed comparison, Christ and His New Covenant ministry are shown to be superior to the ministry of the Old Covenant. Since the Old Covenant priesthood was "weak and unprofitable" and could not perfect (mature) those who came to God, a new law was necessary (Heb 7:11-19). The New Covenant Law allows for Christ's superior, everlasting, unchangeable priesthood which is able save those who come to God "to the uttermost" (Heb 7:20-28). Christ's New Covenant ministry is superior because it is built on better promises, and it is performed in Heaven at the right hand of the Father in a tabernacle "not made with hands," whereas the ministry of the Old Covenant was performed by earthly priests before a "copy and shadow" of heavenly things (Heb 8:1-6). The New Covenant was necessary because fault was found by the Old Covenant (8:7-12). The promise of the New Covenant made the first Covenant obsolete, old, and ready to vanish away (8:13). The earthly ministry of the Old Covenant had limited results, but the heavenly ministry of the New Covenant has everlasting results (9:1-10:18). Furthermore, the Hope of the New Covenant makes it possible for believers to obtain the promise of entering into the presence of God (10:19-13:22).

Throughout the book, the author assumes that his audience understands the following: that Christ has initiated the New Covenant which is currently in force, and that they are supposed to be living subject to the Spirit of the New Covenant. They are warned to be careful not to sin willfully, because after coming under the authority of the New Covenant there is no more sacrifice for sin, only a certain expectation of judgment (10:26-31). Instead, they should follow the examples of Old Testament saints who demonstrated how to please God by faith and obedience. "Faith is the basis of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). Thus the faith and obedience of these saints obtained them a good report. In the final warning, believers are reminded that those who refused God when He spoke on earth did not escape punishment; therefore, they certainly shall not escape punishment if they refuse God when He has now spoken from Heaven (12:25).

Finally, the author concludes with some personal requests, blessings, and greetings to and from associates in ministry (13:23-25).

Outlines of Hebrews

The modern, western mind is adept at organizing in a linear fashion, arranging main points in a numerical order. This arrangement often focuses most of the attention on the first point or, conversely, builds to a climax focused on the concluding points. However, the Hebrew mind was adept at organizing in parallel thoughts, a feature which is especially evident in their poetry. Many portions of Scripture, even whole books, often exhibit a chiasmic structure (inverted parallelism). In a chiasmus, an idea in the beginning of the passage (work) is set in parallel with a another idea near the conclusion of the passage (work). Then, the second idea of the passage is set in parallel to the next-to-the-last idea of the passage, and so forth, until one arrives at the central point of the passage at the head of the structure. Therefore, the following two outlines are suggested for the book of Hebrews, the first in a linear structure and the second in a chiasmic structure.

Linear Outline of Hebrews

- I. Christ, the Son, is God's better Prophet (1:1-4:13)
 - A. More recent than the OT prophets (1:1-2) -Although in past times God spoke through the prophets, in these last days God has spoken through Christ, His Son
 - B. Better than the angels (1:2-2:18) -Christ, through whom God has recently spoken, is better than the angels through whom God spoke the Old Law
 1. a better messenger (1:2-4)
 2. a better message (1:5-14)
 3. a greater salvation (2:1-8)

Warning– If you neglect so great salvation your punishment will be greater than those who disobeyed the Old Covenant
 4. a greater savior (2:9-18)
 - C. Higher rank than Moses (3:1-6) -Christ as the Son is the builder of the house of God, whereas Moses

was only a faithful servant in the house of God

- D. Better rest than Joshua's (3:7-4:13) -The rest of God which is promised to Christ's partakers is better than the rest which Joshua entered

Warning– Be careful not to have a stubborn, disobedient heart (like the Israelites who died in the wilderness) which leads you to depart from the living God; instead, be diligent to enter into God's rest

II. Christ, from Heaven, is God's better High Priest (4:14-7:10)

- A. He can sympathize with our weaknesses (4:14-5:4)
 B. He was appointed a priest by God the Father (5:5-6)
 C. His priestly prayers were heard because of His godly fear (5:7)
 D. He was perfected by learning obedience and through suffering (5:8)
 E. He became the author of everlasting salvation to all who obey Him (5:9-6:18)

Warning– Believers can become dull of hearing, instead of going on to perfection/maturity (5:11-6:18).

If a believer does fall away, it is impossible to renew him again because Christ cannot be crucified again (6:4-6). Therefore, be diligent until the end and imitate those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises (6:9-18)

- F. He became the forerunner of our hope, showing the way to God's presence in the Holy of Holies (6:19-20)
 G. He, like Melchizedek, has a never-ending priesthood (7:1-10)

III. Christ is Mediator of God's better New Covenant (7:11-13:22)

- A. The Necessary Changes of the New Covenant (7:11-19)
 1. Of necessity, the priesthood had to be changed because it could not make anyone perfect (7:11)
 2. Of necessity, the Law had to be changed to allow Christ's priesthood (7:12-17)
 3. Of necessity, the former commandments were annulled to bring "a better hope" (7:18-19)

- B. The Everlasting Priesthood of the New Covenant (7:20-28)
 1. Christ is the surety of the New Covenant (7:20-21)
 2. Christ is the Savior of the New Covenant (7:23-25)
 3. Christ is the "once for all" sacrifice of the New Covenant (7:26-28)

- C. The Better Ministry of the New Covenant (8:1-10:18)
 1. The New Covenant ministry of Christ is currently in Heaven and was established on better promises; on the other hand, the Old Covenant ministry was only a copy and shadow of heavenly things (8:1-6)
 2. The New Covenant ministry was necessary because the Old Covenant was not faultless (8:7-12)
 3. The promise of the New Covenant made the ministry of the first Covenant obsolete, old, and ready to vanish away (8:13)
 4. The earthly ministry of the Old Covenant had limited results, but the heavenly ministry of the New Covenant has everlasting results (9:1-10:18)
 a. the earthly tabernacle (which no longer exists) was prepared with human hands (9:1-5), but the heavenly tabernacle was not made with hands (9:11)
 b. the ordinances of the Old Covenant were temporary until the time of reformation under the New Covenant (9:6-10)
 c. the High priests entered the earthly Holiest of All only once each year (9:6-8), but Christ has entered the heavenly Holiest of All "once for all," showing everyone the way (9:11-12)
 d. the earthly priests offered sacrifices for sins which could not make anyone perfect/mature (9:7-10), but the blood of Christ has "once for all . . . obtained everlasting redemption" (9:11-12)
 e. the earthly priests offered sacrifices of bulls and goats which sanctified a believer only by atonement, purifying the flesh (9:13), but the blood of Christ cleanses even a believer's conscience from dead works to serve the living God (9:14)
 f. the blood of bulls and goats ratified the Old Covenant and sanctified the Law, the people, and the earthly tabernacle (9:16-22); but Christ's death ratified the New Covenant, and with His own blood He entered the heavenly tabernacle, once, at the end of the ages, to put away sin (9:16-28)
 g. the blood of bulls and goats were insufficient to accomplish God's will, but Christ and His blood accomplished God's will (10:1-10)

- 1) Christ's one offering has forever perfected those who are being sanctified (10:11-14)
- 2) Christ's one offering has brought complete remission of sin so that no further sacrifices are needed or available (10:15-18)

D. The Hope of the New Covenant (10:19-13:22).

—The New Covenant ministry has made it possible for believers to obtain the promise: to enter into God's presence in the Holy of Holies

*If we want to obtain the promise (10:36), to be "partakers of His holiness" (12:10), and to receive our inheritance (12:28), we are admonished to do the following:

1. Hold fast the unfailing profession of our hope (10:19-25; cf. 3:1; 4:14)
Warning— Be careful not to sin willfully, because there is no more sacrifice for sin, only a certain expectation of judgment (10:26-31)
2. Endure suffering (10:32-39)
3. Imitate the faith of our fathers (11:1-39)
4. Run the race set before you in the presence of these witnesses (12:1-2)
5. Endure God's discipline as a son (12:3-13)
6. Pursue peace with others and holiness before God (12:14)
Warning— Do not fall behind in the grace of God, become bitter, and defile others (12:15-17)
Warning— If those who refused God when He had spoken on earth did not escape, we certainly shall not escape if we refuse God when He has spoken from Heaven (12:18-29)
7. Continue in brotherly love (13:1-22)

IV. Concluding Requests, Blessings, and Greetings (13:23-25)

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Chiastic Outline of Hebrews

- A. God has recently spoken His will through His Son (1:1-4)
- B. The angels worship the Son (1:5-7)
- C. The Son created heaven and earth which will perish; He will rule forever (1:8-14)
- D. How shall we escape retribution, if we neglect God's message through His Son? (2:1-4)
- E. The Son of God will inherit all creation and is not ashamed to call us brothers (2:5-18)
- F. God witnessed that Moses was faithful in His house; if faithful, we also will be in His house (3:1-7)
- G. Those who departed from the living God did not inherit the Promised Land/enter His rest (3:8-4:13)
- H. Christ is the better High Priest (4:14-7:28)
 - I. Based on these facts (H & H'), Christ is Mediator of the better New Covenant (8:1-13)
 - H' Christ is the better Sacrifice (9:1-10:18)
 - G' Let us draw near to the living God, so that after we endure we can obtain the promise (10:19-39)
 - F' The faithful obtained a good witness, obeying God's will for their lives (11:1-40)
 - E' God's discipline is a sign of sonship which will lead to inheritance in the New Jerusalem (12:1-24)
 - D' We shall not escape retribution if we turn away from God who has spoken from Heaven (12:25-26)
 - C' God will replace heaven and earth, but the kingdom we are receiving will never be replaced (12:26-29)
 - B' Let us imitate the Son, identifying (suffering) with Him outside the camp/gate (13:1-19)
 - A' God's everlasting New Covenant will perfect you to do His will (13:20-25)

To the Hebrews

1 In various portions^a and in various ways, God, having spoken in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by a Son,^b whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom indeed He made the universe;^c ³ who, being the brightness^d of His glory and the express image of His underlying person^e and upholding all things by the word^f of His power, when by Himself He had produced the cleansing^g of our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become so much better than the angels, inasmuch as He has inherited a more excellent^h name than they.

⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say:

**“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You?”ⁱ**

And again:

**“I will be to Him a Father,
And He shall be to Me a Son?”^j**

⁶ But when He again brings the firstborn^k into the inhabited earth, He says:

^a πολυμερῶς – many assigned portions (lots)
^b Dt 18:18-19
^c αἰῶν –the ages [can refer to all things contained in all the ages] (Heb 1:2, 8; 5:6; 6:5, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 9:26; 11:3; 13:8, 21)
^d radiance (cf. 2Cor 4:4)
^e ὑπόστασις –underlying substance, basis [often in context of securing a future possession] (2Cor 9:4; 11:17; Heb 1:3; 3:14; 11:1)
^f ῥῆμα –utterance, speech
^g καθαρισμός –cleansing by washing, purification
^h διάφορος –differing from, surpassing others
ⁱ Ps 2:7; 7 ways Christ is better than angels: (1) Christ is declared to be the heir of God
^j 2Sam 7:14; (2) Christ is obedient to God’s will
^k Ps 89:27
^l Dt 32:43, LXX; (Ps 97:7); (3) angels worship Christ (Lk 2:10-15)
^m Ps 104:4; (4) angels are God’s servants (Ps 91:11; Rev 7:1; 8:5-13)
ⁿ Ps 45:6-7; (5) Christ’s marriage celebration and righteous reign
^o Ps 102:25-27; (6) God will remain, even though the Earth will perish
^p Ps 110:1; (7) Christ’s adversaries will be defeated
^q see 8:2 note

“Let all the angels of God worship Him.”^l

⁷ And of the angels He says:

**“Who makes His angels winds
And His ministers a flame of fire.”^m**

⁸ But to the Son He says:

**“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of
Your kingdom.**

⁹ **You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;
Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your
companions.”ⁿ**

¹⁰ And:

**“You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation
of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.**

¹¹ **They will perish, but You remain;
And they will all grow old like a garment;**

¹² **Like a cloak You will fold them up,
And they will be changed.
But You are the same,
And Your years will not fail.”^o**

¹³ But to which of the angels has He ever said:

**“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool?”^p**

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering^q spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit

1:1-4:13 Christ, the Son, is God’s Better Prophet

1:1 In various portions and in various ways, God, having spoken in time past– emphasizes the progress of divine revelation in each new dispensation, contrasting God’s “portions” of revelation in “past times” with His recent revelation in “these last days.” The contrast between “then and now” and more specifically between “old and new” is a major theme and central to the author’s argument that if a believer returns to the “old” he is unfaithful to God and disobeyed to God’s “latest” revelation which reveals His will for this dispensation. “Concerning this salvation, these prophets inquired and searched carefully, prophesying of the grace that would come to you” (1Pet 1:10); a grace greater than that which they had known (cf. Rom 9:23-31; 10:11-21; 11:6-12, 19-27; 15:9-21).

having spoken . . . to the fathers by the prophets– God’s word has been proclaimed to mankind by means of His prophets (both OT and NT); this includes the writing prophets and all the other prophets, such as Abel and Abraham (Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; Heb 11:4).

1:2 has in these last days– in the OT, the concept of the last (ἔσχατος) days referred to the coming messianic age (Dt 4:30; 31:29; Jer 23:20; 30:24; Eze 38:16; Dan 10:14; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1) which the NT begins (Acts 2:16-17; 2Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; Jas 5:3; 1Pet 1:20; 2Pet 3:3; 1Jn 2:18; Jude 18; cf. “last day” 7x in John; 1Cor 10:11).

spoken to us by a Son– υἱός (son; see note Mt 1:1). “The Word was with God and the Word was God” (Jn 1:1); “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).

1:2-4 His Son whom . . . – this sevenfold description of the Son of God demonstrates His “complete” superiority to all of God’s other servants (even better than angels).

1:3 express image– χαρακτήρ (likeness, precise reproduction, a duplicate mark; a tool to impress or engrave another exactly alike). Christ’s underlying divine character is precisely like that of God the Father in every respect. One who sees Christ “has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9); Christ is the image of the unseen God (Col 1:15);

Christ “being in the form of God” is also “equal with God” the Father (Phil 2:6). Thus, God’s purpose for mankind became evident when He created man in His “image and likeness” (Gen 1:26-27).

sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high– while living on the earth, Christ’s ministry was as “that prophet like Moses”; now in Heaven at the Father’s right hand, His ministry is as the High Priest of believers; when He comes again, Christ’s ministry will be as the King of Israel, and the Great King of Kings over the whole earth. After Christ is proclaimed “King” over the kingdoms of this world (Rev 11:15), God will make His enemies His footstool (Ps 110:1), a task not completed until all of them are cast into the Lake of Fire.

1:4 having become so much better– describes the Son’s change status of based on His righteous work serving God (not any change of His divine essence); specifically, His saving man from sins after which He sat down at the right hand of the Father (1:3).

better– more excellent, more useful, advantageous. Comparing the “old” with the **better** “new” is a major theme throughout Hebrews: the word “better” occurs twelve times (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24), supporting the underlying contrast between God’s revelation in past times through angels (messengers) and His final revelation in these last days through His Son (1:1-2).

more excellent name– based on the idea that one’s “name” reflects his work and character. Although the angels were made to be God’s ministers (1:14), they were highly revered by the Jews. However, the work of the Son of God has made His name as the “Christ” to surpass the name (work) of any angel.

1:14 those who will inherit salvation– κληρονομέω (to partake of an inheritance) is used 4 times in Hebrews: of Christ inheriting a better name (1:4); of believers inheriting salvation (1:14); of those who through faith and endurance inherit the promises (6:12); of Esau who afterward would have inherited the blessing, but was rejected (12:17). The “salvation” in view (1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9) is not God’s gift of righteousness when one believes and becomes a child of God, but inheriting God’s kingdom. Christ’s New Covenant brings rewards to the persecuted (Mt 5:5-12), the hundred-fold reward (Mt 19:29), inheritance in the kingdom (Mt 25:34), and rewards to overcomers (Rev 21:7; also Mk 10:17; Lk 10:25; 18:18; 1Cor 6:9-10).

2 Therefore we must give the more earnest^a heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away^b from them. ²For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast,^c and every transgression^d and disobedience^e received a just reward,^f ³how shall we escape^g if we neglect^h so great a salvation, which at the beginning was received, spoken by the Lord, and was confirmedⁱ to us by those who heard Him, ⁴God also bearing witness both by signs and wonders, by various miracles, and by distributions^j of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will^k?

⁵For He has not put the world^l to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. ⁶But one testified in a certain place, saying:

“What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?”

⁷**You have made him a little lower than the angels;**

You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

⁸**You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”^m**

For in subjecting all things under him,ⁿ He left nothing *that* is not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all things having been subjected to him.^o ⁹But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower^p

- ^a περισσοτέρως –greater degree, surpassing, more abundant (i.e. Mk 15:14; 2Cor 11:23)
- ^b παρῤαρέω –to flow by, escape, or drift away
- ^c βέβαιος –firm, stable; *metaph.* sure, trustworthy (Rom 4:16; 2Cor 1:7; Heb 3:6, 14; 6:19; 9:17; 2Pet 1:10, 19)
- ^d παράβασις –going over, crossing the line, disregard, violation (Rom 2:23; 4:15; 5:14; Heb 9:15)
- ^e παρακοή –hearing amiss, unwillingness to hear
- ^f μισθοποδοσία –payment of wages due, reward for good, punishment for disobedience (Heb 2:2; 10:35; 11:26)
- ^g ἐκφεύγω –flee away, escape (Lk 21:36; Rom 2:3)
- ^h ἀμελέω –to not care about, disregard; (Mt 22:5; 1Tim 4:14; Heb 8:9)
- ⁱ βεβαιόω –to confirm, make firm or sure, establish (Mt 16:20; Rom 15:8; 1Cor 1:6,8; 2Cor 1:21; Col 2:7; Heb 13:9)
- ^j μερισμός –division, distribution; Heb 4:12
- ^k θέλησις –a willingness, a desire
- ^l οἰκουμένη –inhabited world
- ^m Ps 8:4-6
- ⁿ under man –Gen 1:26-28
- ^o Dan 7:14, 27; Rev 11:15
- ^p Phil 2:5-8

Comparisons: “better”/“more”/“great”

- “[the Son is] better than the angels” 1:4
- “we are confident of better things concerning you” 6:9
- “the less is blessed by the better” 7:7
- “the bringing of the better hope [does make perfect]” 7:19
- “Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant” 7:22
- “[Jesus] is also mediator of a better covenant” 8:6
- “a better covenant which was established on better promises” 8:6
- “heavenly things [were purified] with better sacrifices” 9:23
- “you have a better and enduring possession in heaven” 10:34
- “they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country” 11:16
- “that they might obtain a better resurrection” 11:35
- “God having provided some better things for us” 11:40
- “to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel” 12:24
- “[the Son] has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name” 1:4
- “we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard” 2:1
- “this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses” 3:3
- “God, willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise” 6:17
- “it is far more evident . . . there arises another priest” 7:15
- “now He has obtained a more excellent ministry” 8:6
- “of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands” 9:11
- “how much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience” 9:14
- “by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified . . . there is no more offering for sin” 10:14-18
- “exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching” 10:25
- “there remains no more sacrifice for sin” 10:26
- “a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” 11:4
- “shall we not much more be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live” 12:9
- “much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven” 12:25
- “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” 2:3
- “Seeing we have a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens” 4:14
- “consider how great is this man was to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils” 7:4
- “you endured a great struggle with suffering” 10:32
- “do not cast away your boldness of speech which has great reward” 10:35
- “we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses” 12:1
- “Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant” 13:20

2:1 the more earnest heed . . . lest we drift away– employs the metaphor of a ship: full attention (heed) must be given to bring a ship to the dock so that it does not drift away (slip). The warning here is to pay attention to the words spoken by Christ and not to neglect and lose them. This metaphor is extended in 3:6 (hold fast) and in 6:19 (anchor); (also see, the “shipwreck” of believers in 1Tim 1:19).

2:2 if the word spoken through angels– “if” here indicates a condition which was fulfilled and concerns the word spoken through angels which proved trustworthy. The fact that the angels helped in the giving of the Old Covenant Law is one reason why Jewish tradition revered them so highly. However, this Jewish tradition is unsettled until the New Testament (NT) Scriptures confirm it: an angel spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai (Acts 7:38); the fathers “received the law by the direction of angels” (Acts 7:53); the Old Law was “appointed by angels” (Gal 3:19).

2:3 how shall we escape if we neglect– This question compares NT believers (“we”) under the New Covenant with OT believers under the Old Covenant (not unbelievers with Israelites). The reason given why we will not “escape” punishment is our neglect of this promise of a better inheritance (“so great a salvation”) spoken by the Son, which “we heard” and must not allow to “slip away.” Even simple neglect can put at risk this “great salvation.”

so great a salvation– this “salvation” does not refer to justification by faith, the gift from God which one cannot lose. In justification by faith, there is equality because the belief which justifies places every believer on the same footing with an equal credit of righteousness and reconciles him with God. However, the promises of inheritance in the Old Covenant, “spoken by angels,” are not as great as the promises of the New Covenant. Therefore, a greater salvation (inheritance) is offered by the New Covenant.

which at the beginning was received, spoken by the Lord– refers to the initial commands given by Christ and received by the multitudes (Mt 5-7; cf. Acts 3:22-23).

2:5 the world to come– “the coming inhabited world.” The millennial kingdom is only a partial restoration. The idea in view here is the restoration of all things which is expressed in various ways: “the world to come” (Mt 12:32; Mk 10:30; Lk 18:30; Eph 1:21; Heb 2:5; 6:5); “things to come” (Jn 16:13; Rom 8:38; 1Cor 3:22; Heb 9:11; 10:1; 11:20); “life to come” (1Tim 4:8); “time to come” (1Tim 6:19); “city to come” (Heb 13:14); “glory to come” (Rom 8:18).

than the angels, on account of the suffering of death having been crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death on behalf of everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain^a of their salvation perfect^b through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *are* all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying:

**“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing
praise to You.”^c**

¹³ And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”^d

And again:

**“Here am I and the children whom God has
given Me.”^e**

¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have in common^f flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook^g in the same, that through death He might destroy^h him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and freeⁱ those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.^j ¹⁶ For indeed He does not rescue^k angels, but He rescues the seed of

^a ἄρχηγός -prince, leader; (Acts 3:15; 5:31; Heb 12:2; compare with “captain of the Lord’s host”; Jos 5:14-15)

^b τελειόω -to make perfect, complete, mature (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22; 1Jn 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18)

^c Ps 22:22

^d 2Sam 22:3; Isa 8:17

^e Isa 8:18

^f κοινωνός -to share, have in common, partner (Rom 12:13; 15:27; Gal 6:6; 1Tim 5:22; 1Pet 4:13)

^g μετέχω -to partake, eat (Heb 5:13; 7:13; cf. 3:1)

^h καταργέω -to make inactive, abolish (1Cor 15:26; 2Cor 3:7, 11, 13, 14, 17; Gal 5:4; Eph 2:15)

ⁱ ἀπαλλάσσω -to free from (Lk 12:58; Acts 19:11)

^j δουλεία -slavery (Rom 8:15, 21; Gal 4:24; 5:1)

^k ἐπιλαμβάνομαι -to take hold of, snatch (Mt 14:21; Mk 8:23; Acts 16:19)

^l ὀφείλω -to be duty bound, ought to

^m ἱλάσκομαι -to expiate, pardon

ⁿ βοηθέω -to run to the cry of (Mt 15:25;

^o μέτοχος -note below

^p κατανοέω -consider, perceive (what is implied), (Lk 20:23)

^q ὁμολογία -(n) saying the same thing (2Cor 9:13; 1Tim 6:12-13; Heb 3:1; 4:14;

Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had¹ to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation^m for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aidⁿ those who are tempted.

3 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers^o of the heavenly calling, consider^p the Apostle and High Priest of our profession,^q Christ Jesus, ² who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also *was faithful* in all His house.^r ³ For this One has been counted worthy of more glory^s than Moses, inasmuch as He who built^t the house has more honor than the house. ⁴ For every house is built^t by someone, but He who built^t all things^u *is* God. ⁵ And Moses indeed *was faithful* in all His house^v as a servant,^w for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward*, ⁶ but Christ as Son over His *own* house, whose house we are if we hold fast^x the

10:23)

^r οἶκος -house, household, family dwelling

^s 2Cor 3:7-18

^t κατασκευάζω -to plan, prepare, construct, equip, adorn, furnish (Heb 3:3, 4; 9:2, 6; 11:7)

^u creation, Rom 1:19-20

^v Num 12:7

^w θεράπων -an honored servant who serves willingly

^x κατέχω -from ἔχω, to have, possess (Mt 21:38; Lk 4:42; 8:15; 1Th 5:31)

2:9 made a little lower than the angels— Christ is not a created being, instead He took on Himself the form of humanity and, in doing so, humbled Himself to a state lower than that of angels.

might taste death for everyone— γεύομαι (to taste, to come to know by experience). Christ experienced death for “all” humanity, not just for a select portion of humanity. Thus, the grace of God is available for everyone so that each can receive Christ as Savior.

2:14 power of death— κράτος (dominion, power) a root which means to perfect or complete and used to express the extent of strength (“power of his strength” Eph 6:10) or of one’s dominion (in doxologies, 1Pet 4:11; 5:11; Jude 1:25; Rev 1:6; 5:13).

2:16 does not rescue angels, but He rescues the seed of Abraham—ἐπιλαμβάνομαι (ἐπι, motion toward + λαμβάνω, to take, possess +ομαι, mid. voice, for himself). In context, this word means “to grasp ahold and rescue someone” (“snatch out of the hand” Ex 3:8). Based on the reference to “freedom from bondage” (2:15), one might be tempted to translate it “to redeem.” In fact, the price of man’s freedom was paid by Christ who, to overcome the power of death, was “made like His brethren” (2:17) and offered Himself a sacrifice.

3:1 holy brethren— “holy” denotes those who are set apart for divine service. Jesus described those who spiritually would be His “brethren”: “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” (Mt 12:50).

partakers of the heavenly calling— μέτοχος (partaker, partner; Lk 5:7; Heb 1:9, companions; 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8). From Heaven, God calls these to be **partakers** and serve Him in His kingdom (1Th 2:12; i.e. Paul’s calling in Acts 9). Those partakers who serve Him faithfully will *share* Christ’s inheritance in God’s kingdom.

3:2 who was faithful to Him who prepared Him— ποιέω (to create, produce, prepare). Christ was faithful, obeying the Father who prepared a body for Him and appointed Him (cf. 1Sam 12:6, LXX).

3:5 for a testimony— Moses fulfilled his responsibility, testifying of Christ (Dt 18:15), as did all the prophets through whom God spoke.

3:6 whose house we are if we hold fast— the hope of believers will not be disappointed, if they “hold fast” (3:6, 14; 10:23; a ship’s heading, Hdt. 7, 59.188), obeying the will of God. They will, like Moses, be part of God’s house (people of God). However, those who do not obey the will of God (Christ’s commands) will make shipwreck of their lives. The phrase “whose house we are” might be

References to the Israelites’ Redemption (Salvation):

2:9 “taste death on behalf of everyone”/“We shall all be dead” (Ex 12:33)

2:10 “the captain of their salvation”/Joshua (*Yahweh is salvation*) “captain of the LORD’s host” (Josh 3:14-15)

2:11 “He who sanctifies . . . are all of one”/“the LORD our God is one LORD” (Dt 6:4)

2:12 “My brethren”/“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren” (Dt 18:18)

2:14 “destroy him who had the power of death”/“not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you” (Ex 12:23)

2:15 “were all their lifetime subject to bondage”/“they made their lives bitter with hard bondage” (Ex 1:14)

2:16 “He rescues the seed of Abraham”/“So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians” (Ex 2:19)

2:17 “High Priest . . . to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people”/“the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev 4:35)

2:18 “He is able to aid those who are tempted”/“their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. . . . God looked upon the children of Israel” (Ex 2:23-25)

boldness of speech^a and the rejoicing^b of the hope steadfast^c to the end.

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,
⁸ Do not harden^d your hearts as in the rebellion,
 In the day of trial in the wilderness,
⁹ Where your fathers tempted Me, proved Me,
 And saw My works forty years.
¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with that generation,
 And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart,
 And they have not known^e My ways.’
¹¹ So I swore in My wrath,
 ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”^f

¹² Beware,^g brethren, lest there be in any of you a corrupt^h heart of unfaithfulnessⁱ in departing^j from the living God; ¹³but exhort^k one another daily, while it is called “Today,” so that none of you be hardened^d through the deceitfulness^l of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partakers^m of Christ if we hold fastⁿ the beginning^o of our underlying substance^o steadfast^c to the

^a παρρησία –*lit.*, all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35)
^b καύχημα –grounds for glorying, leading to boasting and rejoicing (Rom 4:2; 1Cor 5:6; 9:15; 2Cor 5:12; Gal 6:4; Phil 2:16)
^c βέβαιος –firm, stable; *metaph.* sure, trustworthy; Rom 4:16; 2Cor 1:7; Heb 3:6, 14; 6:19; 9:17; 2Pet 1:10, 19
^d σκληρύνω –become hard, *metaph.* stubborn (Acts 19:9; 9:18; Heb 3:13, 15, 4:7)
^e γινώσκω –to know (Mt 5:11, 37, 39, 45; 6:23; 7:11, 17, 18; 18:32; 20:15; 22:10; 25:26)
^f Ps 95:7-11
^g βλέπω –to perceive by the use of the eyes (Heb 2:9; 3:12, 19; 10:25; 11:1, 3; 7:12:25)
^h πονηρός –1. toil and hardships; 2. corrupted, physically diseased; (see Mt 7:17, results of sin)

end,^p ¹⁵ while it is said:
 “Today, if you will hear His voice,
 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”^q
¹⁶ For who, having heard, rebelled?^r Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? ¹⁷ Now with whom was He displeased^s forty years? *Was it* not with those sinning, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest,^t but to

ⁱ ἀπιστία– unfaithfulness, weak faith (3:19; Mk 9:24)
^j ἀφίστημι –to stand apart, withdraw, depart (Lk 2:37; 1Tim 4:1; 6:5)
^k παρακαλέω –to call beside, exhort, comfort
^l ἀπάτη –deceitfulness (Mt 13:22; Eph 4:22; Col 2:8; 2Th 2:10; 2Pet 2:13)
^m μέτοχος –see 3:1 note
ⁿ κατέχω –see 3:6 note
^o ὑπόστασις –underlying substance, basis [often in context of securing a future possession] (2Cor 9:4; 11:17; Heb 1:3; 3:14; 11:1)
^p τέλος –conclusion (Mt 10:22; 24:6, 13, 14; 26:58; Rev 22:13)
^q Ps 95:7-8
^r παραπικραίνω –*lit.*, to make bitter, rebel (noun form “rebellion” used in 3:8, 15)
^s προσοχθίζω –to be displeased, offended, to spue out (“angry” in 3:10; see 3:11 note about God’s “wrath”)
^t κατάπαυσις –(n) a resting (Acts 7:49; Heb 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10, 11)

explained in Jesus’ promise concerning the believers’ hope: for those who keep His word, God will come and make His home with them (Jn 14:23-25). Believers have been forgiven; and having become new creatures, they cannot lose their relationship as children of God. However, they can lose this hope—this privilege of living in God’s everlasting city in intimate fellowship with Him and receiving all the rewards He has prepared for them.

if we hold fast the boldness of speech and the rejoicing of the hope—“holding fast” is the condition if a believer is to live in God’s everlasting house. The “boldness” refers to speaking freely about Christ and the believers’ hope (cf. 2Cor 7:4; Heb 10:19 note). The grounds for “rejoicing” results from the believer suffering persecution because of his obedient witness (like the prophets, Mt 5:10-12). Furthermore, Christ promised that those who obey His commandments will abide in His love and have cause to rejoice (Jn 15:9-11). Generally, the hope of believers begins with the confidence that God will carry out the gospel promises to save man from sin, Satan, and death. However, the conclusion of this gospel hope includes much more; specifically, the restoration of all things, so the believer can see God and live with Him in His everlasting city, the New Jerusalem.

steadfast to the end—this phrase might have been interpolated from verse 14; but even if so, it does not add anything new.

3:8 as in the rebellion, In the day of trial—in the LXX, “rebellion” and “trial” are associated with Meribah and Massah (Ex 17:7).

3:11 so I swore in My wrath, “They shall not enter My rest”—this oath implies an ending: “If they enter . . . [then my name is not Yahweh].” Here, ὀργή, the normal word for God’s “wrath” is used.

3:12 Beware, brethren—this warning is directed toward believers, already identified as “brethren” (2:11, 12, 17; 3:1, 12; 8:11; 10:19; 13:22), even those who were boldly witnessing and therefore have cause to rejoice (3:6).

a corrupt heart of unfaithfulness in departing from the living God—in Hebrew thought, one’s heart is the place of his understanding, will, and emotions. Sin has corrupted man’s heart along with everything else in this world. However, whether or not one’s heart is unfaithful is up to the individual (Acts 8:37; 11:23), thus the admonition is given not to “depart from the living God.” Faithful Moses is a positive example of a believing heart which did not depart from the living God (3:5). In contrast, those who died in the wilderness are negative examples of those whose hearts became stubborn, rebelled, and departed from the living God (Mt 22:32).

3:13 exhort one another daily—the mutual responsibility of every believer to constantly warn others in the family of God of the danger of departing from the living God.

so that none of you be hardened—in the OT, three distinct Hebrew words have all been translated “harden” to describe Pharaoh’s heart:

1. *chazaq* –to make strong, encourage (Ex 7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:2, 12, 35; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 12:33; 14:4, 8, 17; cf. Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18; 11:20)
2. *qashah* –to make difficult, stubborn, obstinate (Ex 7:3; 13:15; cf. Gen 35:16,17; 49:7; Dt 10:16; 15:18; 1Sam 5:7)
3. *kabed* –heavy, burdensome (Ex 7:14; cf. Gen 12:10; Ex 4:10; 8:24; 9:3, 18, 24; 10:14; 12:38; 17:12; 18:18; 19:16; Num 11:14)

In Ps 95:8 (quoted in Heb 3:8), the word *qashah* is used to describe an obstinate, stubborn, rebellious heart.

through the deceitfulness of sin—the heart can be made stubborn by the deceitfulness of sin. The first example of man’s deception by sin occurred in the Garden of Eden. Jesus explained how the life and fruitfulness of believers can be choked by the deceitfulness of riches (Mt 13:22). The believer has the responsibility to “put off the former behaviors the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Eph 4:22).

3:14 we have become partakers of Christ if—though every believer is a child of God is and therefore an heir, every believer is not automatically a partaker (partner) with Christ. Being an heir of God through Christ (Gal 4:30) means that a believer has the potential to receive an inheritance, but only if testamentary conditions are met.

if we hold fast the beginning of our underlying substance steadfast to the end—here is stated a testamentary condition, which must be met if a believer is to be a partaker (joint-heir) with Christ. Another such condition is that one must suffer if he is to reign with Christ (Rom 8:17). The word ὑπόστασις (underlying substance) is translated “person” in Heb 1:3 and as “basis” in Heb 11:1. In this context, it seems to refer to the basis for the believer’s hope, which if he holds fast, will make him as partaker with Christ.

3:16 who, having heard, rebelled—that they had “heard” points to the fact of their belief in God’s promise to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (Ex 4:30-31) and that God did indeed redeem them. However, after they believed and willingly “came out,” they then rebelled, refusing to obey God’s command (Num 14).

3:17 with whom was He displeased—opposite of God being pleased with those who obey/“walk in His ways” (like Enoch, Heb 11:5).

3:18 those who refused to be persuaded—after hearing the spies report of what they had seen in the Promised Land, the Israelites cried all night and murmured that they should return to Egypt (Num 13:26-14:4). Then Joshua and Caleb tried to persuade them not to

those who refused to be persuaded?^a ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unfaithfulness.^b

4 Therefore, since a promise remains^c of entering His rest,^d let us fear^e lest any of you be accounted to have fallen short^f of it. ²For indeed *the promise* was proclaimed^g to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit^h them, not being mixedⁱ with faith in those who heard *it*. ³For we who have believed do enter that rest,^d as He has said:

“So I swore in My wrath,
“They shall not enter My rest,”^j

although *His* works were finished from the foundation of the world.^k ⁴For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way:

“And God rested on the seventh day from all His works;”^l

⁵ and again in this place:

“They shall not enter My rest.”^m

⁶ Since therefore it remainsⁿ that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first proclaimed^g did not enter because of obstinacy,^o ⁷ again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a

^a ἀπειθέω –to refuse to be persuaded, refuse to believe and/or obey (Jn 3:36; Acts 14:2; Rom 2:8; 10:21; Heb 3:18; 11:31)

^b ἀπιστία –unfaithfulness, weak faith (3:12; Mk 9:24)

^c καταλείπω – to remain, leave behind (Mt 16:4: 21:17; Lk 5:28; Rom 11:4, Heb 4:1; 11:27)

^d κατάπαυσις –(n) a resting (Acts 7:49; Heb 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10, 11)

^e φοβέω –to terrify, fear (Rom 11:20; Col 3:22; Heb 11:23, 27; 13:6; 1Jn 4:18; Rev 11:18)

^f ὑστερέω –to come short, fail, be lacking (Mt 19:20; Mk 10:21; 1Cor 1:7; Phil 4:12; Heb 4:1; 11:37; 12:15)

^g εὐαγγελίζω –to proclaim [good tidings] (Heb 4:2, 6)

^h ὠφελέω –to profit (Lk 9:25; Jn 6:63; Rom 2:25; 1Cor 13:3; Gal 5:2; Heb 4:2; 13:9)

ⁱ συγκεράννυμι –to pour out together, mix (1Cor 12:24)

^j Ps 95:11

^k κόσμος –world, the order of the universe

^l Gen 2:2

^m Ps 95:11

ⁿ ἀπολείπω –to leave behind (2Tim 4:13, 20; Heb 4:6, 9; 10:26; Jud 6)

^o ἀπειθεία –obstinacy, opposition to the divine will, disobedience (Rom 11:30; 32; Eph 2:2; 5:6; Col 3:6;

long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden^p your hearts.”^q

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest,^r then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. ⁹So, as a result, there remainsⁿ a Sabbath rest^s for the people of God. ¹⁰For He who has entered His rest^d has Himself also rested^q from His works as God *did* from His.

¹¹Let us therefore be diligent^t to enter that rest,^d lest anyone fall according to the same example of obstinacy.^o ¹²For the word^u of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.^u

Heb 4:6; 11)

^p σκληρύνω –become hard, *metaph.* stubborn (Acts 19:9; 9:18; Heb 3:13, 15, 4:7)

^q Ps 95:7-8

^r καταπαύω –to give rest (Acts 14:18; Heb 4:4, 8, 10)

^s σαββατισμός –Sabbath

^t σπουδάζω –to endeavor, be diligent, labor (Gal 2:10; Eph 4:3; 1Th 2:17; 2Tim 2:15; 4:9, 21; 2Pet 1:10, 15; 3:14)

^u λόγος –word, doctrine, account (Mt 7:24, 26, 28; 8:16; 12:36; 13:19, 21, 22, 23; 18:23; 24:35; Heb 2:2; 4:2, 8, 10)

“rebel against the LORD” (Num 14:8-9). However, the Israelites “refused to be persuaded” (Heb 3:18) deciding to stone their leaders (Num 14:10).

Things to “Behold!”

1. See Jesus, lower than the angels for the suffering of death, but crowned with glory and honor (2:9).
2. See whether or not in any of you is an corrupt heart of unbelief in departing from the living God (3:12).
3. See those Israelites, having heard the promise to enter His rest, rebelled, refusing to be persuaded, they displeased God; therefore, they could not enter (3:19).
4. As you see the Day [of the Lord] approaching, do not forsake assembling one with another, but exhort one another even more (10:25).
5. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not *seen* (11:1).
6. The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are *seen* were made of things which do not appear (11:3).
7. Noah, being warned of things not *seen*, moved by the fear of God and prepared an ark, saving his house and becoming heir of righteousness which is by faith (11:7).
8. See that you do not refuse Christ who speaks, for if they did not escape, who refused Him who spoke on the earth, we shall not escape if we turn away from Him who is speaking from Heaven (12:25).

4:1 since a promise remains of entering His rest– the promise of entering His rest in the Promised Land was “left behind” for the second generation of Israelites. Years later, the promise of entering God’s rest still remains, being offered to those to whom David wrote and to believers today (Ps 95:7-11; cf. Heb 4:1-7).

let us fear lest any of you be accounted to have fallen short of it– usually, the people of God are told “fear not” (Mt 1:20; 28:5; Lk 1:30; 2:10; 5:10; 8:50; 12:7; 12:32); but here is a command to “fear” being **accounted** (δοκέω) **to have fallen short** of entering God’s rest. In this context, “falling short” does not describe one who is unjustified (as in Rom 3:23) and has no hope. It describes a believer who has hope of entering God’s rest, but is judged “unworthy” to enter that hope (Lk 20:35; 21:36; Col 1:10; 1Th 2:12; 2Th 1:5, 11).

4:2 the promise was proclaimed to us as well– the promise of entering God’s rest was proclaimed to the Israelites of the Exodus and again to those in David’s day, and it has also been **proclaimed to us as well**. For example: “the kingdom is within your grasp” (Mt 4:17; cf. Mt 5:3-12, 19-20; 11:28).

the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it– they had heard God’s word of promise delivered by God’s messenger, but it did not benefit them because they did not “pour out” (mix) their faith with the word.

4:6-9 it remains that some must enter it– even those led by Joshua, who entered and possessed the Land, did not fulfill “God’s rest,” otherwise David would not have “spoken of another day” (4:8, *if*—a condition contrary to fact).

did not enter because of obstinacy– being stubborn and disobedient to God’s will, they lost their inheritance in the Promised Land.

4:10 has Himself also rested from His works as God did from His – whether this refers to Christ (the Forerunner) or to a believer, when one’s work on Earth for God is accomplished, one enters into God’s rest.

4:11 be diligent to enter that rest– this cannot be justification by faith, since no amount of diligent work can justify a man. Justification is a gift (Eph 2:8-9). Inheriting God’s rest is a reward (Mt 19:28).

4:13 naked and open to the eyes of Him– on judgment day, we have no clothes to cover our shame; and as the neck of a sacrificial lamb is exposed to a knife, our “necks will be exposed” to God’s Word. God warned that, when the Christ “like Moses” has spoken, all who do not obey His word will be required to give an account (Dt 18:15-19).

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great^a High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast^b our profession.^c ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize^d with our weaknesses, but was in all respects tempted^e as *we are, yet* without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly^f to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help^g in time of need.

⁵ For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. ² He can have some empathy^h for those who are ignorantⁱ and going astray, since he himself is also encompassed^j with weakness. ³ Because of this he is required^k as for the people, so also for himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. ⁴ And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵ So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but *it was* He who said to Him:

“You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.”¹

^a μέγας –great size, number, age, rank (Mt 2:10; 5:19; Heb 4:14; 8:11; 10:21, 35; 11:24; 13:20)
^b κρατέω –to take / hold power over, master, possess [in one’s hand] (Mt 9:25; 12:11; 14:3; Heb 6:18; noun, Heb 2:14)
^c ὁμολογία –(n) saying the same thing (2Cor 9:13; 1Tim 6:12-13; Heb 3:1; 4:14; 10:23)
^d συμπαθέω –Heb 10:34
^e πειράζω –to test [i.e. one’s character], to tempt to do evil (Mt 4:1; Jn 6:6; 2Cor 13:5; Heb 2:18; 3:9; 4:15; 11:17, 37; Jas 1:13)
^f παρρησία –lit., all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35)
^g βοήθεια –Acts 27:17
^h μετριοπαθέω – lit., a little + passion/emotion
ⁱ ἀγνοέω –to be ignorant, not understand (Mk 9:32; Rom 6:3; Heb 5:2)
^j περιέκειμαι –to be compassed with, have around one (Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2; Acts 28:20; Heb 5:2; 12:1)
^k ὀφείλω –to owe [money or a duty], be a debtor, (Heb 2:17; 5:3, 12; 1Jn 2:6)
¹ Ps 2:7 (Messiah is appointed to be king; cf. Heb 1:5)

⁶ As He also *says* in another place:

“You are a priest forever
According to the order^m of Melchizedek;”ⁿ

⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear,^o ⁸ though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience^p by the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been perfected,^q He became the author^r of everlasting salvation to all who obey^s Him, ¹⁰ called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek”¹¹ of which we have much to say, but *it* is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

¹² For though by this time you ought^k to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach

^m τῶς αἰς –of the same kind, (Lk 1:8; 1Cor 14:40; Col 2:5; Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 17, 21)
ⁿ Ps 110:4 (appointed a priest)
^o εὐλάβεια –lit., good + receiving; godly fear, devoutness (Heb 5:7; 12:28)
^p ὑπακοή –lit., under + hearing; obedience to (Mk 1:5; 5:19; 6:16; 2Cor 10:5, 6)

^q τελειόω –to make perfect, complete, mature (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22)
^r αἴτιος –cause (from αἰτέω)
^s ὑπακούω –lit., under + to hear; to listen and obey; (Mt 8:27; Mk 1:27; Acts 6:7; Rom 6:12, 16, 17; Eph 6:1; 2Th 1:8; 3:14; Heb 5:9; 11:8)

4:14-7:10 Christ, from Heaven, is God’s Better High Priest

4:14 has passed through the heavens- this reference to the expanses of the three heavens might be a comparison with the three areas of the Tabernacle: the outer court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. Just as the Priest passed out of view when going into the Holy of Holies, Jesus Christ has passed out of view going into the highest and holiest abode of God in the third heaven.

4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathized with our weaknesses- this seems to be a rebuttal to a mistaken idea that a Priest in Heaven is not as available as a human priest on Earth. The fact that Christ can sympathize with human (finite) weakness has already been established (2:17-18).

without sin- the point being made is that, like us, Jesus Christ was tempted and therefore can truly sympathize with us; but even so, we are reminded that He did not sin. Like Adam, all of Christ’s temptation came from outside sources (Mt 4:1-11), since He did not have a sinful nature.

4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace- God through Christ has provided everything for us, even giving us access to His throne (cf. Est 4:11). Knowing of Christ’s vantage point in Heaven that He is the Son of God and has experienced temptation, we can speak confidently when we come to our High Priest, because when we fail, we will obtain mercy and the grace to serve Him.

5:2 He can have some empathy- the function of a priest is to act on behalf of man. Occurring only here in the NT, this verb expresses a balance of mind, combining a gentle understanding with a controlled longsuffering, absent any impatience or anger toward those the high priest serves.

those who are ignorant and going astray- these two terms describe the believers to whom the priest will minister.

5:3 also for himself- In the first century, the high priest laid his hands on the head of the bull, “his sin offering” (Lev 16:11) and would say: “O God, I have committed iniquity and transgressed and sinned before You, I and my house and the children of Aaron, thy holy people. O God forgive, I pray, the iniquities and transgressions and sins which I have committed and transgressed and sinned before You, I and my house” (M Yoma 4:2).

5:4 no man takes this honor to himself- Examples of those who wrongfully assumed the priestly ministry are Korah (Num 16), Saul (1Sam 13:8-14), and Uzziah (2Chr 26:16-21).

5:5 Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest- no other NT writer describes Jesus Christ as High Priest. However, Jewish tradition taught that there would be two messiahs, one of David and another of Aaron. Jesus Christ is both priest and king.

Christ’s Qualifications to be our High Priest:

1. Royal Son of God (5)
2. Priest forever, like Melchizedek (6)
3. Human, the days of His flesh (7)
4. Devoted to (fearing) God (7)
5. Perfected through suffering and obedience (8-9)
6. Author of everlasting salvation (9)

5:7 with vehement cries and tears- obviously the author had access to facts not recorded elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Mt 26;36-46; Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:39-46).

to Him who was able to save Him from death- although Christ asked if it was possible “to take the cup from Me;” ultimately He determined to “drink the cup” (Jn 18:11) and trusted God to resurrect Him from the grave (Ps 16:9-10).

5:8 He learned obedience by the things which He suffered- royalty rarely suffers. Christ did not have to be corrected by discipline. Becoming human, He humbled Himself to learn submission and obedience to the will of others (Lk 2:52) even to death (Phil 2:8). He learned obedience by obeying, (cf. discern good from bad, 5:14).

5:11 since you have become dull of hearing- their condition of “having become” dull of hearing is an acquired one; it does not reflect their original eagerness to hear and respond to the word of God (Heb 10:32-34). Their dull hearing makes this material concerning Christ’s priesthood “hard to explain.” Otherwise, those who should be teachers should understand these things. Compare “become dull” (5:11) with “become sluggish” (6:12).

5:12 by this time you ought to be teachers- growth in living things is expected. They had been believers long enough that they should be

you again the beginning^a principles^b of the oracles^c of God; and you have come to need milk^d and not solid^e meat. ¹³For everyone who partakes^f of milk^d is inexperienced^g in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.^h ¹⁴But solid^e meat belongs to those who are of full age,ⁱ *that is*, those who by reason of practice^j have their senses exercised^k to discern both good and evil.^l

6 Therefore, leaving the beginning^a of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfectness,^m not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine concerning baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of everlasting judgment. ³And this we will do if God

^a ἀρχή –the beginning, origin, head or cause (Mt 19:4, 8; Mk 1:1; Jn 1:1; Acts 11:15; Heb 1:10; 2:3; 3:14; 5:12; 6:1; 7:3; 1Jn 1:1; 2:7; 3:11; 2Jn 5)
^b στοιχείον –elements, fundamental principles (Gal 4:3, 9; Col 2:8, 2Pet 3:10, 12)
^c λόγιον –brief utterance of God (Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; 1Pet 4:11)
^d γάλα –milk, *metaph.*, more simple truths, basic doctrine (1Cor 3:2; 9:7; Heb 5:12, 13; 1Pet 2:2)
^e στερεός –solid, *strong* (2Tim 2:19; 7; Heb 5:12, 14; 1Pet 5:9)
^f μετέχω –to partake, eat (Heb 2:14; 7:13; cf. 3:1)
^g ἄπειρος –not experienced (experienced, Heb 11:29, 36)
^h νήπιος –a baby, little child, i.e. untrained (Mt 11:25; 1Cor 3:1; Gal 4:1, 3; Eph

permits.
⁴For *it is impossible*ⁿ for those who were once^o enlightened,^p and have tasted^q the heavenly gift, and have become partakers^r of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted^q the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶and have fallen away, to renew them again to repentance, since they

4:14)
ⁱ τέλειος –mature, perfect; see note below
^j ἔξις –a power acquired by practice
^k γυμνάζω –*lit.*, to exercise naked; vigorously; to train (1Tim 4:7; Heb 12:11; 2Pet 2:14)
^l κακός –bad, evil
^m τελειότης –(from τέλειος) perfectness (Col 3:14)
ⁿ ἀδύνατος –not able, possible, (Mt 19:26; Lk 18:27; Rom 8:3; Heb 6:8; 10:4; 11:6)
^o ἅπαξ –once [for all time, complete], Heb 9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2; 12:26, 27; 1Pet 3:18)
^p φωτίζω –to shine light, to spiritually enlighten (Lk 11:36; Jn 1:9; Eph 1:18; 3:9; 2Tim 1:10; Heb 6:4; 10:32)
^q γεύομαι –to taste, enjoy, experience (Mt 16:28; 27:34; Lk 14:24; Jn 2:9; 8:53; Heb 2:9; 6:4, 5; 1Pet 2:3)

able to understand this doctrine and to teach it to others (2Tim 2:2; cf. 1Pet 3:15).

you need someone to teach you again the beginning principles—sadly, these believers were still immature, needing teachers for themselves, to teach them again the initial **principles** they had been taught after their conversion.

the oracles of God—the “brief utterances of God” refers to His commandments. Certainly, this does not refer to the Ten Commandments delivered to the Israelites by Moses, which were so well known that they did not need to be taught again. Here, **the oracles of God** certainly refer to the New Law, the New Covenant Commandments of Christ (Mt 5-7). These “beginning principles” (5:12) are the “the beginning of the doctrine of Christ” (6:1), taught to one who believed that Jesus is the Christ, the promised lawgiver like Moses (Dt 18:15-19).

you have come to need milk and not solid meat—emphasizes their spiritual immaturity and need for the basic truths of the Christian faith. the phrase “have [be]come” describes their change of condition, having regressed to the point of not being able to digest meaty doctrine. A new believer should begin with these six truths (6:1-2).

5:13 everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe—a new believer is immature and must receive nourishment from milk until he is mature enough for the exercise of righteousness. Both milk and meat come from the Word of God: **milk** any believer can understand, **meat** can be difficult to understand (2Pet 3:15-16). The word of righteousness refers to God’s revealed will in a specific dispensation (Heb 1:1-2).

5:14 full age—as the mature (τέλειος) eat meat, they should mature (become perfect) like God the Father (Mt 5:48; cf. 19:21; Rom 12:2; 1Cor 2:6; 14:20; Eph 4:3; Phil 3:15; Col 1:28; 4:12; Jas 3:2).

by reason of practice have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil—discernment is a characteristic of maturity. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were tempted, desiring the ability to discern (know) good from evil. God desires man to have this wisdom; but to truly possess it, it must be acquired by training oneself in the Word of righteousness (i.e. *good*- following Christ’s commandments; *bad*- going back to the Old Law).

6:1 leaving the beginning of the doctrine of Christ—this refers to progress from Christ’s first principles (Mt 5-7), the starting place for Christian doctrine (as opposed to Judaism). However, without the historical background of Judaism, especially its prophecies concerning the Messiah, much of Christianity would be incomprehensible.

let us go on to perfectness—in spite of the dullness of hearing and immaturity of these believers, the author will endeavor to teach them “meaty” doctrine appropriate for more mature (perfect) believers.

not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God—two foundational truths (5:12) of Christianity, proclaimed by Christ and His forerunner, John the Baptist.

6:2 the doctrine concerning—built on this foundation are four basic teachings which every believer should know and understand.

- 1) **baptisms**—these include the water baptism of repentance (John the Baptist and Jesus, John 3:25-26; cf. Acts 19:1-5), which was superseded by the water baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Great Commission), and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Day of Pentecost); [pl. used in some MSS in Col 2:12];
- 2) **laying on of hands**—referring to the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17-19; 19:6; 1Tim 4:14; 2Tim 1:6);
- 3) **resurrection of the dead**;
- 4) **everlasting judgment**.

6:4-6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened . . . and have fallen away, to renew them again to repentance—the question most ask concerning this passage is whether or not it describes children of God. If so, what does it mean that these cannot be renewed to repentance? Five participles describe these believers:

- 1) **once enlightened** [Aorist passive]— ἅπαξ denotes “what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never needs repetition” (Thayer’s). φωτίζω describes Jesus Christ as the true Light who *enlightens* every man, especially those that receive Him, that is, those who believe in His name (Jn 1:9-12; cf. Jn 8:12; 2Cor 4:6; Heb 10:32).
- 2) **have tasted the heavenly gift** [Aorist middle]— (Jn 4:10). Jesus described the experience of believing on the Son as eating the living bread which has come down from Heaven (Jn 6:41, 50-58).
- 3) **have become partakers of the Holy Spirit** [Aorist passive]—Peter described the Gentiles in Cornelius’ house who believed as having “the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on [them] also” (Acts 10:45). In his report in Jerusalem, Peter said, “God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 11:17; cf. 15:11; also see Heb 3:1, 14).
- 4a) **have tasted the good word of God** [Aorist middle]— the *spoken word* (ῥῆμα) of God was described by Jesus as the good seed which was heard and received (Mt 13:19-23; Mk 4:14-20; Lk 8:11-15).
- 4b) **have tasted . . . the powers of the age to come** [Aorist middle]— what aspect of the age to come is experienced immediately by every new believer who has tasted the Word of God? new creation: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation” (2Cor 5:17; cf. Gal 6:15).
- 5) **and have fallen away** [Aorist active]— not warning about becoming a babe again. Previously, the Israelites were given as examples of those who had *fallen* (Heb 3:17; cf. 4:11). Here, παραπίπτω denotes that those in question have *fallen away* after having had the five experiences listed above. In Ezekiel 22:4 (LXX), παραπίπτω describes one who has “become guilty” by transgressing the Law through idolatry. A proverb: “You cannot fall out of a tree, you have not been in.”

crucify again^a for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.^b

⁷For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives^c blessing from God; ⁸but if it bears thorns and briars, *it is* not approved^d and near to being cursed,^e whose end *is* to be burned.

⁹But, beloved, we are persuaded of better things concerning you, and things belonging to salvation, even though we speak in this manner. ¹⁰For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor^f of love which you have proved^g toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. ¹¹And we desire that each one of you demonstrate^h the same diligence to the full bearing^h of the hope until the end, ¹²that you do not become sluggish,ⁱ but imitate^j those who through faith and

^a ἀνασταυρώω –to crucify again (cf. Mt 20:19; 27:35)

^b παραδειγματίζω –to make a public example, to shame (Mt 1:19; Heb 6:6)

^c μεταλαμβάνω –to partake, receive, find (Acts 2:46; 24:24; 27:33; 2Tim 2:6)

^d ἀδόκιμος –not approved (Rom 1:28; 1Cor 9:27; 2Cor 13:5, 6, 7; 2Tim 3:8; Tts 1:16)

^e κατάρα –curse (Gal 3:10, 13; Jas 3:10; 2Pet 2:14)

^f κόπος –lit., beating the breast, troubles, labor (Mt 26:10; Lk 11:7; 18:5; Jn 4:38; 1Cor 3:8; 15:58; 1Th 1:3; 3:5; Rev 2:2)

^g ἐνδείκνυμι –to prove, demonstrate

^h πληροφωρία –lit., fully + wear / bare (Col 2:2; 1Th 1:5; Heb 6:11; 10:22)

ⁱ νόθρος –dull, indolent (Heb 5:11; 6:12 from a derivative of νόθος, illegitimate son, Heb 12:8)

patient endurance^k inherit^l the promises.

¹³For when God made a promise^m to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴saying,

“Surely blessing I will bless you, And multiplying I will multiply you.”ⁿ

¹⁵And so, after he had patiently endured,^o he obtained^p the promise.^m ¹⁶For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath

^j μιμητής –imitator (1Cor 4:16; 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1Th 1:6; 2:14; 1Pet 3:13)

^k μακροθυμία –patient endurance, self-restraint (Rom 2:4; 9:22; 2Cor 6:6; Gal 5:22; Col 1:11)

^l κληρονομέω –to inherit by lot (Mt 5:5; 19:29; 25:34; Mk 10:17; Lk 10:25; 18:18; 1Cor 6:9-10; Heb 1:4, 14; 6:12; 12:17; 1Pet 3:9; Rev 21:7)

^m ἐπαγγελία –promise (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33; Gal

3:22, 29; Eph 2:12; 3:6; 1Tim 4:8; Heb 4:1; 6:12, 15, 17; 7:6; 8:6; 9:15; 10:36; 11:13, 17, 33, 39; 2Pet 3:4, 9; 1Jn 1:5)

ⁿ Gen 22:17

^o μακροθυμέω –to patiently endure, see vb. 6:13 (Mt 18:26, 29; Lk 18:7; 1Cor 13:4; 1Th 5:14; Jas 5:7,8; 2Pet 3:9)

^p ἐπιτυχάνω –to obtain, to attain to (Rom 11:7; Heb 6:15; 11:33; Jas 4:2; cf. Heb 11:13, “to receive”)

once enlightened . . . and have fallen away- if one interprets this description to mean that it is possible for a believer to lose his salvation (not remain justified by faith), he must also admit that the phrase **it is impossible . . . to renew again** must mean that once **fallen** one can never repent and become a believer again. Certainly, “falling away and not being renewed to repentance” does not mean that a child of God is no longer reconciled to God. Jesus gave assurance that every one who becomes God’s child will live forever: he cannot be “snatched out of the Father’s hand” (Jn 10:27-29). God will preserve all of His children and has reserved an everlasting inheritance for each one of them (1Pet 1:4-5). However, just like those idolatrous Israelites who *transgressed* (LXX παραπίπτω, “to fall away,” Eze 3:20; 14:13; 15:8; 18:24; 20:28; 22:4) the Old Covenant in Ezekiel’s day, a New Testament believer can be guilty of breaking the New Covenant. (Cf. παράπτωμα, Mt 6:14, 15; 18:35; Mk 11:25, 26; Rom 4:25; 5:15, 16, 17, 18, 20; 11:11, 12; 2Cor 5:19; Gal 6:1; Eph 1:7; 2:1, 5; Col 2:13; Jas 5:16). The children of God who are not faithful to the New Covenant might lose some or all of their inheritance. If so, they cannot repent and renew their commitment, like the Israelites who periodically renewed their commitment to the Old Covenant. A fresh restart (renewal) is impossible because Christ cannot be crucified again in order to ratify a renewal of the New Covenant. An idea is introduced here, which is further explained later: that Christ’s death was once for all (Heb 7:27; 9:12, 26-28; 10:10; cf. 1Pet 3:18).

it is impossible . . . to renew again . . . crucify again- the foremost question arising from this passage is whether or not these are believers in Christ (children of God). First of all, the authenticity of the five participles in vv. 4-6 are not in question. Second, in order to fall away and need renewal by crucifying **again** (a second time), this must have happened the *first* time. Third, since only those who have believed in Christ can be urged to go on to maturity, these readers must be children of God. Otherwise, a warning like this is nonsense if it is directed toward unbelievers. Why would an unbeliever pay any attention to this warning? Would an unbeliever desire to be renewed a second time? However, a believer who has fallen away might desire to be renewed and start his Christian life fresh, but this is **impossible**.

6:7 the earth which drinks in the rain . . . and bears useful herbs , receives blessing from God- this general statement of truth is applicable to God as the husbandman and his children as the ones bearing fruit and being blessed by God (Jn 15:1-6).

6:8 but if it bears thorns and briars, it is not approved- the opposite of fruitfulness is the worthlessness of **thorns and briars** (both are mentioned in Mt 7:16). God pronounced a curse on any who broke the Old Covenant by turning to idolatry (Dt 29:22-25). As part of this curse the land would be burned and not produce any fruit. Isaiah picks up this theme and includes “briars and thorns” in the curse of those unfaithful to God’s Covenant (Isa 5:3-7; 7:24-25; 9:13-

21; 10:17-19; 27:4; 32:13).

is not approved- God commands His people to prove whether or not they are loyal to Him (Ex 16:4; 20:20; Dt 8:2, 16; cf. Jdg 2:22; 3:1, 4). Those who did not love God were not loyal to Him and His Covenant and were disapproved (Dt 13:3; Jdg 2:22). Likewise, those in the NT who do not obey Jesus’ Commandments, fail to do God’s will under the New Covenant Law and thus risk being disapproved (Rom 1:28; 1Cor 9:27; 2Cor 13:5, 6, 7; 2Tim 3:8; Tts 1:16).

near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned- the **briars and thorns** which in the **end** will be **burned** illustrate the judgment of the works of believers who do not produce any fruit. If their works are worthless wood, hay, and stubble, after they are burned, nothing will remain. However, the believer himself “is saved, but so as by fire” (1Cor 3:12-15). Jesus described the accounting which will be required of slothful servants whose work is worthless (Mt 25:24-30; Lk 12:43-47; 19:20-24). Some of these slothful servants are sent away because of their unfaithfulness.

6:9-12 beloved- two groups of believers are mentioned. The first group are **beloved** and have done some **work** which has **proved** their loyalty to Christ’s **name**. This first group is encouraged to **demonstrate the same diligence** until they also have **full bearing of the hope** as the second group **who through faith and patient endurance inherit the promises**.

6:9 we are persuaded of better things concerning you- this does not negate the previous warning, or make it hypothetical, but it is intended to encourage those believers whose works have proved them loyal to Christ’s name, to continue to be faithful and fruitful.

things belonging to salvation- Thayer includes “leading to salvation” as a possible translations. These better things which accompany salvation are so much better than being cursed.

though we speak in this [negative] manner [to you]- the audience of the warning has not changed; they are now being admonished.

6:10 God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love- cannot refer to an unbeliever (“all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” Isa 64:6). Also, **labor** (trouble) might also refer to persecution resulting from righteousness and/or faithfulness to Christ’s name.

6:12 that you do not become sluggish- the warning begins and ends with the same word, νόθρος translated “dull” (5:11) and then “sluggish” (6:12). This word is from a derivative of νόθος which denotes a natural (illegitimate) son who does not inherit under Greek law (cf. 12:8). This reinforces the theme that, just as a worthless servant is not rewarded by his master, a worthless (unfruitful) believer will not inherit with Christ. Instead, a believer should **imitate those who through faith and patient endurance inherit the promises**.

6:15 after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise- this occurred after Abraham’s big test: the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22;

for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. ¹⁷Thus God, intending^a to show^b more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability^c of His intention,^d gave surety of *it* by an oath, ¹⁸that by two immutable^e things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge^e to lay hold^f of the hope set before *us*.

¹⁹This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure^g and steadfast,^h and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil, ²⁰where the Forerunnerⁱ has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

7 For this Melchizedek,^j king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter^k of the kings and blessed him, ²to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated^l “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” ³without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but

^a βούλομαι –to deliberately will, intend (Mt 1:19; 11:27; Lk 22:42; 1Tim 6:9; Heb 6:17; Jas 1:18; 3:4; 4:4; 2Pet 3:9)

^b ἐπιδείκνυμι –to show, to demonstrate by showing, prove (Mt 16:1; 22:19; 24:1; Lk 17:14; 20:24; 24:40; Acts 9:39; 18:28; Heb 6:17)

^c ἀμετάθετος –not transposed (Heb 6:17, 18)

^d βουλή –deliberate will, intentions, counsel (Lk 7:30; 23:51; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 1Cor 4:5; Eph 1:11)

^e καταφεύγω –to flee for refuge (Acts 14:6)

^f κρατέω –to take/hold power over, master, possess [in one’s hand] (Mt 9:25; 12:11; 14:3; Heb 4:14; noun, Heb 2:14)

^g ἀσφαλής –lit., cannot fail; sure, certain, reliable

^h βέβαιος –firm, stable; *metaph.* sure, trustworthy; (Rom 4:16; 2Cor 1:7; Heb 2:2; 3:6; 6:19; 9:17; 2Pet 1:10, 19)

ⁱ πρόδρομος –advance man (whom others follow)

^j mentioned twice in OT- Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4; cf. Josh 10:1

^k κοπή –cutting in pieces

made like^m the Son of God, remains a priest continually.ⁿ

⁴Now consider how great^o this man *was*, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. ⁵And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; ⁶but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. ⁷Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. ⁸Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. ⁹Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, ¹⁰for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

^l ἐρμηνεύω –to explain, expound, interpret, translate (Jn 1:38, 42; 9:7)

ⁿ διηνεκής –continually, forever (Heb 10:1, 12, 14)

^o πηλίκος –large (magnitude) *metaph.* distinguished (Gal 6:11)

^m ἀφομοίω –to model or shape into an image or copy

cf. Jas 2:21-24). The promise which Abraham **obtained** was not that he would have innumerable seed, or that his seed would inherit the Promised Land, or even that he would have a son (since he already had Isaac and was sacrificing him). What was the promise for which Abraham was patiently waiting? (Heb 11:8-10). Abraham’s ultimate desire was to live in God’s city. However, in order for this to happen, first, there were many other promises which had to be fulfilled concerning his descendants who would become a nation and the Seed who would become the Messiah and bless all the nations.

6:17 God, intending to show– Since no one is greater, God swears by appealing to Himself that He will accomplish His promise. God intends to prove His sincerity to Abraham. For a study of the words relating to the acts of one’s will see Mt 1:19-20: “Joseph . . . not desiring . . . intended . . . considering/resolving” describing the progression of one’s will: one’s desires (θέλω) leads to one’s deliberate intentions (βούλομαι) then to one’s consideration/resolution (ἐνθυμέομαι) to act according to one’s will.

the immutability of His intention– the term (ἀσφαλής) “immutable” refers to a testamentary will which could not be changed by anyone other than the maker. God’s intentions (βουλή), sometimes translated His “counsel” (Lk 7:30), refers generally to the good He has planned for mankind. Here, His intention is specific and relates to His promise to Abraham which now that Abraham has obtained this promise: God will make sure that this good will happen.

6:18-20 by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie– these **two immutable things** refer to God’s word of promise to Abraham and the oath which God swore to confirm this promise. How is this promise given to Abraham a **refuge** to which we have **fled** and an **anchor** of our **soul**? They relate to God’s everlasting city and future dwelling place, Abraham’s hope and our hope. Just like those who needed to flee to a city of refuge in the OT (Num 35:9-15), the everlasting city of God is our city of refuge. Just as God’s **presence** was **behind the veil** in the Holy of Holies, His everlasting dwelling place will be in the New Jerusalem. Christ, our **fore-runner** is already in God’s presence and we can follow Him there, if we will likewise make our lives a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2).

7:1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest– following the pattern of many ancient city-states the king also served as priest (and in some places was recognized as the adopted son of deity). The city of Salem eventually became the site of Jerusalem. After the Spirit is

poured out on men and the Messiah reigns in righteousness, then the result will produce peace (Isa 32:1, 15, 17).

How Melchizedek was made (drawn) to resemble the Son of God:

1. Priest of the Most High God
2. Greater than Abraham
3. King of righteousness
4. King of Salem (“peace”) [note order 3 then 4]
5. Having neither beginning or end
6. Remains a priest continually

and Melchizedek’s priesthood is superior in these ways:

1. his royalty
2. he took tithes from Abraham
3. he blessed Abraham
4. he had no beginning or end to his life
5. is testified of him that he lives
6. he received tithes from Levi

7:3 without father– a term normally applied to an illegitimate child. Even though Melchizedek certainly had parents, the implication of the absence of his genealogy in Genesis, a book with many genealogies, is that Melchizedek had no **beginning**. It seems that the author’s conclusion also indicates that in the record of Scripture even the absence of information is inspired by God.

nor end of life– Aaron’s death is recorded (Num 20:22-29).

7:4-5 how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth– tithing to honor God was practiced prior to the Law of Moses. Here, the author emphasizes that their “Patriarch” Abraham was outranked by Melchizedek. Thus, he outranked all of Abraham’s sons, even the Levites who received the people’s tithes.

7:8 Here mortal men receive tithes– the Levitical priesthood, still active at this time, changed whenever a **mortal** (high) priest died.

7:9-10 Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father– an ancestor is described as including his descendants. Thus, Rebekah was told that “two nations are in your womb” (Gen 25:23). This concept is similar to the idea of headship, employed to explain how mankind sinned and died while yet in Adam (Rom 5:12-14; 1Cor 15:22). The purpose of this argument is to show how Melchizedek was superior to Levi, in order to advance the point that Christ’s priesthood is better.

¹¹ Therefore, if perfection^a were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise^b according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? ¹² For the priesthood being changed,^c of necessity there is also a change^d of the law. ¹³ For He of whom these things are spoken partakes^e of another tribe, from which no man has officiated^f at the altar.

¹⁴ For *it is* evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. ¹⁵ And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises^b another priest ¹⁶ who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an indestructible^g life. ¹⁷ For He testifies:

“You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek.”^h

^a περισσοτέρως –greater degree, surpassing, more abundant (i.e. Mk 15:14; 2Cor 11:23)

^b ἀνίστημι –to stand up, arise [from the dead] (Mt 20:19; Mk 9:10; Heb 7:11, 15)

^c μετατίθημι –to replace, remove, transpose, transfer, change things established (Acts 7:6; Gal 1:6; Heb 7:12; 11:5; Jude 4)

^d μετάρθεις –noun form of μετατίθημι (Heb 7:12; 11:5; 12:27)

^e μετέχω –to partake, eat (Heb 2:14; 5:13; cf. 3:1)

^f προσέχω –to give heed, attention (Heb 2:1)

^g ἀκατάλυτος –[α + κατα + λύω] indestructible

^h Ps 110:4

ⁱ ἀθέτησις –[α + τίθημι] *lit.*, un-setting; a removal, setting aside (Heb 7:18; 9:26)

^j ἄσθενής –not strong, (Mt 25:39; 26:41; 1Cor 1:25; Gal 4:9; 1Pet 3:7)

^k ἀνωφελής –unprofitable

¹⁸ For on the one hand there is an annullingⁱ of the former commandment because of its weakness^j and unprofitableness,^k ¹⁹ for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near^m to God.

²⁰ And inasmuch as *He was not made priest* without an oath, ²¹ for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:

“The LORD has sworn
And will not relent,
You are a priest forever
According to the order of Melchizedek,”^h

²² by so much more Jesus has become a suretyⁿ of a better covenant.

(Tts 3:9)

^l τελειόω –to make perfect, complete, mature (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22)

^m ἐγγίζω –*lit.*, is at hand, draw near (Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 26:46; Acts 7:17; Heb 10:25; 1Pet 1:7)

ⁿ ἔγγυος –*lit.*, with a limb; a surety [of a covenant]

7:11-13:22 Christ is Mediator of God’s Better New Covenant

7:11 if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood– if the Old Covenant could make men perfect, the Messiah was not necessary. Perfection is more than holiness or reconciliation to God. It refers to *completing* what mankind is lacking because sin has made man less than what God had designed him to be. Specifically, man was designed to be godly; he was made in the likeness and image of God (Gen 1:26-27). Also, God has commanded man to be perfect like Himself (Gen 17:1; Dt 18:13; 1Kgs 8:61; 2Chr 16:9; Mt 5:48; 19:21; 2Cor 13:11; Col 1:28; 4:12; Heb 13:21; Jas 1:4; 2:22; 1Pet 5:10). However, even though the Old Law was good and its priesthood established limited relations between God and men, it could not make anyone perfect; that is, it could not restore that which man was lacking because of sin (Heb 9:9; 10:1; cf. 11:40; 12:23; 13:21). Note: this argument is directed toward the Jews; the Greeks did not seek perfection through the Law of Moses and the Levite priesthood.

(for under it the people received the law)- Moses and his brother Aaron, both Levites, delivered the Old Covenant to the Israelites. In fact, there were other priests (presumably Levites) already appointed before God gave the Ten Commandments at Sinai (Ex 19:6, 22, 24). Even so, the Levite priesthood and the Old Covenant Law of Moses, which authorized all its priestly rites and sacrifices, were inextricably bound together.

7:12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a changed of the law– was the priesthood replaced? Some would say “no,” since at the time of the writing of Hebrews the rites were still being performed in Jerusalem (before AD 70). However, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the author provides proof that the priesthood changed with Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Here, God reveals unequivocally that, when the priesthood was “replaced,” by “necessity” (ἀνάγκη, Heb 7:12, 27; 9:16, 23) there was also a “replacement” of the Law. The Law of God is no longer the Old Covenant Law given by Moses; but now, it is the New Covenant Law given by Christ (1Cor 9:20-21; Gal 6:2).

7:14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood– no other tribe was authorized by the Old Covenant Law to officiate as priests, except the Levites (Ex 28:1; Num 3:10). During the history of Israel, two kings intruded upon the duties of a priest. King Saul was instructed by the prophet Samuel to wait for him, but he did not wait. Since he offered the burnt offering before Samuel’s arrival, God judged his disobedience: “your kingdom shall not continue” (1Sam 13:8-14). King Uzziah also intruded upon the duties of a priest when

he burnt incense on the altar. As a result of his trespass, Uzziah was struck with leprosy (2Chr 26:16-21). According to the Old Law, since Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, He could not be a priest.

7:15-16 in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an indestructible life– Christ’s authority to be priest did not come from the Old Law, but from having “an indestructible life” (from being raised from the dead). Christ’s resurrected life reversed Adam’s sinful death. Christ’s resurrection evidenced God’s complete approval of His Son, as did God’s appointment of Him to be priest “of a different kind” after the order of Melchizedek (7:17). Otherwise, if Christ had not been appointed priest, He would not have been able to offer the blood of His sacrifice, sprinkling it on the mercy seat in Heaven.

7:18-19 annulling of the former commandment– Messiah, the Son of David, could not be made priest (Ps 110:4) unless the Old Covenant Law was no longer in force. According to the Old Covenant, Christ would have been guilty of intruding into the priestly office, like King Saul and King Uzziah, and likewise be subject to judgment.

because of its weakness and unprofitableness– the weakness of the Old Law was that it could not bring anyone other than the high priest into the Holy of Holies, and his entry was only momentary. The unprofitableness of the Old Law was that it could only condemn and curse (Gal 3:10-13), it could not make anyone perfect like God. However, with the New Covenant Law and priesthood of Christ, believers now have a **better hope, through which we draw near to God and can be made perfect.**

7:20-22 inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath . . . by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant– although the Levite priests were appointed to be God’s priest forever for all generations (Ex 40:15; Dt 18:5), Christ was appointed to be a priest forever by God’s oath, making His priesthood better than the Levites’. To the same degree that Christ is superior to the Levites, He also has become the guarantor of the better New Covenant.

covenant– the Greek word for an arrangement or a disposition (διαθήκη) is translated “covenant” or “testament” seventeen times in Hebrews (7:22; 8:6, 8, 9, 10; 9:4, 15, 16, 17, 20; 10:16, 29; 12:24; 13:20). In Greek, διαθήκη referred to one’s “last will and testament”; however, in the LXX it was used to translate the Hebrew word בְּרִית (bēriyth, “covenant”). Thus this Greek term emphasizes the believer’s inheritance as a reward for doing God’s will expressed in the New Covenant, rather than the punishment meted out by the Old Covenant for every transgression of God’s will.

²³ Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. ²⁴ But He, because He continues forever, has a permanent^a priesthood. ²⁵ Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost^b those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting^c for us, *who is* loyal,^d harmless,^e undefiled,^f separate^g from sinners, and has become higher^h than the heavens; ²⁷ who has no necessity daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for allⁱ when He offered up Himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected^j forever.

8 Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: we have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ^{2a} a Minister^k of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected,^l and not man.

^a ἀπαράβατος *-lit.*, not putting foot over; can not be transgressed; without negation, termination, violation (cf. Mt 15:2, 3; Acts 1:25; 2Jn 9)

^b παντελής *-all complete, perfectly* (Lk 13:11)

^c πρέπω *-to be fitting, appropriate* (Mt 3:15; 1Cor 11:13; Eph 5:3; 1Tim 2:10; Tts 2:1; Heb 2:10)

^d ὀσιος *-to be loyal to one's duty [to God], in LXX, hesed* (Acts 2:27; 13:34, 35; 1Tim 2:8; Tts 1:8; Rev 15:4; 16:5)

^e ἄκακος *-not bad, corrupt; no harm, malice;* (Rom 16:18)

^f ἀμίαντος *-not defiled* (Heb 13:4; Jas 1:27; 1Pet 1:4; *opp.*, Jn 18:28; Tts 1:15; Heb 12:15; Jude 8)

^g χωρίζω *-to divide, separate, divorce* (Mt 19:6; Acts 1:4; Rom 8:35, 39; 1Cor 7:10, 11, 15; Phm 1:15)

^h ὑψηλός *-high, lofty* (Mt 4:8; 17:1; Rom 12:16; Heb 1:3; Rev 21:10, 12)

ⁱ ἐφάπαξ *-once for all; from ἅπαξ* (Rom 6:10; 1Cor 15:6; Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10; cf. Heb 6:4, note)

^j τελειόω *-to make perfect, complete, mature* (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb

³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore *it is* necessary that this One also have something to offer. ⁴ For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; ⁵ who serve the copy^m and shadowⁿ of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said,

“See *that* you make all things according to the pattern^o shown you on the mountain.”^p

⁶ But now He has attained^q a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22)

^k λειτουργός *-minister [of the state]* (Rom 13:6, 15:16; Phil 2:25; Heb 1:7, 8:2)

^l as a tent is pitched

^m ὑπόδειγμα *-sign, copy, example [for warning]; interchangeable w/ paradeigma in LXX* (Jn 13:15; Heb 4:11; 8:5; 9:23 Jas 5:10; 2Pet 2:6)

ⁿ σκιά *-shadow, shade caused by the light* (Mt 4:16;

Acts 5:15; Col 2:17; Heb 8:5; 10:1)

^o τύπος *-lit., impression, the mark of a blow (from a chisel); a figure, image, or pattern* (Jn 20:25; Acts 7:43; Rom 5:14; 6:17; 1Cor 10:6, 11; Tts 2:7; Heb 8:5)

^p Ex 25:40

^q τυγχάνω *-lit., to hit a mark; obtain a result* (Lk 20:35; Acts 19:11; 2Tim 2:10; Heb 8:6; 11:35)

Christ's priesthood is better:

1. His life is indestructible (7:15-19)
2. His appointment is by God's oath (7:20-21)
3. His priesthood is unchangeable (7:23-25)
4. His sacrifice is better (7:26-28)

7:25 He is also able to save to the uttermost—“the uttermost” (παντελής) expresses the ultimate degree of completeness/perfection (i.e. the woman who could not stand *completely* straight, Lk 13:11). Here, it describes how Christ saves us from everything which we need to be saved, leaving nothing remaining to harm us.

those who come to God through Him—this phrase qualifies who He saves, limiting it to those who come to God through Christ. Certainly, this truth contradicts universalism.

since He always lives to make intercession for them—Christ is always living to make intercession (not a continuous sacrifice) to the Father for us; and He does so from a position of authority, seated at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:25, 33, 34; 5:31; 7:55, 56; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13). No one else has this sort of access to God; this is why we must come to God through Christ, “the one mediator between God and man” (1Tim 2:5; cf. Jn 14:6).

Christ as High Priest is Fitting for us (7:26):

1. He is loyal to God
2. He is harmless to men
3. He is undefiled in Himself
4. He is separate from sinners
5. He has become exalted above the heavens

7:27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices—every day, morning (9 AM) and evening sacrifices (3 PM) were offered by the Levites priests, but only once each year on the day of Atonement the High Priest offered a sacrifice for everyone: **first for His own sins and then for the people's**. However, Christ's sacrifice was “once for all” and therefore will never be repeated (“there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins” 10:26). Christ's

intercession for us is not yearly, but continually (daily) (7:25).

8:1-6 main point . . . now He has attained a more excellent ministry . . . He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises—starting with the marvelous fact of Christ's priesthood and building to the **main point** in the book's chiasmic structure, the author presents the following conclusions:

1. That Christ ministers in the sanctuary in Heaven, “the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (8:1)
2. That Christ had “something to offer” in Heaven: He offered Himself “once for all” (8:3; cf. 7:27)
3. That Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry than the Levite priests (8:6)
4. That Christ has mediated a better Covenant than Moses (8:6)
5. That Christ's New Covenant is based on better promises than the promises of the Old Covenant (8:6).

8:2 true—not in contrast to “false,” but to a “copy/shadow” (8:7).

8:4-5 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest—Christ is “from Heaven” and His kingdom is “the kingdom from Heaven.” Even though still on Earth, “our citizenship is in Heaven” (Phil 3:20).

offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things—if the earthly tabernacle is only a mere **copy** reflecting the **true** things in Heaven, what about the sacrifices, the priesthood, and even the Old Law authorizing the copies? (“For the law, having a shadow of good things to come,” Heb 10:1).

make all things according to the pattern—this does not mean that the heavenly sanctuary is material or that Moses saw it; just that God showed him a pattern, something like an architectural model.

8:6 a more excellent ministry . . . He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises—in Gal 3:19, Moses is called the mediator of the Covenant made at Sinai. Not only is Christ “the Mediator of the New Covenant” (9:15; cf. 12:24; 1Tim 2:5), He was “given for a Covenant” (Isa 42:6; 49:8) so that His death procured “redemption for transgressions under the first Covenant” (9:15). Why only the transgressions of the first Covenant? Because the New Covenant commandments are not intended to expose one's sinfulness. The following chapters explain the better promises (Jer 31:31-34) of forgiveness (atonement) and access to God under the New Covenant.

7 For if that first *covenant* had been faultless,^a then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault^b with them, He says:

“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded^c them,’ says the LORD.

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

¹¹ None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

^a ἄμεμπτος —to find no fault; (Lk 1:6; Phl 2:15; 3:6; 1Th 3:13)

^b μέφομαι —fault, blame (Mk 7:2; Rom 9:19)

^c ἀμελέω —neglect, be careless, (Mk 22:5; 1Tim 4:14; Heb 2:3; 8:9; 2Pet 1:12)

^d Jer 31:31-34 (LXX)

^e παλαιόω —to make old or worn out (Lk 12:33; Heb 1:11; 8:13)

^f γηράσκω —to grow old, fail from age (Jn 21:18)

^g ἀφανισμός —disappear (from ἀφανίζω, Mt 6:16, 19, 20; Acts 13:41; Jas 4:14)

^h δικαίωμα —ordinance, judicial decree/ sentence (Lk 1:6; Rom 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; 8:4; Heb 9:1, 10; Rev 15:4; 19:8)

ⁱ λατρεία —service for God, rendered for hire, (Jn 16:2; Rom 9:4; 12:1; Heb 9:1, 6)

^j ἅγιος —sanctuary, *specifically* Holy Place or Holy of Holies (Heb 8:2, 9:1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11)

^k κατασκευάζω —to plan, prepare, construct, equip, adorn, furnish (Mt 11:10;

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”^d

¹³ In that He says, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete.^e Now what is becoming obsolete^e and growing old^f is ready to vanish away.^g

9 Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances^h of divine serviceⁱ and the earthly sanctuary.^j ² For a tabernacle was prepared^k: the first *tent*, in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary,^j ³ and behind the second veil, the tent of the tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,^j ⁴ having the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; ⁵ and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot

Mk 1:2; Lk 1:17; 7:27; Heb 3:3, 4; 9:2, 6; 11:7; 1Pet 3:20)

8:7 if that first covenant had been faultless— similar to the point made in 7:11: the Old Covenant, like its priesthood, was unable to make anyone perfect, therefore it was faulty. This fault was known to God, but He only intended these things to be a copy and shadow of the true (8:2; 9:24; cf. Jn 1:17).

then no place would have been sought for a second— this is a radical idea, that the first Covenant itself was faulty and that the second (New) Covenant was “sought for” to take its place. Had God planned to replace the first Covenant with the New Covenant? Yes. The fault of the first was its inability to make men perfect and bring them to God. Still, it accomplished God’s purpose for it to be a “schoolmaster to bring men unto Christ” (Gal 3:24). But now, God has replaced the Old with the New.

8:8 finding fault with them— God found fault with the Israelites who broke His Old Covenant. At Sinai, the Israelites had promised to keep God’s Covenant (Ex 29:7-8; 24:3-8), but they broke it immediately and repeatedly. Later, God temporarily set aside Israel because of her sin (Jer 3:8; 31:32; Hos 1:9; 2:23).

8:9 when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt— “when Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son” (Hos 11:1; cf. Mt 2:15).

8:11 None of them shall teach his neighbor— “neighbor” (πλησίον, similar to πλησίον, Lk 15:15) refers to a fellow-citizen in God’s Kingdom, where everyone from the “least” to the “greatest” will “know God” intimately (Mt 5:19; Jn 6:45; cf. Mt 7:21-23; 1Jn 2:12-14, 20, 27). There, no priest will have to teach them “to know God.”

8:13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete— in Jeremiah’s day (~600 BC) when God first spoke of the

future “new” Covenant, He implied that Moses’ Covenant was “old.” In the NT, the exact phrase “new covenant” is mentioned six times (Lk 22:20; 1Cor 11:25; 2Cor 3:6; Heb 8:8; 9:15; 12:24*; cf. Mt 26:27-28; Mk 14:23-24; Rom 11:27; Heb 8:10, 13; 9:15; 10:16). The New Covenant does not fulfill the Old Covenant, it supersedes the Old and accomplishes what the Old could not do.

Five views of the Church’s relationship to the New Covenant.

1. The New Covenant is only for the nation of Israel.
2. The Church has replaced Israel as the participant in the New Covenant.
3. There are two New Covenants, one for Israel and the other for the church.
4. There is one New Covenant, to be fulfilled eschatologically with Israel, and the Church participates in it soteriologically.
5. Christ has called a “new nation,” a new Israel led out of the wilderness, and fishermen are gathering this assembly (church) out of all the nations. Judah was the first nation invited to participate in the New Covenant; and when they believe, they will be grafted back into the olive tree of blessing.

9:1 the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary— continuing the contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, the ordinances and tabernacle of the Old Law are mentioned. Here, the reader is reminded that he was barred from entering into the presence of God, only the High Priest had this privilege once a year (Lev 16). Besides being ineffective in bringing people to God, the Old Covenant was full of regulations and its tabernacle was “worldly” (κοσμικός, Tts 2:12), being built by man (8:2; 9:11, 24).

9:3 called the Holy of Holies— although this place is “called” the **Holy of Holies**, it is but a shadow of the true which is in Heaven.

9:5 the cherubim— God’s ministering spirits are first mentioned when they are stationed outside the Garden of Eden. They often designate God’s presence (2Sam 22:11), and they guarded His dwelling place above the Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant.

the mercy seat— (ἱλαστήριον, Rom 3:25) literally “the place of propitiation” refers to the place where blood was sprinkled for the atonement of their sin. At this place, Jehovah met with His people Unfortunately, only once a year, only one High Priest had access.

cannot now speak in detail— not the purpose here (see Ex 25-40).

Three Primary Promises of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34):

1. God’s Law will be “written on the minds and hearts,” not on stone (Eze 36:26-27).
2. “I will be your God, and you will be my people” (Hos 1:9; 2:23). In God’s Kingdom, His people will not need to teach one another, “‘Know the Lord,’ for all shall know Me,” (cf. Jn 6:45; Mt 7:23; 1Jn 2:27). Note: the Spirit’s gifts of apostles and pastor/teachers and the written New Testament show that teachers are still necessary for our edification.
3. God will not “remember” the sins of His people: one final Sacrifice (10:3-4, 10-12, 17-18) will bring complete forgiveness.

now speak in detail.

⁶ Now when these things had been thus prepared,^a the priests always entered into the first part of the tabernacle, performing^b the services.^c ⁷ But into the second part the high priest *entered* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance;^d ⁸ the Holy Spirit was signifying^e this, that the way into the Holy of Holies^f was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. ⁹ It *was* symbolic^g for that time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service^h perfectⁱ in regard to the conscience^j—¹⁰ *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances^k imposed until the time of restoration.^l

¹¹ But Christ, having come *as* High Priest of the good things that have come with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,^m ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtainedⁿ everlasting

^a κατασκευάζω —to plan, prepare, construct, equip, adorn, furnish (Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lk 1:17; 7:27; Heb 3:3, 4; 9:2, 6; 11:7)

^b ἐπιτελέω —to bring to an end, perfect, complete (Lk 13:32; Rom 15:28; 2Cor 7:1; 8:6, 11; Gal 3:3; Phil 1:6; Heb 8:5, 9:6; 1Pet 5:9)

^c λατρεία —service for God, rendered for hire, (Jn 16:2; Rom 9:4; 12:1; Heb 9:1, 6)

^d ἀγνόημα —thoughtlessness, ignorance (cf. Mk 9:32)

^e δηλόω —to make known, signify, declare (1Cor 1:11; 3:13; Col 1:8; Heb 9:8, 12:27, 1Pet 1:11; 2Pet 1:14)

^f ἅγιος —sanctuary, *specifically* Holy Place or Holy of Holies (Heb 8:2, 9:1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11)

^g παραβολή —a placing of one beside another; *metaph.*, a comparison (Mt 13:3; Heb 9:9; 11:19)

^h λατρεύω —to serve for hire, religious worship (Mt 4:10; Lk 1:74; Acts 7:7; Rom 1:9, 25; 8:5; 9:9, 14; 10:2; 12:28; 13:10; Rev 7:15; 22:3)

ⁱ τελειόω —to make perfect, complete, mature (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb 2:10; 5:9, 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22)

^j συνειδησις —joint knowl-

redemption.^o ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience^j from dead works to serve^h the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator^p of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption^q of the transgressions^r under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance.

edge, conscience, the soul knowing right from wrong (Jn 8:9; Heb 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22; 13:18)

^k δικαίωμα —ordinance, judicial decree/ sentence (Lk 1:6; Rom 1:32; 2:26; 5:16, 18; 8:4; Heb 9:1, 10; Rev 15:4; 19:8)

^l διόρθωσις —a making straight; restoration of the natural, good condition, *metaph.*, the time of the Messiah, time of perfection

^m κτίσις —the act of creating, things created (Mk 10:6; 13:19; 16:15; Rom 1:20, 25; 8:19, 20, 21, 22, 39; 2Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Heb 4:13; 9:11)

ⁿ εὐρίσκω —finding that which one is seeking (1Cor 4:2; Phil 3:9; Heb 4:16; 9:12; 11:5, 12:17; 1Pet 1:7; 2Pet 3:14)

^o λύτρωσις —a ransoming [of slaves], redemption, deliverance (Lk 1:68; 2:38; Heb 9:12)

^p μεσίτης —arbitrator between two (Gal 3:19, 20; 1Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24)

^q ἀπολύτρωσις —liberation procured by paying a ransom (Lk 21:38; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; 11:35)

^r παράβασις —going over, crossing the line, disregard, violation (Rom 2:23; 4:15; 5:14; Heb 9:15)

9:7 not without blood— the “blood” of a sacrifice becomes an important theme in the following passages.

9:8 the Holy Spirit was signifying— the true meaning of the limited access into the Holy of Holies was not understood by Moses or the prophets of the Old Covenant (1Pet 1:10-12).

9:9 that time— the time of the Old Covenant and its tabernacle is being compared to the time of restoration (9:10) and the good things which have come when Christ became High Priest (9:11).

9:10 various washings— “baptisms” under the Old Law (compared to Christian baptism under the New, cf. 6:2).

the time of restoration— the rectification of all things emanates from God's promised Messiah (Gen 3:15). In this messianic age, there is a new Covenant, a change of priesthood, a heavenly sanctuary, and a final sacrifice. These realities replace the copies, freeing believers from those things which were only a shadow of the true.

9:11 the good things that have come— the good things of the time of restoration have already become reality and true through Christ (“better Covenant established on better promises,” 8:6; “the everlasting inheritance,” 9:15; cf. 10:34; “the things hoped for but not seen,” 11:1). However, as long as this present sinful world still exists, Christ's restoration of all things can not be made perfect (until God creates the new heavens and New Earth).

greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, not of this creation— the phrase “not made with hands” refers to heavenly things. Such things, like God's command to use uncut rocks to build His altar, reinforce the fact that, when one is worshipping the Creator of all things, man's work is not acceptable.

9:11-12 But Christ, having come as High Priest of the good things that have come . . . with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained everlasting redemption— Christ is now the High Priest under the New Law; and since only one, the High Priest, can enter to minister in the Holy of Holies, the Levite priesthood must give way to His priesthood (Lev 16:29-30). These necessary changes in the Law, the priesthood, and in the ordinances have allowed Christ to offer His own blood in the heavenly Holy of Holies and obtain everlasting redemption, fulfilling His pur-

pose in being the Christ (Lk 1:68; 2:38).

9:13 the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean— these ashes were placed outside the camp to be used in ceremonies which symbolized one's purification (Num 19:1-10). When Miriam was unclean with leprosy, she was sent outside the camp until she became clean (Num 13:11-13).

9:14 offered Himself without spot to God— Christ was entirely without spot or blemish, like the lamb required for the Passover.

cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God— through Christ, the forgiveness of sin and guilty is complete, being removed even from the conscience of a believer. If a believer continues to try to keep the Old Law, his conscious will feel guilty.

9:15 Mediator of the New Covenant— (Heb 8:6; 12:24; 1Tim 2:5).

redemption for transgressions under the first Covenant— see note 8:6. Christ came “to give His life a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45; cf. Isa 52-53). A ransom is paid to release someone from bondage; Christ's ransom has released all believers from their bondage to sin; but here, the emphasis is on the judgment (death) which is required for trespasses committed under the Old Covenant. The penalty for disobedience under the New Covenant is not death, it is not entering God's house (3:6) and His rest (4:11).

receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance— this word “inheritance” (κληρονομία) refers to the property one receives by lot (from κληρονόμος, one who receives by lot, thus, an heir). In the OT, a firstborn son received a double portion (allotment). Often lots were cast to insure a fair distribution or to assure that the outcome is according to God's will (i.e. Acts 1:26).

Things Everlasting, Concerning the Everlasting Age to Come:

1. Everlasting salvation (5:9)
2. Everlasting judgment (6:2)
3. Everlasting redemption (9:12)
4. Eternal Spirit (9:14)
5. Everlasting inheritance (9:15)
6. Everlasting Covenant (13:20)

¹⁶For where there *is* a testament,^a there must also of necessity^b be the death of the testator.^c ¹⁷For a testament^a *is* in force^d after *men are* dead, since it has no power^e at all while the testator^c lives. ¹⁸Therefore not even the first *covenant* was inaugurated^f without blood. ¹⁹For when Moses had spoken every commandment according to the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled^g both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰saying, “**This *is* the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.**”^h ²¹Then likewise he sprinkled^g with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. ²²And according to the law almost all things are purifiedⁱ with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.^j

²³Therefore *there was* a necessity^b on the one hand that the copies^k of the things in the heavens should be purifiedⁱ with these, but on the other hand the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hand, *which are* copies^l of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf; ²⁵not that He should offer

^a διαθήκη —covenant, testament (Mt 26:28; 14:24; Lk 20:22; Acts 3:25; 7:8; Rom 9:4; 11:27; 1Cor 11:25; 2Cor 3:6, 14; Gal 4:24; Eph 2:12; Heb 7:22; 8:6, 8, 9, 10; 9:4, 15, 16, 17, 20; 10:16, 29; 12:24; 13:20; Rev 11:19)
^b ἀνάγκη —necessity (Heb 7:12, 27; 9:16, 23)
^c διατίθημι —to arrange [one’s affairs], dispose of [by a will] (Lk 22:29; Acts 3:25; Heb 8:10; 9:16, 17; 10:16)
^d βέβαιος —firm, stable; *metaph.* sure, trustworthy (Rom 4:16; 2Cor 1:7; Heb 2:2; 3:6; 6:19; 9:17; 2Pet 1:10, 19)
^e ἰσχύω —to be strong, robust, healthy (Mt 5:13; 9:12; Mk 9:18; Lk 13:24; Phil 4:13; Rev 12:8)
^f ἐγκαθίζω —to renew, to initiate (9:18; 10:20)
^g ῥαντίζω —to sprinkle; to symbolically cleanse (Heb 9:13, 19, 21; 10:22)
^h Ex 24:8
ⁱ καθαρίζω —to cleanse (by removal), to free from faults, purify from sin (Mt 8:2, 3; 23:25; Mk 7:19; Acts 10:15; 11:9; 15:9; 2Cor 7:1; Eph 5:26; Tts 2:14; Heb 9:14, 22, 23; Jas 4:8; 1Jn 1:7, 9)
^j ἄφεσις —release (from bondage); forgiveness, pardon (Mt 26:28; Mk 1:4; 3:29; Lk 1:77; 4:18; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22; 10:18)

Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— ²⁶He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put awayⁿ sin by the sacrifice of Himself. ²⁷And as it is appointed^o for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait^p for Him He will be seen^p a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

10 For the law, having a shadow^q of the good things to come, *and* not the very image^r of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who

^k ὑπόδειγμα —sign, copy, example [for warning]; interchangeable w/ *paradeigma* in LXX (Jn 13:15; Heb 4:11; 8:5; 9:23; Jas 5:10; 2Pet 2:6)
^l ἀντίτυπος —a thing formed after a pattern, a type or prefigure [in the OT] (Heb 9:24; 1Pet 3:21)
^m ἄθετις —[α + τίθημι] *lit.*, un-setting; a removal, setting aside (Heb 7:18; 9:26)
ⁿ ἀπόκειμαι —to be laid away, reserved (Lk 19:20; Col 1:5; 2Tim 4:8; Heb 9:27)
^o ἄπεκδέχομαι —to patiently wait for (Rom 8:19, 23, 25; 1Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5; Phil 3:20; Heb 9:28)
^p ὀπτάνομαι —to look at, behold (Mt 5:8; 24:30; 28:7, 10; Jn 3:36; 11:40; Rom 15:21; 1Cor 15:5, 6, 7, 8; 1Tim 3:16; Heb 9:28; 12:14)
^q σκιά —shadow, shade caused by the light (Mt 4:16; Acts 5:15; Col 2:17; Heb 8:5; 10:1)
^r εἰκὼν —image, icon (Mt 22:20; Rom 1:23; 8:29; 1Cor 11:7; Col 1:15; 3:10; Heb 10:1; Rev 13:14)

9:16-17 testament— (διαθήκη) this word cannot always be translated “covenant.” This context demands that it be translated “testament.” A significant aspect of the New Covenant is that it functions as a testamentary will, having no force until after **the death of the testator**. Thus, if the terms of the New Covenant are to be effective, Christ’s death was **necessary**. Even though the Jews were told that the Messiah would be “given as a covenant to the people” (Isa 42:6; 49:8), the idea of His death was a disgrace.

9:18-22 not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood—the New Covenant followed the same pattern as the Old Covenant, being ratified by the blood of a sacrifice (Ex 24:1-8). However, Christ was not only the Sacrifice of the New Covenant, He was also the Testator whose death initiated the New Covenant.

9:22 almost all things are purified with blood— an exception was made for the very poor, thus not everything was purified by blood (Lev 5:11-13; cf. Ex 19:10; Lev 16:26-28; 22:6), but otherwise, blood was necessary.

Christ’s sacrifice was better than Old Covenant sacrifices:

1. Christ entered a Holy Place which was not made by human hands but made by God (9:24)
2. Christ appeared in Heaven in the presence of God (9:24)
3. Christ offered Himself once (9:26)
4. Christ’s sacrifice of Himself put away sin, bearing the sins of many (9:26-28)

9:26 the end of the ages— (συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος) this phrase appears six times in the NT (Mt 13:39, 40, 49; 24:3; 28:20; Heb 9:26). The Gk noun συντέλεια means completion, consummation, end. Its verb form συντελέω means to end together, to end completely, to bring to fulfillment (Christ’s words, Mt 7:28; Mk 13:4; Christ’s temptation, Lk 4:2, 13; Paul’s purification, Acts 21:27; God’s word, Rom 9:28; the New Covenant, Heb 8:8). Here, at **the end of the ages**, the Old Covenant reached its conclusion: Christ’s life and death

were the climax in the fulfillment of OT prophecy. However, Christ’s sacrificial death also marked the end of the Old Covenant age and its authority and the beginning of the New Covenant age.

9:27-28 as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ . . . — this principle of death has applied to all men, even to Christ. In Christ’s case, because of His perfect life and obedience to the Father’s will, He has been glorified and is now sitting at the right hand of the Father in Heaven “waiting till His enemies are made His footstools” (10:12-13; cf. Gen 3:15).

Christ’s three appearances:

1. On our behalf, He has presented (ἐμφανίζω) Himself as an offering before God the Father (9:24)
2. By His sacrifice on the cross, He appeared (φανερόω) in order to put away sin (9:26)
3. By those who wait for Him, He will be seen (ὀπτάνομαι) a second time, without sin, unto salvation (9:28)

9:28 to those who eagerly wait for Him— this does not necessarily refer to all believers, only to those eagerly awaiting His coming.

He will be seen a second time, apart from sin, for salvation—for (εἰς) this preposition normally follows a verb denoting direction and an entrance into something. Here, *salvation* as a destination is not the initial aspect of salvation, being rescued (redeemed) from sin by belief in Christ. This destination refers to the final aspect of salvation, being restored to God’s blessings—entering the kingdom and receiving an inheritance.

10:1 the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very imager of the things— a shadow is shade caused by light. In contrast to the shadow (σκιά) of the Law of the Old Covenant, the Word of the New Covenant is the Creator who gives life and light (Jn 1:1-5). The Old Covenant Law was a shadow which could only provide an outline of the spiritual truths of Christ’s sacrifice while pointing to the “true” (9:24) image (εἰκὼν).

approach perfect.^a ²For then would they not have ceased being offered? For the worshipers, having once been cleansed,^b would have had no more consciousness^c of sins. ³But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. ⁴For *it is impossible^d* for the blood of bulls and goats to take away^e sins.

⁵Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

“Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared^f for Me.^g

⁶In burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You had no pleasure.

⁷Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’”^h

⁸Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and *sacrifices* for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure *in them*” (which

^a τελειόω —to make perfect, complete, mature (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22; 1Jn 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18)

^b καθάρω —to cleanse; by pruning (Jn 15:2), from sin (Heb 10:2); cf. καθαρίζω

^c συνείδησις —joint knowledge, conscience, the soul knowing right from wrong (Jn 8:9; Heb 9:9, 14; 10:2, 22; 13:18)

^d ἀδύνατος —not possible (Mt 19:26; Lk 18:27; Rom 8:3; Heb 6:4, 8; 10:4; 11:6)

^e ἀφαιρέω —to take away, cut off (Mt 26:51; Lk 1:25; 10:42; 16:3; Rom 11:27; Heb 10:4; Rev 22:19)

^f καταρτίζω —to make fit, complete, perfect [as it ought to be] (Mt 4:21; 21:16; Lk 6:40; Rom 9:22; 1Cor 1:10; 2Cor 13:11; Gal 6:1; Heb 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; 1Pet 5:10)

are offered according to the law), ⁹then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes awayⁱ the first that He may establish the second. ¹⁰By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once^j for all.

¹¹And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away^k sins. ¹²But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³from that time waiting till His enemies are placed *as* His footstool. ¹⁴For by one offering He has

^g quoted from LXX; acc. MT: “My ears you have opened” Ps 40:6-8

ἄπαξ] (Rom 6:10; 1Cor 15:6; Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10; cf. Heb 6:4, note)

ⁱ ἀναίρω—to take away, kill, abolish (Mt 2:16; Lk 22:2; 23:32; Acts 2:23; 5:33)

^k περιαιρέω —to take away that which surrounds a thing (Acts 27:20, 40; 2Cor 3:16; Heb 10:11)

^j ἐφάπαξ —once for all [from

10:1 can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect— yearly sacrifices on the Day of Atonement only provided temporary expiation of sin, not a permanent cleansing. As soon as one sacrifice was offered, their sin would require that another be made in the following year. These yearly sacrifices never made anyone perfect (τελειόω). To be “perfect” means to be the mature godly man which God designed Adam to be. To be made perfect, a believer must be cleansed from sin and then learn obedience to God’s will (cf. 1Jn 2:12-14).

Being “made perfect” through obedience results in the hope of obtaining God’s promise:

1. Christ was “made perfect through suffering” (2:10)
2. Christ learned obedience by the things He suffered (5:8-9)
3. The Old Law could not make anyone perfect, permanently cleansing them from sin (7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1)
4. By His one sacrifice, Christ has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (10:14)
5. The faithful, whose obedience obtained for them a good testimony, will be made perfect and receive the promises along with those believers who like them are faithful and obedient (11:39-40)
6. The spirits of just believers made perfect will obtain the promise of living with God in the New Jerusalem (12:22-23; cf. 11:13-16)

10:2-4 For then would they not have ceased being offered? . . . For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins— certainly God granted forgiveness of sin through the Old Covenant sacrifices. However, the fact that these sacrifices had not **ceased** indicated that they did not result in permanent cleansing from sin, such that “**the worshiper, having once been cleansed, would have had no more consciousness of sins**” (cf. 10:22). Thus the yearly sacrifices remained a constant **reminder** of one’s sins. On the other hand, the New Covenant promised a cleansing from sin so complete that even God would not remember their sins and their lawless deeds (10:17). The purpose of the Old Covenant was to prepare people for the Messiah and His New Covenant (Gal 3:24; cf. 1Pet 1:10-12).

10:5-7 Therefore— based on the inadequacy of the Old Covenant sacrifices, the author turns to the New Covenant ministry/sacrifice.

it is written of Me— Psalm 40 is messianic, not just referring to King David, but also prophetically pointing to Christ.

to do Your will— the Old Covenant detailed the will of God for the Israelites; but they had broken the Covenant (Jer 31:32), and so, God’s presence had left the Temple (Eze 10:18). God did not want empty sacrifices and rituals; He wanted righteous obedience (Isa 1:13-17; Amos 5:21-24; cf. Ps 51:16-17; Jer 6:20; Hos 6:6-7). Christ would do the will of God; and in the commandments of His New

Covenant, He set a new standard of righteousness (Mt 5:19-20).

10:8 sacrifices for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them— God is not confused, even though He legislated the Old Covenant sacrifices and was pleased with the faithful who obediently offered them, He did not **desire** (θέλω, Heb 10:5, 8, 12:17; 13:18 [a stronger alternate form of αἰρέω, Phil 1:22; 2Th 2:13; Heb 11:25]) them. Sacrifices for sin would not have been required, if man had not committed sin. But since man did sin, a sacrifice for sin was required. Similarly, God took no pleasure in the death of His only begotten Son. Quite the contrary, His wrath will be poured out on all those who have rejected His Son and His sacrifice, which revealed His love for all mankind (Jn 3:16-18). Still, God intended (βούλομαι) that His Son would offer Himself as the final sacrifice to take away the sins of the world, so Christ did the will (θέλημα) of His Father (Lk 22:42).

10:9-10 “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second— the author of Hebrews uses the word “first” (πρῶτος) six times to describe the Old Covenant (8:7, 13; 9:1, 15, 18; 10:9). Here, God’s declaration of His will is placed in parallel to His covenant. And another parallel is presented: Christ’s obedience to God’s will, when He yielded Himself to be “taken away to be slain” (ἀναίρω) by sinful men (Acts 2:23; cf. Lk 23:32), results in the “first” (Old) Covenant being “taken away to be destroyed” (ἀναίρω). **By that [God’s] will**, that is, the New Covenant, **we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all**. By God’s will, Christ is offered as a sacrifice, not under the authority of the Old Covenant, but under the ministry of the New Covenant.

I have come to do Your will— Christ’s purpose was not to fulfill the Old Covenant Law, but **to do God’s will** (θέλημα, Heb 10:7, 9, 10, 36 [the prolonged form of θέλω] cf. note 6:17). Christ said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (Jn 4:34); “the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does” (Jn 5:19-20; cf. 5:30; 12:49; 14:31). Doing God’s will meant fulfilling the prophecies written about Him in the Law (Pentateuch) and the Prophets (Mt 5:17-18; cf. Mt 21:4; Lk 24:25-27). When Christ did God’s will by healing people on the Sabbath, He broke the Sabbath Laws (but the Old Covenant was no longer in effect). He also taught His disciples to disregard other commands of the Old Law (e.g. Mk 7:14-23).

10:12 offered once forever— Heb 7:27; 9:12, 25-28; 10:1, 12, 14, 18. **sat down at the right hand of God**— Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

10:13 waiting till His enemies are made His footstool— Ps 110:1; ὑποπόδιον (*lit.* “under foot”). Christ completed His work on the cross: “[the serpent] shall bruise his heel”; but, “He shall bruise your head” (Gen 3:15). God’s work of wrath will subdue the nations, making them **His footstool** (Ps 2; Rev 5-19).

perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

¹⁵ Indeed, the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for among *the words* He had said before,^a

¹⁶ **“This is the covenant that I will make With them after those days,” says the LORD: “I will put My laws into their hearts And in their minds I will write them,”^b**

¹⁷ *then He adds,*

“Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”^c

¹⁸ Now where there is remission^d of these, *there is no longer an offering for sin.*

¹⁹ Therefore, brethren, having boldness^e

^a προλέγω –to foretell, predict (Mt 24:25; Mk 13:23; Rom 9:29; Heb 10:15; 2Pet 3:2; Jude 17)

^b Jer 31:33

^c Jer 31:34

^d ἄφεσις –release (from bondage); forgiveness, pardon (Mt 26:28; Mk 1:4; 3:29; Lk 1:77; 4:18; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18; Col 1:14; Heb 9:22; 10:18)

^e παρρησία –lit., all + speech, meaning speaking freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35)

^f εἴσοδος –an entrance, the place or way leading into a place (Acts 13:24; 1Th 1:9; 2:1; Heb 10:19; 2Pet 1:11)

^g ἐγκαινίζω –to renew, to

for the entering^f of the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ which He initiated^g for us, a new^h and living way through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹ and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw nearⁱ with a true heart in full bearing^j of faith, having *our* hearts sprinkled from an corrupt^k conscience and the body washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast^l the

initiate (Heb 9:18; 10:20)

^h πρόσφατος –freshly killed; recently made, new

ⁱ προσέρχουμαι –to come to, approach (Mt 4:3, 11; 5:1; Heb 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6; 12:18, 22)

^j πληροφροῖα –lit., fully +

wear / bare (Col 2:2; 1Th 1:5; Heb 6:11; 10:22)

^k πονηρός –1. toil and hardships; 2. corrupted, physically diseased; (see Mt 7:17, results of sin)

^l κατέχω –see note 3:6; 3:14 (cf. Heb 10:13; 11:10)

10:14 by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified– to summarize the forgoing discussion (10:1-14), it is declared that Christ’s one offering has done what the Old Covenant could not do: perfected believers, giving them access to the Father’s presence (7:19). Based on Christ’s sacrifice, the believer is perfected and given access to God. Before this, when someone believed God, he received God’s gift of righteousness (i.e. Abraham, Gen 15:6). However, even though Abraham was part of the family of God and had been given everlasting life, he was not made perfect until after Christ’s sacrifice (He led the captives into God’s presence, Eph 4:8).

being sanctified– in one sense, the believer has already “been sanctified” (10:10) in that, becoming a child of God, he has been separated from this ungodly world: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God” (1Cor 6:11; cf. 1Cor 1:2; Jude 1). However in another sense, the believer is “**being sanctified**,” in that, he is becoming like Christ and has a significant part in the completion of his sanctification. His part begins with “present[ing himself to be] a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which [his] reasonable service” (Rom 12:1). If he does this, God will complete his sanctification: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely” (1Th 5:23). The process of sanctified is similar to the process of perfection (becoming spiritually mature).

10:15-17 Indeed, the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us– He is an inner witness of the change to and the effectiveness of the New Covenant: “**I will put My laws into their hearts, And in their minds I will write them;**” (cf. 2Cor 3:2-3) and “**Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.**” His witness to these two facts are related to the perfection of those being sanctified. The first points to God’s will for the believer’s new life, that he should imitate Christ; and the second points to the basis of the believer’s access to God, that his sins are completely forgiven.

10:18 where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin– further developing a significant difference between the Old Covenant and the New. The Old provided for “yearly” sacrifices, by which one repeatedly received forgiveness of recent sins and also renewed one’s commitment to the Old Covenant. The New Covenant has only one sacrifice for sin, Christ’s death on the cross, and so, the sacrifices under the Old Covenant are no longer effective. Once a believer has been released from his bondage to sin (forgiveness) through Christ’s blood, no other future sacrifices are available whereby he might renew the New Covenant (10:26).

10:19 Therefore, brethren– based on the book’s doctrinal discussion of Christ’s better message, better priesthood, and better New Covenant ministry, the **brethren** are given a series of exhortations.

having boldness– this word for “boldness of speech” is mentioned four times in Hebrews. In the second and third occurrences (4:16; 10:19) the believer is encouraged to use his newfound access to God’s throne through the blood of Christ to “boldly speak,” asking for God’s help. However, in the first and last occurrences (3:6; 10:35) the believer’s boldness of speech refers to his responsibility as an ambassador to proclaim God’s gospel of peace (2Cor 7:4). The believer is exhorted to hold fast *the boldness and the rejoicing* of his

hope (3:6). Both of these activities were previously defined and were well-known to the audience. For definition, one should look at the New Covenant promises spoken by Christ (in Mt 5-7), looking for a specific reference to “boldness of speech” and “rejoicing.” Such a reference is soon found in Mt 5:11-12. The boldness of speech describes those who speak of Christ and are persecuted for His sake; and the rejoicing describes the joy and gladness of those persecuted for Christ’s sake because of their great reward in Heaven.

10:20 He initiated for us, a new and living way– Christ introduced the new avenue of access to God’s presence (Jn 14:6). Here the word translated “**new**” (πρόσφατος) means something “recently slain” and is emphasizing the contrast between Christ’s death on the cross and the living way into God’s presence. It is a **living way** because Christ has “an endless life” (Heb 7:16).

His flesh– the blood and body of Jesus have initiated the new **way through the veil** (torn, Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45). Christ’s body is placed in parallel with His blood, just as in the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper: “My body which is given for you” (Lk 22:19); “My blood which is shed for you” (Lk 22:20).

10:21 having a High Priest over the house of God– the OT High Priest was only a servant, just as Moses was only a servant in God’s house (Heb 3:5-6). But Christ is the Son over God’s house, having authority which a servant does not have. As High Priest, Christ intercedes on our behalf.

10:22 draw near with a true heart– a “true” heart functions in every respect as it was designed to function: it has no defect, is not divided, but is, in OT terms, a “whole heart” (Ps 9:1; 111:1; 119:2, 10, 34, 58, 69, 145; 138:1; Jer 3:10).

in full bearing of faith– although often translated “full assurance,” this does not refer to a freedom from doubt which inspires confidence. It means to “fully wear” (like an officer’s uniform) one’s faith so that it is unmistakably recognizable in public view; in other words, a believer should habitually live out the principles of Christlikeness for everyone to see (cf. Col 2:2; 1Th 1:5).

having our hearts sprinkled from an corrupt conscience– sprinkling refers the symbolic act of the “sprinkling of blood,” for atonement. Blood was sprinkled during the Passover, when the Old Covenant was ratified, and in the yearly sacrifices. However, through sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, believers have had their corrupt consciences cleansed, not just covered (atoned), something the Old Covenant could not do (Heb 9:9, 14; 10:2).

the body washed with pure water– seems to refer to Christian water baptism, an outward rite symbolizing the reality of the cleansing of the heart within a believer. In a similar way, in the OT the priest and worshipper were cleansed symbolically by washing in water before they approached God in His Tabernacle (Ex 30:25-26; Lev 16:4). Ezekiel prophesied of the New Covenant cleansing and the new heart provided: “I will sprinkle clean water on you . . . I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them” (Eze 36:25-27). Thus the believer is to walk according to the Spirit by His power (Rom 8:1-14).

unfailing^a profession^b of *our* hope^c for He who promised *is* faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to provoke^d love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting^e *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day drawing near.^f

²⁶ For if we are sinning willfully^g after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains^h a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain frightfulⁱ expectation^j of judgment, and fiery jealousy which will devour *those who are contrary*.^k ²⁸ Since anyone who rejected^l Moses' law dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or*

^a ἀκλινής —not inclining, not bowed down, not worn away, not falling back (cf. Mt 8:20; Lk 9:12; 24:5, 29; Heb 11:34)

^b ὁμολογία —(n) saying the same thing (2Cor 9:13; 1Tim 6:12-13; Heb 3:1; 4:14; 10:23)

^c ἐλπίς —expectation, hope (Heb 3:6; 6:11, 18; 7:19; 10:23)

^d παροξυσμός —provoke, incite, irritate (Acts 15:39; Heb 10:24)

^e παρακαλέω —to comfort, exhort (Heb 3:13; 10:25; 13:19, 22; cf. Heb 6:18; 12:5)

^f ἐγγίζω —lit., is at hand, draw near (Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 26:46; Acts 7:17; Heb 10:25; 1Pet 1:7)

three witnesses; ²⁹ of how much worse punishment,^m do you suppose, will one be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him who

^g ἑγκαινίζω —of one's own will, voluntarily (Heb 10:26; 1Pet 5:2; cf. Rom 8:20; 1Cor 9:17; Phm 14)

^h ἀπολείπω —to leave behind (2Tim 4:13, 20; Heb 4:6, 9; 10:26; Jud 6)

ⁱ φοβερός —inspiring fear (Heb 10:27, 31; 12:21)

^j ἐκδοχή —expectation (cf. Heb 10:13; 11:10)

^k ὑπεναντίος —contrary to (Col 2:14, Heb 10:27; cf. Mt 14:24; Mk 15:39; Acts 26:9)

^l ὑπεναντίος —to do away with [something established] (Mk 6:26; 7:9; Lk 7:30; 10:16; Jn 12:48; Gal 2:21; 3:15; Heb 10:27)

^m τιμωρέω —avengement, punishment (cf. Acts 22:5; 26:11)

10:23 hold fast the unfailing profession of our hope— “failing” describes an opposing army which falls back (“is put to flight,” Heb 11:34). Believers are to “hold steady” (the heading of a ship) on their course of obedience (Heb 3:6), in their becoming like Christ (Heb 3:14), and in their unfailing profession of their hope (Heb 10:23). Those who do can trust God to keep His promise to give us His rest (4:1; cf. 1Tim 2:11-12).

Three things to “hold fast”:

1. our boldness of speech and the rejoicing of our hope, so that we will be part of God's house (3:6)
2. the beginning of our becoming like Christ (see note at 3:14) firm to the end, so that we will be partakers (sharers) in Christ's inheritance (3:14)
3. the unfailing profession of our hope, because He is faithful who has made the New Covenant promises to us (10:23)

10:24-25 let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works— to “provoke” (a strong negative term) one another in a positive manner toward love and good works, those things commanded by Christ's New Covenant.

Three exhortations in light of our new access to God (10:19-21):

1. let us draw near with a true heart in full bearing of **faith** (10:22)
2. let us hold fast the unfailing profession of our **hope** (10:23)
3. let us consider one another in order to provoke **love** and good works (10:24)

not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together— this is not a new command but the continuation of the last. Do not stop meeting with other Christians. You cannot provoke others unless you interact with them. Even today, it is vital for believers in every locale to gather and spend time together, fellowshiping and **exhorting** one another to do God's will. When believers come together there is a shared warmth, like embers on a hearth, reaching to the soul.

so much the more as you see the Day drawing near— gathering together and provoking love in others is even more important in light of Christ's imminent return and the ensuing Day of judgment. “Drawing near” denotes the nearness of an thing or event, that it is so close that it is “within one's grasp” and is translated “at hand” in the phrase “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; cf. Rom 13:12; Phil 2:30; Jas 4:8; 5:8; 1Pet 4:7). This introduces the topic of God's judgment of His people in the following paragraph.

10:26-31 For if we are sinning willfully. . . . The Lord will judge His people— this section describes presumptuous or premeditated “sinning” (a present participle, denoting continuing action), that is, the rebellious breaking of God's Covenant commandments, and the judgment which will follow. By using “we” the author includes himself in this possibility. Scripture provides definite examples of willfully sinning under both the Old and the New Covenants. Achan willfully disobeyed God's command concerning the spoils of Jericho (Josh 6:18-19; 7:11; cf. Num 15:30-31; Dt 7:2, 26; 20:10-20). In Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira willfully sinned, breaking Christ's

commandment to always speak the truth (Mt 5:33-37). When God's people willful sin, it always brings judgment (Heb 10:30).

Willful sinning is equivalent to the following:

1. trampling the Son of God underfoot
2. counting the blood of the New Covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing
3. insulting the Spirit of grace (10:29; cf. 1Sam 15:23)

10:26 if we are sinning willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth— the definition of intentional or presumptuous sin (Num 15:30-31). In the NT, the word “truth” can have a specialized meaning referring to Christ and His ministry: “the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17). Thus, Christ's ministry and His New Covenant are often called the “truth” or the “true” (Heb 8:2; 9:24; cf. Mt 22:16; Mk 12:14, 32; Lk 16:11; 20:21; Jn 1:9, 14, 17; Jn 4:23, 24; 5:33; 6:32; 7:28; 8:32, 40, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:1, 26; 16:7, 13; 17:17, 19; 19:35; 2Cor 11:10; Gal 3:1; 5:7; Eph 4:21; 1Tim 2:7; 4:3; Jas 1:18; 2Pet 1:12; 2:2; 1Jn 2:8; 5:20; 2Jn 4; 3Jn 4; Rev 3:7, 14; 6:10; 19:11).

there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins [under the New Covenant]— neither was there a sacrifice for willful sins under the Old Covenant (Num 15:30-31). The declared judgment was that any such guilty person was to be cut off from God's people (Gen 17:14).

10:27 a certain frightful expectation of judgment, and fiery jealousy— the word “**frightful**” is used only one other time in relation to the fear of a believer: Moses (12:21). The verb form of the word “**expectation**” is used to describe Christ's expectation (10:13) and Abraham's expectation (11:10). This judgment is describing God's high standard for believers under His Covenant and His **fiery jealousy** (πυρρός ζήλος) which will devour those who oppose His truth.

which will devour those who are contrary— reference to Isaiah 26:11 and Zephaniah 1:18, describing fiery judgment on God's people (believers). This is not the word for “enemy,” but for being “contrary” to God (Col 2:14). Korah is an example of a believer who was contrary. When Korah and his followers rebelled against God's will, they were devoured in divine judgment: “the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. . . . And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense” (Num 16:32-35).

10:28 anyone who rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses— specifically, the sin of idolatry with the penalty being death by stoning (Dt 17:2-7; cf. 19:15).

10:29 trampled underfoot— to disregard something valuable, deeming it to be worthless (i.e. salt Mt 5:13; pearls 7:6; seed Lk 8:5; other people Lk 12:1).

counting the blood of the New Covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing— the blood of the covenant (Ex 24:8; Zec 9:11; Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; Heb 9:20; 10:29; 13:20. cf. 1Cor 11:25) sanctified believers (Heb 2:11; 10:10, 14) and objects of worship. To “**count common**” means to treat holy things as profane.

said, “**Vengeance^a is Mine, I will repay,**”^b says the Lord. And again, “**The LORD will judge His people.**”^c ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated,^d you endured^e a great struggle^f with sufferings: ³³ partly while you were made a spectacle^g both by reproaches^h and afflictions, and partly while you became companionsⁱ of those who were so treated; ³⁴ for you had sympathy^j for me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring^k possession^l for yourselves in heaven. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your boldness of speech,^m which has great reward.ⁿ ³⁶ For you have need of endurance,^o so that after you have done the will^p

^a ἐκδίκησις —to vindicate, to avenge one’s rights, to do justice (Lk 18:7, 8; 21:22; Acts 7:24; Rom 12:19; 2Cor 7:11; 2Th 1:8; Heb 10:30; 1Pet 2:14)

^b Dt 32:35 (cf. Lev 19:18; Rom 12:19)

^c Dt 32:36 (cf. Ps 135:14)

^d φωτίζω —to shine light, to spiritually enlighten (Lk 11:36; Jn 1:9; Eph 1:18; 3:9; 2Tim 1:10; Heb 6:4; 10:32)

^e ὑπομένω —to remain, abide, endure [suffering] (Mt 10:22; 24:13; Mk 13:13; Lk 2:43; Rom 12:12; 1Cor 13:7; 2Tim 2:10, 12; Heb 10:32; 12:2, 3, 7; Jas 1:12; 5:11; 1Pet 2:20)

^f ἀθλησις —combat, contest in public games [from ἀθλος] (cf. 2Tim 3:5)

^g θεατριζέω —to bring on the stage, expose to contempt

^h ὀνειδισμός —a reproach

of God, you may obtain^q the promise:

³⁷ “**For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.**

(Rom 15:3; 1Tim 3:7; Heb 10:33; 11:26; 13:13)

ⁱ κοινωνός —partner, sharer, partaker [from κοινός, common] (Mt 23:30; Lk 5:10; 1Cor 10:18, 20; 2Cor 1:7; 8:23; Phm 17; Heb 10:33; 1Pet 5:1; 2Pet 1:4)

^j συμπάθειω —Heb 4:15

^k μένω —to stay, abide, to remain, endure (Mt 10:11; 11:23; Jn 15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16; 1Cor 7:20; Heb 7:3, 24; 10:34; 12:27)

^l ὑπαρξις —possessions (Acts 2:45; Heb 10:34); “goods” above is the participle form (ὑπάρχοντα)

^m παρρησία —lit., all + speech, meaning speaking

freely, boldness (Mk 8:32; Acts 2:29; 4:29, 31; Heb 3:6; 4:16; 10:19, 35)

ⁿ μισθοποδοσία —payment of wages due, reward for good, punishment for disobedience (Heb 2:2; 10:35; 11:26)

^o ὑπομονή —patient endurance, steadfast (Lk 8:15; 21:19; Rom 2:7; Heb 10:36; 12:1; Jas 1:3, 4)

^p θέλημα —n. desire, will [the prolonged form of θέλω—to desire, to will] (Heb 10:7, 9, 10, 36)

^q κομίζω —to tend, care for, to receive, take away, to obtain (Mt 25:27; Lk 7:37; 2Cor 5:10; Eph 6:8; Col 3:25; Heb 10:36; 11:19, 39; 1Pet 1:9; 5:4; 2Pet 2:13)

10:30 Vengeance is Mine, I will repay . . . The LORD will judge His people—the author removes all doubt as to whom this warning is addressing—it is the people of God who will be judged if they sin willfully by breaking God’s Covenant. In Deuteronomy 32, the Song of Moses describes the People of God growing fat and forsaking their God, “scornfully esteeming” Him and provoking Him to jealousy (Dt 32:15-36). Generally, “**Vengeance is Mine, I will repay**” refers to God’s right to recompense everyone, especially enemies, honor or wrath according to their deeds (Rom 2:7-8; 12:19). However, in reference to His own people, redeemed and sanctified: “**The Lord will judge His people**, and have compassion on His servants” (Dt 32:36) and vindicate the upright (Ps 17:2).

10:31 a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God—(see 3:12). The phrase “the hand of the LORD” describes God’s direct action: in judgment (against the cattle of the Egyptians, Ex 9:3; 1Sam 5:6-9, 11; 7:5, 13; Isa 19:16; Ps 75:8; Acts 13:11) and against the rebellious Israelites, Ex 16:3, Dt 2:15; Josh 22:31; Jud 2:15; Ruth 1:13; 1Sam 12:15; 24:14; 51:17;); often in mighty deeds, prophecy, and blessing (i.e. drying up the Jordan River, Josh 4: 23-24; cf. Gen 49:24; 1Kgs 18:46; 2Kgs 3:15; 1Chr 21:13; 2Chr 6:4; 30:12; Ezra 7:6, 28; Neh 2:8; Job 2:10; Ps 118:15-16; Pro 21:1; Isa 25:10; 41:20; 62:3; Ecc 2:24; Eze 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1; Lk 1:66; Acts 11:21; 1Pet 5:6); holding the life of man (Job 12:9-10). Here, the warning is directed to rebellious believers who should fear being judged even as the rebellious Israelites were judged.

10:32 recall the former days in which . . . you endured a great struggle with sufferings—after warning his audience, the author is now encouraging them to remember their past days of faithful service to God. Their service was rendered **after [they] were illuminated** (6:9-12). Throughout the book, their conversion and status as children of God and their ministry under the New Covenant has never been in doubt. Previously, they were commended: “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have proved toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (Heb 6:10). Their former endurance consisting of struggles and suffering is described in detail (10:33-34).

10:33 you were made a spectacle—this describes a stage production, a spectacle for all to behold. Paul uses the noun form of this word to describe the apostles’ suffering unto death: “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men” (1Cor 4:9).

both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated—three ways in which they were made spectacles:

by reproaches—even though Christ was in the right, for God’s sake He suffered rebukes from ignorant religious leaders (Rom 15:3);

and afflictions—not just tribulations from enemies of God. This includes being hard pressed by poverty (2Cor 8:2, 13; Phil 4:14; Jas

1:27); being persecuted by the government or the traditions of men (2Cor 6:4; 2Th 1:6); being in physical or mental anguish (Rom 8:35; 2Cor 6:4; 12:10); or the misery of imprisonment (Phil 1:16).

became companions of those who were so treated—being a partner or sharer (κοινωνός), having things in common (κοινός), with those who are suffering for Christ.

10:34 for you had sympathy for me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods—a specific way in which they became companions of the author in his affliction (and maybe of other prisoners as well). Note that in having sympathy for others, they were imitating Christ (Heb 4:15). “Accepted” is often used in the context of the kingdom of God (Mt 15:43; Lk 2:25, 38; 12:36; 23:51; Tts 2:13). The plundering of one’s goods usually describes a victorious army robbing those who have been conquered; but in this case it probably describes the sharing of their possessions to meet the needs of other believers even though it might have resulted in their own economic hardship (cf. Acts 4:32-37; 2Cor 8:1-7).

knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven—when they allowed their earthly treasures to be plundered, they were simply obeying Christ’s command to “lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys” (Mt 6:20; cf. 33). Christ, being appointed the heir of all things (Heb 1:2), will share His inheritance with the heirs of the promise (Rom 4:13; Eph 1:14; Gal 3: 16, 29; Heb 1:14), if they endure suffer for His sake (Rom 8:17; 2Tim 2:12; Heb 6:12).

10:35 do not throw away your boldness of speech, which has great reward—not mere “confidence” which by itself does nothing and certainly will not bring a “great reward.” As in Heb 3:6, the believer’s **boldness of speech** concerning Christ is connected to his great reward at the judgment seat of Christ (see note at 10:19). If he throws away his ministry, he also throws away his great reward.

10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise—like spiritual food, endurance to do the will of God is a necessity of spiritual life (Jn 4:32-34). This introduces the list of faithful saints (Heb 11) who although they “obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise [yet] . . . that they should not be made perfect apart from us” (Heb 12:39-40). If we also do the will of God, enduring suffering as they did, both we and they will be perfected together, receiving the promise of God’s rest, that is, the believers’ hope of living with God in His house (Heb 3:6; 3:18-4:1). Nevertheless, every child of God has everlasting life; and even if he does not remain faithful and has nothing surviving when his works are judged, Christ will remain faithful to him.

For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.

If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.

If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

If we are faithless, He remains faithful;

He cannot deny Himself (2Tim 2:11-13; cf. Rom 5:1-5).

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith;
 But if he draws back,^a
 My soul has no pleasure in him.”^b

³⁹ But we are not of those who draw back^d to destruction,^e but of those who believe unto the obtaining of the purchased possession^f of the soul.^g

11 Now,

Faith is the basis^h of things hoped for, the proof of things^j not seen.

² For by it the elders have been given a good witness.^k

³ By faith we understand that the worlds^l were framed^m by the wordⁿ of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

^a ὑποστέλλω –to draw back, [ⲛⲓⲛⲓ –to be swollen and then shrink] (Acts 20:20, 27; Gal 2:12; Heb 10:38; 1Pet 2:14); [cf. ἀποστέλλω –to send forth, Mt 10:5, 16, 40; 11:10]

^b Hab 2:3-4 (LXX)

^c Dt 32:36 (cf. Ps 135:14)

^d ὑποστολή –n. a drawing back (from ὑποστέλλω)

^e ἀπώλεια –destruction, ruin, waste (Mt 7:13; 26:8; Mk 14:4; Jn 17:12; Acts 8:20; 25:16; Rom 9:22; Phil 1:28; 3:19; 2Th 2:3, 1Tim 6:9; Heb 10:39; 2Pet 2:1,2, 3; 3:7, 16; Rev 17:8, 11)

^f περιποίησις –obtaining a purchased possession (Eph 1:14; 1Th 5:9; 2Th 2:14; Heb 10:39; 1Pet 2:9) [from περιποιέω, to make or

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he was given a good witness^k that he was righteous, God testifying^k of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

purchase for oneself, cf. Acts 20:28; 1Tim 3:13]

^g ψυχή –breath, life, soul (Mt 2:20; 6:25; 10:28,39; 11:29; 12:18; 16:26; 20:28; 22:37; Col 3:23; Heb 4:12; 6:19; 10:38, 39; 12:2; 13:17; Jas 1:21; 1Pet 1:9; 2:11)

^h ὑπόστασις –underlying substance, basis [often in context of securing a future possession] (2Cor 9:4; 11:17; Heb 1:3; 3:14; 11:1)

ⁱ ἔλεγχος –proof, that by which something is tested or proved (2Tim 3:16; Heb 11:1)

^j πρᾶγμα –a deed, fact, legal matter (Heb 6:18; 10:1; 11:1)

^k μαρτυρέω –to be a witness (Mt 23:31; Lk 4:22; Jn 1:7; Acts 6:3; 1Tim 5:10; Heb 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6; 3Jn 12)

^l αἰών –the ages [plural form points to all things contained in the ages]

^m καταρτίζω –to make fit, complete, perfect [as it ought to be] (Mt 4:21; 21:16; Lk 6:40; Rom 9:22; 1Cor 1:10; 2Cor 13:11; Gal 6:1; Heb 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; 1Pet 5:10)

10:37-38 – This quotation begins with encouragement to the just to “hide for a moment” until God’s judgment is past (Isa 26:20). Faith is to be a characteristic virtue of a believer’s life. Switching to Habakkuk 2:4-5, it warns the proud (ⲛⲓⲛⲓ, swollen) that they are not upright. However, instead of “proud,” the LXX uses the word ὑποστέλλω meaning “to draw back,” and one might combine the two meanings “to be swollen and then shrink back.” This Gk word is especially significant here since it has the same root as ἀποστέλλω, “to send [as an apostle].” Thus the warning is: if a believer shrinks from his duty, God’s soul will have no pleasure in him.

10:39 those who draw back to destruction – to draw back or shrink from doing one’s duty leads to destruction. Jesus warned His disciples about the possibility of their destruction: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it” (Mt 7:13). “Destruction” describes waste and ruin, the consequences of sin. It also describes the work of Satan and the “sons of destruction” (Jn 17:12; 2Th 2:3; 2Pet 3:7; Rev 17:8, 11). Although a believer can ask and receive forgiveness for his sin, the destructive consequences of his sin will still be realized (i.e. King David’s sin with Bathsheba). Under the New Covenant, the usual consequence of a believer’s sin is the loss of rewards and of opportunities to serve God in greater ways.

those who believe unto the obtaining of the purchased possession of the soul – there is a purpose, a goal for the believer’s faith beyond justification by faith: to reclaim the life (soul) which was lost to sin. To repurchase his soul, a believer’s faith is tested and tried with fire so that he might “obtain” (κομίζω, Heb 10:36) the “end” (τέλος, complete fulfillment, goal) of the salvation of his soul (1Pet 3:9). In one’s initial exercise of faith, he receives Jesus as the Christ, saving him from sin and giving him the power to become a child of God (Jn 1:12). However, after becoming a believer, he must, like Christ the captain of our salvation (Heb 2:10-11; 12:1-2), become perfected (matured) by enduring trials and suffering as he does God’s will (Mt 5:48; Eph 4:13; Col 1:28; 4:12; Heb 2:10; 5:9). After a believer’s faith is fully tested and he has done the will of God, God will recompense his labor, whereby he “obtains” the promise: the hope of God’s rest (Heb 10:35-36; 11:1-40). God offers every believer who serves Him a possession to be purchased, the full restoration (salvation) of his soul, the life God designed and intended for mankind. “By your endurance possess [acquire] your souls” (Lk 21:19).

11:1 Faith is the basis of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen – faith is not analyzing the probabilities and confidently choosing the best one. These examples depict “living faith” in action (10:38). The word ὑπόστασις, translated “basis” refers to the “underlying substance” (Heb 1:3; 3:14) which provides the foundation of a believer’s future hope: the fact that God has given the promise of entering His rest (Heb 4:1). The proof comes from the test of doing God’s will. When the believer is tested, will he be approved and receive all that God promises; or will he draw back, fail to endure, and thus not receive the promises (Heb 10:36-39)?

things not seen – this generally refers to many of God’s promises

and His mighty acts. For Abraham, he was seeking the promise of the city of God. Although he did not receive the promises in this lifetime, he “saw them afar off” and was “assured of them” (Heb 11:13).

11:2 by it the elders have been given a good witness – the following list is of some OT believers who, living by faith, were tested and approved. On account of this, they were given a good witness that they were “righteous” (Heb 11:4) and that they “pleased God” (Heb 11:5); thus they became “heirs of righteousness” (Heb 11:7). However, some “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off” (Heb 11:13; cf. Heb 12:39-40). Since Adam is known for his disobedience, he is not included in this list.

11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God – faith is believing God: a worldview that what God has revealed is true. God has described the creation events of which no man was witness. To understand, man must depend on God’s Word. By faith, a believer understands that God created everything by divine command (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26), even if he does not fully understand everything that God did. (Likewise, a believer must believe God that all of this world will be destroyed.) The word framed (καταρτίζω) means to prepare, furnish, make fit.

the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible – the Latin phrase *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) is often used to describe creation coming into existence by divine command instead of evolving from preexisting matter or energy. This verse clearly teaches that creation came into being by divine fiat. However, this verse teaches that visible creation was not made of things which are visible [to human eyes]. Certainly, the universe was not created by a preexisting energy, other than the power of God.

11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain – Abel’s sacrifice was of better quality than Cain’s because he offered it by faith. Faith is not confidence—it seems Cain was not lacking in confidence. Faith is believing God, and living faith is acting in obedience to God’s will. Believing God is the beginning of one’s faith (Gen 15:6). Throughout Hebrews 11, each faithful example shows how living by faith means that a believer pleases God by doing His will (following His example, obeying His commands). When Abel offered his sacrifice, he followed God’s example by sacrificing a lamb (Gen 3:21). In spite of God’s encouragement to “do what is right” (Gen 4:6-7), Cain still failed the test.

through which he was given a good witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts – God “looked on” (Gen 4:4) Abel’s gifts, giving a good witness that he was righteous (a term not used in Gen 4); Abel was doing God’s will and was thus approved of God. In God’s system of accounting, when one believes God, an initial gift of righteousness from God is accounted to him because of his faith (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3-5; 5:15-19; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9). After this initial faith and justification, a believer can be further justified by his faith working together with his good works (obedience to God’s will). Together these make his faith mature (perfect). In this way, God’s initial gift, accounting righteousness to him, is fulfilled (Jas 2:23).

through it he being dead still speaks – although Abel’s life was brief, his living faith challenges all who hear of his righteousness.

⁵By faith Enoch was removed^a so that he did not see^b death, “and was not found, because God had removed him;”^c for before his removal^d he had this *good* witness,^e that he pleased^f God. ⁶But without faith *it is impossible*^g to please^f Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek^h Him.

⁷By faith Noah, being divinely warnedⁱ of things not yet seen and moved by godly fear,^j prepared an ark for the salvation^k of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

^a μετατίθημι –to replace, remove, transpose, transfer, change things established (Acts 7:16; Gal 1:6; Heb 7:12; 11:5; Jude 4)

^b εἶδω –to see; to know [by perception] (Mt 2:2, 9, 10, 11, 16; 3:7; Heb 3:9; 8:11; 11:5, 13, 23; Jas 3:1; 4:17; 5:11)

^c Gen 5:24

^d μεταθέσις –noun form of μετατίθημι (Heb 7:12; 11:5; 12:27)

^e μαρτυρέω –to bear witness (Mt 23:31; Lk 4:22; Jn 1:7; Acts 6:3; 1Tim 5:10; Heb 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6; 3Jn 12)

^f εὐαρεστέω –to be acceptable, to be [well + pleasing] (Heb 11:5, 6; 13:16) [verb]

⁸By faith when he was called, Abraham obeyed,^l to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance, and he

form of εὐάρεστος, Rom 12:1, 2; 14:18; 2Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20; Tts 2:9; Heb 13:31

^g ἀδύνατος –not possible

(Mt 19:26; Lk 18:27; Rom 8:3; Heb 6:4, 8; 10:4; 11:6)

^h ἐκζητέω –to diligently seek, investigate, crave, beg, require (Lk 11:50, 51; Acts 15:17; Rom 3:11; Heb 11:6; 12:17; 1Pet 1:10)

ⁱ χρηματίζω –to advise; to give an answer to those consulting a divine oracle (Mt 2:12, 22; Heb 11:7; 12:25)

^j εὐλαβέομαι –to act circum-spectly, to beware, fear [God] (Acts 23:10; Heb 11:7) [adj. form, εὐλαβής, Lk 2:25; Acts 2:5; 8:2; noun form, εὐλάβεια, Heb 5:7; 12:28]

^k σωτηρία –deliverance from enemies (Lk 1:69, 71, 77; 19:9; Rom 1:16; Heb 1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 6:9; 9:28; 11:7)

^l ὑπακούω –lit., under + to hear; to listen and obey; (Mt 8:27; Mk 1:27; Acts 6:7; Rom 6:12, 16, 17; Eph 6:1; 2Th 1:8; 3:14; Heb 5:9; 11:8)

11:5 By faith Enoch was removed so that he did not see death—Enoch changed locations: he was removed (μετατίθημι) from abiding on Earth to be with God. This word describes the bodies of Jacob and Joseph being transferred from tombs in Egypt to Abraham’s tomb in Canaan (Acts 7:16). Being removed is the same word used to describe the Old Covenant being “replaced” by the New Covenant (Heb 7:12). This word is used negatively to describe the Galatians who “exchanged” the grace of Christ for the message of the Judaizers (Gal 1:6) and also to describe those who “change” the grace of God into license to sin (Jude 4).

that he pleased God—in the LXX, the Hebrew idiom “he walked with God” is translated “he pleased God” (i.e. Gen 5:24). This is the witness God has recorded concerning Enoch.

11:6 without faith it is impossible to please Him—if it were true that faith is a gift from God, it would remove all human responsibility because man would be incapable of pleasing God unless He gives man the necessary faith. Instead, the lesson here is that these believers were able to please God because in faith they obeyed Him, doing God’s will, whatever He asked of them.

he who comes to God must believe—no doubt God draws men to Himself through Christ (Jn 6:44; 12:32; 14:6). The question answered here is “what he who comes to God must believe”: 1) he must believe that God exists; and 2) he must believe that God rewards those who diligently seek Him. When God draws someone, that person must also seek God. If he does, he will find God because God is already drawing him and, thus, is providing the truth which he needs to believe and obey. “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn 8:31-32; cf. 6:28-29; 15:10; Rom 2:8; Gal 3:1; 5:7; 1Pet 1:22; 4:17). God’s initial gift is a credit of righteousness accounted to all who believe God’s gospel (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:1-8). When one becomes a believer, if he **diligently seeks** God, doing the

good works God desires him to do, then additional righteousness (justification) is accounted to him (Jas 2:20-26). In the book of Hebrews, the author addresses believers who are considering whether to fall back to the traditions of the Old Covenant. However, the Old Covenant has been replaced with the New; so, they can no longer please God by obeying the Old Law. Even if they kept the Old Law, there is no longer any reward for doing so. On the other hand, rewards are available for those who **diligently seek** God, obeying the word which God recently sent through His Son (Heb 1:2; Rev 22:12). The greatest of these rewards are finding God and living with Him in the New Jerusalem (Heb 12:22-25).

11:7 Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen—the word (χρηματίζω) translated **being warned** is the idea of receiving a divine oracle (i.e. the wise men, Mt 2:12, and Joseph in Mt 2:22). Oracles (λόγιον) from God are recorded in Scripture (Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2; Heb 5:12; 1Pet 4:11), such as the warnings here in Hebrews. The phrase **things not yet seen** refers back to the description of faith given in Heb 11:1 (“the test of things not seen”). There was nothing evident to Noah. He had not yet seen a flood or even rain, let alone a world-wide flood or a ship the size of the ark. This was Noah’s great test of faith which he passed because of his obedience.

and moved by godly fear, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household—Simeon (Lk 2:25), Christ (Heb 5:7), and others (Acts 2:5; 8:2) are also described as having **godly fear**. Later, the author admonishes his readers: “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb 12:28). Noah’s faith is seen in his obedience when he **prepared** the ark according to God’s instructions (Gen 6:13-22; 7:5). The word **salvation** (σωτηρία) generally means “deliverance from one’s enemies.” For Noah’s house, salvation meant deliverance from the destruction of death (the judgment of the Flood). This serves to illustrate the everlasting salvation of every believer from the second death in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14-15; 21:8).

and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith—to be an heir gives one the expectation of receiving an inheritance. However, an heir might not have rights of inheritance until he meets the conditions set forth (by a testament). Similar to Abraham’s obedience in offering Isaac, Noah’s obedience gained him the inheritance of righteousness which comes by faith (Jas 2:20-26). He inherited a “new” world after the flood; we will inherit the world to come (Heb 2:5-8).

11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called—the Gk word ὑπακούω (“obey”) is used only one other time in the book—to describe Christ “becom[ing] the author of salvation to all who obey Him” (Heb 5:9). In the LXX, ἀκούω (“to hear”) is used to translate שמע (shama): “Hear O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Dt 6:4). Shama’ means “to hear and obey” or “to hearken.” The word ὑπακούω emphasizes the aspect of obedience. When Abraham heard God’s word, he obeyed it immediately.

the place which he would receive as an inheritance—Abraham looked forward to the “yet unseen” reward. His inheritance was not Heaven, but to live with God in His royal city, the New Jerusalem.

Coming to God (προσερχομαι in Hebrews):

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

7:25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who **come** to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

10:1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who **approach** perfect.

10:22 Let us **draw near** with a true heart in full bearing of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an corrupt conscience and the body washed with pure water.

11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who **comes** to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

12:18-22 For you have not **come** to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest But you have **come** to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

went out, not knowing^a where he was going. ⁹By faith he dwelt^b in the land of promise as *in* a foreign^c country, dwelling^d in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;^e ¹⁰for he expected^f the city which has foundations,^g whose builder^h and makerⁱ is God.

¹¹By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed,^j and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged^k Him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead,^l were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude; as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable.

¹³These all died^m in faith, not having received the promises^e but having seenⁿ them afar off, were persuaded^o of them,

^a ἐπίσταμαι –to turn one's mind to, to understand, know (Mk 14:68; Acts 10:28; 15:7; 19:15; 22:19; Heb 11:8)

^b παροικέω –to dwell beside (Lk 24:18; Heb 11:9)

^c ἄλλοτριος –belonging to another; foreign (Mt 17:25; Lk 16:12; Acts 7:6; Rom 14:4; Heb 9:25; 11:9; 34)

^d κατοικέω –to dwell, settle (Mt 2:23; 4:13; 12:45; 23:21; Heb 11:9)

^e ἐπαγγελία –promise; announcement (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 39; 7:17; 13:32, 32; Rom 4:13, 14, 16; 9:4, 8, 9; 15:8; Heb 4:1; 6:12, 15, 17; 7:6; 8:6; 9:15; 10:36; 11:9, 13, 17, 33, 39)

^f ἐκδέχομαι –to receive; to expect or wait for (Jn 5:3; Acts 17:16; 1Cor 11:33; Heb 10:13; 11:10; Jas 5:7)

^g θεμέλιος –laid down as a foundation (Lk 6:48, 49;

embraced^p *them* and confessed^q that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

14:29; Acts 16:26; Rom 15:20; Heb 6:1; 11:10)

^h τεχνίτης –artificer, craftsman (Acts 19:24, 38; Heb 11:10; Rev 18:22)

ⁱ δημιουργός –workman for the public; author, artisan, builder (Heb 11:10)

^j καταβολή –to lay down [a foundation] to throw down [seed], to deposit semen (Mt 13:35; 25:34; Heb 11:11)

^k ἡγέομαι –to go before; to lead, rule, influence; to consider, deem, account (Mt 2:6; Lk 22:26; Acts 26:2; 2Cor 9:5; Phil 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7; Heb 10:29; 11:11, 26; 13:7, 17, 24)

^l νεκρόω –to make lifeless, dead, a corpse (Rom 4:19; Col 3:5; Heb 11:12)

^m ἀποθνήσκω –to die,

perish, to wither away [seeds, a man's virility] (Mt 8:32; 9:24; Jn 4:47; 1Cor 15:36; Phil 1:21; Col 2:20; Heb 9:27; 10:28; 11:4, 13, 21, 37)

ⁿ εἶδω –to perceive by the eyes or the senses, to experience; to know, understand (Mt 2:2, 9, 10, 11, 16; 1Th 4:5; 1Tim 3:15; Heb 3:9; 8:11; 10:30; 11:5, 13, 23; Jas 4:17; 5:11)

^o πείθω –to persuade, (Heb 2:13; 6:9; 11:13; 13:17, 18)

^p ἀσπάζομαι –to salute, greet, kiss (1Cor 16:20; 2Cor 13:12, 13; Heb 11:13; 13:24)

^q ὁμολογέω –to say the same thing (Mt 7:23; 10:32; Heb 11:13; 13:15)

11:8 not knowing where he was going– when Abraham left Ur for the Promised Land, he did not yet know where exactly God was leading him, and so he stopped for a time in Haran (Gen 11:31). When Abraham was dwelling in Haran, God spoke to him, giving him more information, promising to bless Him and to bless the world through him (Gen 12:1-4). When Abraham arrived in the Promised Land, God appeared to him again, and this time He promised Abraham that his seed would inherit the Promised Land (Gen 12:7). Abraham's faith in God is accounted to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6).

11:9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents–the author is highlighting Abraham's example dwelling along side (παροικέω) the Canaanites. Instead of settling down (κατοικέω) in solid-built houses and being assimilated into their culture, he dwelt in transitory tents. Why is this significant? Because he looked forward, expecting to receive the promise (to live in God's city which will have permanent foundations).

11:10 for he expected the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God–the divine promise created an expectation in Abraham, as a farmer expects a fruitful harvest (Jas 5:7) or as the sick expected the moving of the water of Bethesda (Jn 5:4). In Abraham's case, he **expected** to find the city of God. The city has **foundations** (θεμέλιος) similar to the wise man's house which is built on a rock foundation (Lk 6:48). This is not referring to anything which the Old Covenant brought or to the ancient city of Jerusalem (of which God was certainly not the architect). Christ is described as the chief cornerstone; and His preaching which became the doctrine of the apostles is the foundation of the New Testament/Covenant (Rom 15:20; 1Cor 3:10-12; Eph 2:20; Heb 6:1). Thus, the New Jerusalem, the everlasting city of God, will have twelve everlasting foundations with an Apostle's name written in each one of them (Rev 21:14-19). There is nothing wrong with expecting God's rewards.

11:11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed– the active verb indicates that Sara was willingly involved, **receiving strength** to conceive Isaac (compare this with Mary's conception, Lk 1:38). Oddly, the verb "to throw down [seed, semen]" (καταβολή) is usually a male action, except in this verse where it describes Sarah's conception. Certainly, this reminds the reader of God's promise concerning the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). Sarah's example demonstrates that women are not excluded from the promises of God, the testing of their faith, and the inheritance of salvation (cf. 1Tim 2:15). Sarah was approved even though she initially doubted the promise which seemed beyond the realm of possibility, laughing at the idea of bearing a child so late in her life (Gen 18:12).

because she judged Him faithful who had promised– first, God made a promise; then Sarah responded in faith to God's promise, **judging Him faithful** to keep His promise. Next, God strengthened her to conceive; and finally, Sarah **received strength** from God to conceive Isaac. Such is the dynamic of a believer living by faith.

11:12 one man, and him as good as dead– Abraham's body is described as **dead** because it was no longer virile. Abraham himself was not dead, neither was he spiritually dead at the time (Gen 15:6).

as many as the stars of the sky in multitude; as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable– poetic descriptions of Abraham's numerous descendants (both physical and spiritual).

11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises–at their appointed time each of these (Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob) died. What is important is that they lived in a manner consistent with faith: they believed that God "is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (11:6). Even so, in this life they did not "receive" the possession which God promised to give them as a reward (cf. 6:15). Their death and the fact that God's promise was yet unfulfilled, implies a future supernatural event: the resurrection. Throughout this passage, the emphasis is on "death" and "promise."

The faith of our fathers who "obtained" the promises (6:15; 11:13)

1. They perceived (understood) the promises afar off.
2. They were persuaded to act based on the promises.
3. They embraced the promises as one would greet a loved one.
4. They confessed to others that they were foreigners on this Earth.

but having seen them afar off– here, the idea of "seeing" (εἶδω) is to perceive with one's senses, specifically, to perceive with one's spiritual understanding that the promises of God are real and everlasting, even though at times in this life they seem to be far away. Undoubtedly, they came to understand that their possession of the Promised Land would be realized only after their resurrection.

were persuaded of them– many believers know the truth that God will reward them if they please Him, but still they are not **persuaded** to obey Him. For example, the Israelites could not be persuaded to obey God and enter the Promised Land (3:18-19). Because of their obstinance, instead of receiving an inheritance from God, they brought an awful judgment on themselves. They were left outside the Promised Land, being excluded from the fullness of God's blessing.

embraced them– to "embrace" the promises means to greet them as one would a loved-one returning from a long journey: to hug them around the neck and kiss them (cf. 1Cor 16:20; 2Cor 13:12).

and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth – (see Gen 23:4) the word ξένος (stranger) refers to an alien, without knowledge or share (inheritance) in a country, [also to the one who is hospitable to the alien] (Mt 25:35, 38, 43, 44; Eph 2:12, 19). The word παρειδιημος (pilgrim or sojourner) refers to aliens who reside alongside the native inhabitants. As **strangers and pilgrims**, they "said the same thing" to their neighbors. With them we should **confess**:

*This world is not my home,
I am just 'passing through.
My treasures are laid up
Somewhere beyond the blue*

¹⁴ For those who say such things declare plainly^a that they seek a fatherland.^b ¹⁵ And truly if on the one hand, they had called to mind^c that *country* from which they had come out, they might have had an opportunity to return, ¹⁶ but now on the other *hand*, they desire^d a better *country*, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed^e to be named^f their God, for He has prepared^g a city for them.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, when he was tested,^h offered up Isaac, that is, he who had receivedⁱ the promises offered up his only begotten^j *son*, ¹⁸ of whom it was said, “**In Isaac your seed shall be called,**”^k ¹⁹ accounting^l that God *was* able^m to raise *him* up, even from the dead,ⁿ from which indeed he also received^o him in a figurative sense.^p

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying,^q

^a ἐμφανίζω —to manifest, exhibit to view, to declare, make known (Mt 27:53; Jn 14:21, 22; Acts 23:15, 22; Heb 9:24; 11:14)
^b πατρίς —a fatherland (Mt 13:54, 57; Heb 11:14)
^c μνημονεύω —to call to mind, remember, mention (Mt 16:9; Mk 8:18; Lk 17:32; Jn 15:20; Heb 11:15, 22; 13:7)
^d ὀρέω —to stretch forth in order to grasp something, to aspire (1Tim 3:1; 6:10; Heb 11:16)
^e ἐπαισχύνομαι —to be ashamed + of (Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; Rom 1:16; 6:21; 2Tim 1:8, 12, 16; Heb 2:11; 11:16)
^f ἐπικαλέω —to be sur-named; to call upon (Mt 10:3; Lk 22:3; Rom 10:12; 1Cor 1:2; 2Cor 1:23; 2Tim 2:22, Heb 11:16; Jas 2:7)
^g ἐτοιμάζω —to make ready, to prepare for a king (Mt 3:3; 20:23; 22:4; 25:34; 41:26:17, 19; Mk 1:3; 10:40; Lk 1:17, 76; Heb 11:16)
^h πειράζω —to test [i.e. one’s

blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped,^r *leaning* on the top of his staff.

character], to tempt [in the context of doing evil] (Mt 4:1, 3; 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35; Mk 1:8; Jn 6:6; Acts 5:9; 15:10; 1Cor 10:9, 13; 2Cor 13:5; Heb 2:18; 3:9; 4:15; 11:17, 37; Jas 1:13, 14; Rev 2:2, 10)
ⁱ ἀναδέχομαι —to receive, entertain [guests] (Acts 28:7; Heb 11:17)
^j μονογενής —only-begotten (Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38; Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Heb 11:17; 1Jn 4:9)
^k Gen 21:12
^l λογίζομαι —to account, reckon, calculate, weigh a matter (Mt 11:31; 15:28; Lk 22:37; Rom 2:3, 26; 3:28; 4:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24; 6:11; 8:18, 36; 14:14; 1Cor 4:1; 13:11; 2Cor 3:5; 11:5; Phil 3:13; Heb 11:19)
^m δυνατός —able, powerful. it was possible (Mt 19:26; 24:24; 26:39; Mk 9:23; Lk 1:49; Acts 2:24; 7:22; Rom 4:21; Heb 11:19)
ⁿ νεκρός —a lifeless corpse (Mt 8:22; 10:8; Eph 2:1, 5; Col 2:13; Heb 6:1, 2; 9:14, 17; 11:19, 35; 13:20; Jas 2:17, 20, 26; 1Pet 1:3)
^o κομίζω —to tend, care for, to receive, take away, to obtain (Mt 25:27; Lk 7:37; 2Cor 5:10; Eph 6:8; Col 3:25; Heb 10:36; 11:19, 39; 1Pet 1:9; 5:4; 2Pet 2:13)
^p παραβολή —a placing of one thing beside another, comparison, likeness; a proverb (Mt 13:3, 10, 13, 18; Mk 3:23; 4:2; Lk 4:23; 12:41; Heb 9:9; 11:19)
^q ἀποθνήσκω —to die [naturally or violently] (Rom 5:6, 7, 8; Heb 7:8; 9:27; 10:28; 11:4, 13, 21, 37)
^r προσκυνέω —to worship, to kiss the hand [like a dog licking a hand] (Mt 2:2, 8, 11; 4:9, 10; Lk 24:52; Jn 4:20, 21, 22, 23, 24; Heb 1:6; 11:21; Rev 3:9)

11:14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a fatherland— Abraham himself would not return to the city of Ur or even to Haran when he sought a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:1-10). Also, when Jacob took leave of Laban, he requested, “Send me away, that I may return to my own place to my country [Canaan]” (Gen 30:25). While living in Canaan, neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob settled down in a permanent house, because they knew the **fatherland** they were seeking was not of this world—it was of the world to come. It would be the country prepared by God the Father.

11:15 they might have had an opportunity to return— even though they could have, they chose not to return because they desired something better. Their faithful example should be compelling to the Hebrew Christians who are considering a return to Judaism.

11:16 now are desiring a better country, that is, a heavenly country— “to desire” means literally “to grasp for.” This should remind the reader of Christ’s proclamation that “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand [within your grasp].” The hope of Abraham to live with God is the hope of every believer.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be named their God— the most common NT translation for ἐπικαλέω (to call upon) is “to surname.” This idea is that God’s name is changed to include the believer, and the believer is known to be part of God’s family. Although God’s personal name is “Yahweh,” He made Himself known as “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Ex 3:6, 15-16; cf. Mt 22:32). Consider how early on, “men began to call upon the name of the LORD” (Gen 4:26). Thus, those who called on God’s name were known to be part of His family.

for He has prepared a city for them— the New Jerusalem (Zion) certainly does not refer to the Jerusalem currently on this Earth. First of all, the architect and public-works artisan of the New Jerusalem is God (11:10). Secondly, this city (kingdom) is prepared and furnished by God (11:16). Thirdly, this city (kingdom) is currently situated in Heaven (12:22). Fourthly, this city (kingdom) is the one which will come to the New Earth (13:14; cf. Rev 21:1-22:5).

11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac— this was the ultimate test of Abraham’s faith. Although he did not know how to reconcile God’s different revelations, he knew how to obey (Gen 22:1). Many figurative parallels can be drawn between Isaac and Christ and also between Isaac and the believer.

he who had received the promises— dozens of Greek words with various meanings are translated “to receive” in the NT. In this verse, “received” means to entertain as an honored guest. The promise is a trust which requires Abraham’s attention and protection. And yet, God asks Abraham to kill Isaac, the one in whom the promise was residing.

λαμβάνω —to take in one’s hands [self-prompted], make one’s own (Heb 2:2; 7:5, 8, 9; 9:15; 10:26; 11:8, 11, 13, 35)
δέχομαι —to take [by the hand], undertake, assume; to receive and welcome a guest (11:31; cf. variations: Mk 4:20; 2Cor 6:17; 10:34, 11:17, 35; 12:6; Jam 2:25; 3Jn 9, 10)
κομίζω —to tend, care for, provide for, to take away for oneself, obtain, preserve for oneself (10:36; 11:19, 39; * Lk 7:37; 2Cor 5:10)
ἐπιτυγχάνω —to obtain, attain (Rom 11:7; Heb 6:15; 11:33; Jam 4:2)

only begotten son— referring to the “one son” in whom all the hopes of the parent reside. Obviously, Abraham also had another son, Ishmael by Hagar. However, Isaac was the son of promise (Rom 9:7-8; Gal 4:23, 28).

11:19 accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead— this reasoning in Abraham’s mind concerning Isaac’s resurrection is another piece of information which was not revealed in the OT. Even though Abraham had accepted Isaac’s death, that he expected something miraculous is implied in his orders to his servants to wait for both of them to return: “Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you” (Gen 22:5). God had done the impossible in Isaac’s birth: Abraham’s body being dead (Rom 4:16-22). Abraham expected nothing less than the impossible in Isaac’s death, “being fully convinced that what [God] had promised He was also able to perform” (Rom 4:21).

from which indeed he also received him in a figurative sense— the idea of παραβολή is much broader than the modern concept of “parables” (i.e. Christ’s teaching parables) It includes any comparison including those in proverbs, moral tale, allegories, fables, and, of course, parables. A side by side comparison is the key element of this figure of speech.

11:20 Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come— this episode (Gen 27:1-40) usually reflects negatively upon Jacob since he cheated Esau of his firstborn blessing. Previously, Esau had sold his birthright to Jacob for some red stew (Gen 25:29-34). However, God had revealed a reversal of human customs concerning the twins (nations) in Rebekah’s womb (Gen 25:23). Thus, Jacob and his mother set out to acquire what God had promised. After Isaac realized that Jacob had received the blessing, just as God had promised, he confirmed him as heir to Abraham’s blessing (Gen 28:3-4).

11:21 Jacob . . . blessed each of the sons of Joseph— Jacob adopted the sons of Joseph’s Egyptian wife (Gen 48:5). Jacob’s action had the effect of granting a younger son (Joseph) with the double portion of inheritance, which was the right of the eldest brother. In his blessing, Jacob “knowingly” places his right hand on the younger (Gen 48:14).

²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying,^a called to mind^b the exodus^c of the children of Israel, and gave orders^d concerning his bones.

²³ By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful^e child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

²⁴ By faith Moses, after he became a great *man*, refused^f to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing^g rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶ esteeming^h the reproachⁱ of Christ greater riches^j than the treasures^k in Egypt; for he turned his eyes^l to the reward.^m

²⁷ By faith he forsookⁿ Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he became strong^o while seeing^p Him who is invisible.^q ²⁸ By faith he instituted^r the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

²⁹ By faith they passed through^s the Red Sea as by dry *land*, whereas the Egyptians,

^a τελευτάω —to have an end, to die, (Mt 2:19, 9:18; Mk 9:44, 46, 48; Lk 7:2; Acts 2:29; 7:15; Heb 11:22)

^b μνημονεύω —to call to mind, remember, mention (Mt 16:9; Mk 8:18; Lk 17:32; Jn 15:20; Heb 11:15, 22; 13:7)

^c ἔξοδος —out + way, departure (Lk 9:31; Heb 11:22; 2Pet 1:15; cf. εἴσοδος —an entrance, the place or way leading into a place, Acts 13:24; 1Th 1:9; 2:1; Heb 10:19; 2Pet 1:11)

^d ἐντέλλω —to command, order what must be done, to tell the end of a matter (Mt 4:6; 15:4; 17:9; 19:7; 28:20; Jn 14:31; 15:14, 17 Acts 1:2; 13:47; Heb 9:20; 11:22)

^e ἀστεῖος —of the city, polished manners; elegant, fair (Acts 7:20; Heb 11:23)

^f ἄρνέομαι —to deny, contradict, refuse, to contradict his own interests (Mt 10:33; 26:70, 72; Lk 12:9; Jn 1:20; Acts 3:14; 4:16; 2Tim 2:12, 13; Tts 1:16; 2:12; Heb 11:24)

^g αἰρέω —to take for oneself, to choose (Phil 1:22; 2Th

attempting^t to do so, were swallowed up.^u

2:13; Heb 11:25)

^h ἡγέομαι —to go before; to lead, rule, influence; to consider, deem, account (Mt 2:6; Lk 22:26; Acts 26:2; 2Cor 9:5; Phil 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7; Heb 10:29; 11:11, 26; 13:7, 17, 24)

ⁱ ὀνειδισμός —a reproach (Heb 10:33; 11:26; 13:13)

^j πλοῦτος —fullness, abundance, plenitude (Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19; Lk 8:14; Rom 2:4; 9:23; 11:12, 33; Eph 1:18; 2:7; 3:8; Heb 11:26)

^k θησαυρός —the place for ones precious things are collected; a casket, coffer (Mt 2:11; 6:19, 20, 21; 12:35; 13:44, 52; 19:21; 2Cor 4:7; Col 2:3; Heb 11:26)

^l ἀποβλέπω —to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something else (Heb 11:26)

^m μισθαποδοσία —payment of wages due, reward for good, punishment for disobedience (Heb 2:2; 10:35; 11:26; cf. 11:6)

ⁿ καταλείπω —to leave be-

hind, forsake (Mt 4:13; 16:4; 19:5; Lk 5:28; 10:40; 15:4; Heb 4:1; 11:27; 2Pet 2:15)

^o καρτερέω —to be strong (Heb 11:27) [from κράτος, *strength, power*, (from a root meaning to complete or perfect), *equiv. to ἰσχύω*]

^p ὁράω —to see with one's eyes; [emph. on perception, understanding] (Mt 8:4; 16:6; 24:6; Lk 1:22; 9:36; Jn 1:18, 34; 5:37; 6:46; 8:38; 14:7; Heb 2:8; 8:5; 11:27)

^q ἄορατος —not seen, invisible (Rom 1:20; Col 1:15, 16; 1Tim 1:17; Heb 11:27)

^r ποιέω —to do, make, author (Heb 1:2, 3, 7; 3:2; 6:3; 7:27; 8:5, 9; 10:7, 9, 36; 11:28; 12:13, 27; 13:6, 17, 19, 21)

^s διαβαίνω —lit. through + foot; to pass through/over (Lk 16:26; Acts 16:9; Heb 11:29)

^t πείρα —a trial, attempt experiment (Heb 11:29, 36)

^u καταπίνω —to drink down (Mt 23:24; 1Cor 15:54; 2Cor 2:7; 5:4; Heb 11:29; 1Pet 5:8; Rev 12:16)

11:22 Joseph . . . called to mind the exodus of the children of Israel— he remembered the promise God had given to Abraham: his descendants would be afflicted four hundred years, and after the oppressive nation is judged, they would return to Canaan (Gen 15:13-16). In the LXX, the Greek word ἔξοδος (*exodus* meaning “exit, departure”) was assigned to be the name of the second book of Moses. Joseph believed God's promises to Abraham, and his desire to participate in these promises is evident in his command to return **his bones** to the Promised Land (Gen 50:24-25; cf. Ex 13:19; Josh 24:32).

11:23 because they saw he was a beautiful child— it is suggested that when Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, saw his exceptional beauty (Ex 2:2; Acts 7:20), they somehow knew that God had special plans for him. Their faith certainly looked back to God's promises to Abraham (since the four hundred years were almost expired), and maybe, even back to God's promise to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15).

they were not afraid of the king's command— Pharaoh had commanded that every Israelite new-born son be cast into the Nile River (Ex 1:22).

11:24-25 Moses, after he became a great man, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter— maturing into his full royal rights as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, Moses **became great** (μέγας γενόμενος) in Egypt. However, he denied himself the prestige, comfort, and **pleasures** which come with Egyptian rank; and instead, being mature and fully aware, he chose to identify with his Hebrew heritage and **to suffer affliction with the people of God** (Ex 2:11; cf. Acts 7:23-25). There is nothing inherently wrong with power and position when God places His servants in such places (i.e. Joseph and Daniel). Usually, the problem is that one's personal ambitions drive him to acquire power and prestige instead of pursuing God and His purposes.

11:26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt— the idea of the **reproach of Christ** seems to be an anachronism since Christ lived 1400 years after Moses. However, there are two senses in which the reproach of Christ was real in Old Testament times. First, Christ was present with the Israelites in their exodus from Egypt (1Cor 10:4). Jesus suffered with the Israelites (Isa 63:9), just as He suffers with His people today. Second, God's people have always suffered reproach because of the promise of Christ (which was first given in Gen 3:15). Ever since the Garden of Eden,

godly people, like Able, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, have been reviled and ostracized by their peers and have even been killed because of their witness for God's promises. Moses chose a life of suffering reproach, because he believed God's promises concerning the coming Christ, and also, because **he turned his eyes to the reward** (Heb 11:6; cf. Mt 5:11-12; 16:24-26; 19:21, 27-30; 25:14-30, 34; 1Cor 3:12-15; 2Cor 4:16-18; 2Tim 2:11-13; Rev 22:12). What is the ultimate reward for the believer? Finding the One for whom he was seeking (Heb 11:6), seeing God (Mt 5:8), and living with God in the New Jerusalem (Heb 4:1; 12:22-24). To Moses, the **treasures in Egypt** were empty coffins. The fame and fortune of Pharaoh went with him to his grave.

11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king — this is not referring to the time when Moses fled from Pharaoh to Midian because he had killed the Egyptian who was beating the Israelite. Moses forsook Egypt the moment he chose to identify with God's people; he did so without fearing Pharaoh's wrath. It was only after he tried to deliver the Israelites through his own strength, that he killed the Egyptian, and then in fear of Pharaoh, he fled. God wants us to do His work through the strength He supplies, not our own strength (i.e. King Saul vs. King David). When Moses came back to Egypt to deliver the Israelites in the strength of the Almighty God, Moses no longer feared Pharaoh.

for he became strong while seeing Him who is invisible— God is the source which can satisfy man's needs. Moses drew his strength from seeing the God who can not be seen. Moses had a great privilege: “the LORD spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Ex 33:11; cf. Num 12:7-8). Still, Moses never did look directly on God, as no man can do so and live. However, Moses did see the glory of God as He passed by, all the while, God was protecting him in the cleft of a rock (Ex 33:20-23). Otherwise, God revealed Himself to Moses through physical means, such as the fire in the bush and also the pillar of fire and the cloud which led the people. Moses was strengthened in all his interactions with God.

11:28 By faith he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of blood— there was not a precedent for sprinkling the blood on the doorpost for atonement and divine protection, but since this was God's instructions to the Israelites, Moses made sure that they knew God's will for that new dispensation.

11:29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land— “they” refers to the first generation of Israelites, coming out of Egypt. God includes them in this list of faithful believers.

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who refused to be persuaded,^a when she had received^b the spies with peace.

³² And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon^c and Barak^d and Samson^e and Jephthah,^f also of David and Samuel and the prophets: ³³ who through faith subdued^g kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained^h promises, stopped the mouthsⁱ of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edgeⁱ of the sword, out of weakness^j were made strong, became valiant^k in battle, turned to flight^l the armies of the aliens.

³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life^m again. Others were tortured,ⁿ not accepting redemption,^o that they might procure^p a better resurrection.^m ³⁶ Still others had trial^q of mockings and scourgings, yes, even of chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn

^a ἀπειθέω —to refuse to be persuaded, refuse to believe and/or obey (Jn 3:36; Acts 14:2; Rom 2:8; 10:21; Heb 3:18; 11:31)

^b δέχομαι —to receive [as a guest] (Mt 10:14; Heb 11:31)

^c Jdg 6-9, Midianites

^d Jdg 4-5, Canaanites (Sisera)

^e Jdg 13-16, Philistines

^f Jdg 11-12, Ammonites

^g καταγωνίζομαι —to fight against (Heb 11:33)

^h ἐπιτυγχάνω —to obtain, to attain to (Rom 11:7; Heb 6:15; 11:33; Jas 4:2; cf. Heb 11:13, “to receive”)

ⁱ στόμα —mouth, edge of sword (Heb 11:33, 34)

^j ἀσθένεια —weakness, infirmity (Heb 4:15; 5:2; 7:28; 11:34)

^k ἰσχυρός —strong (Heb 5:7; 6:18; 11:34)

^l κλίνω —to bow, fall back, to lie down [at end of day] (Mt 8:20; Jn 19:30; Heb 11:34)

^m ἀνάστασις —resurrection (Heb 6:2; 11:35)

ⁿ τυμπανίζω —to beat a drum; to torture (Heb 11:35)

in two, were tempted,^r were slain^s with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute,^t afflicted,^u tormented^v— ³⁸ of whom the world^w was not worthy.^x They wandered^y in deserts and mountains, *in dens and*

^o ἀπολύτρωσις —liberation procured by paying a ransom (Lk 21:38; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; 11:35)

10:28; 11:4, 13, 21, 37)

^p τυγχάνω —*lit.*, to hit a mark; obtain a result (Lk 20:35; Acts 19:11; 2Tim 2:10; Heb 8:6; 11:35)

^t ὑστερέω —to fall short, want, fail (Mt 19:20; Mk 10:21; 1Cor 1:7; Phil 4:12; Heb 4:1; 11:37; 12:15)

^q πείρα —a trial, attempt experiment (Heb 11:29, 36)

^u θλίβω —to trouble, press [as grapes] (Mt 7:14; Mk 3:9; 2Cor 1:6; 1Th 3:4; Heb 11:37)

^r πειράζω —to test [i.e. one's character], to tempt [in the context of doing evil] (Mt 4:1, 3; 16:1; 19:3; 22:18, 35; Mk 1:8; Jn 6:6; Acts 5:9; 15:10; 1Cor 10:9, 13; 2Cor 13:5; Heb 2:18; 3:9; 4:15; 11:17, 37; Jas 1:13, 14; Rev 2:2, 10)

^v κακουχέω —*lit.* to have + evil/bad, maltreat (Heb 11:37; 13:3)

^s ἀποθνήσκω —to die, perish, to wither away [seeds, a man's virility] (Mt 8:32; 9:24; Jn 4:47; 1Cor 15:36; Phil 1:21; Col 2:20; Heb 9:27;

^w κόσμος —a harmonious arrangement, this world system (Mt 4:8; 5:14; 13:35, 38; Heb 4:3; 9:26; 10:5; 11:7, 37)

^x ἄξιος —having weight; befitting, worthy (Mt 3:8; 1Tim 5:18; Heb 11:38)

^y κακουχέω —to stray, roam, wander about (Heb 3:10; 5:2; 11:38)

11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down— these walls fell down for no apparent reason (Josh 6). Here, God gives credit to the faith of those who **encircled** [the walls] **for seven days**. However, it was not the strength or valor of these Israelites which brought down Jericho's walls. They simply followed God's instructions, and He gave them the victory.

11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish— the last description of great faith is a most unlikely candidate: Rahab, a Gentile and a harlot. However, she is greatly revered in Jewish tradition. She is listed in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Mt 1:5). She is also mentioned in James along with Abraham, both being examples of how living faith is perfected by works (Jas 2:18-26). When she protected the spies, she endangered her own life. As a result of her active faith, she **did not perish with those who refused to be persuaded**. God is willing to save the worst of humanity, if they believe Him.

11:32-34 what more shall I say?— the list is not exhaustive. The following examples are not exactly in chronological order. Most of these faced overwhelming opposition but they overcame these adversities by their faith and obedience to God's will. The first four men and the last four descriptions are bookends for the chiasmus:

- A. Gideon
- B. Barak
- C. Samson
- D. Jephthah
- E. David
- F. Samuel and the prophets
- E' subdued kingdoms
- F' worked righteousness
- G. obtained promises
- F'' stopped the mouths of lions
- F''' quenched the power of fire
- D'E'' escaped the edge of the sword
- C' E''' out of weakness were made strong
- B' E'''' became valiant in battle
- A' E''''' turned to flight the armies of the aliens

To the world, many of these people presented as examples of faith were small and insignificant; but in God's record the significance of their actions remains beyond their deaths. Also, be assured that, since these examples are in God's family, their deaths will not stop God from fulfilling His promises to them.

worked righteousness— the righteous are acceptable to God, they act according to His will and conform to the requirements of God's Law. Although this description is specifically assigned to Samuel's faithful life, since it is one of the central points of the chiasmic structure, it also denotes an emphasis of this whole passage, that these all were approved of God because they worked (ἐργάζομαι) God's will.

obtained promises— the climax of the chiasmus. The word ἐπιτυγχάνω (to obtain, to attain to) is used only one other time in Hebrews, referring to Abraham who “after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise” (6:15). God had promised that Abraham would play an important part in bringing God's blessing to all the families of the Earth (Gen 12:1-3). Abraham's hope was to live in God's city. There were many other promised events which had to first take place so that Abraham's Seed would become the Messiah and bless all nations. In this instance, **obtained promises** seems to refer primarily to King David. After God gave him rest from all his enemies, David desired to build a house for God so that God would live with him in Jerusalem. Instead of allowing David to build His house, God promised to build David's house, giving him a seed and throne, both of which would be everlasting (2Sam 7:11-16). In both cases, Abraham and David desired to live with God, and their actions (based on their faith) were approved by God, by which they **obtained God's promises**. God's promises to Abraham and David are essential gospel promises.

11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again— the focus shifts to those who by faith endured suffering and death.

Others were tortured, not accepting redemption, that they might procure a better resurrection— although some might have been ransomed or liberated if they renounced their faith; instead, they chose to die terrible deaths, and thereby **procure a better resurrection**. This concept of “**better resurrection**” is a metonymy which refers to resurrection to everlasting life and God's rewards. Those who endure suffering for Christ in this life will reign with Him in the world to come (2Tim 2:12). As this book often warns, those believers who “neglect” or “fall away” from this “great salvation” will suffer great loss in the world to come.

11:37-38 They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— God made Abraham rich, but most of God's servants have been poor. However, they like Abraham, **wandered about** searching for God's everlasting city and His righteousness (cf. Mt 6:33). **Of whom the world was not worthy**, but God counts worthy of His kingdom (1Th 2:12; Col 1:10).

caves of the earth.

³⁹ And all these, having been given a *good* witness^a through faith, did not receive^b the promise, ⁴⁰ God having provided^c something better for us, that they should not be made perfect^d apart from us.

12 Consequently^e we also, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside^f every weight^g and the sin which so easily ensnares^h us, let us runⁱ with endurance^j the race^k that is set before^l us, ² looking^m away to Jesus, the Captainⁿ and Perfector^o of *our* faith, who in exchange for *the* joy that was set before^l Him endured^p a cross, thinking nothing^q of *the* shame, and has sat down^r at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ For consider^s Him who endured^p such hostility^t from sinners against Himself, in order that you might not become weary,^u fainting in your souls.^v ⁴ You have not yet resisted^w to bloodshed, striving against^x sin. ⁵ And you have forgotten^y the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the discipline^z of the LORD,

^a μαρτυρέω —to bear witness (Mt 23:31; Lk 4:22; Jn 1:7; Acts 6:3; 1Tim 5:10; Heb 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 1Jn 1:2; 4:14; 5:6; 3Jn 12)

^b κομίζω —to tend, care for, to receive, take away, to obtain (Mt 25:27; Lk 7:37; 2Cor 5:10; Eph 6:8; Col 3:25; Heb 10:36; 11:19, 39; 1Pet 1:9; 5:4; 2Pet 2:13)

^c προβλέπω —to foresee, to provide (Heb 11:40)

^d τελειόω —to make perfect, complete, mature (Lk 13:32; Jn 17:4, 23; 19:28; Acts 20:24; 2Cor 12:19; Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; Jas 2:22; 1Jn 2:5; 4:12, 17, 18)

^e τοιγαροῦν — [a particle introducing a conclusion] (1Tim 4:8; Heb 12:1)

^f ἀποτίθημι —to put off, lay aside (Acts 7:58; Rom 13:12; Eph 4:22, 25; Col 3:8; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:21; 1Pet 2:1)

^g ὄγκος —[emph. by position] mass, weight, oppressive burden (Heb 12:1)

^h εὐπερίστατος —to skillfully surround (Heb 12:1)

ⁱ τρέχω —to haste [θρίξ, hair], run, exert (Mt 27:48; 28:8; Mk 5:6; Lk 15:20; Rom 9:16; 1Cor 9:24, 26; Gal 2:2;

5:7; Phil 2:16; Heb 12:1)

^j ὑπομονή —patient endurance, steadfast (Lk 8:15; 21:19; Rom 2:7; Heb 10:36; 12:1; Jas 1:3, 4)

^k ἀγών —a place of assembly [for the Greek games], a contest (Phil 1*30; Col 2:1; 1Th 2:2; 1Tim 6:12; 2Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1)

^l πρόκειμαι —to set before; to be appointed (2Cor 8:12; Heb 6:18; 12:1, 2; Jude 7)

^m ἀφοράω —to turn the eyes away from other things and fix them on something (Heb 12:2)

ⁿ ἀρχηγός —prince, leader (Acts 3:15; 5:31; Heb 2:10; 12:2)

^o τελειωτής —perfector (Heb 12:2; [from τελειόω —to make perfect, complete, mature Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:2])

^p ὑπομένω —to remain under, endure [suffering] (Mt 10:22; 24:13; Mk 13:13; Lk 2:43; Rom 12:12; 1Cor 13:7; 2Tim 2:10, 12; Heb 10:32; 12:2, 3, 7; Jas 1:12; 5:11; 1Pet 2:20)

^q καταφρονέω —to contemn, to think little or nothing of (Mt 6:24; 18:10; Rom 2:4; 1Cor 11:22; 1Tim 4:12; 6:2; Heb 12:2)

^r καθίζω —to set, appoint, to sit down (Mt 5:1 13:48; 19:28; 20:21, 23; 23:2; 25:31; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Rev 3:21; 20:4)

^s ἀναλογίζομαι —to consider by comparing or weighing one in proportion to another (Heb 12:3; [from ἀναλογία, Rom 12:6])

^t ἀντιλογία —words spoken against; contradiction, hostility, rebellion (Heb 6:16; 7:7; 12:3; Jude 11)

^u κάμνω —to grow weary, to be sick (Heb 12:3; Jas 5:15; Rev 2:3)

^v ψυχή —breath [of life]; the soul [essence of the person not dissolved by death] (Heb 4:12; 6:19; 10:38, 39; 12:3; 13:17)

^w ἀντικαθίστημι —to stand against [troops in battle] (Heb 12:4)

^x ἀνταγωνίζομαι —to fight against (Heb 12:4)

^y ἐκλανθάνομαι —to forget, be ignorant of (Heb 12:5)

^z παιδεία —the training of children, discipline, instruction to increase virtue, nurture (Eph 6:4; 2Tim 3:16; Heb 12:5, 7, 8, 11)

11:39 all these, having been given a good witness through faith—“all” includes all in this list, even those which might seem unworthy to us. How is it that Samson and Jephthah and Rahab, with their incredible flaws and sinfulness, were given a good witness? In spite of their shortcomings, they did the Father’s will. Since, God has accounted their obedience (works) for righteousness (Jas 2:22-25), they have **been given a good witness through faith**.

did not receive the promise—they did “obtain” the promise which they gained as a reward for their obedience (Heb 6:15; 11:33), but the promised reward has not yet been “received” by them. Jesus explained to His disciples that one day Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will be sitting in His Kingdom (Mt 8:11), but that day is still in the future (cf. Acts 1:4-7). This is not referring to the many incidental promises which are given to believers as they are serving God. This is referring to the hope of all believers, to see and live with God the Father.

11:40 God having provided something better for us—as God has “foreseen” (προβλέπω) the future, He has “provided” (προβλέπω) **something better for us**. The promises given to Abraham are larger and better than the promises given to the Israelites under the Old Covenant (Gal 3:15-29). Similarly, the promises of the New Covenant are **better for us** than the promises of the Old Covenant.

that they should not be made perfect apart from us—the reason why the OT saints have not received the rewards promised to them is because God wanted to include them in the larger plans which have come on account of Christ and His New Covenant. Partaking of God’s promise is an opportunity for all believers of all ages. Those who “lived by faith” under the OT economy and those who “live by faith” under the NT economy can all be “sons of God by faith” (Gal 3:26; cf. 3:21-29).

12:1 Consequently—presents a conclusion with applications.

having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us—the list of faithful saints who have died (Heb 11) are witnessing our struggles and suffering for Christ. The idea of cloud might refer to their being in the presence of God (the pillar of fire and cloud in the wilderness and the Tabernacle). Also, they will “give witness” of our faithful deeds (Heb 11:2, 4, 5, 39). Since the context is that of a *race* (ἀγών, contest), these witnesses can be understood as fans cheering us on to victory. Ancient covenants required divine (heavenly) witnesses.

laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us—two types of hindrances: **weight** and **sin**. We must not allow any **weight** (i.e. gold) to hinder us or **sin** to entangle us—either might prevent us from completing the **race** (task) which God has appointed for us. Here, **race** (ἀγών, contest) refers to a test of obedience such as those tests experienced by the faithful (Heb 11:1-39). Endurance is key. Applying this to the audience, if they return to the easier ways of the Old Covenant or otherwise depart from the living God, they will forfeit the blessings and inheritance offered by the New Covenant.

12:2-3 looking away to Jesus, the Captain and Perfector of our faith—two titles are assigned to Jesus Christ. The first title is **captain** (ἀρχηγός) which is found earlier in the book in the context of Moses and Joshua. Both men were captains of the Israelites: Moses leading the way out from bondage in Egypt and Joshua leading the way into the inheritance of the Promised Land. Jesus is our New Covenant **Captain** leading us out from the bondage of sin and into our everlasting inheritance. The second title is **perfector** (from τελειόω, to make perfect), describing His accomplished work which could not be accomplished by the Old Covenant. The **faith** which needs perfecting is one’s belief and obedience to the “so great a salvation” that “which at the beginning was received, spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him” (Heb 2:3; cf. 1Cor 15). Christ is our example: He exchanged the suffering of the **cross** for the **joy** to come; He was not **thinking** of the shame, instead he thought about sitting beside His Father.

consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, in order that you might not become weary, fainting in your souls—to **consider** (ἀναλογίζομαι) means “to weigh” what Christ suffered against how much you have suffered. The hostility of those against Him (the Jewish leadership, the Roman government, and Satan) is more than most believers will ever face. But if they do, they should not faint, but rejoice that they are “counted worthy to suffer shame for [Christ’s] name” (Acts 5:41).

12:4-5 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin—in modern times, very few believers suffer bloodshed and death. He might be set as a soldier in battle (ἀντικαθίστημι) against worldly opposition or in a personal contest (ἀνταγωνίζομαι) against sin. When one **endures such hostility**, God considers him a “son.”

Nor be faint when you are rebuked^a by Him;
⁶ **For whom the LORD loves He disciplines,^b**
And whips^c every son whom He receives.^d

⁷ When you endure^e discipline,^f God deals^g with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not discipline^{b?} ⁸ But if you are without discipline,^f of which all have become partakers,^h then you are natural childrenⁱ and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers, instructors,^j and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For indeed, for a few days they disciplined^b *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He *disciplines* for *our* profit,^k that *we* may partake^l of His holiness. ¹¹ Now on the one hand, at the time discipline^f seems not to be joyful, but painful; but on the other hand, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been ex-

^a ἐλέγχω —to rebuke, refute [by truth], convince [of sin] (Mt 18:15; Lk 3:19; Jn 3:20; 8:9, 46; 16:8; Eph 5:11, 13 Heb 12:5)

^b παιδεύω —to train children, to discipline, to instruct in virtues, to correct, chastise (Lk 23:16, 22; Acts 7:22; 22:3; 1Cor 11:32; 2Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:20; 2Tim 2:25; Tts 2:12; Heb 12:6, 7, 10; Rev 3:19)

^c μαστιγῶ —to scourge, whip; to train by affliction (Mt 10:17; 20:19; 23:34; Mk 10:34; Lk 18:33; Jn 19:1; Heb 12:6)

^d Prv 3:11-12

^e ὑπομένω —to remain, abide, endure [suffering] (Mt 10:22; 24:13; Mk 13:13; Lk 2:43; Rom 12:12; 1Cor 13:7; 2Tim 2:10, 12; Heb 10:32; 12:2, 3, 7; Jas 1:12; 5:11; 1Pet 2:20)

^f παιδεία —the training of children, discipline, instruction to increase virtue, nurture (Eph 6:4; 2Tim 3:16; Heb 12:5, 7, 8, 11)

ercised^m by it.

¹² Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feebleⁿ knees, ¹³ and make straight paths^o for your feet, so that what is lame may not be turned out,^p but rather be healed.

^e προσφέρω —to lead, bring; to present, offer [as a sacrifice]; to deal with, to treat (Mt 2:11; 4:24; 5:23, 24; Heb 5:1, 3, 7; 8:3, 4; 9:7, 9, 14, 25, 28; 10:1, 2, 8, 11, 12; 11:4, 17; 12:7)

11:50; 16:7; 1Cor 6:12; Heb 12:10)

^l μεταλαμβάνω —to be a partner, a partaker [of food with others]; to get or find something (Acts 2:46; 24:25; 27:33; 2Tim 2:6; Heb 6:7; 12:10)

^m γυμνάζω —to exercise naked, vigorously (1Tim 4:7; Heb 5:14; 12:11; 2Pet 2:14)

^h μέτοχος —see 3:1 note

ⁱ νόθος —natural son [born of a concubine or slave, as opposed to a lawful son] (Heb 12:8; also see Heb 5:11; 6:12, νόθρός, dull, indolent [is from a derivative])

ⁿ παραλύω —to loose on one side, be paralyzed, (Lk 5:18, 24; Acts 8:7; 9:33; Heb 12:12)

^j παιδευτής —an instructor, teacher (Rom 2:20; Heb 12:9)

^o τροχιά —track of a wheel, rut; course [for a runner] (Heb 12:13)

^k συμφέρω —to bear together to help, be profitable (Mt 5:29, 30; 18:6; 19:10; Jn

^p ἐκτρέπω —to turn out, turn aside (1Tim 1:6; 5:15; 6:20; 2Tim 4:4; Heb 12:13)

12:7 When you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons—two significant concepts are combined: endurance and discipline. For a believer, endurance includes all sorts of hardships, from obedience to God’s commands to hostility from enemies of God. One extreme arises from divine love, the other extreme arises from human sinfulness. The word παιδεία (“**discipline**,” from παῖς, παιδίον, denoting a young child or a servant, Lk 1:69; Heb 2:13, 14; 11:23) includes all sorts of training from the nurturing of a child’s spirit and instruction of his mind to the strengthening and hardening of his physic. When **God** [offers to] **deal with you as with sons**, He might employ both extremes to bring about maturity (perfection), to make one into a son. The word υἱός (son) denotes offspring which is mature, worthy to carry on the name and privileges of one’s father or ancestor (Mt 1:1; 3:17; 5:9, 45; Heb 2:10). In contrast, the word τέκνον (child, Mt 2:18; 21:28; not found in Hebrews) denotes a little child (baby) who is dependent on his parents (cf. Lk 2:48). Accordingly, believers are supposed to act as the sons of God, not as little children (Rom 8:14; 9:26; Gal 3:26; 4:5-7; Rev 21:7).

12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are natural children and not sons—when this was written, every child and servant in a household received training (**discipline**) so that he would learn what was expected of him. However, certain illegitimate offspring were without discipline because they were not **partakers** (have no share or inheritance) in the household. The word νόθος denotes a “natural son” (unlawful, born outside of lawful marriage, to a slave or a foreigner), excluded from his father’s heirs and lacking the rights of citizenship (those who have a share in the city). This does not mean that the father of the νόθος is unknown (which would be denoted by σκοτιος [fatherless, *lit.*, dark]). The opposite of νόθος is γνήσιος (“of the blood,” 2Cor 8:8; Phil 4:3; 1Tim 1:2; Tts 1:4) which denotes a “lawful son” (genuine, legitimate), having full rights of inheritance and a citizen of his city (note Phil 4:3). The difference between a γνήσιος and a νόθος is his mother, the former is from the “lawful” wife and the latter is from a concubine or slave. God’s discipline is positive, not negative like divine judgment for sin. God’s discipline often prepares a believer to do His work or for a test of obedience, both bringing opportunities for reward. If a believer is **without discipline**, he is νόθος and is not going to inherit as a partaker with Christ. A νόθος is an untrained child as opposed to a trained son (υἱός) who will inherit. According to ancient tradition, sons born of a concubine did not inherit from their father. For example, Abraham’s other sons did not inherit like Isaac, but instead were only given gifts (Gen 25:5-6). Paul describes both the Old and New Covenants in the context of becoming sons and heirs (Gal 4:5-7). Hagar representing the Old Covenant is “the

one from Sinai, which gives birth to bondage . . . [and] to Jerusalem which now is.” In contrast, Sarah represents the New Covenant and “the Jerusalem above [which] is free and mother of us all” (Gal 4:24-26). Like Isaac, born of a freewoman, we are free, “children [τέκνον] of promise” (Gal 4:28). Therefore, “cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman” (Gal 4:30). This example well fits the Greek concept of a νόθος, a son who will not inherit from his father or be a citizen in his father’s city. Paul then warns those born of the freewoman the “Jerusalem above,” not to use their liberty to fulfill the desires of the flesh, because “those who practice [the works of the flesh] will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:1-21).

12:9 we have had human fathers, instructors, and we paid them respect—human fathers who properly care for their children will be their **instructors** (παιδευτής) in order to train their children to act as they should. Although a very immature child will at times rebel against his parents, as one matures he begins to understand and respect his father and so his tendency to rebel subsides.

Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live—Adam faced this test, but failed; so, all men died (Rom 5:12, 17-21). **Father of spirits** is compared to human fathers.

12:10 but He disciplines for our profit, that we may partake of His holiness—when Jesus presented the New Covenant to His disciples, He taught concerning those things which would **profit** them and those which would not. Jesus began by listing the blessings and rewards His New Covenant offered (Mt 5:3-12); He then mentioned some things which would not **profit** (συμφέρω) them (Mt 5:19-30). God’s Covenants offer rewards, an inheritance to those who obey His covenant commands (Gen 15:17-21; Heb 11:7; 12:11). To **partake** (μεταλαμβάνω) describes people sharing a meal: the disciples “did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart” (Acts 2:46). Believers who endure God’s discipline will profit from this reward: God will share His holiness with them.

12:11 afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it—those who exercised (vigorous exertion) for the Olympic games might receive an olive wreath, if they won. Those who accept God’s training (discipline) will be rewarded with righteousness—the type of righteousness which can be accounted only to those who are at peace with God (Mt 5:9; Jn 20:21; Rom 5:1; 8:6; 10:15; 14:17; Gal 5:22; 6:16; Eph 2:17; Phil 4:7). “Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (Jas 3:18; cf. Mt 5:9).

12:12 strengthen the hands . . . the feeble knees—metaphors from Isaiah 35:3-10 and Proverbs 4:26 of a runner who is renewing his strength and recuperating to prepare for an upcoming race.

¹⁴ Pursue peace with all *men*, and the sanctification without which no one will see^a the Lord: ¹⁵ watching carefully lest anyone fall short^b of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest *there be* any fornicator or profane^c person, like Esau who for one morsel^d of food sold^e his birthright. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was disapproved,^f for he found no place of repentance, although he diligently sought^g it with tears.

¹⁸ For you have not come^h to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire and cloud and darkness and tempest, ¹⁹ and the soundⁱ of a trumpet and the voice^j of words,^k so that those who heard^l it refused that the word^m should not be spokenⁿ to them anymore. ²⁰ For they could not bear what was commanded^o: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.”^p ²¹ And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, “I am exceedingly

^a ὀπτάνομαι –to look at, behold; to appear, allow oneself to be seen (Mt 5:8; 17:3; 24:30; 26:64; 27:4, 24; 28:7, 10; Jn 1:50, 51; 3:36; 11:40; 16:16, 17, 19, 22; 19:37; Acts 1:3; 2:3, 17; 7:2, 26, 30, 35; 9:17; Heb 9:28; 12:14; 13:23; 1Jn 3:2; Rev 1:7; 22:4)

^b ὑστερέω –to fall short, want, fail (Mt 19:20; Mk 10:21; 1Cor 1:7; Phil 4:12; Heb 4:1; 11:37; 12:15)

^c βέβηλος –accessible, lawful to place one’s foot [therefore, profane] (1Tim 1:9; 4:7; 6:20; 2Tim 2:16; Heb 12:16)

^d βρῶσις –act of eating, *metaph.*, corrosion (Mt 6:19, 20; Jn 4:32; 6:27, 55; Rom 14:17; Heb 12:16)

^e ἀποδίδωμι –to pay, to give away for one’s own profit (Mt 5:26; 33; 6:4, 6, 18; 12:36; 16:27; Heb 12:11, 16; 13:17; 1Pet 3:9; 4:5)

^f ἀποδοκιμάζω –to disapprove, reject, repudiate (Mt 21:42; Mk 8:31; 12:10; Lk 9:22; Heb 12:17; 1Pet 2:4, 7)

^g ἐκζητέω –to seek out, search for; to beg; to demand back, require (Lk

afraid and trembling.”^q

²² But you have come^h to Mount Zion^r and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the festival assembly^s and church^t of the firstborn^u *who are registered*^v in heaven, to God the Judge

11:50, 51; Acts 15:17; Rom 3:11; Heb 12:17; 1Pet 1:10)

^h προσέρχομαι –to come to, approach (Mt 4:3, 11; 5:1; Heb 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6; 12:18, 22)

ⁱ ἤχος –sound, noise, report (Lk 4:37; Acts 2:2; Heb 12:19)

^j φωνή –sound, voice (Mt 2:18; 3:3, 17; Heb 3:7, 15; 4:7; 12:19, 26)

^k ῥῆμα –utterance, speech

^l ἀκούω –to hear [something]

^m λόγος –word spoken by a living voice; doctrine; discourse; reason (Heb 2:2; 4:2, 12, 13; 5:11, 13; 6:1; 7:28; 12:19; 13:7, 17, 22)

ⁿ προστίθημι –to put [together], to add, to do further (Mt 6:27, 33; Mk 4:24; Lk 3:20; Heb 12:19)

^o διαστέλλω –a charge,

command (Mt 16:20; Mk 5:43; 7:36; Acts 15:24; Heb 12:20)

^p Ex 19:12-13

^q Dt 9:19

^r Σιών –refers to Jerusalem in connection with the Messiah (Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15; Rom 9:33; 11:26; Heb 12:22; 1Pet 2:6; Rev 14:1)

^s πανήγυρις [πᾶς + ἀγορά] –a gathering for a festival (Heb 12:23)

^t ἐκκλησία –a gathering of those called out [of their homes]; church

^u πρωτότοκος –the first born (Mt 1:25; Lk 2:7; Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Heb 1:6; 11:28; 12:23; Rev 1:5)

^v ἀπογράφω –to write off, to enter into a record, register (Lk 2:1, 3, 5; Heb 12:23)

12:14 Pursue peace with all– the immediate context is the believer’s preparation for his race. Now, he is told what to pursue in his race, specifically, **peace with all**. Certainly foremost, this includes helping others to “make peace” with God (Mt 5:9). Note that Christ said that He did not “come to send peace on earth” (Mt 10:34).

and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord–coupled with pursuing peace, the believer’s race includes pursuing a specific type of **sanctification**. What does it mean: **without which no one will see the Lord**? There is a judicial sanctification which happens as soon as someone believes God, becoming a child of God the believer is separated from the world, placed into God’s family, and made a new creature and a citizen of God’s kingdom (having his name written in the Book of Life). However, there is also personal sanctification, the perfection of a believer which happens in this present life. In personal sanctification, a believer is to walk in the Spirit and become progressively more Christlike. A believer who is pursuing the lusts of this world is not pursuing **the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord**. This explains Jesus’ blessing, “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God; and also His warning, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things I say?” (Lk 6:46; cf. Mt 7:21-27). The author then provides two examples of those who did not pursue this sanctification.

12:15 any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled– the Israelites were similarly warned about a “root of bitterness” just before they entered the Promised Land (Dt 29:18-20). God warned them that, if this happened and they turned away from Him, then the curses of the Covenant would come upon them. A bitter root can/will produce a bitter fruit.

12:16-17 lest there be any fornicator or profane person, like Esau – in biblical terminology, a spiritual **fornicator** is an idolater, one who is unfaithful to God. Also, being **profane** is to treat that which is holy as if it were common. Esau treated his rights as firstborn of Isaac and heir of Abraham’s promise as if they were unimportant, a common thing not worthy of his attention.

afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was disapproved– later, when Esau had changed his mind, it was too late because **he was disapproved**. Being “approved” (δόκιμος) or “disapproved” (ἀποδοκιμάζω) has to do with “testing” (δοκιμάζω). When Abraham was tested by God (Gen 22:1), he was approved (Jas 2:21). Esau failed when he was tested, so **he was disapproved**. **for he found no place of repentance, although he diligently**

sought it with tears– **repentance** simply means “a change of mind.” This is not saying that Esau was unable to repent; it is saying that there was no room for Esau after he repented. Why? Jacob was in the place of blessing; he was now in Esau’s **place**. Esau’s **tears** demonstrate that his remorse was genuine (cf. Mk 9:24; Lk 7:38, 44; Acts 20:19; 31; 2Cor 2:4; 2Tim 1:4; Heb 5:7; 12:17; Rev 7:17; 21:4).

12:18-21 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched– continuing the contrast between the Old and New Covenants, this refers to Mount Sinai when God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments (Ex 19-20:26). Emphasis is on God’s voice and the words which He spoke to His people, but **they could not bear what was commanded**. Even Moses trembled at this awesome appearance of the Almighty God and the sound of His voice.

12:22-24 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem– this contrast is another demonstration of how the New Covenant is better than the Old. The author points out that his readers have not **come** to Sinai (which was awesome enough) but **have come** to God’s home, the **heavenly Jerusalem** (the city of peace). A celebration is happening in God’s house as believers from all ages are allowed to enter His presence because of the blood of Jesus Christ, the **firstborn** and inheritor of God’s creation. **Innumerable angels** are also included in this celebration along with two discernable groups of men, the **church of the firstborn** and the **spirits of just men made perfect**. The church includes those who have come to Christ after His death on the cross. The spirits of just men made perfect describes OT saints who waited in Hades until Christ led captivity captive (up to Heaven). The register in Heaven refers to the Book of Life (cf. Ex 32:31-33; Dt 29:19-21; Ps 69:27-28; Dan 12:1-2; Mal 3:16-18; Lk 10:19-20; Phil 4:3; Heb 12:23; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19).

The Living God

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you a corrupt heart of unfaithfulness in departing from the living God” (3:12)

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (9:14)

“And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:30-31)

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (12:22)

of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new^a covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling^b that speaks better things than *that of Abel*.

²⁵ See that you do not refuse^c Him who is speaking. For if they did not escape^d who refused^e Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away^e from Him who *is speaking* from heaven, ²⁶ whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “**Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also heaven.**”^f ²⁷ Now this, “**Yet once more,**” signifies^g the removal^h of those things that are being shaken,ⁱ as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, since we are receiving^j a kingdom which cannot be shaken,^k let us be thankful, by which we may serve God acceptably^l with reverence^m and godly fear.ⁿ ²⁹ For our God is a consuming^o fire.

13 Let brotherly love continue.^p ² Do not forget to befriend^q strangers, for by

^a νέος —new [as to time], recent, younger (Mt 9:17, Lk 5:39; 15:12, 13; Jn 21:18; Heb 12:24)

^b ραντισμός —a sprinkling [for purification] (Heb 12:24; 1Pet 1:2) [from ραντίζω, to sprinkle, Heb 9:13, 19, 21; 10:22]

^c παραιτέομαι —to beg, to avert by entreaty, to refuse, make excuse (Lk 14:18, 19; Acts 25:11; 1Tim 4:7; 5:11 2Tim 2:23; Tts 3:10; Heb 12:19, 25)

^d φεύγω —to flee, escape, (Mt 2:13; 3:7; 23:33; 1Cor 6:18; 10:14; 1Tim 6:11; Heb 11:34; 12:25; cf. Heb 2:3)

^e ἀποστρέφω —to turn away, to turn back, to defect (Mt 5:42; 26:52; 27:3; Lk 23:14; Acts 3:26; Rom 11:26; 2Tim 1:15; 4:4; Tts 1:14; Heb 12:25)

^f Hag 2:6

^g δηλόω —to make known, signify, declare (1Cor 1:11; 3:13; Col 1:8; Heb 9:8, 12:27, 1Pet 1:11; 2Pet 1:14)

^h μετᾶσσις —[noun form of μετατίθημι, to replace, remove, transpose, transfer, change things established,

doing so some have unwittingly entertained^r angels. ³ Remember the prisoners as if you were bound with them—those who are mistreated^s—since you yourselves are in the body also.

⁴ Marriage *should be* deemed precious by

cf. Acts 7:16; Gal 1:6; Heb 7:12; 11:5; Jude 4] (Heb 7:12; 11:5; 12:27)

ⁱ σαλεύω —to shake; to shake down, overthrow (Mt 11:7; 24:29; Mk 13:25; Lk 6:38, 48; 21:26; Acts 2:25; 4:31; 16:26; Heb 12:26, 27)

^j παραλαμβάνω —to take to, join as an associate, to receive an office (Mt 1:20, 24; Mk 4:5, 8; 12:45; 17:1; Gal 1:9; Phil 4:9; Heb 12:28)

^k ἀσάλευτος —not shaken, overthrown (Acts 27:41; Heb 12:28)

^l εὐάρεστος —acceptably, in a well-pleasing manner (Heb 12:28 [cf. εὐάρεστος, acceptable, well-pleasing, Rom 12:1,2; 14:18; 2Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20; Tts 2:9; Heb 13:21])

^m αἰδώς —reverence, down-cast eyes (1Tim 2:9; Heb

12:28)

ⁿ εὐλάβεια —lit., good + receiving; godly fear, devoutness (Heb 5:7; 12:28; cf. 11:7)

^o καταναλίσκω —to consume, destroy (Heb 12:29 [from ἀναλίσκω, to consume, destroy, spend [money], Lk 9:54; Gal 5:15; 2Th 2:8])

^p μένω —to remain

^q φιλοξενία —lit., friend + stranger; to befriend, entertain (Rom 12:13; Heb 12:28 [cf. φιλόξενος, 1Tim 3:2; Tts 1:8; 1Pet 4:9])

^r ξενίζω —to entertain strange people or things (Acts 10:6, 18; 17:20; Heb 13:2; 1Pet 4:4, 12)

^s κακοῦχέω —lit. to have + evil/bad, maltreat (Heb 11:37; 13:3)

12:24 Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant—the word translated “new” emphasizes the recent character of the **New Covenant** of which Christ is **Mediator** in contrast to the “Old” Covenant.

to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel—Abel’s blood called out for God’s vengeance (Gen 4:10); however, Jesus’ blood promises forgiveness and cleansing of sin.

12:25 do not refuse Him who is speaking—Moses spoke for God but promised that another like him would come and also speak for God: “I will raise up for them a prophet . . . and will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him” (Dt 18:15-19). In both instances, God has spoken (Heb 1:1-2).

if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth—the Israelites heard God’s voice at Sinai, but later refused to obey His instructions at Kadesh (Num 14:1-10). God punished their disobedience by condemning that generation to wander for 40 years and die in the wilderness, barring them from receiving an inheritance in the Promised Land: “You shall know my rejection” (Num 14:26-38).

much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who is speaking from heaven—this is a comparison between the words of Moses and the words of Christ. Greater revelation demands greater responsibility. God has spoken through both of them: Moses was a mediator from earth, whereas Christ was the mediator **from Heaven**. (Compare this to the phrase “kingdom from heaven” used throughout Matthew). So, if the Israelites did not escape the consequences of their refusals (Heb 3:18; 11:31), certainly, we will **not escape** the consequences, **if we [defect] from Him . . . from Heaven**. (Note that one cannot defect from something unless he is already part of it.) So **much more**, the author is admonishing these Jewish believers who are considering a defection back to the Old Covenant, that if they felt an obligation to obey the Old Covenant, they should feel an even greater obligation to obey the New Covenant, because if they refuse, the consequences will be even more severe.

12:26-28 whose voice then shook the earth . . . yet once more—this a fortiori argument continues. “**Yet once more,**” signifies the **removal of those things that are being shaken as of things that are made**. If God’s voice has shaken the earth a little at Sinai (Ex 19:18), know that a day is coming when He will severely shake the earth so that it will be removed (destroyed), **that the things which cannot be shaken may remain** (cf. Isa 13:13; 34:4; 65:17, 22; Mt 24:29; 2Pet 3:10-13; Heb 1:10-12; Rev 6:12-14; 20:11; 21:1). What will survive the “shaking” destruction described here? First, God is Creator and

He cannot be destroyed. Second, God has made creatures in His image and likeness and they (men and angels) cannot be destroyed. Third, the kingdom of the Christ, the son of David, cannot be destroyed (2Sam 7:16, 25, 29). **Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken** (Lk 18:29).

12:28 let us be thankful, by which we may serve God acceptably—thankfulness to our God should be a constant attitude of every believer: “In everything give thanks” (1Th 5:18; cf. 1Cor 15:57; 2Cor 2:14; 8:16; 9:15; 1Tim 1:12; 2Tim 1:3; 1Pet 2:19).

by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear—**reverence** is the attitude of humility, having downcast eyes, having shame for one’s unworthiness. The author has mentioned others who obeyed with **godly fear**: Jesus Christ (5:7) and Noah (11:7).

12:29 For our God is a consuming fire—further admonishment for a believer to remain faithful to God: “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Dt 4:24). This warning is directed towards God’s people, that He is jealous when they go to serve other gods (worldly things). Judgment and a consuming fire await unfaithful believers (Heb 10:27, 30; cf. Mt 5:29-30).

13:1-19 In this conclusion of the discussion of the New Covenant ministry, the author offers a list of practical admonitions which will encourage the believer who is keeping the “**everlasting**” New Covenant. These admonitions focus on maintaining a healthy spiritual life within the Christian community, the “**body**” of Christ.

13:1 Let brotherly love continue—further evidence that the book is written to believers: they were already obeying Christ’s command to love one another as brethren in the family of God (6:10). However, if they returned to Judaism, their love for the brethren would diminish.

13:2 Do not forget to befriend strangers—literally, “do not forget to love strangers,” and set in parallel to “continue to love brothers.” This should remind us of Abraham (Gen 18), Lot (Gen 19), Gideon (Jdg 6), and Manoah (Jdg 13). Believers should treat every messenger of the gospel as an angel of God.

13:3 Remember the prisoners as if you were bound with them—showing love for prisoners; these readers had done this in the past (10:32-34). Instead of going back to Judaism to escape this persecution, they are encouraged to continue to care for those being persecuted. Since they are **in the body also**, they also might be imprisoned one day. Being in the body of Christ should remind them that, if one member suffers, the others suffer with it (1Cor 12:26).

all, and the bed *kept* undefiled;^a but fornicators and adulterers^b God will judge.

⁵ *Let your walk^c be without covetousness;^d be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."^e* ⁶ So we may courageously^f say:

"The LORD is my helper;

I will not fear.

What can man do to me?"^g

⁷ Remember^h those who leadⁱ you, who have spoken the word of God to you, imitate^j their faith, thoroughly considering^k the outcome^l of *their* walk through life.^m ⁸ Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever. ⁹ Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be establishedⁿ by grace, not with foods^o which have not profited^p those who have walked^q therein.

¹⁰ We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. ¹¹ For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp.^r ¹² Therefore Jesus also, that

^a ἄμιάντος—not defiled (Heb 7:26; 13:4; Jas 1:27; 1Pet 1:4)

^b μοιχός—an adulterer (Lk 18:11; 1Cor 6:9; Heb 13:4; Jas 4:4)

^c τρόπος—manner [of life], walk, conduct (Acts 1:11; Rom 3:2; 2Th 3:2; Heb 13:5; Jude 7 [also see ἀναστροφή, Heb 13:7])

^d ἀφιλάργυρος—lit. not loving money, not covetous (1Tim 3:3; Heb 13:5; cf. Lk 16:14; 1Tim 6:10, 2Tim 3:2)

^e Dt 31:6, 8, 23; Josh 1:5

^f θαρρέω / θαρσέω—to be of good courage, of good cheer, to be bold (Mt 9:2, 22; 14:27; 2Cor 5:6, 8; 7:16; 10:1, 2; Heb 13:6)

^g Ps 118:6

^h μνημονεύω—to call to mind, remember, mention (Mt 16:9; Mk 8:18; Lk 17:32; Jn 15:20; Heb 11:15, 22; 13:7)

ⁱ ἡγέομαι—to go before; to lead, rule, influence; to consider, deem, account (Mt 2:6; Lk 22:26; Acts 26:2; 2Cor 9:5; Phil 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7; Heb 10:29; 11:11, 26; 13:7, 17, 24)

^j μιμέομαι—to imitate someone (2Th 3:7, 9 Heb 13:7;

He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered^s outside the gate.

¹³ Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp,^r bearing His reproach.^t ¹⁴ For here we have no continuing^u city, but we seek the one to come. ¹⁵ Therefore

3Jn 11)

^k μνημονεύω—to vindicate, to avenge one's rights, to do justice (Lk 18:7, 8; 21:22; Acts 7:24; Rom 12:19; 2Cor 7:11; 2Th 1:8; Heb 10:30; 1Pet 2:14)

^l ἔκβασις—an egress, escape, the end (outcome) of one's life (1Cor 10:13; Heb 13:7)

^m ἀναστροφή—walk, manner of life (Gal 1:13; Eph 4:22; 1Tim 4:12; Heb 13:7; Jas 3:13; 1Pet 1:15, 18; 2:12; 3:1, 2, 16 [from ἀναστρέφω, to turn upside down, to turn back, to turn hither and thither, to walk about; Mt 17:22; Jn 2:15; Acts 5:22; 2Cor 1:12; Eph 2:3; 1Tim 3:15; Heb 10:33; 13:18; 1Pet 1:17])

ⁿ βέβαιος—firm, stable; metaph. sure, trustworthy (Rom 4:16; 2Cor 1:7; Heb 3:6, 14; 6:19; 9:17; 2Pet

1:10, 19)

^o βρώμα—that which is eaten [from κοινός, common] (Mt 14:15; Lk 3:11; Jn 4:34; Rom 14:15, 20; 1Cor 10:3; Heb 9:10; 13:9)

^p ὠφελέω—to profit (Lk 9:25; Jn 6:63; Rom 2:25; 1Cor 13:3; Gal 5:2; Heb 4:2; 13:9)

^q περιπατέω—to walk, to live (2Cor 5:7; 10:2, 3; 12:18 Gal 5:16; Eph 2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15; Heb 13:9)

^r παρεμβολή—an encampment, fortified position, barracks, fortress (Acts 21:34; Heb 11:34; 13:11, 13)

^s πάσχω—to suffer (Mt 16:21; 17:12, 15; 29:19; Heb 2:18; 5:8; 9:26; 13:12)

^t ὀνειδισμός—a reproach (Rom 15:3; Heb 10:33; 11:26; 13:13)

^u μένω—to stay, abide, to remain, endure (Mt 10:11; 11:23; Jn 15:4, 5, 6,

13:4 Marriage should be deemed precious by all, and the bed kept undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge—

God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:24). Asceticism wrongfully taught that celibacy was more honorable than marriage (see 1Cor 7, where Paul defends both, marriage with temporary abstinence and celibacy, in order to better serve the Lord; cf. 1Tim 2:15; 3:2, 4-5, 12; 4: 1-5; 5:14). However, this injunction is not directed toward asceticism but against **fornicators and adulterers**, those who defile the sanctity of marriage. No doubt, God will judge unbelievers, but here, the author is emphatically stating that God will judge believers who commit these sins (cf. 1Cor 6:9; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:5; Jas 4:4).

13:5 Let your walk be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have—“the love of money a root of all kinds of evil for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness” (1Tim 6:10). “Do not covet” was the last of the Old Covenant Commandments (Ex 20:17). Likewise, Christ rebuffed coveting in His New Covenant Commandment to “lay up treasure in heaven” (Mt 6:19-34). His command echoes in this warning: “what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mt 16:26). Believers who are covetous will not inherit the kingdom of God (1Cor 6:9-10). Thus, Paul learned to be content even when he was lacking (Phil 4:11).

13:5-6 “I will never leave you nor forsake you”— a most emphatic statement (a double negative followed by a triple negative; cf. Jn 10:28). God says as much to Jacob (Gen 28:15), to Moses (Ex 3:12;

4:12), to the Israelites (Dt 31:6), to Joshua (Dt 31:8, 23; Josh 1:5; 3:7), to Gideon (Jdg 6:16), to Solomon (1Kgs 11:38; 1Chr 28:20), and to those in trouble who call on Him (Ps 91:15; Isa 43:2). “God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work” (2Cor 9:8; cf. Rom 8:35). In this life, if you have Christ, you have everything you need.

13:7 Remember those who lead you— the word “remember” points primarily to early leaders, the first to have spoken the word of God to you. **Imitate their faith**, not necessarily them (their mannerisms) with this question in mind: what was the outcome (ἐκβασις) of their life? The expected **outcome** of a believer’s **walk through life** is illustrated by the examples listed in Hebrews 11: “they died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb 11:13).

13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever— the Christ of the New Covenant and His consistent, unchanging, endless life, the ultimate example for our imitation.

13:9 Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods, which have not profited those who have walked therein— again, a comparison between the restrictions of the Old Covenant and the freedom of the New Covenant (cf. Jn 1:17). What is being built? (Mt 7:24-27; 2Pet 1:10). What kind of profit? (Mt 5:19-20, 27-30; 6:33). How to walk well-pleasing to God (Heb 11:5-6). The Old Covenant regulations on foods were ended (Mk 7:18-19; Acts 10:9-16; Rom 14:14-17; 1Cor 8:7-9; Col 2:16-20; 1Tim 4:1-5; cf. Gen 9:3).

13:10-13 We have an altar— this altar refers to Christ’s sacrifice and our need to identify with Him, and not with Old Covenant. When the OT priests offered a sacrifice, the people and the priests usually ate some of the meat. However, on the Day of Atonement, the meat of the animals sacrificed for their sins were not eaten but carried **outside the camp** to be **burned**. In contrast, Christ was sacrificed outside the city (**gate**), and we must “eat His flesh and drink His blood,” **bearing His reproach**, if we are to have the life He offers (Jn 6:53-58).

13:14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come— every believer should be seeking God’s city and everlasting kingdom (11:10, 16, 12:22, 28), for not one city on this present

Ten Imperatives of Hebrews 13

- Love brethren (cf. Mt 5:21-24; Jn 13:34-35)
- Befriend strangers (cf. Mt 5:38-48)
- Remember to care for prisoners (cf. Mt 6:1-4)
- Be faithful to your spouse (cf. Mt 5:27-32)
- Do not covet worldly things, be content (cf. Mt 6:19-24)
- *Love of Christ, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (cf. Mt 6:25-34)
- Remember and imitate the faithful lives of early leaders
- Do not be carried away by strange doctrines which are unprofitable (but identify with Christ’s reproach outside the camp)
- Offer the sacrifices of praise, doing good, and sharing (to please God)
- Obey your current leaders (for your own profit)
- Pray for us that we may live honorably

through Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, confessing^a His name. ¹⁶But do not forget producing good^b and sharing,^c for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.^d

¹⁷Trust^e those who lead^f you, and yield *to them*, for they watch out^g for your souls, as those who must give an account.^h Let them doⁱ so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable^j for you.

¹⁸Keep praying^k for us; for we trust^e that we have a good^l conscience, in all things desiring to live^l well.^m ¹⁹But I especially urge *you* to doⁱ this, that I may be restoredⁿ to you the sooner.

²⁰Now may the God of peace who brought up^o our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting^p covenant, ²¹make you complete^q in every good work to do His will,^r producingⁱ in us what is well pleasing^s in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

²²And I beseech you, brethren, bear^t with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you such a little^u letter.

²³Know that *our* brother Timothy has

^a ὁμολογέω —to say the same thing (Mt 7:23; 10:32; Acts 23:8; 24:14; Rom 10:10; Heb 11:13; 13:15; 1Jn 4:2, 3, 15)

^b εὐποιῶν (εὐ + ποιέω) a beneficence, production of good, (Heb 13:16)

^c κοινωνία —community, fellowship, a sharing (Acts 2:42; Rom 15:26; 1Cor 1:9; 10:16; Phil 3:10; Heb 13:16)

^d εὐαρεστέω —to be well-pleasing (Heb 11:5, 6; 13:16)

^e πείθω —to persuade, induce to believe; to listen to, comply with, obey (Mt 27:20, 43; 28:14; Heb 2:13; 6:9; 11:13; 13:17, 18)

^f ἡγέομαι —to go before; to lead, rule, influence; to consider, deem, account (Mt 2:6; Lk 22:26; Acts 26:2; 2Cor 9:5; Phil 2:3, 6, 25; 3:7; Heb 10:29; 11:11, 26; 13:7, 17, 24)

^g ἀγρυπνέω —to not sleep, be attentive, watch (Mt 13:33; Lk 21:36; Eph 6:18; Heb 13:17)

^h λόγος — word(s) [of a speech, discourse, law] (Mt 5:32, 37; 7:24, 26, 28; Heb 2:2; 4:2, 12, 13; 5:11, 13; 6:1; 7:28; 12:19; 13:7, 17, 22)

ⁱ ποιέω —to make, cause, produce, do, perform (Mt 1:24; 3:3, 8, 10; 4:19; 5:19,

been set free, with whom I shall see^v you if he comes shortly.

²⁴Greet^w all those who lead^f you, and all the saints.^x Those from Italy greet^w you.

²⁵Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

32, 36, 44, 46, 47; 6:1; Heb 1:2, 3, 7; 3:2; 6:3; 7:27; 8:5, 9; 10:7, 9, 36; 11:28; 12:13, 27; 13:6, 17, 19, 21)

^j ἀλυσιτελής —*lit.*, not + pay +end; not profitable (Heb 13:17; cf. Lk 17:2)

^k καλός —good, beautiful, excellent, honorable (Mt 3:10; 5:16; 7:17, 18, 19; 12:33; 13:8, 23, 24, 27, 37, 38, 45, 48; 15:26; 18:8, 9; 26:10, 24; Heb 5:14; 6:5; 10:24; 13:9, 18)

^l ἀναστρέφω —to turn back, walk here and there, to live, to overturn (Mt 17:22; Jn 2:15; Heb 10:33; 13:18)

^m καλῶς —beautifully, well, excellently (Mt 5:44; 12:12; 15:7; Jn 13:13; Heb 13:18)

ⁿ ἀποκαθίστημι —to restore to a former state (Mt 12:13; 17:11; Mk 3:5; 8:25; 9:12; Lk 6:10; Acts 1:6; Heb 13:19)

^o ἀνάγω —to lead up [to a higher place] (Mt 4:1; Lk 2:22; 4:5; 8:22; 22:66; Rom 10:7; Heb 13:20)

^p αἰώνιος —age-long, never ending, everlasting (Heb 5:9; 6:2; 9:12, 14, 15; 13:20)

^q καταρτίζω —to make fit, complete, perfect [as it ought to be] (Mt 4:21; 21:16; Lk 6:40; Rom 9:22; 1Cor 1:10; 2Cor 13:11; Gal 6:1; Heb 10:5; 11:3; 13:21; 1Pet 5:10)

^r θέλημα —what one wishes, a desire

^s εὐάρεστος —well-pleasing, acceptable (Rom 12:1, 2; 14:18; 2Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20; Tts 2:9; Heb 13:21)

^t ἀνέχω —to bear up, sustain, endure (Mt 17:17; Mk 9:19; Lk 9:41; Acts 18:14; Heb 13:22)

^u βραχύς —short, small, little here and there, to live to overturn (Lk 22:58; Jn 6:7; Heb 2:7, 9; 13:22)

^v ὀπτάνομαι —to look at, allow oneself to be see, to appear (Mt 5:8; 17:3; 24:30; 26:64; Heb 9:28; 12:14; 13:23)

^w ἀσπάζομαι —to salute, greet, kiss (1Cor 16:20; 2Cor 13:12, 13; Heb 11:13; 13:24)

13:15 through Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God— not through the Levite priests, but through [Christ] believers are to offer their sacrifices. There are no longer the limitations imposed by the Old Covenant—limiting some sacrifices to specific holy days and feasts in Jerusalem. Now every day is a holy day and we can offer our sacrifices continually.

that is, the fruit of our lips—the phrase “fruit of our lips” comes from the LXX rendering of “the calves of our lips” (Hos 14:2). The passage begins, “O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God, for you have fallen by your iniquity” (Hos 14:1). God desires the fruit which comes from a believer’s heart, not the blood of bulls and goats.

confessing His name—some translations render this “giving thanks to His name,” even though ὁμολογέω is normally translated “confess.” Whenever believers confess Christ’s name, their actions not only are evidence of their faith, they also are acceptable sacrifices well-pleasing to God. Someone is a believer if he confesses the name of Christ (Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8; Rom 10:9, 10; 1Jn 2:23; 4:2, 15).

13:16 do not forget producing good and sharing for with such sacrifices God is well pleased—these three activities are sacrifices well-pleasing to God: 1) confessing Christ’s name, 2) producing good, and 3) sharing one’s possessions with others. That these are well-pleasing to God means that He desires that believers would do these things and He will reward those who do His will. God’s will is that we offer and partake of these sacrifices continually.

13:17 Trust those who lead you and yield to them—as our spiritual leaders use the Word of God to try to persuade us, we should trust and yield to them. There is a good reason for their concern: they are responsible to God for our spiritual well-being.

for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give an account—the concept of “watching out” is that of “losing sleep” like a sentry guarding the camp throughout the night. Spiritual leaders will be required to give an account before God for their actions and will “receive a stricter judgment” (Jas 3:1); and if one has been a good example imitating Christ, he might receive “a crown of glory” (1Pet 5:4).

Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you—a spiritual leader is not to “lord over” other believers, but to become helpers of their joy (1Cor 1:24) so that they will become the leader’s joy and glory in the presence of Christ at His coming (1Th 2:19-20). Furthermore, to do otherwise would be unprofitable for a believer, because he might not become as mature as he could have and might not receive all the rewards which God has in store for him (1Cor 3:13-15; 2Cor 5:10).

13:18 a good conscience, in all things desiring to live well—a good conscience is “good” because it functions as it was designed to function; it is not corrupted and thus does not accuse a believer because of his false conduct. To “live” refers to one’s walk here and there on the earth. The adverb “well” (καλῶς) is from the same root as the adjective “good” (καλός).

13:20-21 the God of peace— God is the God of peace, of wholeness, of complete goodness. He provides everything mankind needs; especially, everything one needs to be reconciled (make peace) with Him. (cf. Rom 15:33; 16:20; 1Cor 14:33; 2Cor 13:11; Phil 4:9; 1Th 5:23).

that great Shepherd of the sheep— their true Leader who laid down His life for His sheep (Jn 10:15; cf. Ps 23; Isa 40:11; Ezek 34:23; Zech 13:7; Mt 10:6; 15:24; 1Pet 2:25; 5:4) and is now making intercession for them (Heb 7:25).

through the blood of the everlasting covenant— the New Covenant is everlasting and will not become “old” like the Covenant mediated by Moses (8:13).

make you complete in every good work to do His will, producing in us what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ—this is God’s purpose for His elect servants (cf. Eph 1:3-14).

13:22 such a little letter— reminding the readers of the fact that Christ was made a “little” lower than the angels

13:25 Grace be with you all. Amen— “For the [Old Covenant] Law was given through Moses, but [New Covenant] grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17).