

***Christ:
Prophet, Priest
and King
(An Analysis Of Hebrews)***

Winford Claiborne

International Gospel Hour

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Dedication

To:

Dr. E. Claude Gardner



Excellent college teacher
Outstanding college administrator
Loving family man
Community leader
Prolific writer
Supporter of good works
Faithful and knowledgeable preacher
Esteemed friend

Introduction

The book of Hebrews may be one of the most neglected books of the New Testament. One of the reasons could be its teaching on the relationship of the gospel to the law of Moses. Most groups that identify themselves as "Christian," including Seventh-Day Adventists, teach that the so-called "ceremonial" regulations of the Mosaic covenant have been removed, but practically none of the groups believe the entire covenant, including the Ten Commandments, has been nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14-17). Some denominations make the mistake of calling the ceremonial laws "the law of Moses" and the moral laws "the law of God." The New Testament does not sanction that distinction. All of the laws in the Jewish covenant—sabbath-keeping, offering animal sacrifices, burning incense, keeping the various feasts and festivals—are identified as the law of Moses and as the law of God. The law of Moses was the law of God for the Jewish nation.

A correct understanding of the book of Hebrews would go a long way in refuting some of the grievous errors being promoted in the religious world. Most liberal theologians deny that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh. Hebrews 1 quotes God as saying that Jesus Christ is God.

And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and

they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail (Heb. 1:7-12).

Could that language be used of one who was not and is not deity?

The major emphasis in Hebrews is the superiority of the gospel of Christ to the law of Moses. Over and over, the author of Hebrews uses comparative adverbs and adjectives to stress the superiority of the gospel to the law. He uses the word "better" (*kreisson*) thirteen times—better hope, better testament, better promises, better sacrifices, etc. The truth is: Every phase of the gospel of Christ is better than the comparable phrase of the Jewish covenant. One example should suffice. The Mosaic covenant provided animal sacrifices to atone for men's sins (Lev. 1:1-9). Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God, gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. The blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins (Heb. 10:4).

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:9-10).

The words "first" and "second" in this passage refer to the first covenant—the law of Moses—and the second covenant—the gospel of Christ. The first was abolished that he might establish the second. There are many passages in Hebrews that teach the abolition of the Mosaic covenant and the establishment of the new covenant. Since there was a change in the priesthood from that of Aaron to that of Melchizedek, there had to be a change in the law (Heb. 7:12).

For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second...In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath

made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away (Heb. 8:7, 13).

After establishing beyond dispute that the Mosaic covenant has been cancelled and the new covenant has been bound on all who have lived since Pentecost, the inspired author makes application of that great truth to our behavior as Christians. What difference does it make that we live under a better covenant with better promises?

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation... (Heb. 2:1-3)?

On the basis of our being blessed with a better covenant, the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers to be diligent in serving the living God.

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb. 10:22-25).

Hebrews provides great inspiration and encouragement for those who would please our heavenly Father. I know it has blessed my life.

This analytical study of Hebrews might not have been published had not E. Claude Gardner and Max Patterson kept insisting. From the time I joined the Bible faculty at

Freed-Hardeman University (1979) until just recently, brother Gardner urged me to publish some of the material I had written—not just on Hebrews but on many other topics. I began to do that in the fall of 2001 and since then I have published three books: **Restoring God's Pattern For The Home, Divine Relationships** and **Silence Can Be Sinful**. The International Gospel Hour published all three books. The entire income from the books goes to add new stations to the Gospel Hour network. I am grateful I can use these books for that purpose.

E. Claude Gardner has encouraged me to use whatever talent the Lord gave me to further His kingdom. He provided many opportunities for me while I was a teacher at Freed-Hardeman, including appointing me as director of the annual lectureship. In addition, He made arrangements for me to be the speaker on the International Gospel Hour. No challenge in my life has been so fulfilling as being the speaker on this international program. It requires many hours of reading, researching, writing and recording. But it is most enjoyable and rewarding. I shall always be grateful to brother Gardner for his support and prayers. He has been a great comfort to me since the loss of my dear wife on October 12, 2002.

Max Patterson has also been a staunch supporter during the last twenty-three years that I have known him and his gracious wife, Billie. I count them among my dearest friends. I sincerely thank brother Patterson for writing the preface to this book. He read my original manuscript and offered very valuable suggestions. I am sure the book is better because of his contributions. From the time he reviewed this study (three or four years ago), he encouraged me to publish it. I value his judgment very highly.

During the times I taught this study at the Scotts Hill Church of Christ, Scotts Hill, Tennessee, and at the West Fayetteville Church of Christ, Fayetteville, Tennessee, my most enthusiastic student was my dear Molly. She kept my

notes and added to them as we studied together. For more than fifty-three years, she loved, exhorted, criticized me and supported the work I have tried to do. No one ever had a more loving and supportive wife. She also urged me to publish this study of Hebrews. How am I going to be able to continue my work in the Lord's vineyard without her? I know she wanted for me to continue. When the cancer returned after a brief remission, we traveled to St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville. As we checked into the hospital, she said, "I do not know what is going to happen to me, but I want you to continue your work." With God's help, I shall plan to abide by her wishes and prayers. But I assure you, it is not easy.

If I could speak to every husband in the world this very day, I would say: "Make sure you tell your wife every day how much you love her. The day may come when she will precede you in death. You surely do not want her to go into eternity without knowing of your great love for her." As a husband I made many mistakes—often inexcusable mistakes—but one I tried never to make—not telling my Molly of my great love for her. I tried to tell her every day. I know she believed I loved her with my whole heart. I write this book in honor of my gracious companion of more than a half-century. Life can never be the same without her, but with God's grace I shall continue to preach, to write and to serve in other ways as long as I live. I can hardly wait to see my Lord and be reunited with my true love.

Doron Claiborne, Danny Claiborne—our sons—and their families have grieved with me and have done their best to console me. My sons know how much I loved their mother and tried to be a good husband and father. I shall always be grateful such wonderful people came into my life. I am thankful to the elders and members of the West Fayetteville Church of Christ for their love during these past few months. I am not sure how I could have handled my Molly's

death without their prayers and comforting words. I thank Paul and LaDon Sain for their efforts to make this book attractive and available.

May God bless all who have contributed so much to my life!

Preface

I have known Winford Claiborne since the 1970's. For many years I heard him teach classes and lecture. In every public and private situation, he was a Christian gentleman. I have often thought, "There's a man on his way to heaven." Sadly, yet somehow gloriously, we now need to add, "There's a man on his way to heaven, to join his lovely wife, Molly."

No one can help but be impressed with two things about the writing and speaking ability of Winford Claiborne. He always does his homework, and he knows how to say and write his mind. These two factors are an absolute must for the public speaker. How many times have we heard an otherwise wonderful message dismissed because the speaker did not know how to express himself adequately with proper English? On the other hand, how many times have we heard a good speaker's message dismissed because he did not know his subject? The speaker had made very little or no preparation!

When Winford Claiborne speaks, one is not disappointed in either his research, or his command of the English language. He has one of the finest private libraries among preachers, and other public speakers—and he uses it. I marvel at his grasp of the English language, and his ability to express himself profoundly, yet simply. He is a true intellectual, and one of the marks of a true intellectual is that no one misunderstands the teaching that comes from his lips. One is reminded of one of the best passages on successful preaching in the Bible: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading" (Neh. 8:8).

In regard to the subject discussed in this book of Hebrews: look at the careful analysis. Appreciate the research. Marvel at the ease of understanding the message

which has been written. Be thrilled at the practical application, and the analogy drawn for our everyday lives. Glory in the good that it will accomplish.

I have read carefully Claiborne's work on this book of Hebrews, at least two times, and some of it four or five times. It is well written, and with such effective application! It will be a great practical help to our brotherhood in this twenty-first century. He is faithful to the text, and his analogy to modern life is superb. Just as the theme for this book is "better" (the word occurs thirteen times), every person who reads and studies this book will be better.

Countless thousands are thrilled that the Lord has blessed this good man with health, and time to do so much good on the radio, and to write so many useful and invaluable books that may be utilized by a grateful brotherhood for many years to come.

Max Patterson
Neosho, MO 64850
December, 2002

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Introduction To

The Book Of Hebrews

I. INTRODUCTION;

A. Donald Guthrie, **New Testament Introduction**
Downera Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970. Guthrie identifies three major problems in the book of Hebrews.

1. Authorship. Names which have been suggested.

a. Paul.

(A) Paul has been nominated for this honor more than any other writer.

1. "In the East the Epistle was probably regarded as Pauline, at least from the time of Pantaenus (death around 190)" (Guthrie, p. 686).

2. Clement of Alexandria (born in the middle of the 2nd century) ascribed the epistle to Paul (Guthrie, p. 686).

3. Origen (c. 185-c. 254) thought the content belonged to Paul, but not the style. "His own supposition was that one of the pupils of the apostle wrote down from memory what he had heard" (Guthrie, p. 686). Origen said: "But who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly" (Guthrie, p. 686).

4. As I was growing up, preachers of the gospel would generally refer to the epistle of Hebrews as being Pauline. I did myself for years. It is not easy to break the habit even now.

5. There are some passages which sound like Paul, but that does not prove Paul wrote them. I shall point

out some of these as we study the book together,

- (B) The Bible simply does not say who wrote the book and there is no point in going off the deep end in matters of this kind.
 - 1. If we had needed to know, we would have been told.
 - 2. We can agree that Hebrews is a great book, but we have no idea who wrote it.
- (C) Until the time of the Reformation it was generally agreed that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews, but Calvin, Erasmus and Luther questioned his authorship of the book.
 - 1. Luther relegated the book of Hebrews to the end of the New Testament as he did other books he thought to be of secondary character, such as, the book of James.
 - 2. His opinion was the Apollos wrote Hebrews.
- b. Barnabas.
 - (A) Tertullian (c. 160–c. 220) thought Barnabas wrote Hebrews. He seemed to be copying an idea which was somewhat common in his day.
 - (B) Barnabas was a companion of Paul's which might explain why it sounds somewhat like Paul.
- c. Luke.
 - (A) Some scholars think there are similarities between Hebrews and Luke's writings—Acts and Luke.
 - (B) There were early writers who thought Luke wrote the book.

- d. Clement of Alexandria. There are similarities between Hebrews and the writings of Clement, but there are even greater dissimilarities.
 - e. Silvanus.
 - (A) We know he was both Peter's (1 Pet. 5:12) and Paul's (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; companion).
 - (B) Some scholars think they see parallels between Hebrews and 1 Peter.
 - f. Apollos.
 - (A) Luther argued that Apollos wrote Hebrews. He had several followers who accepted his views.
 - (B) There are some pretty good arguments for his having written Hebrews, but they are not conclusive,
 - (1) His contacts with Paul.
 - (2) His Alexedrian learning.
 - (3) His knowledge of the scriptures.
 - (4) His eloquence.
 - (5) His contacts with Timothy.
 - (6) His considerable influence among the churches (Guthrie, p. 695).
 - g. Philip the evangelist.
 - (A) Sir William Ramsay maintained that Philip may have written the book.
 - (B) There is no hard evidence that he wrote any book.
 - h. Priscilla.
 - (A) Harnack thinks the absence of a name attached to this book indicates that a woman may have written it.
 - (B) A woman's authority would have been suspect in those times.
 - (C) Absolutely no evidence of this theory.
2. The audience of the epistle. To whom did the

writer direct this book?

- a. The audience almost had to be Jewish.
 - (A) The Jewish priesthood appears prominently in Hebrews.
 - (B) Jewish names—Moses, Aaron, Abraham—and Jewish incidents are sprinkled throughout the book.
 - (C) There is nothing Gentile about the book.
 - (D) Yet few New Testament books have done so much for Gentiles. It shows conclusively that all men—both Jews and Gentiles—are now subjects of the gospel message.
3. The purpose of the book.
 - a. Dr. Guthrie lists these purposes of the book.
 - (A) To warn Jewish Christians against apostasy to Judaism.
 - (B) To challenge restricted Jewish Christians to embrace the world mission.
 - (C) To announce the absolute character of Christianity to mainly Gentile Christians.
 - (D) To counteract an early type of heresy (maybe Gnosticism) (Guthrie, pp. 703-710).
 - b. We can hardly doubt that the Hebrew writer had several purposes in mind. But it seems that his main purpose was to show that Christianity is the "better" way. The word "better" is used thirteen times in thirteen chapters. There are many other comparative words, as we shall see in our indepth study of the books.
- B. Scholarly summaries of the book of Hebrews.
 1. Robert G. Gromacki, **Stand Bold in Grace**, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984. "In the Book of Hebrews, the author exhorts his readers to advance into the full blessings of the new covenant. He wants them to enjoy the total ministry of Jesus Christ in this life. He warns

them about the dire consequences for rejecting the provision and leadership of the Savior" (p. 9).

2. Neil R. Lightfoot, **Jesus Christ Today**, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976. "Hebrews is the greatest piece of exhortation found in the New Testament" (p. 6).

Chapter 1

The Book Of Hebrews

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Hebrews 1.

1. "God" (1:1).

- a. Bible writers—both in the Old Testament and in the New—never advance formal arguments for the existence of God.
 - (A) "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).
 - (B) Psalm 19:1-6.
 - (C) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).
 - (D) "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20),
 - b. Can one prove the existence of God?
 - (A) Many philosophers and theologians deny that we can prove that God exists.
 - (B) If we can show design in the world, does that not prove a designer?
 - c. What can we know about God? We can certainly know what he reveals for us (1 Cor. 2:6-13)
 - d. What kind of being is God?
 - (A) A Father.
 - (B) Good and severe (Rom. 11:22).
 - (C) Merciful.
 - (D) Psalm 23.
-

2. God has spoken (1:1-2).
- a. "In time past."
 - (A) "In time past" from **palai**, denotes long ago, old.
 - (B) "Has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Pet. 1:9).
 - b. "Sundry times" from **polumeros** and means "in many portions" or "at many times."
 - c. "Divers manners" from **polutropos**, **polu**, many, **tropos**, ways or manners.
 - d. These terms suggest the many ways God has revealed himself "in time past."
 - (A) God spoke through angels,
 - (B) He spoke through the burning bush.
 - (C) He spoke through the still small voice.
 - e. "Unto the fathers by the prophets."
 - (A) The term "fathers" referring to the various individuals to whom God had spoken.
 - (1) "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live for ever" (John 6:58).
 - (2) "Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers" (John 7:22).
 - (3) "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all. God blessed for ever" (Rom. 9:5).
 - (B) "The prophets" were the men whom God used to reveal his will unto men. Literally, "in the prophets."
 - f. God now speaks through his Son. "Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."
 - (A) "In these last days" literally means "at

the end of these days."

- (1) The expression, "last days," refers to the period of God's final dealing with mankind. After the Christian era, there will be only eternity.
 - (2) The Bible writers use the term to mean the Christian era (Acts 2:17).
 - (3) "Has spoken" is first aorist indicative and means did speak or spoke and indicates God's final revelation to man.
 - (4) God now speaks through his Son.
 - (a) How can any man ignore the Son of God and expect to escape the judgment of God?
 - (b) God chose his Son as his spokesman because there was no one greater through whom he could speak.
- (B) We are here dealing with one of the most vital truths of God's book. God has always communicated with his creatures. Now he speaks only through his Son.
3. The reasons God has spoken through his Son (1:2b-14).
- a. "Whom he has appointed heir of all things."
 - (A) "Has appointed" is first aorist active indicative-timeless aorist. Jesus Christ is heir for time and for eternity.
 - (B) The idea of sonship necessarily involves being an heir.
 - (1) "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together (Rom. 8:17).
 - (2) "Wherefore you are no more

a servant, but a son; and if a son,
then an heir of God through
Christ" (Gal. 4:7).

b. "By whom he made the worlds," Some of us may have problems thinking of Christ as the Creator, but the Bible unquestionably teaches that truth.

(A) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

(B) "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

(C) "Who being the brightness of his glory."

(1) The tense of the participle-present active—suggests timeless existence. He is always the brightness of God's glory.

(2) "Brightness" from **apaugazo**, to emit brightness, Jesus Christ shines forth the brightness of God's glory.

(D) "The express image of his person."

(1) "Express image" from the Greek **charakter** and means "the very image" (ARV) or "exact representation" (NASB).

(a) The word originally referred to a tool for making marks. Then it came to mean that which

- occurred as a result of markings
- (b) "Who is the image (**eikon**) of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15).
- (2) "His person" from **hypostasis**, literally that which stands under. The same word is used in Heb. 11:1 and translated "substance." Jesus Christ is the very essence of God-his exact likeness.
- (E) "And upholding all things by the word of his power."
- (1) "Upholding" from **phero**, to bear, to carry, "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved (**phero**) by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).
- (2) "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (**sunestemi**: stick together cohere)" (Col. 1:17). Jesus Christ not only made the world; he holds it together.
- (3) God spoke the world into existence (Gen. 1) and he upholds or keeps it operating by his word. No wonder Paul talks about the power of the word (Rom. 1:16).
- (F) "When he had himself purged our sins." "Having made,"
- (1) The priestly work of Jesus Christ is a very vital theme in Hebrews. He himself purged our sins.
- (2) "Purged" from **katharismos** which has to do with cleansing or purification. "Purge out (**ekkatharate**) the old leaven that you may be a new lump, even as Christ

our sacrifice has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

(3) Jesus Christ is not only our high priest, but he offered himself as the sacrifice for our sins.

(G) "Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

(1) These verses present Jesus Christ as prophet—"has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son"—our high priest—"he had himself purged our sins"—and our king. "He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

(2) Jesus Christ was born to be king, but he became king in actuality on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:29-36).

(3) Having accomplished the mission of purging our sins, he sat down on the right hand of God.

(4) "Majesty" from **megalosunes** meaning great, glorious. Jesus assumed the glory he had with the Father from the beginning. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5).

c. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtain a more excellent name than they" (1:4).

(A) "Being made" from **genomenos**, literally "having become," second aorist participle of **ginomai**.

(B) Jesus Christ was better in every way than

the angels. Angels had their mission (v. 14), but their mission differed from Christ's.

- (C) Why does the Hebrew writer contrast Christ with angels and not with Moses? The law of Moses was delivered by angels.
 - (D) Christ's being God's Son made him a direct heir of God and gave him a more excellent name than the angels.
- d. Contrasts between angels and Christ.
- (A) "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son" (1:5)?
 - (1) God has never said any of this to an angel—only to his Son.
 - (2) "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."
 - (a) This quotation is from Psalm 2:7. This chapter is quoted more often in the New Testament than any other Old Testament passage.
 - (b) It is quoted in Acts 13:33 of Christ's resurrection and Hebrews 5:5 of Christ's being made a high priest.
 - (3) "And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son."
 - (a) This quotation is from 2 Samuel 7:14. The same verse is used in reference to God's relationship to Christians (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 21:7).
 - (b) God created the angels and honors them. He has assigned them special missions, but he

does not use the same language of them that he does of the Son.

- (4) We are God's, but we are not his sons in the same way Jesus is. Cf. John 5:17.
- (B) "And again, when he brings in the first begotten into the world, he says. And let all the angels of God worship him" (1:6).
- (1) "When he brings the first begotten into the world" may refer to the incarnation or to the resurrection.
 - (2) This quotation appears in the Greek version of the Old Testament (LXX), but not in the Hebrew (Dt. 32:43). In substance it appears in Psalm 97:7.
 - (3) The one who is worshipped is greater than the ones who do the worshipping.
 - (4) This indicates how much greater is the law given by Christ than the one given through the angels to Moses.
- (C) "And of the angels he says. Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire" (1:7).
- (1) This quotation is from Psalm 104:4.
 - (2) Angels are apparently spiritual beings, but on some occasions, they took on the appearance of men (Gen. 19).
 - (3) Angels could travel without earthly mediums and go where God sent them.
 - (4) God uses his ministers (**leitourgous**) for cleansing like fire. The word preached by God's ministers is to purify.

- (D) "But unto the Son he says. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom" (1:8).
- (1) We must remember who the speaker is: God the Father.
 - (2) "But unto the Son he (God) says."
 - (a) There is no higher authority in the universe than God. Whatever he says has to be absolutely, infallibly true.
 - (b) He calls Jesus Christ "the Son." There is a relationship between God the Father which does not exist between any man and God. That is Christ's reason for referring to God as "my Father" or "the Father." "My Father works hitherto and I work" (John 5:17).
 - (3) "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."
 - (a) God called Christ "God." How could there be any doubt about Christ's deity?
 - (b) The quotation is from Psalms 45:6-7.
 - (c) Could the speaker on this Psalm-God the Father-have been speaking of anyone else?
 - (d) Some preachers and professors among churches of Christ deny predictive prophecy. If this Psalm does not predict who Christ would be, I do not know why it appears in the book of Psalms and why the Hebrew writer
-

quotes it.

- (e) The angels had a temporary duty and existence; the Son and his throne are eternal.
 - (4) "A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom."
 - (a) The Old Testament passage reads: "The scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter" (Psa. 45:6).
 - (b) The scepter (**rabdos**) means a walking stick, staff, It was a symbol of authority.
 - (c) Normally, kingdoms of the earth show their authority by military might.
 - (d) Figuratively speaking, the scepter of Christ's kingdom is righteousness—"right" (Psa. 45:6).
 - (e) Is there or can there be an absolute right or righteousness? If there cannot be, the passage has little meaning.
 - (E) "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (1:9).
 - (1) "Thou has loved righteousness."
 - (a) "Righteousness" from **dikaiosunen**, right doing, right living.
 - (b) By his very nature, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, could not do otherwise than love right.
 - (c) Christ's scepter is a scenter of righteousness; his kingdom is a kingdom of righteousness.
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- (d) Those who are in his kingdom must live by his righteous and perfect will.
 - (e) "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law does he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:2).
 - (f) "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Psa. 119:97).
- (2) But loving righteousness is not enough. We must also hate evil. "Thou hast hated iniquity."
- (a) Some might be offended at the Bible's use of the word "hate." But he is not talking about hating people, but hating evil.
 - (b) The word "iniquity" (**anomia**) literally means without (a) law (**nomos**), hence lawless.
 - (c) "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:104).
 - (d) The Ephesians hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans which Christ also hated (Rev. 2:6)
 - (e) Following Christ means more than opposing and hating evil, but that is a vital part of it (1 Pet. 3:10-12).
 - (f) "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Rom. 12:9).
 - (g) "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every appearance (**eidous**: form) of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22).

- (3) "Therefore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows."
- (a) "God, even thy God." Christ was anointed by God himself.
- (b) "Has anointed" from **chrío**, from which we get the word "Christ" (**christos**).
- (c) The anointing was an occasion of joy, probably a feast honoring Christ.
- (d) "Fellows" from **metochous**, partners, sharers. Christ's fellows were angels. He was elevated above the angels.
- (F) "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (1:10).
- (1) "And, thou, Lord."
- (1) The word "Lord" (**kurios**) was used of Jehovah in the Old Testament.
- (2) Christ was called "God" in verse 8 and "Lord" in verse 11.
- (3) These words ought to convince any doubters about Christ's deity.
- (2) "In the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth."
- (1) Christ as creator has already been mentioned in this chapter. "By whom also he made the worlds"

- (1:2).
- (2) "In the beginning" would indicate Christ's preexistence.
- (a) "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58).
- (b) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).
- (c) "And he is before all things" (Col. 1:17).
- (3) This quotation is from Psa. 102:26-28.
- (4) Christ is the one who laid the very foundation of the earth.
- (5) Could this language be used of anyone other than deity?
- (3) "The heavens are the works of thy hands."
- (a) The Hebrew writer is affirming about Christ what Genesis 1:1 says about God. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
- (b) Could an angel have done what the Hebrew writer says Christ did?
- (G) "They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a garment" (1:11).
- (1) "They" refers to the heavens. This physical universe will eventually be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10-12).
- (2) The world and the heavens which Christ created will perish, but Christ will remain forever.
- (3) Jesus is greater than the earth. He is the Creator.

- (4) "They shall wax old as doth a garments."
- (H) "And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and they years shall not fail" (1:12).
- (1) This is highly figurative language showing that this old world is not destined to last forever.
 - (2) Scientists claim that it is running down (the second law of thermodynamics).
 - (3) Everything we know in this life—including this world and the heavens above—changes and will change. Christ does not change. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8).
 - (4) What a tremendous comfort and inspiration to know that Christ is always there, always faithful. He has never failed; nor will he ever.
- (I) "But to which of the angels said he at any time. Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (1:13)?
- (1) This quotation comes from Psalm 110:1.
 - (2) Did God ever say to an angel, "Thou art my Son?" But he said it to Jesus Christ.
 - (3) Christ—not the angels—has been given the place of preeminence, of authority (Mt. 28:18). He is the head of the church; angels are not (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 - (4) Christ will reign until he has put all

enemies under his feet, "For he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. The 1st enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

- (J) If God does not deliver his message through angels, what purpose do they serve? "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (1:14)?
- (1) The angels are all "ministering" spirits. "Ministering" from *leitourgia* usually means religious service.
 - (2) The angels are "sent forth (*apostello*: our word "apostle" to minister" (*diakonian*: usual word for serve).
 - (3) "For them who shall be heirs of salvation."
 - (a) This verse does not teach that each of us has a guardian angel.
 - (b) Angels do minister, but we are not told how. There is no point in our speculating,
 - (c) Angels ministered to Christ after his temptations (Mt. 4:11). "Minister" in this verse is **diakoneo**.
- e. The Hebrew writer has shown conclusively that Jesus Christ is greater than the angels. What is the significance of his arguments? Therefore, we have a greater law than the one given through angels. The gospel of Christ is superior in every way to the law of Moses.

Chapter One Questions:

1. Why is it not possible to determine the author of Hebrews?
2. Who has usually been considered the author of Hebrews?
3. Explain the meaning of the expression, "sundry times and divers manners."
4. In ages before the gospel was given, God "spoke unto the fathers by the prophets." How does He speak in the Christian era? Explain.
5. The author of Hebrews lists a number of reasons why God speaks through His Son. Discuss each of the following:
 - a. "Whom he has appointed heir of all things."
 - b. "By whom he made the worlds."
 - c. "Being the brightness of his glory."
 - d. "The express image of his person."
 - e. "Upholding all things by the word of his power."
 - f. "Purged our sins."
 - g. "Sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high."
6. It ought to be obvious that Jesus Christ the Creator is greater than the angels He created. So why does the book of Hebrews compare Jesus and the angels?
7. List some of the comparisons between Christ and the angels.
8. Liberal theologians often deny that Jesus is God. Show from Hebrews 1 that Jesus is God.
9. If God no longer reveals His will through angels, what purpose do they serve?

Chapter 2

The Book Of Hebrews

B. Hebrews 2

1. The great salvation (2:1-4).
 - a. The greater our blessings and opportunities the greater our responsibilities, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (2:1).
 - (A) "Therefore" presupposes that something has been said before from which the inspired writer is drawing a conclusion. NASB translates *dia touto* "for this reason."
 - (B) "Ought" from *dei* which means must, it is necessary. This word teaches obligation, duty. Examples:
 - (1) "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told you what you must (*dei*) do" (Acts 9:6).
 - (2) "For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:20).
 - (3) The word is used one hundred five times in the New Testament and translated "should," "must," "must needs," "ought," "behooved," "needful," "was meet."
 - (4) The word leaves no room for man's alternatives; we have a sacred

obligation to do whatever God requires.

(C) "To give more earnest heed."

(1) "More" is one of those comparative words used so frequently in Hebrews. "Better" is used thirteen times in Hebrews. The Greek word (**perissoteron**) is closely related to **perisseuo** which is translated "abound," "to exceed." "More abundantly."

(2) "Heed" from **prosechein**, to hold to, to attend, to beware.

(3) Why should citizens of the new kingdom give the more earnest heed? We have a better spokesman, a better way, a better mediator, better promises, a better resurrection. The way of Christ is better in every way than the old covenant. "To whom much is given of him much is required" (Luke 12:48).

(D) "To the things which we have heard."

(1) What had the Hebrew Christians heard?

(2) The Hebrew writer does not give the broad outlines of the gospel message as Paul does in Romans (1:14ff.), Galatians, and 1 Corinthians (15:1-8).

(3) They had heard the gospel, had become obedient to it and were expected to keep it carefully and enthusiastically.

(E) "Lest at anytime we should let them slip."

(1) "Lest" from **mepote**, lest haply.

- (2) "Slip" from **pararuomen** (**pararreo**) meaning to flow by or past, to drift. The word is used only this one time in the New Testament.
- (3) The KJV leaves the impression that the truths of the gospel will slip away from us. The original ways say, "Lest we drift away from it" or "lest haply we drift away."
- (4) Is there really a danger we should slip away from what we have heard? If not, why does the Hebrew writer mention the possibility?
- b. The law of Moses proved steadfast, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received it just recompense of reward" (2:2).
- (A) "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast."
- (1) The New Testament makes it very plain that the word spoken by angels was the law of Moses.
- (a) "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracle to give unto us.... Who received the law by the disposition (**diatage**: ordination, appointment) of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:38, 53).
- (b) "Wherefore then serves the law? It was added because of

transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained (**diatasso**: ordained, appointed) by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19).

(c) "If..." is condition of the first class, assumed as true.

(d) "Stedfast" from **bebaios**, firm, secure, sure.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14).

(2) "And every transgression and disobedience receive its recompense of reward."

(a) "Transgression" from **parabasis**, literally to go aside, hence to go beyond. "Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Mt. 15:2).

(b) "Disobedience" from **parakoe**, hearing amiss. The word involves an unwillingness to hear.

(c) Those who disobeyed God's law as given through angels to Moses were punished. "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath....And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall

stone him with stones without the camp" (Num. 15:32, 35).

(d) "Recompense of reward" from the Greek word **misthapodotes** (**misthos**, reward, payment of wages and **apodidomi**, to recompense). **Apodidomi** literally means to give back or to pay back. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward (**misthapodosian**).

c. How can Christians escape if they neglect the great salvation? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (2:3)?

(A) "How shall we escape?"

(1) "We"-Christians-not unbelievers. The unbelievers have never been saved. The Hebrew writer puts himself in the category of other Christians-"we."

(2) "Escape" from **ekpheugo**, to flee out of place. **Ek** means out of or away from, **pheugo** means to flee.

(3) The import of the question cannot be missed. We cannot escape if we neglect the great salvation.

(B) "If we neglect so great salvation."

(1) The tense of the verb is instructive-first aorist active participle "having neglected." How shall we escape having neglected so great salvation?

(2) The verb is "neglect"-not reject. The writer was addressing Christians-not unbelievers.

- (3) "So" indicates just how great the gospel is compared to the law of Moses.
- (4) Why is salvation in Christ referred to as the "great" salvation?
- The price paid was the very blood of the Son of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
 - It is worldwide in scope (Mt. 11:28-30; 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
 - It will last till the end of the age. There will be no other plan offered (Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1:3).
 - It is offered to everyone—male and female, bond and free, Jew and Gentile (Gal. 3:26-29).
 - It is the only way of true freedom (John 8:32).
- (5) How can we neglect the great salvation?
- Failing to attend services?
 - By neglecting studying our Bibles?
 - Not visiting and ministering to those in need?
 - Failure to tell people of our hope for eternity?
- (C) Identifying marks of the great salvations
- "Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord."
 - "Which" refers to the very salvation which is available only in Christ.
 - "At the first" would refer to the preaching of salvation which Christ did while he was on earth (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47). The Lord himself—not Moses or one of the other prophets—brought the message to man.

- (c) "Began to be spoken" from **archen labousa laleisthai**, literally, "having received a beginning to be spoken."
 - (d) Since the Lord was and is superior to the angels, his word is more impressive than the law of Moses. The gospel is greater in every way than the law of Moses.
- (2) "And was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."
- (a) "Confirmed" from **bebaioo**, the same word used in verse 2 and translated "stedfast." The New Testament was proved beyond question as to its origin and applicability.
 - (b) The Hebrew writer apparently was not in the original twelve. It was confirmed unto us. If he had been there, it is unlikely he would have used such language.
 - (c) The apostles were the ones who heard and delivered the message of Christ to the world, including the author of Hebrews; the author seems to have been one generation removed from the apostles.
 - (d) The apostles continued to preach what Christ had begun (Acts 2:38-39; 22:16).
- (3) God bore witness to apostolic preachings "God also bearing witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will" (2:4)?

- (a) Jesus began to teach the great salvation, the apostles confirmed it and God bore witness to it.
- (b) God himself got into the act. He bore witness to what the apostles preached. "God also bearing witness."
- (AA) "God also bearing witness" from **sunepimartureo**, sun, with or to join, **martureo**, to bear witness. The Greek means to join in bearing witness with others.
- (BB) There is no higher authority than God almighty. He gave his approval to what the apostles preached on Pentecost, at the house of Cornelius, etc.
- (c) "Both with signs and wonders, and with divers gifts."
- (AA) "Signs" from **semeiois**, signs pointing to a higher power and purpose.
- (BB) "Wonders" from **teras**, indicating the impression made on the viewers. Cf. Acts 2:22.
- (CC) "Divers miracles." "Divers" from **poikilais dunamesin**, manifold powers or works. This is the common word for miracle.
- (DD) "Gifts" from **pneumat**, **pneuma** is the word for "Spirit" Cf. 1 Corinthians 12.

- (d) The gifts of the Holy Spirit which God used to bear witness to the preaching of the apostles were according to God's will. He determined when a miracle was appropriate for the confirmation of the word.
2. The humiliation and glory of Christ (2:5-9).
- a. In this section the author shows that Jesus was made lower than the angels for a particular purpose which will become clear in these verses.
 - b. "For unto the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak" (2:5).
 - (A) NASB has a little clearer translation of this verse. "For he did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking."
 - (B) Even though Jesus Christ is greater than the angels, he became a man to fulfill God's purposes of human redemption.
 - (C) God did not put the world to come under the angels.
 - (1) "The world to come" does not refer to the eternal inheritance of the saints.
 - (2) The expression refers to the Messianic age—the Christian era.
 - (D) "Subjection" from **hupotasso**, to arrange or to order under. The same word is used of wives (Eph. 5:22-24), church members to elders (Heb. 13:7, 17), citizens to civil government (Rom. 13:1-7).
 - (E) "The world to come...whereof we speak." The Hebrew writer is discussing the

Christian era—the time when Christ reigns in the hearts of men.

- c. "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him" (2:6)?
- (A) "But one in a certain place testified, saying."
- (1) The one in a certain place was the author of Psalm.
 - (a) In my King James Version the author of Psalm 8 is identified as David.
 - (2) Why did not the author of Hebrews say David instead of "one in a certain place?"
 - (a) The people would have known the author without his having to mention him.
 - (b) This was literary device which was often used among the Hebrews.
 - (c) NASB translates the expression, "One has testified somewhere."
 - (d) The word "testified" (**diemarturato**) is used in verse.
 - (3) The author of Psalms by divine inspiration looked down through the corridors of time and identified Jesus as the ideal man.
 - (B) "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"
 - (1) Since man is a sinner, why does God take such an interest in him?
 - (2) The Psalmist (and the Hebrew writer) are not asking about man's

physical makeup. They are asking about man's standing before God—his worth to the Maker of this universe—including man.

- (3) "Mindful" comes from the Greek **mimneske (mnaomai)** and means to remind, to remember. Why is God mindful of man?
 - (4) Does God's minfulness extend even to unborn babies? Are they also created in the image of God?
- (C) "Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
- (1) "The son of man" simple refers to man's humanity. Human beings are the descendents of other human beings.
 - (2) "Visit" from **episkeptomai**, meaning to inspect, to look upon, care for, exercise oversight.
 - (a) "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people....Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high has visited us" (Lk. 1:68,78).
 - (b) "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God has visited his people" (Lk. 7:16).
 - (c) James 1:27.
 - (d) The noun form of this word—**episkopos**—is used of elders and is translated "bishop."
 - (3) This verse illustrates a literary device called "parallelism." "What is man

that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him?" The same basic thought is expressed in slightly different language. The book of Proverbs is full of such parallelisms—called "synonymous parallelisms." Example: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Prov. 22:1).

d. "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands" (2:7).

(A) NASB translates: "Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels." RSV uses the same approach. If this translation is correct, it would refer to Christ's becoming man for a short time. The idea is correct, but I am not sure the translation is.

(B) "Thou madest him a little lower" from one Greek word—*elattosas*, a verb meaning to lower, to lessen, to decrease. The same verb is used in verse 9 and also in John 3:30: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

(C) "Little" from *brachu*, some little. The NASB and RSV think he is talking about little time.

(D) "Than the angels" from *par' angelous*, "compared to the angels."

(1) The Hebrew in Psalm 8:5, the verse from which the Hebrew writer is quoting, uses the word *elohim*, plural for God.

- (2) But he is not speaking of the Almighty. Psalm 29:1 uses the same noun which is translated "O ye mighty" (KJV) or "O heavenly beings" (RSV).
- (E) "Thou crowndest him with glory and honor."
- (1) "Crowndest" from **estephanosas, stephanoo**, to crown.
 - (2) **Doxa** and **time** were qualities God Himself ascribed to man.
 - (3) If these verses do not show man's value to God, I do not know what it would take.
 - (4) These verses do not teach that man was worthy of God's love, but they do show the infinite grace of God in creating and continuing to care for man.
- (F) "And didst set him over the works of thy hands."
- (1) Scholarly writers call this "the dominion mandate." God gave man dominion over the created universe.
 - (2) The original mandate reads: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28).
 - (3) The Psalmist says, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen,

- yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas" (Psa. 8:6-8).
- (4) "Did set" from **kathistemi**, to set down, to appoint. God planned for man to rule this material universe under His direction.
 - (5) Are we in danger of exploiting our world and not being proper stewards of it?
- e. "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not all things put under him" (2:8).
- (A) "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."
 - (1) He is still speaking of man in general—not Jesus Christ whom He introduces in verse 9.
 - (2) Christ made man the master of all he surveyed, but he was and is accountable to God for his behavior.
 - (3) "Put in subjection" from **hupotaxai** (**hupotasso**) arrange under. Literally, "he subjected."
 - (B) "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him."
 - (1) Is God disappointed with what we have done to His earth?
 - (2) Would proper use of the animals prohibit our killing and eating animals?
 - (3) Like all of God's good gifts, we can

misuse and abuse His earth and all its animal inhabitants.

- (4) He emphasizes that man is over all by saying, "He left (**aphiemi**) nothing not subject to him."
- (C) "But now we see not all things put under him."
- (1) In spite of our wonderful discoveries and inventions, there is much about nature we cannot control or even predict. Example: Hurricane Andrew.
 - (2) There are diseases which defy man's greatest ingenuity.
- f. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (2:9).
- (A) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death."
- (1) In the preceding verses, the Hebrew writer has been talking about man in general, just as Genesis one and Psalm 8 do.
 - (2) Jesus is the ideal man who came for a special purpose.
 - (3) Jesus Christ was made a little lower than the angels in that He took on human flesh (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 Tim. 3:16).
 - (4) Jesus came to die for man, but He came forth from the grave and conquered death. "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

- (B) "Crowned with glory and honor."
- (1) Obviously, man in general has been crowned with glory and honor (v. 7), but Christ's position is far higher than man's.
 - (2) Even though Jesus was humiliated, He was exalted to the right hand of God (Phil. 2:5-9).
- (C) "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
- (1) The scheme of human redemption did not depend on man's inventiveness or initiative. It was by God's grace.
 - (2) The purpose of Christ's coming, becoming a man was to taste death for every man.
 - (3) "Taste" from **geuomai**, to experience -not simply to sip.
 - (4) Christ's death was to benefit the whole of the human race.
 - (5) It is through His death that men and women have the hope of immortality. "But thanks be unto God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).
 - (6) Not all men take advantage of the death of Christ, but He died for all-not just the elect.
3. Jesus Christ, our Perfect Savior (2:10-18).
- a. "For it became him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (2:10).
 - (A) "Became" from **eprepen**, to stand out, to be becoming or seemly, to be eminent,

to be conspicuous among a number. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).

(B) "For whom are all things and by whom are all things."

(1) The "whom" refers to God—not to Christ.

(2) The world exists by His power and for His glory.

(C) "In bringing many sons to glory."

(1) The Hebrew writer is referring to God's plan for saving us.

(2) Christians are God's sons (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5). These passages call us sons by adoption.

(D) "To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

(1) The verb is "to make perfect" and is from **teleioo**.

(a) There is no suggestion that Jesus had sinned and needed to be forgiven.

(b) Jesus came to live among men to learn our condition. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all men that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).

(2) By Christ's sufferings, He came to know our side in the conflict between God and man. He became the perfect mediator—knowing God's side and man's side.

- (3) "Captain" from **archegos**, pioneer, author. Neil Lightfoot says it originally applied to a "hero who founded a city, gave it its name and became its guardian" (p. 76).
- (a) The word appears four times in the New Testament. It is translated "**Prince** of life" (Acts 3:15), "a **Prince** and a Savior" (Acts 5:31) and "the **author** and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2).
- (b) The title has a military connotation. It pictures Jesus as the head of the Lord's army.
- b. "For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (2:11).
- (A) "Sanctifies" from **hagiazon**, to set apart, to make holy.
- (B) The One who sanctifies is our Lord Jesus Christ.
- (C) Those sanctified are Christians.
- (D) Jesus Christ identified with human beings. They "are all one."
- (E) Because we have responded in faith and obedience to His word "he is not ashamed to call them brethren."
- (1) "Ashamed" from **epaischunomai**, disappointed, confounded.
- (2) To be a brother of Christ is to be an heir of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).
- (3) Christ is not ashamed to call Christians His brethren. We should always conduct ourselves in such a

way that He is never disappointed in us—never ashamed of us.

- c. "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (2:12).

(A) The Hebrew writer quotes Psalm 22:22:

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

(1) "Declare" from **anangelo**, to announce, to proclaim.

(2) The Messiah of whom the Psalmist spoke would proclaim God's name among his brethren—among Christians.

(B) "Church" from **ekklesia**, congregation, assembly.

(C) "Sing" from **humneso**, to praise in hymns. This is not the usual word for sing (**ado**). **Ado** is the word always used of singing praise to God. Although **psallo** involves singing, it normally refers to the melody made in the heart (Eph. 6:19).

(D) I doubt that this word provides a very strong argument against instrumental music.

- d. "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God has given me" (2:13).

(A) "And again, I will put my trust in him."

(1) The Hebrew writer pictures Christ as putting His trust in God just as other men do.

(2) "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides his face from the house of Jacob and I will look for him" (Isa. 8:17).

- (3) "Trust" from **peitho**, to have confidence in.
- (B) "And again, Behold I and the children which God has given me."
- (1) This quotation is also from Isaiah. "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwell on Mount Zion" (Isa. 8:18).
- (2) Originally, this verse referred to Isaiah and his sons. Isaiah was looking to his sons as witnesses of the salvation God would bring.
- e. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (2:14).
- (A) "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of the flesh and blood."
- (1) The children of whom he has been saying-
- (a) "Partakers" from **koinoneo**, to enjoy fellowship, sharers.
- (b) "Flesh and blood" (some manuscripts have "blood and flesh") means human beings.
- (2) Since we are human, we need a mediator who can share in our human existence. Christ "was in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).
- (B) "He himself took part of the same."
- (1) "Took" from **metecho**, to have with, a synonym of **koinoneo** (fellowship).

“Took part” would be better translated “partook.”

- (2) Jesus Christ became a man and dwelt among us (John 1:1-2, 14).
 - (3) These verses unquestionably teach the incarnation of Christ.
- (C) “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”
- (1) By Christ’s becoming a man, He was able to understand our perspective on life and death.
 - (2) Through His death and resurrection, He was able to overcome death and guarantee that we shall also overcome death (1 Cor. 15:23). Every man in his own order. Christ was the firstfruits. Those who are His will be raised at Christ’s coming.
- (D) The work of Christ destroyed the power of the devil. Men and women still die, but they will be raised to die no more.
- f. “And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (2:15).
- (A) “Deliver” from **apallasso**, to set free from, to release.
- (1) Luke uses it of a judge’s delivering someone to an officer (Lk. 12:58).
 - (2) Acts uses the word to suggest that diseases “departed” from the sick (Acts 19:12).
 - (3) The papyri used the word to suggest what would happen when a wife desired to be released from a marriage commitment (Moulton &

Milligan, p. 52). It was also used of releasing a boat (p. 52).

(B) "Fear of death" is almost universal—if not universal.

(1) It may not be that we are so afraid of death as we are of dying. The pain, the uncertainty of the manner of our deaths make cowards of most of us.

(2) Lucius Annaeus Seneca (c. 3 B.C.-A.D. 65), the famous philosopher and playwright, wrote as follows: "He who does not want to die should not want to live. For life is tendered to us with the proviso of death; life is the way to this destination. On this account, it is folly to fear death; for only the uncertain is to be feared, the certain being take for granted. Death signifies a just and unavoidable necessity. Who would complain about a situation in which everyone is unexceptionable? The first law of justice is equality. Therefore, it would be unseemly to reproach nature for not having a different law for us than for herself. What she joins together, she puts asunder, and what she puts asunder, she joins together again" (Jean-Baptiste Delacour, **Glimpses of the Beyond**. New York: Delacorte Press, 1973, p. 11). Seneca was a contemporary of Jesus and the apostles. Seneca was a tutor for Nero who eventually forced Seneca to commit suicide.

(3) Many of the people who report Near Death Experiences (NDE) or out-of-

body experiences (OBE) say they are not afraid of dying. They claim to have seen the "other side" and think it is much better than this side.

- (4) Christians should not fear death, but it may not be easy for us to accept that truth.
 - (5) Atheists, agnostics and other unbelievers often claim not to fear death, but one wonders if they are merely whistling in the dark.
 - (6) Fear of death can immobilize us if we allow it to.
 - (a) We should be realistic about death because death is as real as life.
 - (b) The New Age proponents deny the reality of death, but they are not dealing with the facts.
- (C) "Were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
- (1) "Subject" from **enecho**, to be held in, to be bound to.
 - (2) "Bondage" from **douleias**, slavery. A man can become a slave to an idea—the fear of death.
- g. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (2:16).
- (A) "He took" from **epilambano**, to take hold of. He did not come to redeem angels; He came to redeem man. Therefore he did not become like the angels.
 - (B) "He took on him the seed of Abraham."
 - (1) Jesus actually became a man. Again an emphasis on the incarnation.

- (2) He came from a Jewish background—
“the seed of Abraham.”
- h. “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (2:17).
- (A) “It behoved” from **opheilen**, to owe, a duty or obligation. The verb is translated “due benevolence” (1 Cor. 7:3).
- (B) “Made like unto his brethren.”
- (1) He became like us to know our nature firsthand.
- (2) He was even tempted in all points like as we are but He did not sin (Heb. 4:15).
- (C) “That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things pertaining to God.”
- (1) By having lived among men and knowing their temptations and heartaches, Jesus could be merciful to us.
- (2) From both man’s and God’s perspectives, He was faithful in discharging His duties in service to God.
- (D) “To make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”
- (1) “Reconciliation” is not translated from the usual Greek word (**katallasso** or **apokatallasso**), but from **hilaskesthai**, to appease, propitiate. The word means “mercy seat.” Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2).

(2) He offered Himself for our sins.
Christ is the mercy seat.

i. "For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (2:18).

(A) Jesus knows the suffering men endure because He Himself suffered.

(B) He was also tempted (Matt. 4:8-11).

Tempted as we are but without sin (Heb. 4:15).

(C) "Succor" from **boetho**, **boe**, a cry, **theo**, to run, to run at a cry or call for help.

Chapter Two Questions:

1. If the gospel of Christ is the greatest law ever given to man, why does the author of Hebrews use the comparative form of adverbs and adjectives: "more," "better," etc.?
2. Christians are to "give the more earnest heed" - compared to what?
3. Is there a possibility of letting the word slip or drifting away from it?
4. When the people under the Jewish covenant disobeyed the law of God, they were punished. Give some examples from the Old Testament.
5. "How shall we escape if we neglect the great salvation?"
 - a. Is there a difference between neglecting the great salvation and rejecting it?
 - b. Why does the author of Hebrews call salvation in Christ "the great salvation?"
6. There are three marks of the great salvation. List and discuss.
7. Psalm 8 teaches that God made man a little lower than the angels. The author of Hebrews applies that passage to Jesus Christ. Why was Jesus made a little lower than the angels?
8. If Jesus were God manifest in the flesh, how could the author of Hebrews say that God made "the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering?"
9. Does Hebrews 2 teach that Jesus Christ was really a man-flesh and blood?
10. Does "fear of death" seem to be almost universal? Discuss.
11. Jesus did not take on the nature of angels, but of men. Explain.

Chapter 3

The Book Of Hebrews

C. Hebrews 3

1. Christ's superiority to Moses (3:1-6).
 - a. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (3:1).
 - (A) Because Christ is not ashamed to call us "brethren" and because He suffered on our behalf, we are to think about who He is and what He has done for us.
 - (B) Christians are called "holy brethren"—not because we are perfect or sinless, but because of our relationship to Jesus Christ.
 - (C) "Partakers" from **metochoi**—not **koinonos**—partner. W.E. Vine: "**Koinonos** stresses the fact of having something in common, **metochos**, the fact of sharing; the latter is less thorough in effect than the former" (volume 3, p. 164).
 - (D) "Heavenly calling" (**kleseas epouraniou**) indicates that our calling is from God and our allegiance ought to be to God.
 - (E) "Consider" from **katanoesate**, to put the mind down on a thing, to fix the mind on. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are you better than the fowls" (Lk. 12:24)?
 - (F) "Apostle" means one who is sent. We

generally use the term to mean the twelve, but the term has broader use than that.

- (G) Christ, our High Priest, is one of the major themes of the book of Hebrews. We shall have much more on that idea as we progress through Hebrews.
- (H) "Profession" from **homologias**, confession. The Greek means same, **homo**, and to say, **logias (lego)**, to say the same, to agree, to confess.
 - (1) Christians must confess that Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:11).
 - (2) This truth appears other times in Hebrews (4:14; 10:23).
- b. "Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house" (3:2).
 - (A) Whatever God wanted Christ to do, He did it faithfully (John 8:29).
 - (B) "Appointed" from **poiesanti (poieo)**, literally to make.
 - (C) Christ is compared to Moses in many respects, including his faithfulness in complying with God's regulations for his work.
- c. "For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who has builded the house has more honor than the house" (3:3).
 - (A) Even though Moses was truly a great man and worthy of honor—even today—yet Jesus Christ is worthy of more honor than Moses.
 - (B) "Counted worthy" from **axioo**, to deem worthy. This Greek word comes into the

English in our word axiology, the study of values.

- (C) Jesus was not only faithful in all His responsibilities; He is the Son of God, the Creator and Sustainer of our universe (Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:16-17).
- (D) The man who builds the house deserves greater honor. Christ is the builder of our universe and of the church.
- (E) Christ is greater in every way than Moses. Therefore, the gospel given by Christ is greater than the law of Moses.
- d. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (3:4).
 - (A) Nothing in the world—including houses, nations, kingdoms—come into existence on their own. "Every house is builded by some man."
 - (1) This concept repudiates the theory of organic evolution. Evolution operates by chance—accidentally—out of nothing.
 - (2) Our houses, our nation and our kingdoms are built by somebody. They did not just happen.
 - (B) The entire universe was built by God. Nothing makes less logical sense than the theory of evolution. Common sense tells us that God had to create our world and all that is in it. "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24).
- e. "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (3:5).

- (A) Moses was certainly one of the key figures in the Old Testament. He is mentioned some eighty times in the New Testament.
 - (B) He was not a perfect man, but he was generally faithful in obeying God's commands.
 - (C) "His house" would refer to the Old Testament economy.
 - (D) Moses was a "servant" (**therapon, therpeuo**), to serve, to heal. **Therapeia** is translated "service" (Lk. 9:11) and a group of servants (Lk. 12:42).
 - (E) The faithfulness of Moses was for a "testimony" (**marturion**, witness). He was a witness of those things which were to be spoken after. The work of Moses was getting men and women ready to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- f. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (3:6).
- (A) Christ is a son in his own house; Moses was a servant in God's house.
 - (B) As the Son is greater than the servant; so Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. This also indicates the greatness of the New Testament covenant as compared with the law of Moses.
 - (C) "Whose house we are."
 - (1) Christians compose the house of God, the family (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - (2) We belong to God because of what Christ did in building the house of God.

- (D) "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."
- (1) What if we do not hold fast?
 - (2) "Hold fast" from **katacho**, to hold firmly, keep, hold down.
 - (3) "Confidence" from **parresian**, courage, boldness, unreservedness of utterance.
 - (4) "Rejoicing" from **kauchema**, to rejoice, to exalt, to boast, to glory.
 - (5) The Hebrew writer is pleading and warning. He exhorts God's people to be faithful in all things.
2. Exhortation to faithfulness (3:7-19).
- a. "Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit says, Today if you will hear his voice" (3:7).
 - (A) The "wherefore" indicates that truths have gone before from which the Hebrew writer is drawing a conclusion.
 - (1) Christ is the "Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (v. 1).
 - (2) He was faithful to God who appointed Christ to do God's work (v. 2).
 - (3) Christ is greater in glory than Moses just as the one who builds the house is greater than the house (v. 3).
 - (4) Moses was faithful in his house as a servant, but Jesus is God's Son over his own house (v. 6). We are the Lord's house "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (v. 6).
 - (B) "As the Holy Spirit says."
 - (1) The Bible, according to the Hebrew writer, is from the Holy Spirit.

- (2) Yet later in this book (4:7), this quotation is attributed to David. What David said under the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit is God's word.
- (C) The lengthy quotation beginning in verse 7 is from Psalm 95:7-11.
- (1) "Today if you will hear his voice." Since David was speaking by inspiration, his words were binding on the Israelites.
- (2) To hear the voice of David was to hear God. Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17).
- b. "Harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (3:8).
- (A) "Harden" from **sklerunete** (**skleros**: hard austere). This word is used in reference to Pharaoh's hardening of his heart.
- (B) If Christians could not harden their hearts, why would the Hebrew writer warn of the possibility?
- (C) "Provocation" from **parapikrasmoi**, to embitter, to exasperate. The common word for "bitter" -**pikraino**-is used several times in the New Testament. "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them" (Col. 3:19).
- (D) "In the day of temptation in the wilderness." The reference in this passage is to Exodus 17:1-7.
- c. "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years" (3:9).
- (A) "When" means "wherewith" or "where" and refers to Deuteronomy 8:15.

- (B) There is no word in the Greek for "me." The Israelites "tested" God "in putting to the proof."
- (1) The KJV translates the verb **epeirasan** from "tempted," but it should be translated "tested." God cannot be tempted (Jas. 1:13).
 - (2) "Proved" from **dokimazo** and means to test or to try with a view to approving or disapproving. They demanded proof from God that His promises were true.
- (C) The Israelites were consigned to the wilderness for forty years. During these forty years, they continued to see God's works.
- d. "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways" (3:10).
- (A) "Grieve" from **prosochthizo**, displeased, extreme anger and disgust. The verb is used only here and in verse 17. The LXX uses the verb to mean "abhor." What a fearful situation when God is angry and disgusted with His children.
- (B) "They do always err in their heart."
- (1) "Err" from **planao**, to wander astray. Our word "planet" comes from this Greek word.
 - (2) Can there be any doubt that God's children can err?
 - (3) "In their heart" would indicate that their thinking was not right. We are what we think. If our thoughts are rebellious, we behave rebelliously.

- (C) "They have not known my ways."
- (1) This expression does not mean that the Israelites did not know God existed, had never heard of God's law and therefore were not responsible for their actions.
 - (2) In spite of all God had done for Israel—both in Egypt and in the wilderness—they still did not understand His ways.
 - (3) How much different are we?
- e. "So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter my rest" (3:11).
- (A) Because the Israelites always erred in their hearts and failed to understand God's ways, He swore to keep them from the land of promise. We cannot ignore God's law without having to suffer the consequences.
 - (B) The Jews who left Egypt, that is, those above military age did not enter Canaan. They died in the wilderness, except Joshua and Caleb.
 - (C) God's rest in this verse refers to the land of promise, but it is later used of heaven (4:9).
- f. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12).
- (A) "Take heed" from **blepo**, a word of exhortation. Present active imperative. "Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision" (Phil. 3:2).
 - (B) "Brethren" indicates He is talking to members of the body of Christ—not unbelievers. This is not just a theoretical warning.

- (C) "Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief."
- (1) This writer knew the dangers confronting the church in every age and warns about those dangers.
 - (2) Just as the Israelites had erred in their hearts, the Hebrew Christians could do the same. Notice the emphasis on the heart—the seat of our will, emotions, etc.
 - (3) "Unbelief" from **apistias** and refers to disbelief, a refusal to believe the gospel record.
- (D) "In departing from the living God."
- (1) "Departing" from **apostenai**, apostatizing, falling away.
 - (2) **Apostenai** comes from **aphistemi**, to depart, to fall away (Lk. 8:13).
 - (3) What are the implications of departing from the living God? Cf. Jeremiah 2:13.
- g. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13).
- (A) "Exhort" from **parakaleo**, to call to one side for comfort, encouragement and help. The noun form of the word is translated "comforter" (John 14:26) and "advocate" (1 John 2:1).
 - (B) Christians are to be involved in each other's lives to the extent that we are concerned about their faithfulness. We are to comfort, encourage, warn one another daily.
 - (C) "While it is called Today." This expression stresses the importance of time.

- (D) Our concern for each other's welfare has as its goal: "Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
- (1) "Hardened" from **skleruno**, same word as in verse 8. A heart hardened by the deceitfulness of sin is similar to the wayside soil of the Parable of the Sower (Lk. 8:5, 12).
 - (2) "The deceitfulness of sin" from **apate tes hamartias**. **Apate** involves trick, fraud.
- h. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (3:14).
- (A) Christians are made "partakers" of Christ, that is, we share in the great promise and blessings He has designed for His children.
 - (B) "Partakers" from **metochoi** (1:9; 3:1). This word stresses the fact of sharing. What greater honor can men know than to share in Christ's great love for us and His provisions for our salvation?
 - (C) "If we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."
 - (1) What if we do not hold our confidence stedfast unto the end? Will we be saved in spite of our failure?
 - (2) A.T. Robertson quotes Jonathan Edwards as saying that the sure proof of our election is that one holds stedfast unto the end (volume 5, pgs. 358-359). I am afraid Edwards was guilty of circular reasoning.
 - (D) "Confidence" from **hupostasis** and is

translated "substance" in Hebrews 11:1. The word literally means that which stands under.

- (E) It is not good enough just to begin the race. We must finish it. "Stedfast unto the end."
- i. "While it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation" (3:15).
- (A) This verse is based on Psalm 95:7-11.
- (B) The Hebrew writer knew the danger of our becoming hardened by sin and turning away from the living God.
- (C) "Provocation" from **pikraino**, to embitter, to exasperate.
- j. "For some, when they heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses" (3:16).
- (A) The Revised Standard Version translates: "Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses?"
- (B) God had endured as much from the Israelites as He could. His anger against sin is not withheld indefinitely. God is longsuffering, but His wrath will be manifest toward rebellious individuals and nations.
- (C) It was not a question of ignorance; they heard and yet they provoked God.
- (D) Rebellion against Moses was almost universal. Rebellion against God's appointed leader is rebellion against God.
- (E) The NASB translates this verse: "For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?"

- k. "For with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness" (3:17).
- (A) The Israelites had been in Egypt for over four hundred years. But as soon as they left Egypt they began to object to God's plan for leading them to freedom.
 - (B) He was grieved with them for forty years.
 - (1) "Grieved" from **prosochthizo**, to be angry, to be displeased.
 - (2) The constant murmuring and other kinds of sinful behavior made God angry. He was displeased with His own people.
 - (C) They sinned (**hamartano**) and were punished for their sins. Twenty-three thousand died in one day (1 Cor. 10:8). "Carcasses" from **kola**, a word describing members of the body like the feet. In the LXX the word is used of dead bodies (Num. 14:29).
- l. "And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not" (3:18).
- (A) God had sworn that they who were rebellious and disobedient would not enter into the rest He had prepared for His people.
 - (B) The "rest" in this verse refers to entering the promised land. Many Old Testament passages, especially in the book of Deuteronomy, warn of the consequences of disobedience. Cf. Deuteronomy 28ff.
 - (C) The word "disbelieved" should be translated "disobeyed" (**apeithesasin**).

- There really is not much difference, however, in the ultimate results of either.
- m. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (3:19).
- (A) The entrance into the rest (Canaan) was conditional. If the Israelites disobeyed, they could not enjoy the promise.
 - (B) The conclusion the Hebrew writer draws from all he has said is very plain: They could not enter because of unbelief.
 - (C) The word in this verse is "unbelief" (**apistian**)-not disobedience.

Chapter Three Questions:

1. The author of Hebrews uses two expressions concerning Christ: "Apostle" and "high priest." Explain the meaning of those terms.
2. Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant. Jesus is a Son over His own house. What is the significance of the comparison?
3. God was often displeased with the behavior of the Israelites. Was their rebellion against God serious?
4. If Christians cannot fall from grace, why does Hebrews warn: "Take heed, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God?"
5. Calvinists argue that Christians cannot "apostatize." Yet the Greek word for "departing" is **apostenai** from which we get our word "apostasy." Discuss.
6. Christians can be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (v. 13), fail to "hold our confidence steadfast unto the end" (v. 14) and "harden our hearts" (v. 15). Will any of this affect our eternal salvation?
7. The Jews who wandered in the wilderness could not enter the land of promise because of unbelief. Is this fact meant to be a warning for Christians in every generation?

Chapter 4

The Book Of Hebrews

D. Hebrews 4.

1. There is another rest for the people of God (4:1-10).
 - a. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (4:1).
 - (A) Notice the many exhortations in the book of Hebrews: "Let us therefore fear." We will encounter these throughout the book.
 - (B) "Let us therefore fear."
 - (1) "Fear" from **phobeomai** (**phobos**), to be afraid.
 - (2) This Greek word for fear can mean either respect or cringing fear. In this context it means being afraid.
 - (3) "It is a fearful (**phoberon**) thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).
 - (C) The promise of entering into God's rest for the Israelites was conditional just as our promise of the eternal rest is conditional.
 - (D) "Any of you should seem to come short of it"
 - (1) If our entrance into the eternal rest is guaranteed—regardless of our behavior—this verse does not make logical sense.
 - (2) "Come short" from **hustereo**, to be too late, to fail to reach the goal. The word is translated "destitute" (Heb.

11:37) and "fail" (Heb. 12:15).

(E) These words were not written primarily to show the fallaciousness of the doctrine of the eternal security of the soul; they were written to prevent our coming short of God's will (Rom. 3:23).

b. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (4:2).

(A) "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them."

(1) We have had the gospel (**euangelizo**: good news) preached unto us just as the Israelites had good news preached unto them.

(a) **Euangelizo** is a verb but includes the message (**euangelion**).

(b) Sometimes both words are used in the same sentence. "Moreover, brethren, I declare (**gnorizo**: make known) unto you the gospel (**euangelion**) which I preached (**euangelisamen**), which also you have received, and wherein you stand" (1 Cor. 15:1). Literally, "the gospel which I gospelized unto you."

(2) The gospel the Israelites heard was not the same message we hear, but both included a promise of rest. The Israelites rest was in Canaan; ours is in heaven.

(B) "But the word preached to them did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

- (1) Literally, the word they heard did not profit them. Why did the word not profit them? It was not mixed with faith.
 - (2) Did not the word Moses preached to the Israelites have miraculous manifestations to prove that the word came from God?
 - (3) Unless we have faith in God's word it does not profit us either.
 - (4) What prevents our receiving with faith the word of God? Has He not authenticated His word by signs, miracles and wonders? Why so widespread unbelief in our day?
- c. "For we which have believed do enter into the rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world" (4:3).
- (A) NASB: "For we who have believed enter that rest; just as He said, 'As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest.'"
 - (B) A.T. Robertson calls the phrase, "enter that rest," emphatic futuristic present middle indicative. "We are sure to enter in, we who believe" (volume 5, p. 361).
 - (C) God Himself had promised and sworn in His wrath. Those who believed and kept God's word will be rewarded with everlasting life. Those who do not believe and do not obey are not going to enter the heavenly rest.
 - (D) There is a sense in which Christians already have rest (Matt. 11:28-30). But the heavenly rest will be ours at the end of our earthly pilgrimage.

- (E) Our rest will be God's rest. He began His rest-cessation of works-from the foundation of the world.
- (F) God is not continuing to create, as some modern scientists and philosophers teach or at least imply.
- d. "For he spoke in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest on the seventh day from all his works" (4:4).
- (A) "He spoke in a certain place." The Hebrew writer was referring to Genesis 2:2: "But the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work." Cf. Exodus 20:11; 31:17.
- (B) The resting God was not an absolute cessation of work (John 5:17).
- (C) "Resting" does not suggest God was tired, as we are when we rest. God simply ceased from His creative work.
- (D) Did God's resting on the sabbath day mean that the sabbath-keeping was an ordinance of God from the beginning of creation?
- e. "And in his place again, If they shall enter into my rest" (4:5).
- (A) "If they shall enter into my rest" is a fairly literal translation of the Greek idiom which suggests a strong negative.
- (B) Other translations render this verse: "They shall never enter my rest." Verse three uses the same language.
- f. "Seeing therefore it remains that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief" (4:6).

- (A) "Remains" from the verb **apoleipo**, to leave behind, to remain over. Some people are going to enter into God's rest.
 - (B) The people to whom the promise of a rest was made did not enjoy the rest because of unbelief (**apeitheisan**: disobedience).
 - (1) "Preached" from **euangelisthentes**, to announce good news.
 - (2) It was good news when God told the Israelites they would enjoy rest when they entered Canaan.
 - (C) They were not permitted, however, to enter the rest because they disobeyed God's word.
- g. "Again, he limits a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (4:7).
- (A) "Limits" from **horizo**, to set a limit (**horos**, horizon).
 - (B) Other translations:
 - (1) "He again fixes another day" (NASB)
 - (2) "He again defines a certain day" (ARV).
 - (C) The Hebrew writer attributes Psalm 95- from which he is quoting- to David. "Saying in David."
 - (D) Saying in David long after the events of Exodus.
 - (E) "Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."
 - (1) "If you will hear his voice." Can we be sure God's voice is in the Bible? How can we identify God's voice outside the Bible?

- (2) Do not harden your hearts. Do not turn aside from hearing and doing God's will.
 - (3) How easy it is for us to allow other matters to interfere with our hearing and doing God's will.
- h. "For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day" (4:8).
- (A) The names Joshua and Jesus have the same form in the Greek text. This explains why the KJV translates the Greek **Iesous** by the name Jesus. The names mean "Savior."
- (1) Joshua led the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the promised land. He gave them a kind of rest-physical rest from their bondage in Egypt and from their wandering in the wilderness.
 - (2) The ultimate rest could not have been given by Joshua. If it could have been provided by Joshua, there would have been no need for talking about another day of rest-the rest of the soul which only Jesus Christ can provide.
 - (3) The Psalmist had in mind another day-the final rest for the righteous.
- (B) The Psalmist was a prophet. He was prophesying of the final and ultimate rest for God's people. He may not have fully understood the heavenly rest which God has prepared for His people, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit He was able to predict such a day.

- i. "There remains therefore a rest to the people of God" (4:9).
- (A) What a tremendous comfort and inspiration this promise from God ought to be to all of God's children.
 - (B) Many of the Israelites enjoyed the rest God had provided for them; many of them did not. The reason some were not permitted to enter the promised land was their unbelief.
 - (C) The Hebrew writer wants us to understand the promise of a heavenly rest, but he also wants to know that the promise of that rest is conditional.
 - (D) The Jews did not enter the promised rest because of their unbelief. The same can happen to men and women in every age.
 - (E) The Greek in this verse for rest is **sabbatismos**, a sabbath rest. This word is found no where else in biblical Greek. Keeping of the Jewish sabbath was not in the mind of the Hebrew writer.
- j. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (4:10).
- (A) The rest of which the Hebrew writer speaks is not the sabbath of the old covenant. The sabbath law had been abolished (Col. 2:14-17).
 - (B) The rest was the rest which God had provided for His faithful children.
 - (C) The eternal rest will mean that men have ceased from their works as God has ceased from His. A.B. Bruce: "God's own rest for God's own true people, an ideal rest for an ideal community" (Lightfoot, p. 97).
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2. The word of God (4:11-13).
- (a) "Let us therefore labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (4:11).
- (A) Please notice the exhortation: "Let us therefore labor."
- (B) "Labor" from **spoudasomen** (**spoudazo**), to hasten, to give diligence (ARV). This verse resembles verse 1: "Let us therefore, fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."
- (C) Entering the rest does not come automatically for God's children. We have to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10).
- (D) Falling short of the rest is real-not just a theoretical-possibility (2 Pet. 1:8-11).
- (1) "Fall short" is from **pipto**, to fall -not from **hustereo**, the common word for falling short.
- (2) The word is translated "fails" (1 Cor. 13:8: "Love never fails").
- (E) "Example" from **hupodeigma**, literally to show under, to copy. The same word is used in John 13:15 and James 5:10.
- (F) Just as the Israelites fell short of entering the rest God had prepared for them, Christians of our day can also fall short. Otherwise, why does the Hebrew writer make these statements?
- b. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul

and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (4:12).

(A) Who or what is "the word of God" the Hebrew writer is discussing? Is it the Bible or is it Christ?

(1) Obviously, the Bible is often called the word of God. Both Old Testament writers and New Testament writers use that kind of language.

(2) But Jesus Christ is also called "the word" (**logos**) (John 1:1-3).

(3) Some of ancient writers identified "the word of God" in this passage as Jesus, but there is no good reason for doing so. The context does not speak of Christ. The language, "sharper than any two-edged sword," would not be applicable to Christ.

(B) "Quick" (**zon**) means living and is so translated in most versions.

(1) Paul uses a form of the same word in his charge to Timothy. "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick (**zontas**) and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:1).

(2) The same word is used in reference to God—"living God" (**theou zontos**) (Heb. 3:12).

(C) "Powerful" from **energes**, active. Our word "energetic" comes from this Greek word.

- (1) "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working (**energeian**) whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:21).
- (2) "Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working (**energeian**) which works (**energoumenen**) in me mightily" (Col. 1:29).
- (D) "Two-edged" from **distomon** (**di**, two, **stoma**, mouthed) sword (**maichairan**). The word cuts in every direction.
- (E) "Piercing" from **diknoumenos**, a verb meaning to go through, to penetrate.
- (F) "Dividing asunder" from **merizo**, **meros**, part, to partition.
- (1) The word of God has the power to penetrate our very hearts.
- (2) Nothing in human behavior can be hidden from the word of God.
- (G) "A discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- (1) "Discerner" from **kritikos**, **krino**, to judge or to discern.
- (2) "Thoughts" from **enthumeseon** (**thumos**) and **ennoion** "intents" of the heart.
- c. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (4:13).
- (A) Men may fancy they are getting by with evil thoughts and deeds. "Neither is there any creature (**ktisis**) that is not manifest in his sight."

- (1) "Manifest" from **phaino**, to shine. Everything is out in the open for the eyes of God.
- (2) He knows what we think, where we go and what we do. We used to sing, "There's an all-seeing eye watching you."
- (B) "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - (1) "Naked" from **gumna** and indicates God's ability to see all. Nothing is hidden from Him.
 - (2) "Opened" ("laid open") from **trachelon**, a verb meaning to bend the neck.
- (C) The language of the Hebrew writer should make us aware of God's concern for us and of His constant watchfulness.
- 3. The Christian's compassionate high priest (4:14-16).
 - a. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (4:14).
 - (A) "Seeing then that we have a great high priest."
 - (1) The Hebrew writer returns to the main theme of the Hebrew letter—the high priesthood of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) There were many good priests under the old law, but we have the greatest high priest known to man. Jesus is superior to the high priests of the law of Moses.
 - (B) "That is passed into the heavens."

- (1) Our high priest is not an earthly priest like the Levitical priests.
 - (2) He "is passed into the heavens." Literally, "passed through the heavens." Christ is seated at the very throne of God where He is performing His functions as our high priest (Heb. 1:3).
- (C) "Jesus the Son of God."
- (1) The Hebrew writer wants us to understand who our high priest is: "The Son of God."
 - (2) Christ is presented in Hebrews as priest, prophet and king.
- (D) "Let us hold fast our profession."
- (1) The book of Hebrews is filled with exhortations.
 - (a) "Let us fear" (4:1).
 - (b) "Let us...strive to enter that rest" (4:11).
 - (c) "Let us hold fast our profession" (4:14).
 - (d) "Let us...draw near" (4:16).
 - (2) "Hold fast" from **krateo**, to cling tenaciously to. **Kratos** means power.
 - (3) "Profession" from **homologias**, confession. Let us keep on holding fast our profession.
 - (4) There is constant emphasis on the need for Christians to be faithful.
- b. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4:15).
- (A) Christ is not so far removed from our human condition that He does not know

what we feel, think and imagine.

- (B) "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."
- (1) Christ's becoming incarnate, that is, taking on flesh and blood makes us know that God is concerned for our weaknesses, hurts, and disappointments.
 - (2) This passage answers the question we often sing about, "Does Jesus care?"
 - (3) "Cannot" from **dunamenon**, have power. Christ has power-He is able-to understand what we have to endure.
 - (4) "Feeling" from **sunpathesai**, literally to feel with. He is able to sympathize with us.
 - (5) "Infirmities" from **astheneiais**, sicknesses, weaknesses. The Greek means lack of strength (**a**, no, **sthenos**, strength). The word need not mean physical illnesses or infirmities.
- (C) "But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
- (1) The ways Satan can tempt man are spelled out in 1 John 2:15: the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.
 - (2) Our Lord was tempted in all these ways (Matt. 4:1-11). Yet He did not sin. Temptation is not wrong; in fact, it cannot be avoided. Yielding to the temptation is wrong (Jas. 1:13-16).

- (3) A number of scriptural passages teach the sinlessness of Christ.
- (a) We are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19).
 - (b) Christ "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22).
- c. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (4:16).
- (A) "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace."
- (1) Another of the many exhortations found in Hebrews: "Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace."
 - (2) "Boldly" from **parresias**, courageously, confidently.
 - (3) Because of Christ's becoming a man and being compassionate with us, we are to come with confidence before the throne of God.
 - (4) "Boldly" does not suggest arrogance or pride, but confidence.
 - (5) "The throne of grace" refers to God's throne where grace is the means of dealing with sinful men.
- (B) "That we may obtain mercy."
- (1) "Obtain" from **lambano**, to receive.
 - (2) God stands ready and willing to bestow His mercy on all who will receive it.
- d. "And find grace to help in time of need."
- (A) We all know-or ought to know-that life

without the grace of God would simply not be possible.

- (B) We need grace to be saved (Eph. 2:8-10), but we also need His grace to go on living.

Chapter Four Questions:

1. The Jews under the old covenant heard the word of God. But the word was not mixed with faith in them who heard it. Does that fact have a bearing on the doctrine of salvation by the grace alone through faith alone? Explain.
2. The Jews did not enter the rest in Canaan God had prepared for them. There remains a rest for the people of God—Christians. Will they enter the rest regardless of their attitudes and actions?
3. Christians must strive to enter the rest God has prepared for His children. Could we miss the rest if fall into unbelief?
4. The author of Hebrews describes the word as being “quick” and “powerful.” Explain those terms.
5. Abraham Lincoln said you can fool all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time. The book of Hebrews teaches that we cannot fool God any of the time. Discuss.
6. The new covenant has the best high priest ever known. Does that have any bearing on our service to God? Explain.
7. Our high priest knows our feelings and temptations. But he differs from other high priests and all other human beings in one major area: He lived without sin. Discuss Christ’s perfect life.
8. Because he knows by experience what we have to endure, we can come before the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy. Explain man’s need for grace.

The Book Of Hebrews

E. Hebrews 5

1. Qualifications of the high priest (5:1-4).
 - a. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins" (5:1).
 - (A) The high priest (and all other priests) had to have certain qualifications before they could occupy that high office.
 - (B) Men were not chosen simply because they belonged to the tribe of Levi. The office was one of great honor and of grave responsibilities.
 - (C) The first qualification was to be "taken from among men." An angel would not have qualified for this office.
 - (D) "Ordained" from **kathistatai**, appointed.
 - (E) He was appointed to the office "for men," that is, to relate to the things pertaining to God. The high priest was ordained of God, but he fulfilled his office to benefit man.
 - (F) "That he may offer (**prosphero**) both gifts and sacrifice for sins."
 - (1) The tense of the verb—present active subjunctive—suggests that "he may keep on offering." As the law provided for sacrifices, the high priest was to obey the law's requirement.
 - (2) The writer is probably talking about the Day of Atonement when both

vegetable and animal sacrifices were offered (Lightfoot, p. 106).

- b. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (5:2). This is the second qualification.

(A) "Who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way."

(1) "Have compassion" from **metriopathein dunamenos**, literally to bear gently.

(a) Vine defines the word **metriopathein** to mean to treat with mildness or moderation, to bear gently. This is not the common Greek word for compassion.

(b) **Dunamenos** means is able, or can. It is the word commonly translated "power."

(2) "Ignorant" from **agnoousin**, not to know.

(3) "Out of the way" from **planomenois**, erring. Our word "planet" comes from this Greek word (**planao**).

(4) If men will turn to God, Christ will bear them gently regardless of the sins they have previously committed.

(B) "For that he himself also is compassed with infirmity."

(1) The high priest under the Mosaic covenant was a man with all the weaknesses which are common to man.

- (2) He was not some kind of super-spiritual man—just an ordinary man called to an extraordinary task.
 - (3) “Compassed” from **perikeimai**, literally lying around him like a chain.
 - (4) “Weakness” or “infirmity” from **asthenian**, sinful weakness.
- c. “And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins” (5:3).
- (A) Since the high priest was a man “compassed with infirmity,” he needed sacrifices for his sins just as other people did.
 - (B) Even though the priests were chosen of God and performed an enormously profitable service, they were still just men.
 - (C) Some of the priests were very sinful and rebellious, but many of them were good men. They performed their services to the best of their ability.
- d. “And no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (5:4).
- (A) The high priests did not decide to run for office and then work toward that goal.
 - (B) The priesthood belonged to God; only those whom He selected could occupy that office.
 - (1) There were men who attempted to usurp the office of the priest and had to pay with their lives for their sinfulness.

- (2) Prophets and kings were also chosen of God. They did not appoint themselves.
 - (C) God Himself called Aaron to be the first high priest.
 - (D) The high priests who followed him were to come from his family. But not every son in the high priest's family became high priest; only those chosen of God. This was the third qualification.
2. Jesus Christ met all the qualifications of a high priest (5:5-10).
- a. "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee" (5:5).
 - (A) The duty of the priest and of everyone else is not to glorify himself, but to glorify God.
 - (B) Aaron did not decide to become the high priest; he was selected of God. He did not take the honor on himself (v. 4).
 - (C) Even though Jesus Christ is one of the persons in the Godhead, He accepted the role of high priest because of the will of the Father. Jesus always manifested such an attitude.
 - (1) "Jesus says unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).
 - (2) "And he that sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29).
 - (3) "I must work the works of him that sent, while it is day: the night comes when no man can work" (John 9:4).

- (D) God said to Jesus, "Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee." Christ often taught that He did not come on His own; the Father sent Him to accomplish His mission.
- (1) "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me" (John 5:30).
 - (2) "I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5:43).
 - (3) "Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honors me; of whom you say, that he is your God" (John 8:54).
- b. "As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec" (5:6).
- (A) "He," that is, God, says. We cannot overlook the importance of expressions like this. The scriptures come from God—not just from Moses or David.
 - (B) The place where God spoke of the Messiah as a priest after the order of Melchizedec is Psalm 110:4: "The Lord has sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec."
 - (C) The priesthood of Christ was not to cease—like the priesthood of the law of Moses. It was to last forever.
 - (D) Melchizedek is a rather shadowy figure. The Bible does not say much about him.

He is mentioned two times outside the book of Hebrews.

(1) Psalm 110:4.

(2) Genesis 14:18: "And Melchizedek king of Salem (or Jerusalem) brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him (Abraham), and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which has delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes of all."

(3) The book of Hebrews mentions him eight times: 5:6; 5:10; 6:20; 7:1; 7:10; 7:11; 7:15; 7:17; and 7:21. We shall discuss these references as we come to them. One fact concerning Christ and Melchizedek needs remembering: Neither Christ nor Melchizedek came from a priestly family.

c. "Who in the days of his flesh when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared" (5:7).

(A) "Who in the days of his flesh."

(1) One of the requirements of a high priest was his need for understanding men—having sympathy for others in their human condition. "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (5:2).

- (2) "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (4:15b).
- (3) The Hebrew writer makes it very plain that Jesus was not only the Son of God—a heavenly being—but He was also a man of flesh and blood.
- (a) He may have been countering men who leaned in the direction of Gnosticism. Some of the Gnostics denied that Christ had come in the flesh.
- (b) "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 7).
- (B) "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears."
- (1) "Offered up" from **prosphero**—the technical term for offering a sacrifice to God. This verb is used often in the book of Hebrews (5:1, 3, 7; 8:3, 4, 7, 9, 14, 25, etc.).
- (2) The Hebrew writer is referring to our Lord's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:44ff).
- (3) "Prayers" from **deeseis** (generally translated "supplications") and "supplications" from **hiketerias** (entreaties). It is not easy to make any great distinction between these two forms of prayer.
- (4) "Strong crying" from **krauges ischuras**, somewhat like a groan. This was genuine anguish of his soul.
- (5) "Tears" from **dakruon**.

- (C) "Unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."
- (1) Our Lord cried out for deliverance from death. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matt. 26:39).
 - (2) "Able" from **dunamenon** (power). God had the power to deliver Christ from death, but it was God's will that Christ die for our sins.
 - (3) The prayers of Christ were heard "in that he feared."
 - (a) Christ prayed for deliverance "if it be thy will."
 - (b) "Feared" from **eulebais**, literally "taking hold well." The word involves acting with godly fear and respect.
- d. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (5:8).
- (A) "Though he were a Son."
- (1) Even though Jesus Christ was the Son of God—God manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), He totally and freely submitted to the will of God.
 - (2) Throughout the book of Hebrews, there is continual emphasis on the Sonship of Jesus Christ. "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee" (1:5; 5:6).
- (B) "Yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."
- (1) Jesus Christ knew obedience before He even came to earth. He constantly lived in harmony with the will of the Father.

- (2) But in His human life, He learned obedience by His suffering. "He always did his Father's will" (John 8:29), but He grew in experience as in wisdom and stature and in power of sympathy with us" (A.T. Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 5, p. 370).
- (3) Christ's sufferings are too numerous for us to mention. But the good part of His sufferings was that He suffered for us and by His stripes we are healed (1 Pet. 2:21-24; Cf. Isa. 53:4-5).
- e. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (5:9).
- (A) "And being made perfect."
- (1) The tense of the Greek verb **teleiotheis** is first aorist passive participle (**teleioo**).
- (a) The Greek does not mean perfection, sinlessness, but completion. Jesus was sinless, but that is not the meaning of the verb in this context.
- (b) Through suffering, Jesus became the perfect mediator between God and man. He knew God's side and learned our side by living among men and suffering in the ways which men suffer.
- (2) "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their

salvation perfect (**teleiosai**) through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10).

(B) "He became the author of eternal salvation."

(1) "Author" from **aitios**, that which causes something. Jesus is the active and concrete cause of our salvation. Another word, **archegon**, is translated "captain of their salvation" (Heb. 2:10), but is also translated "author" in some versions (NASB), "pioneer" (RSV).

(2) When the Hebrew writer uses the expression "eternal salvation," you know he is not talking about salvation from oppression (as in liberation theology) or from capitalism (as in Marxism). Peter wrote: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:9).

(C) "Unto all them that obey him."

(1) Jesus Christ came into the world to save all men. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth...who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:4, 6).

(2) But not all are going to be saved because they will not obey Him. Rubel Shelly says, "It is a scandalous and outrageous lie to teach that salvation arises from human activity. We do not contribute one whit to our salvation" (Curtis Cates, **The Second Incarnation**, Memphis: Cates Publications, 1992, p. 13).

- (a) If men do not contribute one whit to their salvation, why is there constant emphasis on repentance, baptism and faithful service in the Lord's kingdom?
 - f. "Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (5:10).
 - (A) "Called from **prosagoreutheis**, a verb meaning to salute, to address. It is used only here in the New Testament. It refers to God's designating Jesus a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
 - (B) More to say about this priest as we continue our studies of Hebrews.
- 3. The immaturity of the Hebrew Christians (5:11-14).
 - a. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing you are dull of hearing" (5:11).
 - (A) "Of whom" refers to Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God. Maybe he was speaking of Jesus.
 - (B) We do not know all the Hebrew writer wanted to say, but some of it may be discussed later in this book, especially in chapter seven.
 - (C) "Hard to be uttered."
 - (1) **Dusermeneutos, dos, hermeneuo**, "hard of interpretation." **Dus** comes into our language in words like dysfunctional, dyspeptic. A prefix like un- and mis-.
 - (2) The difficulty of teaching about Christ's being a priest like Melchizedek had nothing to do with the writer's inability to teach the truth. The people could not

receive the full truth because of their dullness of hearing. Christ's immediate disciples often had trouble understanding what He was teaching.

- (D) "Seeing you are dull of hearing."
(1) They were slow or sluggish in mind—not intellectually incapable of understanding.
(2) They may have been able to understand the words of the Hebrew writer, but they could not or would not make an application of his teaching.
- b. "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (5:12).
(A) We have no way of knowing how long these Christians had been in the church, but long enough they should have known more than they did.
(B) "For when for the time you ought to be teachers."
(1) How long should it be from one's obedience to the gospel until he is able to teach—not necessarily teach publicly?
(2) What keeps men and women from teaching?
(a) Indifference.
(b) Ignorance.
(c) Inadequate preparation.
(3) If you are a new Christian, you should be able to teach what you know about becoming a Christian.

You might not be qualified to teach a group of Bible scholars, but you can teach something about the gospel.

- (4) Should all of us not want to teach—to bring souls into the kingdom of heaven?
- (C) “You have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.”
- (1) “Have need” from **opheilontes** means duty, obligation. The same word is translated “due benevolence” (1 Cor. 7:3). The KJV most commonly translates the word “ought.”
 - (2) These Christians had been taught about Christ, but apparently they had made little or no progress in their growth. They needed to be taught again. It is almost as if they had never been taught before.
 - (3) “First principles” from **stoicheia** and literally means fundamental elements, ABC’s. “Primarily signifies any first things from which others in a series, or a composite whole, take their rise....It was used of letters of the alphabet, as elements of speech” (Vine, volume 2, p. 22-23). Examples of its use:
 - (a) “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world” (Gal. 4:3). Paul refers to the basic elements which make the world what it is.
 - (b) “But now, after that you have

known God, or rather are known of God, how turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereupon you desire again to be in bondage" (Gal. 4:9)?

- (c) "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).
 - (d) "Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances" (Col. 2:20)?
 - (e) "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burned up.... Looking for and hasting upon the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. 3:10, 12).
- (4) "Oracles of God."
- (a) The Greek word for "oracles" is **logion**, from **logos**, word.
 - (b) Examples of the use of the word "oracles" in the New Testament:
 - (1) "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him

in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively (living) oracles to give unto us" (Acts 7:38).

- (2) "Much in every way: chiefly, because that unto us were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2).
- (3) "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet. 4:11).
- (5) "And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."
 - (a) In their years of being members of the body of Christ, they had not grown to where they could receive the more difficult truths of the gospel.
 - (b) The word "milk" (*galaktos*) is not always used in a derogatory sense. Peter instructed the early Christians: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).
 - (1) It is perfectly natural for babies to want milk. Their systems are immature and can handle milk only for a while.

- (2) But when one grows into maturity, he must have more substantial food.
- (3) "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes (**nepiois**: infants) in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able. For you are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife and divisions, are you not yet carnal, and walk as men" (1 Cor. 3:1-3)?
- (c) "Strong meat" from **stereas trophes** and means "solid food." Babies are simply not able to eat solid food. Their systems are not able to receive it and to digest it.
- c. "For everyone that uses milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (5:13).
- (A) Babies can handle milk well, but they are not mature enough to handle solid food.
- (B) In like manner, those who need spiritual milk are not mature enough to use the "word of righteousness" to full advantage.
- (C) "Unskilful" comes from **apeiros**, without experience.
- (D) The use of God's word must come from years of study, growth and practice. No one becomes skilled in using a sword the

- first time he uses it.
- (E) God's way of making men righteous is through their use of His word.
 - (F) "Babe" from **nepios**, infant.
- d. "But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (5:14).
- (A) "Strong meat" (**sterea trophe**) is the same expression we examined in verse 12. Modern versions generally render the expression "solid food."
 - (B) "Full age" from **teleion**, mature, "full grown men," "adults."
 - (1) This noun and its verb form (**teleioo**) is almost always translated "perfect" or "perfection."
 - (2) The word never means sinlessness, without flaw. It has to do with achieving the goal (**telos**) or design of life. More on this in Hebrews 6:1.
 - (C) If one is going to strengthen one's body, he must use his body.
 - (D) "Senses" from **aistheteria**, faculties, "their organs of perception." Sometimes we use the expression, "a trained eye," by which we mean the ability to see what others might miss.
 - (E) "Exercised" from **gumnazo**, literally to exercise naked (**gumnos**).
 - (1) "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself rather unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7).
 - (2) "Having their eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous

practices; cursed children" (2 Pet. 2:14).

- (3) "For bodily exercise (**gymnasia**) profits little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8).
- (F) "Discern" from **diakrisin**, to make a judgment, to decide between.
- (1) Why are some people unable to decide whether abortion or gambling or alcohol is wrong? They have not exercised their senses to discern between good and evil.
 - (2) Discerning between good and evil is not an easy activity. Even those who are mature often have to struggle with the rightness or wrongness of certain situations.
 - (3) No one is ever able to make a correct decision about right and wrong on every occasion. But we are supposed to grow in that direction.
 - (4) We must learn to think like Christ (Phil. 2:5).
 - (5) We must seek heaven and think heaven (Col. 3:1-4).
 - (6) We must pray for wisdom and discernment (Jas. 1:5).
- (G) "Good and evil" are objective ideas—not merely the wishes of human beings. Some activities are always right or wrong; others are right or wrong—depending on the situation. Christians must constantly work at learning the difference and sticking by their knowledge and convictions.

SUPPLEMENT TO HEBREWS 5

- A. Bailey Smith, **Real Evangelism**, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1978.
1. "One man said he was really concerned about modern education." He said, "Could you believe my college freshman came home and asked who Macbeth was. That's terrible. All he had to do was look it up in the Bible" (p. 56).
 2. Dr. Bailey further emphasizes that knowledge alone is not enough. "Most of these people already know enough to win five worlds to Jesus, but they would prefer to boast of their much learning" (p. 59).
- B. George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli, **The People's Religion: American Faith in the 90's**, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989.
1. "Americans revere the Bible—but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates" (p. 60).
 2. Only one-third of Americans read it at least one or more times a week—15 percent read it daily and only another 18 percent read it one or more times a week (p. 60). 38% of Americans claim to be Christians, but "only four of ten know that Jesus, according to the Bible, delivered the Sermon on the Mount....Fewer than half of all adults can name Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as the four Gospels of the New Testament" (p. 60). "Today's teenagers know even less about the Bible than do adults" (p. 60).
- C. John F. MacArthur, **Reckless Faith: When the Church Loses Its Will to Discern**, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994.
1. Dr. MacArthur says that "Christianity today may be shallower than at any time in history" (p. 62). I think he has temporarily forgotten "the

dark ages.”

2. “A survey released by the Barna Research Group in February of 1994 revealed that half of all people who described themselves as ‘born-again’ Christians had no clue what John 3:16 refers to. Large percentages of professing Christians were at a loss to explain such terms as ‘The Great Commission,’ or ‘The Gospel.’ Many defined ‘Gospel’ simply as ‘a style of music’” (p. 62).
- D. George Barna, **What Americans Believe**, Ventura, CA: Regals Books, 1991.
1. “About four out of every ten adults strongly concurred that when Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and others pray to their god, all of those individuals are actually praying to the same god, but simply use different names.... Larger proportions of born again Christians and people who attend evangelical churches concur with this sentiment than reject it” (p. 175).
 2. “The idea that God helps those who themselves are taken directly from the Bible.” Evangelicals: 62% either agree strongly or agree somewhat, Mainline churches: 59% either agree strongly or agree somewhat (p. 219).
- E. How much better would members of the churches of Christ do on some of these questions than our denominational friends? How much do we know about God's word? Who is responsible for our not knowing more?

Chapter Five Questions:

1. What were the qualifications of a high priest under the law of Moses?
2. Were any of the high priests under the old covenant perfect men? How do you know?
3. Did the high priests just decide one day to seek that office? Why or why not?
4. Did Jesus Christ meet all the qualifications of a high priest? Explain.
5. Christ is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek? Who was he?
6. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Why did he have to suffer to learn obedience?
7. Christ is not the author of eternal salvation to all men, but only to whom?
8. Why did some of the Hebrew Christians have difficulty understanding what was said about Christ's being a priest after the order of Melchizedek?
9. Discuss the immaturity of some of the Hebrew Christians.
10. What does the term, "first principles," mean?
11. How does one cease being a baby in Christ and become a mature Christian?

Chapter 6

The Book Of Hebrews

F. Hebrews 6

(1) Growing up in Christ (6:1-3).

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

(A) "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ."

(1) "Therefore" draws a conclusion from the preceding verses. The Hebrew Christians needed milk and not solid food. They had failed to exercise their faculties to discern both good and evil. They were still babies in Christ. They needed to learn the great truths of the gospel and put them into practice.

(2) "Leaving" from **aphentes (aphiemi)**, to leave off or behind. "Let us cease to speak."

(a) Does this expression mean we should forget about the principles of the doctrine of Christ?

(b) The expression means we should build upon them, but not forget about them.

(c) You never forget your ABC's, but you must go beyond them. You never become an educated person simply by knowing your ABC's. You have to add to these.

- (d) The Greek verb is the same one translated "remission" or "forgiveness."
- (3) "Principles" from **arches**, beginning, rule, also translated "principalities" (Eph. 3:10). It refers to the elementary facts concerning Christ.
- (4) "Doctrine" is generally translated from **didaskalia**, but it is a translation of **logos** (word, treatise).
- (a) The Hebrew writer does not encourage men and women to cease believing and teaching the first principles of the gospel. How could men be brought to Christ if we were to do that?
- (b) But nobody ever becomes a mature Christian by continually going back to the first principles. We must go on to learn and to put in practice the deeper truths of the gospel—the solid food.
- (B) "Let us go on unto perfection."
- (1) "Go on" from **pherometha**, to be borne on. The verb is used of a ship's being borne by the wind and of the writers of the New Testament being borne in the messages they were delivering (2 Pet. 1:21).
- (2) "Let us press on" (NASB). However, the verb is passive—not active.
- (3) "Perfection" from **teleionteta**, maturity. "Of full age" (Heb. 5:14).
- (C) "Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works."
- (1) The Hebrew writer is talking about

individual growth—not what we teach to others about obeying the gospel. No one can ever become a Christian without learning and obeying the first principles, but no one can ever become a mature Christian without going beyond the first principles.

- (2) "Foundation" from **themelion**, the foundation of a building.
 - (3) "Laying" from **kataballo**, to throw. The foundation is of vital importance, but we must go beyond the foundation.
 - (4) One of the foundation principles of New Testament Christianity is "repentance from dead works."
 - (a) "Repentance" from **metanoias**, a change of mind.
 - (b) The "dead works" probably means the works one performed while he was still an alien sinner.
- (D) "And faith toward God."
- (1) Who can question the significance of faith in the Christian system?
 - (a) "For we walk in faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).
 - (b) Hebrews 11:6.
 - (c) Romans 10:9-10.
 - (2) That faith is a vital part of the foundation can be seen from its use throughout the New Testament (2 Pet. 1:5-7—"Add to your faith...").
- b. "Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (6:2).
- (A) "Doctrine of baptisms" from **baptismon didaches**. "Baptisms" is plural and

probably refers to the various kinds of baptism mentioned in the Bible: The baptism of John, the baptism in the cloud and in the sea, the baptism of Christ, the baptism of fire, etc. The major emphasis is on John's baptism and the baptism of the new covenant.

- (1) This expression shows that baptism is one of the first principles of the oracles of God.
- (2) But once one has been baptized, he must grow beyond his initial obedience.

(B) "Of laying on of hands."

- (1) This practical originally involved imparting some supernatural gifts.
- (2) In Samaria, the apostles laid their hands on the new converts and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17). Simon the sorcerer saw that the apostles could impart the Spirit by the laying on of their hands. He wanted to buy the power to do the same (Acts 8:18-19).
- (3) Is the practice wrong in our day? We cannot impart the Holy Spirit to others, but it might be a sign of our wanting to bless them and stand by them.

(C) "The resurrection of the dead."

- (1) One of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith is our resurrection in the final day.
- (2) If we are not going to be raised, nothing else really matters. The whole Christian system is false and

we are of all men most miserable
(1 Cor. 15:19).

(D) "Of eternal judgment."

- (1) Modernistic theologians deny that there will be a final judgment, but no Bible writer ever teaches such.
- (2) There is much we do not know about the final judgment, but we know it is going to occur. Jesus explicitly teaches a final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). Paul does also (2 Cor. 5:10).
- (3) If there is not going to be a final judgment, when will the wrongs be righted? When will the righteous be exonerated? If there will be no final judgment, our world is purposeless, hopeless and meaningless.

(E) "And this will do, if God permit" (6:3).

- (1) The Hebrew writer intends to keep progression in the Christian life. He encourages his fellow Christians to do the same.
 - (2) "If God permit" is the writer's way of taking God into his planning, which some of the early Christians failed to do (Jas. 4:13-16).
- (2) Warning against falling away (6:4-8).
- a. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit" (6:4).
 - (A) "Impossible" from **adunaton** (a, negative, **dunamis**, power), to lack power. The same word is used in Hebrews 6:18; 10:4; 11:6.
 - (B) "Those who were once enlightened."

- (1) Literally, once for all enlightened.
 - (2) Those people have to be members of the body of Christ. Those outside of Christ have never been enlightened.
 - (3) The Hebrew writer is not just raising a hypothetical issue. Those who were once enlightened were in real danger of turning back from following Christ.
- (C) "Have tasted of the heavenly gift."
- (1) The word "taste" in this context could be translated "experience."
 - (2) It could not possibly apply to non-Christians.
 - (3) The heavenly gift is salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - (4) The word "taste" is used several times in the sense of experience.
 - (a) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).
 - (b) "If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (1 Pet. 2:3).
 - (c) "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him" (Psa. 34:8).
- (D) "And made partakers of the Holy Spirit."
- (1) "Partakers" from *metachous*, stressing the fact of sharing. In common with all Christians, we are sharers of the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) This verse does not teach some mystical, mysterious infilling or guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy

Spirit guides us as we walk
according to God's word.

- b. "And have tasted the good word of God,
and the powers of the world to come" (6:5).
 - (A) "Tasting" the good word of God means
much more than simply reading the
word. It involves studying, under-
standing, and obeying.
 - (1) James writes about our investigating
God's word: "But whose looks into
the perfect law of liberty, and
continues therein, he being not a
forgetful hearer, but a doer of the
work, this man shall be blessed in
his deed"
 - (2) If the person under consideration has
not fully obeyed the word, he could
not fall away. He was already fallen
away.
 - (B) "Have tasted...the powers of the world
to come."
 - (1) There is a sense in which we already
enjoy the blessings of the world to
come.
 - (2) "World" from *aionos*, age to come.
 - (C) All of these expressions describe actual
spiritual experiences. They could not
apply to anyone who has not obeyed the
gospel.
- c. "If they shall fall away, to renew them again
unto repentance; seeing they crucify to them-
selves the Son of God afresh, and put him
to open shame" (6:6).
 - (A) "If they shall fall away."
 - (1) The sense seems to be conditional-
if they fall away.

- (2) It could be translated "and then fell away" (American Revised Version, English Revised Version).
- (3) It probably does not really matter which translation is correct. It teaches the possibility of apostatizing.
- (4) "Fall away" from **parapipto** (**parapesontas**), **para** away, **pipto**, to fall.
- (a) A similar form appears in Galatians 5:4: **exepesate**, to fall out of grace.
- (b) These verbs present the real possibility of losing one's soul.
- (c) F.F. Bruce argues that the Bible writers "are not given to the setting up of men of straw....The warning of this passage was a real warning against real danger, a danger which is still present so long as 'an evil heart of unbelief' can result in 'falling away from the living God' (Heb. 3:12) (p. 123).
- (B) "To renew them again unto repentance."
- (1) "Renew" from **anankainizein**, **ana**, again, **kainos**, new.
- (a) This is the only use of this word in the New Testament.
- (b) A similar word, **anankainoo**, is used elsewhere in the New Testament.
- (a) "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16).

- (b) "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10).
- (2) "Repentance" from **metanoian**, to change the mind.
- (a) Dr. A.T. Robertson: The words used in this verse deny "the possibility of renewal for apostates from Christ....It is a terrible picture and cannot be toned down" (volume 5, p. 375).
- (b) Is the Hebrew writer teaching that Christians who slip and fall cannot be brought back to Christ?
- (1) "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).
- (2) "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converts the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20).
- (3) What about the apostle Peter's transgression of God's law?
- (C) "Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame."

- (1) It seems to me this part of the verse sheds some light on the impossibility of restoring a brother who has become an apostate.
 - (2) The condition of the apostates has become so greivous that they cannot repent and be forgiven "seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh."
 - (a) Can a human being reach such depths of sin that returning to God becomes impossible?
 - (b) Going so far as to crucify the Son of God afresh seems to be the meaning of this expression.
 - (3) "Crucify...afresh" (**anastraurountas**) literally means to crucify again.
 - (4) "Put him to open shame."
 - (a) The verb is **paradeigmatizo**, meaning to hold up as an example and in a bad sense to expose to disgrace (Robertson, volume 5, p. 376).
 - (b) Apostates go so far from Christ that they are not able to come back. It is not that God will not accept them; they simply have become so hardened to sin they cannot repent and be forgiven.
- d. "For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it, and brings forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God" (6:7).
- (A) "For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes oft upon it."
- (1) The world of nature furnishes an

- example of the truth the Hebrew writer is teaching
- (2) God has ordained certain natural phenomena to occur to keep life going.
- (B) "And bring forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receives blessing from God."
- (1) "Herbs" from **botanen**, our word "botany."
 - (2) "Meet" from **eutheton**, well-placed, fit.
 - (3) "Dressed" from **georgeitai**, tilled. The word literally means a tiller of the soil, a farmer. The word "husbandry" is **georgos**, a farmer, a worker of the soil (1 Cor. 3:9).
 - (4) The farmer tills his soil and then God sends rain to make the crop grow. Such rain and sunshine are blessings from God.
- e. "But that which bears thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing: whose end is to be burned" (6:8).
- (A) This verse echoes some of the ideas presented in the book of Genesis. "And unto Adam he said, Because you have hearkened unto the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you; and you shall eat the herb of the field" (Gen. 3:17-18).
- (B) The correct translation of the verse is as follows: "But if it yield thorns and

thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned" (NASB, RSV).

- (C) "Bears" from **ekpherousa** (**ekphero**) and is a conditional participle—if it keeps on bearing thorns and briars.
 - (D) "Thorns and thistles" (**akanthas kai tribolous**).
 - (E) The field which keeps on bearing thorns and thistles is "rejected" (**adokimos**: tried or tested and rejected). The word is sometimes translated "reprobate."
 - (F) The field would be near cursing.
 - (G) The end of such a field is to be burned, one means of removing thorns and thistles.
- (3) The Hebrew writer encourages Christians (6:9-12).
- a. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak" (6:9).
 - (A) "But, beloved, we are persuade better things of you."
 - (1) Even though there was the danger of the Hebrew Christians could become barren and unfruitful, the writer was persuaded better things of them.
 - (2) "Persuaded" from **peitho**. The Hebrew writer had confidence in these Christians which probably bolstered their courage in the face of persecution.
 - (3) "Better things" than the writer had discussed in verses 4-8. But he did want them to know that the dangers of falling were real.

- (B) "And things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."
- (1) "Accompany" from **echomena**, to hold on to, or belong to.
 - (2) He does not mention the "things which accompany salvation" but he talks in the next verse about our work and labor of love.
 - (3) He was obligated to speak as he had. Their souls could have been in jeopardy.
- b. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward his name, in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister" (6:10).
- (A) "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love."
- (1) Since God is the source of all righteousness, how could He ever be unrighteous?
 - (2) Righteousness is defined as keeping the commandments of God. "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psa. 119:172).
 - (3) God does not forget our faithfulness. How often we forget-not only what men have done for us but also what God has done for us?
 - (4) "Work" (**ergos**), the most common word for "work." The word can be used negatively or positively-for good works or bad works.
 - (5) "Labor of love" from **agapes** which means works which have grown out

of love. The word for "labor" (**kopos**) does not appear in all manuscripts. Some versions translate the verse: "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work the love which you have shown toward His name" (NASB).

- (B) "Which you have shown toward his name."
- (1) The Hebrew writer's confidence toward Christians to whom he was writing was demonstrated in their works and love.
 - (2) They had shown (**enedeixasthai**: demonstrated) toward the name of Christ.
- (C) "In that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
- (1) "Ministered" from **diakonesantes**, to serve. It is the same word which is translated "deacon."
 - (2) These early Christians were faithful to God's wishes and had brought honor to His name because they had ministered to the saints.
 - (a) The word "saints" (**hagiois**) refers to those who are set apart, consecrated to God's service.
 - (b) In the New Testament the term means Christians. Every saint in New Testament times and today is a Christian.
 - (3) Not only had the Hebrew Christians been ministering in the past; they were ministering at the time of the book. Our work in the past will not suffice for today's needs.
-

- c. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (6:11).
- (A) "We desire" from **epithumoumen**. It is the same word translated "lust." Its translation depends on the context.
 - (B) "Everyone of you" would indicate the necessity of every member being busy in the Lord's work. The work of the church is not just for "professionals," but for everyone. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12. "That which every joint supplies" (Eph. 4:16).
 - (C) He wanted them to show (demonstrate) the same "diligence." "Diligence" (**spouden**) indicates dedication to doing the work properly. The word means earnestness, zeal, sometimes "haste."
 - (D) "Full assurance" points to their need to keep growing in the faith and not to remain babies (5:13).
 - (E) The importance of hope can be seen in verses 18-20. "The fulness of hope unto the end."
 - (1) The Hebrew writer knew the hardships and heartaches these early Christians would face.
 - (2) He encourages them not to give up to remain steadfast unto the end.
- d. "That you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (6:12).
- (A) "Slothful" (**nothroi**) means sluggish or slow. The same word is rendered "dull of hearing" (5:11). The literal rendering of the expression is: "That you become not sluggish (or dull of hearing)" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 377).

- (B) He does not want these Hebrew Christians to become sluggish and miss the promises God has for His faithful children.
 - (C) "Followers" from **mimetai**, imitators, mimics. He wants these Christians to imitate the faith and patience of those who will inherit the promises.
 - (D) Whether we translate **pisteos** "faith" or "faithfulness," there is hardly any doubt he is encouraging these Christians to be faithful.
 - (E) "Patience" from **makrothumias** (literally, a long mind) indicates they were to be longsuffering in the face of difficulties and pressures.
 - (F) "Inherit the promises" from **kleronomounton tas epangelias**.
 - (1) "Inherit" literally means to receive by lot. The word is used of the great eternal blessings God has in store for His people.
 - (2) "The promises" are the "great and precious promises" of the gospel (2 Pet. 1:4). We will learn in the rest of this chapter that God's promises never fail. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (1 Cor. 1:20).
- (4) God is faithful to His promises (6:13-20).
- a. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself" (6:13).
 - (A) "Made promise" (**epangeilamenos**) is a verb showing what God had said to

- Abraham about his people, the land and the "seed" (Messiah).
- (B) The importance of the promises God made to Abraham can hardly be overstated. They are continually emphasized in the Old Testament and in the New.
 - (C) God could not swear by any greater person since there was no greater person in the universe. Men usually swear by one who is greater (v. 16).
 - (D) He swore by Himself. His promises are just as surely to be realized as that God Himself exists.
- b. "Saying, surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you" (6:14).
- (A) The quotation is from Genesis 22:16ff.
 - (B) "Blessing" from **eulogon (eulogize)**. Through Abraham God initiated the gospel plan of salvation.
 - (C) "Multiplying" (**plethunon**) had both a physical phase—the nation of Israel—and a spiritual phase—the church of the living God.
 - (D) We know how God fulfilled the great promises He made to Abraham.
- c. "And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (6:15).
- (A) The fulfillment of God's promises may have seemed impossible to Abraham, but he patiently endured and received what God had promised.
 - (B) "Patiently endured" from the Greek **makrothumesas**, having a long mind, longsuffering. He did not complain, but faithfully endured whatever came to him. What a great example of faith.

- (C) After waiting patiently, Abraham obtained the promise God had made to him. "God is not slack concerning his promise..." (2 Pet. 3:9).
- d. "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife" (6:16).
- (A) Men almost always call some greater power to their aid in their swearing—either heaven or Christ or God.
- (B) Obviously, God could not swear by anyone greater than He is. So He swore by Himself (6:13).
- (C) RSV renders the last part of that verse: "In all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation."
- (1) The word "dispute" ("strife"—KJV) comes from the Greek **antilogias**, literally talking back, face to face (Robertson, volume 5, p. 378).
- (2) The word "confirmation" comes from **bebaiosin** and has a legal background. It involves a legal guarantee.
- (D) When an agreement has been reached between two disputing parties, it is sealed with an oath for legal confirmation.
- e. "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel (**to amethatheton**) confirmed with an oath" (6:17).
- (A) God wanted men—and not just the physical descendants of Abraham—to know that His promises were sure. Men

are accustomed to swearing to bind an obligation. God accomodates Himself to that custom to show men His intentions to fulfill His promises.

- (B) "Abundantly" from **perissoteron**, exceedingly, going beyond.
 - (C) "Willing" from **boulomenos**, wishing, desiring.
 - (D) "To show" from **deixai**, to demonstrate. God was under no obligation to do as He did, but He wanted to leave "no stone unturned" in assuring men of His faithfulness to His promises.
 - (E) "Heirs" from **kleronomois** is a form of the same word translated "inherit" (6:12). The word means to receive by lot, but it is not a chance or a coincidence.
 - (F) "Immutability" from **ametatheton**, a, not, **metatithemi**, to change. Other translations of the expression, "the immutability of his will:"
 - (1) "The unchangeableness of his purpose" (**boules**, will) (NASB).
 - (2) "The unchangeable character of his purpose" (RSV).
 - (G) "Confirmed" from **emesiteusen**, interposed, a verb relating to acting as a mediator. The noun form, **mesites**, is translated "mediator" (Heb. 8:6).
 - (H) God Himself interposed an oath. He did not have to take an oath to perform His promises, but He did it for man's sake.
- f. "That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (6:18).

- (A) "Two immutable things" or unchangeable things.
- (B) "The two immutable things are God's promise and His oath" (Lightfoot, p. 131). "Things" from **pragmaton**, matters.
- (C) "It is impossible for God to lie."
 (1) "Impossible" from **adunaton**, a, not, **dunaton**, powerful, able.
 (2) "God is not man, that he should lie" (Num. 23:19).
 (3) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).
- (D) "We might have a strong consolation."
 (1) That we may keep on having a strong consolation (present active subjunctive).
 (2) "Strong consolation" from **ischuran paraklesin**.
 (a) **Parakaleo** means to call to one's side for comfort or consolation.
 (b) Sometimes the word is translated "warn," "exhortation."
 (c) Both Jesus (1 John 2:1-advocate) and the Holy Spirit (John 15:26) and referred to by the Greek **parakletos**.
 (3) Because God is unchangeable we can take strong consolation in Him and in His promises.
- (E) "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."
 (1) "Have fled" from **katapheugo** is used of fleeing to the cities or refuge. We know how uncertain and undependable this world is. Where can we go but to the Lord?

- (2) We want to hold fast the hope which is set before us. We want and must have some sure hope. How can men and women live without the assurance that God cares for us and that He is totally dependable?
- (3) The absolute essentiality of hope can be seen in the next two verses. Without hope life would not be worth living.
- g. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which enters into that within the veil" (6:19).
- (A) Our stedfast hope in God and in His promises provides the stability without which life would have no meaning.
- (B) Hope serves as "an anchor of the soul."
- (1) "Anchor" from **ankuran**, used figuratively in this passage. It is a very meaningful figure for those who know about boating.
- (2) The word is used literally in Acts 27:29: "Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for day."
- (C) "Sure" from **asphale (sphallo)** to totter or slip. With our hope in Christ and in the gospel we can rest sure in our commitment to the cause of Christ.
- (D) "Stedfast" from **bebaian**, firm, trusty. The word suggests that we are secure, stedfast, sure.
- (E) The hope enters into that within the veil. Figuratively, the veil of the Holy of Holies. The meaning is that we are entering into the very presence of God.

- h. "Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (6:20).
- (A) "Forerunner" from **prodromos**, literally running forward or going in advance, such as scouts, especially in military matters (Vine, volume 2, p. 119). We speak of John the Baptist's being the forerunner of Christ, although the word is never used of John. "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I sent my messenger before my face (**pro prosopou sou**) (Matt. 11:10).
 - (B) Christ has already gone before and entered into the Holy of Holies and has prepared the way for us. The forerunner in this case is Jesus Christ.
 - (C) Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy place. Jesus is that High Priest.
 - (D) But He could not be a priest under the law of Moses. He is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Chapter Six Questions:

1. The author of Hebrews instructed the members of the body of Christ to leave the "principles of the doctrine of Christ" and go on to perfection. Define the following terms:
 - a. "Doctrine"
 - b. "Leaving"
 - c. "Perfection"
 - d. "Repentance from dead works"
 - e. "Faith toward God"
 - f. "Doctrine of baptisms"
 - g. "Laying on of hands"
 - h. "The resurrection of the dead"
 - i. "Eternal punishment"
2. Can Christians ever go so far away from God that they cannot return? Explain. Could the term, "once enlightened" apply to anyone other than Christians?
3. What does "tasted of the heavenly gift" mean?
4. The author of Hebrews says he expected "better things of you, and things that accompany salvation." What did he have in mind?
5. We cannot earn salvation, but does not God demand good works of His children?
6. We learn of God's faithfulness in His dealings with Abraham. He swore to Abraham because he could swear by no greater. What does that mean?
7. God is immutable. Define.
8. Hope is an anchor of the soul. Does that give some insight into the importance of hope in a Christian life?

Chapter 7

The Book Of Hebrews

G. Hebrews 7.

1. Melchizedek (7:1-3).
 - a. "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him" (7:1).
 - (A) Earlier in the epistle the Hebrew writer wanted to say more about Christ's being a priest after the order of Melchizedek, but those Christians were not mature enough to understand (5:11-14).
 - (B) Melchizedek lived during the days of Abraham (Gen. 14:18-20), but he is a very shadowy figure.
 - (C) Psalm 110:4 predicts that the coming Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
 - (D) "King of Salem" means king of Jerusalem. He was both priest and king, and so is Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2).
 - (E) Genesis 14 tells of Abraham's encounter with some kings who were determined to destroy Lot and the city of Sodom.
 - (F) After the battle, Melchizedek met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings.
 - (G) The name Melchizedek means "My king is righteous." He was also called "king of Salem" or king of peace.
 - (H) Melchizedek "blessed" Abraham. "Blessed" from *eulagesas*, eulogized, praised.

- b. "To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace" (7:2).
- (A) We do not know what God had said to Abraham about giving a tenth to Melchizedek. The Bible does not tell us.
- (B) "Gave" from **emerisen** (**merizo** from **meros**, portion) can be translated "apportioned" (RSV), "divided" (ARV).
- (C) "Tenth" (**dekaten**) was the portion men usually gave to the gods. Abraham recognized Melchizedek as a priest of the most high God and gave him a tenth part of all. "All" probably represents the spoils Abraham had captured from the kings Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer and Tidal.
- (D) Melchizedek was "king of righteousness" (or my king is righteous) and King of Salem or king of peace. Some scholars deny that Salem is Jerusalem. Josephus identified Salem as Jerusalem, but he could be wrong.
- (E) Melchizedek was a very important person, although we know very little about him.
- c. "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abides a priest continually" (7:3).
- (A) "Without father (**apator**), without mother (**ameter**), without descent (**agenealogetos**)."
- (1) We must not interpret these expressions to mean that this high

- priest was some kind of heavenly, mysterious being—a god of some sort.
- (2) His father was not from a priestly tribe; neither was his mother. He did not have any genealogy. He had no connections with a priestly family.
 - (3) Under the law of Moses, only those who came from the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Neither Christ nor Melchizedek could have served as a priest under the Mosaic law.
- (B) "Having neither beginning (**archen**) of days, nor end of life (**zoes telos**)."
- (1) He did not have either beginning of days nor end of life in the priestly line. In addition, there may not have been any record of these things which are said about Melchizedek.
 - (2) His priesthood had to be based on considerations other than his connection to an earthly priesthood.
- c. "But made like unto the Son of God; abides a priest continually."
- (A) By reviewing what the Scriptures say about Christ's priesthood, one can understand why He is compared to Melchizedek.
 - (B) Melchizedek had a resemblance to the Son of God.
 - (C) Neither Christ nor Melchizedek had either a predecessor nor a successor in the priesthood.
 - (D) Since he had neither father nor mother in the priesthood, he remains a priest forever. In this respect he resembles Christ.

2. The greatness of Melchizedek (7:4-10).
 - a. "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils" (7:4).
 - (A) The word for "consider" (**theoreo**) means one who looks on an object with interest and for a purpose (Vine, p. 114).
 - (B) His greatness can be seen in his being chosen of God for the work of the priesthood. He must have possessed those qualities which God prizes so highly. "Distinguished."
 - (C) Melchizedek was so great that even a man of Abraham's standing would pay tithes to him.
 - (D) "Gave a tenth of the spoils."
 - (1) "Out of the chief spoils" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 381).
 - (2) **Akrothinion, akros, top, this, a heap** (the top of the pile).
 - (E) The incident to which the Hebrew writer refers is found in Genesis 14.
 - b. "And verily they that are the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham" (7:5).
 - (A) The Old Testament law made provisions for the tribe of Levi to serve as priests and for them to receive a tenth of the income of the other tribes (Num. 18:21-24, 26-28).
 - (B) "Priesthood" from **hierateian, hierous**, priest. This word for priesthood is found only here and in Luke 1:9.

- (C) The Levites received the priesthood because God Himself bestowed it upon them.
 - (D) The Levites served the temple and the people of God by God's commandments. In Luke and Acts we learn that many of them actually offered sacrifices and few ever became high priests.
 - (E) Paul used the Old Testament arrangements for priests to encourage Christians to support their preachers. "Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar are partakers of the altar" (1 Cor. 9:13)?
 - (F) The priests did not have to go begging for support. Their own brethren supported them.
 - (G) Abraham paid Melchizedek tithes, but the descendents of Abraham paid tithes to their own priests.
- c. "But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises" (7:6).
- (A) "Descent" from **genealogoumenos**, a verb (**genealogo**) which means to trace one's ancestry.
 - (1) Melchizedek did not trace his ancestry from the tribe of Levi. "But the man whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham, and blessed the one who had the promise" (NASB).
 - (2) We have already learned that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent

- (agenealogetos) having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abides a priest continually" (7:3).
- (B) Melchizedek did not come from the Levitical priesthood, but he "received tithes from Abraham." The record of this transaction stands written in the book of Genesis.
- (C) Abraham was the man to whom God made promises which would affect all mankind subsequent to Abraham. He was a great man and the father of the faithful. Yet he paid tithes to Melchizedek. This shows just how great Melchizedek really was.
- (D) Melchizedek "blessed him (Abraham) who had the promises." The Hebrew writer leaves no doubt about Melchizedek's greatness.
- d. "And without contradiction the less is blessed by the greater" (7:7).
- (A) "Contradiction" from **antilogias**, dispute. The word is used only four times in the New Testament. It is translated "strife" (Heb. 6:16), "contradiction" (Heb. 7:7; 12:3) and "gainsaying" (Jude 11). **Anti** means against and **logias** means words. There is no argument about whether redundant the less is blessed by the greater.
- (B) As great as Abraham was, in some respects he was less than Melchizedek.
- e. "And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives" (7:8).

- (A) The Levitical priests were mere mortals. They died just like the rest of mankind.
 - (B) The priesthood of Melchizedek takes precedence over the Levitical priesthood because the priesthood of Melchizedek continues to function through Jesus Christ.
 - (C) The priesthood of Christ will continue to the end of the world. The Levitical priesthood ended with the coming of the new covenant.
 - (D) Genesis records nothing of Melchizedek's death. He died just like other men, but his priesthood continues in our high priest.
- f. "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham" (7:9).
- (A) "And as I may so say" indicates a desire on the writer's part not to be misunderstood.
 - (B) Levi—a son of Abraham—receives tithes from the Jewish people.
 - (C) But since Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, in a sense, Levi was also paying tithes to Melchizedek.
- g. "For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him" (7:10).
- (A) Levi was not born at the time Abraham paid tithes to the priest.
 - (B) All of this shows just how great Melchizedek was and the fact that he was Christ's forerunner in the priesthood. Christ did not take his priesthood after the Levitical order.
3. The true meaning of the new priesthood (7:9-11).

a. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron" (7:11)?

(A) "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood."

- (1) "Perfection" from **teleiosis**, the completed state. What men needed in their relationship to God was not available in its completed state in the Levitical priesthood and in the law which provided for that priesthood.
- (2) The Levitical priesthood was God's arrangement—not that of Moses or of Aaron. They were simply God's instruments for carrying out His will.
- (3) The Hebrew writer is not criticizing either the priests or the Levitical order. He is pointing out that a new law and a new priesthood were necessary in God's scheme of human redemption.

(B) "For under it the people received the law."

- (1) The priests of the law of Moses were descendents of Aaron and the tribe of Levi.
- (2) The Hebrew writer is preparing his readers—including us—for an argument he will make on the law and the Levitical priesthood.

(C) If God could have achieved all He desired by the Levitical priesthood, "what further need was there that

another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"

- (1) God had not planned for the Levitical order to be the final arrangement for priests. The Levitical order had its place in God's dealing with men, but it was not to last forever.
 - (2) "Another" from **heteron**, a priesthood of a different order.
 - (3) The Levitical order served its purpose and then passed into oblivion. It has nothing to do with our serving the Lord except what we learn from a historical perspective.
 - (4) The new priesthood was not "called" (**legesthai**), reckoned, counted (**lego**).
- (D) The answer to the Hebrew writer's question is very simple: There would have been no need for another priestly line.
- b. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (7:12).
- (A) There can be no doubt about the priesthood's being changed. It is an established fact. The Levitical priesthood was removed for the reestablishment of another line or order. To doubt the change of the priesthood is to doubt the inspiration of the scriptures.
- (1) "Changed" from **metatithemi**, a Greek word meaning to transfer. The verb is rendered "translation" (Heb. 11:5) and "removed" (Gal. 1:6).
 - (2) God's eternal plan called for a

transference of the Levitical to that of Melchizedek. We may not understand all the reasons, but it is true and God's order.

(B) "There is made of necessity a change also of the law."

(1) "Necessity" from **anankes**, necessary, essential. There was no other way to accomplish God's purpose.

(2) There are dozens of scriptures showing that the old law has been removed and the new instituted (Matt. 17:1-13; 2 Cor. 3; the Galatian letter, etc.). The verse under consideration makes it very plain that we are not living under the law of Moses.

(3) If the priesthood changed, there had to be a change of the law. The priesthood did change; therefore there had to be a change of the law.

(4) Some of our preachers would object to our use of a syllogism in teaching on any subject, but you can see that it is legitimate in this instance.

c. "For he of whom these things are spoken pertains to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar" (7:13).

(A) Jesus is the priest of whom the Hebrew writer is speaking.

(B) Jesus Christ did not belong to the tribe of Levi, but to the tribe of Judah.

(C) As influential and prominent as the tribe of Judah was, the men from that tribe could not serve at the altar. They had no right to serve at the altar because they were not authorized to serve.

- (D) This is one of the most important principles coming from Hebrews. We can do in religion only what we are authorized to do. Violating that principle will bring the curses of God upon us.
- d. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood" (7:14).
- (A) "Evident" is from **prodelon**, an adjective (**pro**, before, **delos**, properly signifying visible, clear to the mind, Vine, p. 49). The **deloo** means to declare, to signify. Everybody knows that Jesus Christ was born of the tribe of Judah-not Levi.
- (B) "Sprang" from **anatello**, to rise up like the sun. This is a figurative way of saying that Jesus was born of the tribe of Judah.
- (C) "Of which tribe-the tribe of Judah-Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood."
- (1) If Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood, did that not leave the Jews free to do whatever they wished in regard to the priesthood? In other words, did not the silence of the scriptures allow the Jews total freedom regarding the priesthood?
- (2) James S. Woodroof, **The Church in Transition**, Searcy, AR: The Bible House, Inc., 1990).
- (a) Jim includes in his book a poem, "A Dream of Judgment: A Poem Concerning Those Who Make Laws Based on Inferences From The Silence of the Scriptures"

(pp. 181-210) by John Carroll Brown.

- (1) Jim apparently approves the poem or he would not have included it in his book.
 - (2) I have read few treatises which more thoroughly misunderstand the intention of the divine writers than this poem.
- (b) Examples from Brown's poem:
- (1) "For surely you can plainly see, That your reas'ning is to me worth nothing! for what men infer and bind is prone to err" (p. 185).
 - (2) "For silence neither gives consent, nor does silence e'er forbid" (p. 187).
 - (3) "'O foolish child!' said Christ to me, do you not understand nor see that what was done by church or man serves not as pattern for My plan" (p. 191)?
- (c) If silence neither gives consent nor forbids, how do we explain Leviticus 10:1-2 and Hebrews 7:14?
- (d) Some pertinent questions:
- (1) Where does the Lord say that only commands are binding? Does not Jim Woodroof have to infer that from his own studies? Besides, we have no specific commands addressed

to us. I have never seen my name or Jim Woodroof's in the Bible; yet both of us believe the word of God applies to us.

- (2) Does not Jim have to use reasoning to deny the significance of reasoning?
 - (e) Moses was speaking for God (Deut. 18:12-18). If Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood from the tribe of Judah, then God forbade man's serving from that tribe.
 - (f) The Bible says nothing about playing on a mechanical instrument in Christian worship. Are we free to introduce instruments if they are within "our comfort" zones?
 - (g) The Bible says nothing about counting beads as substitutes for prayer. May we count our rosaries?
 - (h) May we burn incense in our worship services?
 - (i) May we substitute t-bone steak for the bread and apple juice for the fruit of the vine? The Bible does not say, "Thou shalt not drink apple juice at the Lord's table." Does silence bind in these instances?
- e. "And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there arises another priest" (7:15).

- (A) "It is more abundantly evident" (**perissoteron eti katadelon**). The truth of this statement is thoroughly clear-unquestionably clear.
- (B) "Similitude" from **homoiteta**, likewise. Hebrews 4:15 uses the same Greek word. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted **like** as we are, yet without sin."
- (C) We may not be able to follow the reasoning that the Hebrew writer, but he is writing by divine inspiration and therefore he was speaking for God.
- (D) Jesus is not a Levitical priest; He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek.
- f. "Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (7:16).
- (A) The antecedent of the relative pronoun "who" is "another priest," that is, Christ Jesus.
- (B) Jesus came not after "the law of a carnal commandment."
- (1) "Carnal" is not used in the sense of evil, as it often is in the New Testament.
- (2) It refers to the fact that men under the law of Moses were not made priests by an accident of birth.
- (C) "But after the power of an endless life."
- (1) The priests of the Mosaic law served for a while and then died like the rest of mankind.
- (2) Our high priest, however, lives forever—"after the power of an end-

- less life." "Endless" from **akatalutou** (**kata**, according, **luo**, to loose, to dissolve).
- g. "For he testifies, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (7:17).
 (A) "For he testifies" from **martureitai**, present passive of **maturoo**, to testify, to bear witness. ARV translates the expression, "It is witnessed."
 (B) The quotation is from Psalm 110:4. The Hebrew writer goes to considerable effort to assure his readers of Christ's priesthood not being Mosaic. All of this indicates a change in the law by which God deals with men.
- h. "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof" (7:18).
 (A) "Disannulling" from **athetesis** means to "put as of no value" (Vine, p. 313). We should say "annul" rather than disannul.
 (B) Neil Lightfoot quotes Adolf Deissmann as saying concerning this verb: "To declare void," "to invalidate," "to abrogate," "to disannul."
 (C) "The former commandment" refers to various laws of the old covenant.
 (D) "Weakness" from **asthenes** and shows some of what the law could not accomplish—not because of God's inability to provide a perfect law, but man's inability to receive it.
 (E) "Unprofitableness" from **anopheles**, useless.
 (F) The law of Moses was God's law, but it

could not provide for the complete remission of sins. "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (Heb. 8:7). Cf. Hebrews 10:1-4.

- i. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (7:19).
 - (A) Even though the Mosaic law originated in the mind of God and served the Jews well for fifteen hundred years, it was not designed to accomplish God's ultimate purpose in His dealings with mankind.
 - (B) "For the law made nothing perfect."
 - (1) Neil Lightfoot: "It (the law of Moses) made beginnings, taught basic principles, awakened impulses, foreshadowed and pointed the way; but it was impossible for it to make available real fellowship with God. For this reason the Mosaic machinery was weak and useless" (p. 144).
 - (2) "Perfect" from **eteleiosen (teleioo)**. The word does not mean sinlessness, but completion, achieving a goal.
 - (C) "But the bringing in of a better hope did."
 - (1) Christianity provides a better hope because of what Christ accomplished with His life and death. His death actually takes away sin—not just brings it to remembrance from year to year.
 - (2) "Better" is one of the keys to understanding the book of Hebrews. In this verse the Hebrew writer speaks of a better hope.

- (3) We have already emphasized just how vital hope is in living on this earth. It is an "anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:19). "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for" (Rom. 8:24)?
- (D) "By which (hope) we draw nigh unto God."
- (1) The hope we have in Christ allows us to approach the throne of God with boldness. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).
- (2) We just cannot overemphasize the importance of hope in every phase of life—spiritual, political, financial, familial, etc.
4. Christ as the high priest is greater than Melchizedek (7:20-28).
- a. "And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest" (7:20).
- (A) An oath was essential in establishing a man as the priest. Psalm 110:4 is an example.
- (B) God Himself swore by Himself in establishing His covenant with Abraham (Heb. 6:13-14).
- (C) The expression, "he was made a priest," was supplied by the translators, but it certainly expresses the thought of the Hebrew writer.
- b. "For those priests were made without a oath; but he with an oath by him that said unto

him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (7:21).

(A) "For those priests were made without an oath."

(1) The priests of the law of Moses became priests without an oath. They became priests by their lineal descent from Aaron and the tribe of Levi, God's command (Ex. 28:1ff).

(2) We must remember the purpose of the Hebrew writer's reasoning. The priesthood was changed; therefore there had to be a change in the law (Heb. 7:12).

(B) "But he with an oath by him who said unto him."

(1) Jesus Christ's priesthood is greater than that of the Mosaic law. God Himself made an oath to make Jesus the high priest.

(2) Every phase of the new law is greater than a comparable phase of the old.

(C) "The Lord sware and will not repent."

(1) Some of us may take oaths lightly, but not God Almighty. When He speaks, He means what He says.

(2) NASB reads: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind."

(3) The word for "repent" is **metamelomai** and means to change the mind or to regret.

(a) "He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went" (Matt. 21:29).

(b) "For though I made you sorry

with a letter, I do not repent (**metamelomai**), though I did repent (regret): for I perceive that the same epistle has made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed to repentance (**metanoian**): for you were made sorry after a godly manner, that you might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow works repentance unto salvation not to be repented of (**metamelomai**): but the sorrow of this works death" (2 Cor. 7:7-10).

- (D) "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." The oath God made was Christ's being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.
- c. "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant" (7:22).
- (A) "By so much" refers to an oath God made in confirming Christ as our high priest.
- (B) "Surety" from **enguos**, "guarantor" (NEB), one pledged, betrothed, from **engue**, a pledge, one who gives a pledge or a guarantee (Robertson, volume 5, p. 385).
- (C) "Better covenant" obviously refers to the new covenant or the New Testament.
- (1) Already in this chapter we have found the word "better" three times.
- (a) The first time it is used in this chapter it compares Abraham

and Melchizedek. "And without contradiction the less is blessed by the better" (7:7).

(b) "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God" (7:19).
Salvation through Christ is the "better hope."

(c) "By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better testament" (7:22).

(2) Every aspect of the New Testament is better than comparable aspects of the Old.

d. "And they truly were made priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death" (7:23).

(A) The priests of the tribe of Levi were human and therefore subject to death. One priest followed another for the entire duration of the Mosaic law.

(B) The Greek for "were not suffered" is **koluesthai** meaning to hinder. The verb is translated "forbid" (Matt. 19:14), "withstand" (Acts 11:17) and "let" (Rom. 1:13). "Let" in this context means to hinder.

(C) Even though many of the priests were righteous men and lived according to God's will, they still were not to continue in the priesthood because they died (**thanatos**).

e. "But this man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood" (7:24).

(A) Jesus was a "man" like the priests of the

- old covenant, but He was also God "manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).
- (B) He did die, but He continues ever. "Continues" from **menein (meno)** and means to abide.
- (C) Christ enjoys "an unchangeable priesthood."
- (1) Since Jesus has unchangeable priesthood, the gospel is God's last will and testament for men. Since any change in the priesthood would signify a change in the law, there can never be another law.
 - (2) Even if the world continues another 10,000 years, there will never be another priest or priesthood. Christ's priesthood will always be valid.
- f. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing ever lives to make intercession for them" (7:25).
- (A) Since Jesus Christ and no other holds the priesthood from now to the end of the world, "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."
- (1) "Able" from **dunamis**, power.
 - (2) "Save" from **sozo**, to heal, to make whole.
 - (3) "Uttermost" from **panteles**, completely, "for all time," perfectly. **Teles** means perfect, achieving the end in view.
 - (4) "Come" from **proserchomenos**, approach, draw near. The same word is used in the following passage. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the

throne of grace, that we may find mercy to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

(B) "Seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them."

(1) Although the resurrection is not mentioned in this context, the words of this verse make it plain that the dead Savior has been raised from the dead. "He ever lives." Without the living Christ, Christianity would be meaningless and empty.

(2) "Make intercession" from **entunchanein**, to intercede. "Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34).

g. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (7:26).

(A) "For such an high priest became us."

(1) This verse makes us know the superiority of Christ as priest over the priests of the law of Moses.

(2) "Became us" from **prepo** means "to be conspicuous among a number, to be eminent, distinguished by a thing, hence, to be becoming, seemly, fit" (Vine, p. 106). The good work of Christian women "becomes women professing godliness" (1 Tim. 2:10). Paul told Titus to speak the things which became sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).

- (B) God's priest for this era is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."
- (1) "Holy" from **hosios**, saintly, pious, pure from evil conduct. That which is opposed to the unrighteous and polluted.
 - (2) "Harmless" from **akakos**, a, not, **kakos**, wicked; guileless; void of evil, innocent.
 - (3) "Undefiled" from **amiantos**, free from contamination. The word is used of "pure religion" (Jas. 1:27), of the eternal inheritance of the saints (1 Pet. 1:4) and of the marriage bed (Heb. 13:4).
 - (4) "Separate from sinners." "Separate" from **kechorismenos**.
 - (a) Our Lord loved sinners or He would not have voluntarily died for them.
 - (b) He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10).
 - (c) He became sin for us even though He knew no sin, but He did not partake of sin.
- (C) "And made higher than the heavens."
- (1) This probably refers to His ascension to the right hand of God, but it almost certainly had a broader application than that.
 - (2) In every way imaginable, Christ was made higher than the heavens.
 - (3) One of the crucial questions is: What place have we given Him in our lives? In God's sight, He is exalted

and glorified. Is He exalted and glorified in our lives?

- h. "Who needs not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (7:27).
- (A) The priests of the Mosaic law were ordinary men like the rest of us. They sinned and needed to offer sacrifices for their sins.
- (B) The sacrifices were offered daily for the sins of all the people—including the priests.
- (C) In order to be prepared for the spiritual work of offering sacrifices for the people, the priests needed first to offer sacrifices for themselves.
- (D) Jesus Christ did not need to offer a sacrifice for Himself because He had not sinned (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15).
- (1) The Greek **hapax** (translated "once") is a crucial word in our understanding the Christian system. These are examples of the word's use in the Hebrew letter:
- (a) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit" (6:4).
- (b) "But into the second went the high priest once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (9:7).
- (c) "For then must he often have

suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:26).

- (d) "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (9:27).
- (e) "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sin" (10:2).

(2) Jesus Christ satisfied the demands of God's law by giving Himself as a sacrifice **once**—once for all. There was no need to repeat His death on the cross.

- i. "For the law makes men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, makes the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" (7:28).
 - (A) The law of Moses arranged for ordinary, sinful men to be priests. The Hebrew writer uses the word "infirmity" (**asthenian**: weaknesses, sin, etc.).
 - (B) Many of the priests were undoubtedly good men—honorable and devout men—but they were still men—men in need of having sacrifice for themselves.
 - (C) The new covenant which was confirmed by God's oath makes the Son our high priest.
 - (D) The word "consecrated" is from **teteleiomenon**, "has perfected," "made perfect" (NASB). The word signifies achieving a goal.

- (E) Not only is our high priest perfect in that He has reached the goal for which God sent Him, but He is sinless and totally understands our temptations and is able to sustain us whatever the heartaches and troubles we encounter.
- (F) God does not expect sinlessness from us, but He does demand that we imitate our great priest, prophet and king-Jesus Christ.
- (G) We should thank God we have Christ as our high priest.

Chapter Seven Questions:

1. What was Melchizedek's relationship to Abraham?
2. Melchizedek is described as being "without father, without mother, etc."
3. Just how great was Melchizedek?
4. The people of ancient Israel had to pay the livelihood of the priests. Was that God's arrangement?
5. Levi paid tithes in Abraham, although Levi did not live until many years after Abraham. Discuss.
6. If perfection (or completion of God's plan for man) could have been achieved into the Mosaic covenant, there would have been no need for Christ to serve as our priest after Melchizedek and not after Aaron. Does this fact provide some insight into whether the of Moses is still binding?
7. When religious leaders try to bind some parts of the Mosaic law, they overlook or do not accept these words: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made also of necessity a change in the law." Discuss.
8. Our high priest came from the wrong tribe to serve under the Jewish covenant.
 - a. From which tribe did he come?
 - b. Since the law said nothing about a man from Judah serving as a priest, what could possibly be wrong with that arrangement? Do we have to observe the silence of the scriptures?
9. What does the author of Hebrews mean by the term, "carnal commandment?"

10. The law of Moses unquestionably came from the very mind of God. But it could not make the comers thereunto perfect. Why?
11. The priests of the Mosaic covenant had to be replaced on a regular basis because they kept on dying. Who will replace Christ as our high priest?
12. Define each of the following terms as they apply to Christ our high priest:
 - a. Holy
 - b. Harmless
 - c. undefiled
 - d. Separate from sinners
 - e. Made higher than the heavens
13. Why did the priests have to offer sacrifices for themselves as well as for the Israelite people?

Chapter 8

The Book Of Hebrews

H. Hebrews 8.

1. The more excellent ministry of Jesus Christ (8:1-7).
 - a. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens" (8:1).
 - (A) The Hebrew writer has been discussing Christ's priesthood as being "after the order of Melchizedek."
 - (B) Christ's priesthood is superior in every way to that of the Levites.
 - (C) "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum."
 - (1) The word "sum" comes from the Greek **kephalaion** (**kephale**: head).
 - (2) Is the Hebrew writer saying, "Now to summarize?" Or is he saying, "The main point of the recital is?"
 - (3) Dr. A.T. Robertson thinks he is saying, "The chief point is" (**Word Pictures**, volume 5, p. 388).
 - (4) Luke used the same word in reference to a sum of money. "And the chief captain answered, with a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, I was born free" (Acts 22:28).
 - (5) "The main point" or "the chief point" seems to fit the context better. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the main point."

- (D) "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens."
- (1) The Hebrew writer has already told us much about our high priest "who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).
 - (2) Now he informs us that our high priest is "set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens."
 - (a) What the Hebrew writer has said about the Levitical priests was not intended to deny their place in God's dealings with men.
 - (b) As a rule, those priests were men of honor and served a good purpose among the Israelite people.
 - (c) But the high priest of the Christian era is greater in every way than the Levitical priests. How blessed we are to have such a great high priest!
 - (3) Our high priest has ascended to the Father and now sits on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). Peter used similar language on Pentecost: "Therefore being by the right hand of God

exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has shed forth this which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

- b. "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (8:2).

(A) "Minister" from **leitourgos** and refers to one who performs rituals and ceremonies in worship services. The word was used among the Greeks of one who discharged his office at his own expense. Paul used the word of himself: "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:16).

(B) "Sanctuary" from **hagion**, holy place. **Hagios** can be translated holy or sanctified.

(C) "True tabernacle" refers to serving God in heaven.

(1) "Tabernacle" from **skene** and means a tent. This is the word used of the tabernacle in the wilderness.

(2) "True" (**alethinous**) is not contrasted with false, but with a shadow or the picture. The tabernacle in the wilderness was the type; the true tabernacle is the antitype.

(D) "Which the Lord pitched, and not man."

(1) The tabernacle was God's idea, but man "pitched" the tent.

(2) The heavenly tabernacle was totally

God's arrangement. Man has no part in the idea.

- c. "For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat to offer" (8:3).
- (A) God Himself is the one who made the arrangements for high priests to offer gifts.
- (B) "Ordained" from **kathistatai** (**kathistemi**; from **kata**, down, or over against, and **histemi**, to cause to stand, to set. "Appoint" is probably a better modern translation of the verb.
- (C) The high priest had the obligation of offering gifts and sacrifices. Not all priests offered gifts and sacrifices, but the high priest had that responsibility.
- (D) Since Jesus is our high priest, He had to have somewhat to offer.
- (1) "It is of necessity" or "it is necessary" from **anankaion**, from **ananke** (necessity). In God's scheme of dealing with men it was necessary for the high priest to have an offering. We have encountered the same word in Hebrews 7:12 and 27.
- (2) Since Christ did not offer animals in sacrifice to God, what offering did He make (1 Cor. 5:7)?
- d. "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law" (8:4).
- (A) Does this language suggest that God had a pattern for the old covenant that even the Son of God could not ignore? "If he

were on earth, he should not be a priest." The reason was very plain: He came from the wrong tribe (Heb. 7:12-14). There were already men who served in the Levitical priesthood. Christ could not serve under the law of Moses because He came from the tribe of Judah. Does all of this sound rather trivial to modern men? What possible difference could it make whether a priest came from the tribe of Levi?

- (B) We are not obligated to understand nor to explain God's ways. Our responsibility as Bible believers is to accept and to follow what the scriptures teach. There were priests under the Mosaic covenant who offered gifts. Jesus Christ was not one of them; nor could He have been.
- (C) "According to the law" suggests the authority men were to follow. That principle applied to Jesus Christ also.
- e. "Who serve unto example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished when he was about to make the tabernacle, for, See, says he, that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you in the mount" (8:5).
- (A) The priests of the law of Moses "serve as examples and shadow of heavenly things."
 - (1) "Serve" from *Iatreuo* and literally means to work as a hired servant, but I have serious doubts if the literal meaning is here intended. It sometimes has the meaning of religious service.

- (2) "Example" from **hupodeigmati** and signifies copy. The word means to show, **deiknumi**, and **hupo**, under. Cf. Hebrews 9:23 ("patterns"). The word signifies an example to imitate (John 13:15; Jas. 5:10) and for warning. "Let us labor therefore to enter into the rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. 4:11).
- (3) "Shadow" from **skia**. Everyone knows that a shadow is not the real substance. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1). Paul referred to the ordinances of the law as "a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:17).
- (B) "Moses was admonished when he was about to make the tabernacle."
- (1) If there is no pattern and or the pattern makes no difference, why would Moses be "admonished?"
- (a) "Admonished" from **chrematizo** and refers to pronouncements of a magistrate. The verb is always used of divine pronouncements. "And the disciples were called (**chematizo**) Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).
- (b) The word involves a serious warning. The word is translated "warn" (Matt. 2:12, 22),

“revealed” (Lk. 2:26) and “shall be called” (Rom. 7:3).

- (2) Many teachers in the denominational world—and even some among churches of Christ—ignore or make fun of any kind of pattern for the church.
- (C) The Lord’s admonition to Moses when he was about to build the tabernacle. “For, See, says he, that you make all things according to the pattern showed to you in the mount.”
- (1) Did the Lord really mean that Moses should build according to the pattern?
 - (2) After giving a detailed pattern for the tabernacle, the Lord said to Moses, “And look that you make them after their pattern, which was shown you in the mount” (Ex. 25:40).
 - (3) God gave Noah a pattern for constructing the ark (Gen. 6). “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he” (Gen. 6:22). That is what it means to live by faith (Heb. 11:7).
 - (4) God has a pattern for the church’s organization, the teaching which must be done, the acts of worship, and how to become a Christian. How do we think we can ignore that pattern without encountering the wrath of God?
- f. “But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises” (8:6).

- (A) The "he" of this verse is the great high priest, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle (Heb. 8:2).
- (B) "Obtained" from **tungchano**, to hit the mark, to attain.
- (C) "More excellent ministry." "Ministry" from **leitourgias**, service dedicated to God.
- (D) The priests of the law of Moses had a special ministry. It should have been honored—both those who were involved and by other Israelites.
- (E) But the ministry of Christ is incomparably greater.
- (F) "Mediator" from **mesites** which refers to a middle man, an arbitrator. **Mesos**, middle, **eimi**, to go, a go-between.
- (1) "Wherefore then serves the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to who the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (Gal. 3:19-20).
- (2) "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
- (G) Why is the new covenant called "a better covenant?"
- (1) "A better hope" (Heb. 7:19).
- (2) "Established on better promises" (Heb. 8:6).
- (3) We have "in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34).
- (4) "Better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35).

- (5) While the Mosaic law was great, the new covenant is better in every way.
- (H) "Covenant" from **diathekes**. This same word is translated "testament" in a number of passages (Heb. 7:22). The word primarily signifies a disposition of property by will or otherwise (Vine, p. 242). One synonym is the word "agreement."
- (I) The new covenant was "established on better promises." The promises of the gospel are primarily spiritual—not physical: Complete forgiveness of sins, freedom from the law of Moses, blessings of eternal life.
- g. "For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (8:7).
- (A) The word "covenant" in verse seven does not appear in the original. But the feminine gender (**prote**: first) makes it clear the Hebrew writer was speaking of the first covenant, that is, the law of Moses.
- (B) If the law of Moses had faults—blemishes—why would the Psalmist write, "The law of the Lord is perfect" (Psa. 19:7)?
- (C) What were the faults of that first law and why did not God give a faultless law? Did the faults lie with God's inability to give a perfect law or man's inability to receive it? "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3).

- (D) If the first covenant could have accomplished for the human family all which God desired for us, then there would have been no need for a second covenant or law.
 - (E) The law was imperfect because it could not take away sins. However, it was not designed for that purpose.
2. The gospel of Christ replaces the law of Moses (8:8-13).
- a. "For finding fault with them, he says, Behold, the days come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah" (8:8).
- (A) "For finding fault with them."
- (1) God Himself found fault with the provisions of the old covenant.
 - (2) The law of Moses was good and was ordained of God, but it could not provide all which God had in His mind for the human family.
- (B) God Himself said, "Behold, the days come when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."
- (1) Verses 8-12 are borrowed from Jeremiah 31:31-34. In the Hebrew Bible, the verses are from Jeremiah 38:31-34, but in the Septuagint (LXX), the verses are from Jeremiah 31.
 - (2) When modern men express surprise over the law's being removed and the gospel's being instituted, they show either ignorance of the Old Testament or disregard for its prophecies. Two examples:

(a) Stephen L. Carter, **The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion**. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

- (1) "As a Christian, I have no doubt of the continuing validity of God's covenant with Israel (see Rom. 11:29) or of my own spiritual inheritance from the Old Testament tradition. I am perplexed by the insistence of many Christians that Jews can find salvation only by rejecting the special covenant that has nurtured them through centuries of hostility and horror" (p. 88).
- (2) "Christ's message, after all, is one of love and inclusion, not hatred and division" (p. 90).
- (3) Dr. Bailey Smith, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said, "My friend God almighty does not hear the prayer of a Jew" (p. 90).
- (4) "My own view is that exclusivity of this kind betrays a lack of faith in God's charity, but everyone is entitled to choose a religious belief" (p. 90).
- (5) "Nothing about the nature of religion requires either exclusivity or universality" (p. 91).
- (6) "It is the nature of **that individual's faith**, not the

nature of religion itself, that dictates the exclusivity" (p. 92).

- (b) David L. Edwards with a Response from John Stott. **Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal -Evangelical Dialogue**. Downers Grove: InverVarsity Press, 1988.
- (1) David Edwards by his own admission is a liberal theologian. He rejects many of the fundamentals of New Testament Christianity.
 - (2) He says concerning Dr. Stott: "For him it is false to suppose that sinners can be saved through other systems apart from the Christian gospel" (p. 288).
 - (3) "And to deny that God can save those countless millions through their response to the religious traditions into which they have been born is, I think, to deny either God's power or his love" (p. 289).
 - (4) "For the Jews are the people who have always reminded the Christians that God does not deal savingly only with the church or only with those who have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior....A passionate longing for their salvation, and a final conviction that it would come, were what made Paul write some of his

most profound passages to the Romans" (p. 289).

- (5) "When some Gentiles had become Christians, and despised Jews because it was the strict keeping of the law of Moses that now seem contemptible, Paul eventually saw that Israel remained God's beloved people" (p. 296).

(C) How can anyone overlook the fact that Jeremiah's predicts the removal of the old covenant and the establishment of the new?

- (1) Millions of Jews did ignore Jeremiah's predictions. They were not as a people ready for the new covenant when it came.
- (2) Many who call themselves Christians have tried to retain some parts of the law of Moses.
 - (a) Adventists and other sabbatarians want to require the keeping of the Ten Commandments.
 - (b) Dominion or Reconstructionist theologians argue for the observance of many legal and judicial facets of the law of Moses. For example, some of the Dominion theologians want to reinstitute capital punishment for homosexuals.

b. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day which I took

them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord" (8:9).

(A) Obviously, there would be some overlap in the requirements of the two laws.

They both came from God and dealt with many of the same moral issues.

(1) Adultery is specifically condemned in the law of Moses (Ex. 20:14). It is also specifically condemned in the gospel (Matt. 5:28-29; Gal. 5:19-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

(2) The Old Testament forbade homosexual acts (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). The New Testament just as strongly condemns homosexuality (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Jude 7).

(B) But one is not required to obey any commandment because it appears in the Old Testament. The New Testament guides us in our work and worship.

(C) The Old Testament did come from God Almighty, but its precepts and commandments are no longer binding on anyone—neither Jew nor Gentile.

(D) God's rescue of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, His leading them through the wilderness and giving them the law at Mount Sinai constitutes a thrilling story of God's love. There can be no doubt of the supernatural events surrounding God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. "He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt."

- (E) Did the covenant God made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai include the sabbath commandments? If it did, would that not mean that sabbath-keeping would be binding under the new covenant?
- (F) The reason the old covenant was cancelled is explained very plainly: "Because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord." The conditions of the first covenant are spelled out in many passages. "See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandment and statutes and his judgments, that you may live and multiply and the Lord your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that you shall perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon this land, whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live: that you may love the Lord your God, and that you may obey his voice, and that you may cleave unto him: for he is your life, and the length of your

days: that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (Deut. 30:15-20).

- (G) As long as the Jews kept God's law, the covenant would be honored. But when the Jews turned to other gods, they broke the covenant.
- (H) God cannot be accused of being unfaithful since it was the Jews who violated the terms of agreement.
- c. "For this is my covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people" (8:10).
 - (A) As stressed in verse 9, the new covenant would differ markedly from the old covenant.
 - (B) "The house of Israel" would include all who accept the terms of the new covenant—Jews and Gentiles alike.
 - (1) "Know therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. 3:7-9).
 - (2) "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6: 16).

- (3) "Not as though the word of God has taken none effect, For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall your seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for seed" (Rom. 9:6-8).
- (4) The prophecy of Jeremiah shows conclusively that all men—both Jew and Gentile—are spiritual Israel.
- (C) "I will put my laws in their mind."
- (1) The mind plays an important role in our becoming and remaining Christians.
- (a) Jesus instructed men to love God with all their strength, their soul and their mind (Matt. 22:37).
- (b) Paul speaks of the "renewing of the mind" (Rom. 12:2).
- (2) Prominent evangelical theologians are complaining of our not using our minds. Os Guinness, **Fit Bodies, Fat Minds**. Dr. Guinness accuses Christians of not thinking Christianly. "American evangelicals in the last generation have simultaneously toned up their bodies and dumbed down their minds" (p. 10). Former Lebanese Ambassador to the United Nations, Charles Malik, warned in an address at Wheaton College: "The greatest danger besetting American Evangelical

Christianity is the danger of anti-intellectualism. The mind as to its greatest and deepest reaches is not cared for enough" (p. 11). Dr. Guinness quotes Harry Blamires (**The Christian Mind**) as saying, "There is no longer a Christian mind ...the Christian mind succumbed to the secular drift with a degree of weakness unmatched in Christian History" (p. 11).

(D) "Write them on their hearts."

- (1) The words "mind" and "heart" are often used interchangeably in the New Testament and in the Old.
- (2) Jeremiah (and the Hebrew writer) may be using the heart as a synonym of our emotional lives.
- (3) "Heart" and "mind" cover all there is of man's personal life from a standpoint of thinking, understanding and feeling.
- (4) Christianity should affect more than just the intellect.

(E) "I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people."

- (1) A similar promise is found in 2 Corinthians. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:17-18).
- (2) What greater honor can human beings know than to be sons and

daughters of Almighty God? But it also is a great responsibility.

- d. "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know men, from the least to the greatest" (8:11).

(A) There is one mistake regarding the prophecy from Jeremiah and its fulfillment in the New Testament: Interpreting this passage to downplay the importance of teaching and learning. Such an interpretation would deny virtually every truth taught under the new covenant and many found in the Old.

- (1) "And all your children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of your children" (Isa. 54:13).
- (2) "No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me" (John 6:44-45).
- (3) The New Testament presents Jesus Christ as the great teacher. In fact, one of the most frequently used titles of Jesus is "teacher" (*didaskalos*: KJV renders it "Master").
- (4) The word "teacher" (*didaskalos*) is used 58 times in the New Testament, although the Greek is almost always translated "master."
- (5) The word "teach" (*didasko*) appears 97 times in the New Testament. It

appears sixteen times in the book of Acts—the great missionary book.

- (B) In view of these undeniable facts, why does the Bible say, “They shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying know the Lord?”
- (1) A question: When did the Jewish person become a son or daughter of God under the old covenant? What did he have to do to be a son or daughter?
 - (2) Circumcision did not make a Jewish male a child of God. It was merely a sign that he was a son of God.
 - (3) When the Jewish child came into the world, he was a son or daughter of the living God.
 - (4) Is that how men and women under the new covenant become children of God—by being born into a Christian family?
 - (5) Christ’s conversation with Nicodemus tells us that being born the first time does not make one a Christian. He must be born again (or from above) to be a child of God (John 3:3-8).
 - (6) For any human being to become a part of the new covenant, he has to know the Lord first. This shows just how important teaching is in the Lord’s scheme of human redemption.
 - (7) The book of Acts continually emphasizes teaching, preaching, announcing, heralding, etc. There are at least thirty different Greek words

in Acts which refer to teaching or preaching.

(C) Nobody can become a Christian—a subject of the new covenant—without knowing God. He has to be taught before he can come to God (John 6:44-45).

(1) Regardless of a man's education or wealth or social standing, he has to come to the Lord in the same way as all others: He has to know the Lord.

(2) I taught a college course one time with the title: "The Church as a Teaching Institution." The church is much more than a teaching institution, but it certainly is that.

(3) If we are going to change our world, we cannot do it by political means. We must instruct, persuade, and teach.

e. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (8:12).

(A) There is nothing in the new covenant which promises men freedom from sin. We all sin and come short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23).

(B) If Christians do not sin, why would we need mercy? Yet God has promised to be merciful to our unrighteousness and to our iniquities. "Merciful" from **hilaskomai**: to propitiate.

(1) "Unrighteousness" refers to ungodly, immoral thoughts and acts. Walking contrary to what God wants from His people.

(2) "Iniquities" from **hamartion**, sins.

The Greek means to miss the mark. God has a standard for righteous living. When we fail to live according to the standard, we have missed the mark—sinned.

- (C) "Will I remember no more."
- (1) Jeremiah uses the word "forgive" (Jer. 31:34). "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
 - (2) The Greeks had two words which referred to the cancelling of a debt or a bond. **Chiazein** means to put an "X" (**chi**) over it. **Exaleipho** means to wipe out, to erase, to wash away. "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out (**exaleipho**) when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).
 - (3) We often sing, "When God forgives, He forgets."
 - (4) The Greek word translated "forgive" or "remit" (**aphesin**) means to remove, to take away. Our sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions for us" (Psa. 103:12).
 - (5) This is another example of the New Testament's superiority to the Old.
- f. "In that he says, a new covenant, he had made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away" (8:13).

- (A) If there were ever any doubt as to the meaning of this section of Hebrews, that doubt ought to be removed with this verse. The Hebrew writer has been speaking of the law of Moses—the first covenant—and the gospel of Christ—the new covenant.
- (B) The word “old” (**palaios**) means old, out-of-date in contrast to **kainos**, fresh, new.
- (C) None of what this author writes should be construed as being hypercritical of the Old Testament. If you have read this book understandingly, you now how much he honored and loved the Old Testament. But he is saying, as Paul did, that the Old Testament has served its purpose in bringing us to Christ. Now that Christ is come we are no longer under the schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24-25).
- (D) There can be no question of the passing of the law of Moses—all of it—including the Ten Commandments. The law of Moses was a great law. But what it could not provide, the new covenant does. It is better in every way than the old.

Chapter Eight Questions:

1. Christ, our high priest, is set on the right hand of God. What does that mean?
2. Discuss: Christ is "a minister of the true sanctuary, and of the tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."
3. The priests of the Mosaic covenant offered gifts and sacrifices. What did Jesus Christ have to offer?
4. The gifts and offerings of the Jewish law serve as examples of heavenly things. So while we are not to observe the law of Moses, do not those arrangements under the law have meaning for us?
5. Moses had to make the tabernacle and its furniture according to the pattern. Does God have a pattern we must follow as Christians?
6. Those sacrifices were a shadow. Meaning what?
7. Was the law of Moses without fault? If it were, why did God give another covenant?
8. What does the Hebrew writer mean by "first" and "second" covenants?
9. Jeremiah predicted the coming of a new covenant. Summarize his prophecy.
10. What is the meaning of the expression, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord?" Is not teaching essential to the new covenant?
11. The Jewish covenant made arrangements for the people to remember their sins from year to year. What is the difference between the old and the new on this matter?
12. According to this section of Hebrews 8, has the old law vanished?

Chapter 9

The Book Of Hebrews

I. Hebrews 9.

1. The old sanctuary with its rites and ceremonies (9:1-10).

a. "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary" (9:1).

(A) The word "covenant" does not appear in the original, but there can be no doubt about the writer's meaning.

(B) "Ordinances" from **dikaionata**, regulations. The covenant had many regulations for worship and for other purposes.

(C) "Divine" does not appear in the original. "Service" from **latreias** and refers to worship. "For we are the circumcision which worship (**latreuontes**: verb) God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3:3).

(D) "Worldly" does not mean worldly in the sense of being sinful or ungodly. The Greek is **kosmikon** (from **kosmos**) and refers to its being on this earth. "Earthly" would actually be a better translation.

(E) "Sanctuary" (**hagion**) is from the same word translated saint, sanctified and holy. It means a holy place set aside for worship.

b. "For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary" (9:2).

- (A) "Tabernacle" from **skene** which means a tent. The large tents usually had two divisions—the inner and the outer or the first and the second (Robertson, volume 5, p. 394).
- (B) In the outer part of the tabernacle, there were the candlestick, the table and the showbread. Each of these articles had special significance in the worship of the Jews (Ex. 25:31-39; Ex. 25:23-30; Ex. 25:30; 40:23; Lev. 24).
- (C) The outer part of the tabernacle was called "the sanctuary."
- c. "And after the second veil, the tabernacle is called the Holiest of all" (9:3).
- (A) The first veil opened from the outside of the tabernacle into the holy place.
- (B) The second veil opened into the Holiest of all or the Holy of Holies (**hagia hagion**).
- d. "Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid about with gold, wherein was the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant" (9:4).
- (A) The Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place included several items which were very important in the history of Israel.
- (B) "The golden censer." The word "censer" (**thumiaterion**) may mean either the censer or the altar of incense. From the Old Testament text, it is very difficult to decide the meaning.
- (C) "The ark of the covenant." The ark was a chest or a box four feet long, two and one half feet wide and high (Ex. 25:10ff).

- (D) In the ark of the covenant there were three treasures:
- (1) "The golden pot of manna" (Ex. 16: 32-34).
 - (2) "Aaron's rod which budded" (Num. 17:1-11).
 - (3) "Tables of the covenant" (Ex. 25:16ff; 31:18; Deut. 9:9; 10:5).
- e. "And over it the cherubims of glory showing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly" (9:5).
- (A) "It" refers to the ark of the preceding verse.
 - (B) "Cherubim" is a plural word which refers to the creatures pictured in the tabernacle. In some contexts, the cherubim are said to be alive (Isa. 6:2ff; Ezek. 1:5-10).
 - (C) "Mercy-seat" was a place where men sought mercy in the heart of God. The same Greek word (**hilasterion**) is rendered "propitiation" (1 John 2:2).
 - (D) The Hebrew writer could not describe all of the furniture pertaining to the tabernacle in greater detail (**kata meros**).
- f. "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God" (9:6).
- (A) "Ordained" would be better translated "prepared." When all the service has been prepared, the priests went into the first section of the tabernacle.
 - (B) The worship was regularly carried on in harmony with God's wishes.
 - (C) The priests accomplished (**epiteleo**: completed) the worship activities.

- (D) "Service" from *latreias*. "Of God" was added by the translators. The word is generally used of a worship context.
- g. "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people" (9:7).
- (A) In the sanctuary, there were the candlestick, the table, and the showbread (9:2). Beyond the veil in the holy of holies or the Holiest of all were the golden censer, the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, where was the golden pot that had manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant (9:4). In the second compartment of the tabernacle, there were the cherubims of glory which shadowed the mercyseat.
- (B) The common priests went into the first part of the tabernacle to perform whatever service God had ordained for them.
- (C) "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year."
- (1) What would have happened if ordinary priests had gone into the holy of holies? Is God so particular that He would punish them for their disobedience?
- (2) The high priest alone was given that obligation and that only one time each year. The high priest did not dare to presume on God's goodness to decide how often he would go into the Holiest of all. God had made that determination. The priests who were faithful lived by God's regulations.

(D) "Not without blood."

(1) "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22).

(2) All the sacrifices of the old covenant foreshadowed the sacrifice Christ Himself would make for our sins. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:7-9).

(E) The high priest offered a sacrifice for himself and for the errors of the people.

(1) Many of the high priests were good men and faithful to their calling, but they were still men with all the temptations and sins of other fallible men. They were not perfect men by any stretch of the imagination. They needed to be forgiven just like all other people.

(2) "Errors" comes from **agnoematon** meaning not to know. These were sins of ignorance which demanded an atonement. They were not merely oversights.

h. "The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was still standing" (9:8).

- (A) There can be no question about the providence of God in the whole arrangement of the tabernacle. The Holy Spirit was "signifying."
- (B) "Signifying" from **deloo**, to make plain, to point out, to declare.
- (C) What is the "holiest" in this verse?
- (1) It does not seem to apply to the second compartment of the tabernacle.
 - (2) "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building...For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:11, 24).
 - (3) Could the Hebrew writer be anticipating Hebrews 10:19-20: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20)?
- (D) The "holiest" in this verse certainly seems to point toward heaven.
- (E) "Manifest" from **phaneroo**, to make plain, to shine.
- (F) The first tabernacle would be the one constructed by Moses. The second in this context seems to apply to heaven. The first tabernacle obscured the second.

- i. "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience" (9:9).
- (A) "Which" means "which very thing," that is, the tabernacle or tent.
 - (B) The word translated "figure" is **parabole** -not **tupos**-(pattern or model). Why that is so I am not sure.
 - (C) The first tabernacle was a figure for the time then present. The first covenant was a figure of the second. The first was a figure for the time in which they were living. It pointed beyond that time to the Christian era.
 - (D) The first covenant required the offering of both gifts and sacrifices. Modernists may deny that God ordained such sacrifices, but they are opposing both the Old Testament and the New.
 - (E) Even though the gifts and sacrifices were ordained of God, they "could not make him that did the service perfect."
 - (1) The gifts and sacrifices were not designed to make the "comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1). They pointed to the perfect sacrifice which Christ would offer in His death on the cross.
 - (2) The offerings had to be repeated. Under the new covenant, the sacrifice of Christ was made once for all.
 - (F) The conscience was not purged and purified by the Old Testament rites and ceremonies. Their meaning was dependent on the coming of Christ and His
-

death. The death of Christ reached back to save all who came before Him and to those who would live after He came to earth.

- (G) None of this says that God's arrangements for the Jews were inadequate. This was God's plan from the beginning of time. The Jews' forgiveness depended on the death of Christ.
- j. "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation" (9:10).
 - (A) Neil Lightfoot says, "The whole ancient system was at fault. And what a futile system it was that could deal only with food and drink and various ablutions" (p. 168).
 - (B) One needs to be careful of the language he uses in this context. God was behind the law of Moses and it achieved the purpose for which He gave it (Gal. 3:24ff).
 - (C) The old covenant did include many instructions regarding unclean foods (Lev. 11; Deut. 14:3-21), drink (Lev. 10:9; Num. 6:2-3), washings for the high priest (Ex. 30:18-21) and other laws relating to others-lepers, unclean persons, of garments, vessels.
 - (D) Neil says, "One senses a feeling of contempt for these petty matters-what to eat, what to drink, what to wash-things grossly material in nature" (p. 168). I personally think the language is too strong and misdirected.

- (E) They are called "carnal ordinances," but I have doubts about the expression, "grossly material in nature."
- (F) Whatever the nature of those ordinances, they were not to last forever. They had their purposes, but they were imposed until the time of reformation.
- (1) "Reformation" from **diorthoseos**, meaning to set straight or to make right.
- (2) There can be no question about the Hebrew writer's meaning. He was speaking of the advent of New Testament Christianity.
2. Christ's sacrifice as contrasted with the sacrifices of the old covenant (9:11-14).
- a. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (9:11).
- (A) "But when Christ appeared as an high priest of the good things that have come."
- (1) The tense of the verb: "having come."
- (2) There is a question as to the translation of the latter part of that expression: The good things to come or the good things which have come. Both points are well taken and should not cause any great difficulty.
- (3) When Jesus Christ came into the world He brought redemption, forgiveness of sins and much more. When He comes again, He will take His people to be with Him forever.
- (B) "A greater and more perfect tabernacle."

This verse does not talk about the church. It speaks of our great high priest who "has passed into the heavens" (Heb. 4:14). It speaks of the rest God has in heaven for His faithful children. "There remains therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).

- (C) The tabernacle or tent under the old covenant was made by men's hands at God's command. That did not make it unnecessary. But in comparison to our heavenly home, it pales by comparison.
- (D) "Not of this building." "Building" from **ktiseos**, creation. The greater and more perfect tabernacle is heaven itself (Heb. 9:24). God has not used human hands in the creation of our heavenly home.
- b. "Neither by the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (9:12).
 - (A) It cannot be overemphasized that the blood of bulls, of goats and of calves was the way God had ordained for His people under the old covenant to honor and to worship Him. The Jews made two grievous mistakes in their offering of animal sacrifices.
 - (1) They used sick and diseased animals (Mal. 1:13).
 - (2) They offered the sacrifices as substitutes for righteous living (Isa. 1:12-13; Micah 6:6-8).
 - (3) "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15:22).
 - (B) As valuable as the sacrifices under the

- old covenant were, they could not take away sin—could not make the “comers thereunto perfect” (Heb. 10:1).
- (C) So our Lord Jesus Christ by “his own blood entered in once into the holy place.”
- (1) Modernists and feminists may object to a bloody sacrifice, but it is the very heart of the gospel. “Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb. 9:22).
 - (2) The holy place in this context means heaven, as is obvious from verses 8 and 24.
 - (3) “Once” from **hapax**, once for all. Christ’s sacrifice did not have to be repeated. It was once for all.
- (D) “Obtained” from **heurisko** and means to find, to procure with the suggestion of accomplishing the end which had been in view (Vine, p. 798).
- (E) “Redemption” from **lutrosin**. “Redeem” means to release by payment of a ransom (**lutron**). The price paid for our release was the blood of Jesus Christ (Matt. 20:28).
- c. “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh” (9:13).
- (A) God ordained various sacrifices for different types of uncleanness.
- (1) The blood of bulls and of goats was for general cleansing, including preparation for the Day of Atonement.
 - (2) The sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer was designed to purify those who

had touched dead bodies—either by entering a house with a corpse in it or by touching a human bone or grave (Num. 19).

(B) These offerings “sanctified to the purifying of the flesh.”

(1) “Sanctify” from **hagiazei**, to set apart. Condition of the first class, assumed as true.

(2) “Purifying” from **katharizo**, from which we get our word “cathartic.” It purified the flesh, but not the conscience.

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

(A) If the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, what about the blood of the Son of God?

(B) The New Testament constantly stresses the necessity of the shedding of Christ’s blood for our redemption.

(C) “Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.”

(1) The Spirit of God was the power behind the offering Jesus Christ made on the cross.

(2) “Christ offered himself.”

(a) “Offered” from **prosphero**, the technical word for the offering of a sacrifice.

(b) The expression, “offered

himself," shows the voluntary nature of His sacrifice. "Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:17-18).

- (3) "Without spot." **Amomon**, without blemish (Col. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:19). The sacrifices under the old covenant had to be without spot or blemish (Ex. 29:1; Lev. 1:3, 10). Cf. Malachi 1:13ff.
 - (4) Our service to God must be pure, unadulterated and sincere.
 - (D) "Purge" from **katharizo** means cleansing. In the Old Testament it was often used of ceremonial cleansing. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil" (Isa. 1:16).
 - (E) Christ's sacrifice provides for the cleansing of the conscience. "The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) but the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).
3. Christ the mediator of the new covenant (9:15-22).
 - a. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, and by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that

were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (9:15).

- (A) The preceding section has established the absolute necessity of Christ's death.
- (B) This sections shows His mediatorship.
- (C) "Mediator" from **mesites**, a go-between, a middle-man, an arbitrator.
- (D) "Testament" (**diathekes**) is the same word translated "covenant" or "agreement." I am not sure why the different words are used.
- (E) "By means of death" is rendered in the Revised Standard Version, "since a death had occurred which redeems us."
- (F) "Redemption" from **apolutrosin**, to release by payment of a ransom (**lutron**).
- (G) "Transgressions" from **parabaseon**, a going aside, an overstepping, always a breach of law.
- (H) Christ's death not only provides for the remission of sins of those who have lived since He died; it also covers the sins of those who transgressed the first covenant. A.T. Robertson: "Here there is a definite statement that the real value in the typical sacrifices under the Old Testament system was in the realization in the death of Christ. It is Christ's death that gives worth to the types that pointed to Him. So then the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the basis of the salvation of all who are saved before the cross and since" (volume 5, pp. 400-401).
- (I) "They which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

- (1) Those who are called—both under the old covenant and under the new—might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.
 - (2) "Inheritance" from **kleronomias**, always rendered inheritance in the New Testament. The word means to receive by lot.
- b. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator" (Heb. 9:16).
- (A) The word "testament" (**diatheke**) is exactly the same word rendered "covenant." It means an agreement or a contract.
 - (B) "Necessity" from **anangke**, an absolute requirement, what must needs be.
 - (C) "Testator" from **diatithemi** (part of the word rendered "testament" (**diatheke**)). It is a verb—not a noun as the King James implies. It should be translated "the one who made it."
 - (1) Why must there be the death of the one who made the will or testament?
 - (2) When Christ died on the cross to seal His covenant, could anyone change it?
 - (3) How can anyone be so arrogant as to add to or take away from the will of God?
- c. "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives" (9:17).
- (A) While the man who made the testament or will is still living, he can change his will. A will becomes valid only after the testator dies.

- (B) "Strength" from **ischuei**. Wills can be changed at any time before the man who makes it dies.
- d. "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood" (9:18).
- (A) "The first covenant" (9:1) referred to the covenant made with Israel.
- (B) "Dedicated" from **enkainizo** and is used only here and in Hebrews 10:20.
- (1) The tense of the verb reads: "stands dedicated" (perfect passive indicative).
- (2) The word means to renew, to inaugurate. **Ta enkrainia** is translated "feast of dedication" (John 10:22).
- (C) This verse, like so many others in the New Testament, shows the importance of blood in the scheme of human redemption.
- e. "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people" (9:19).
- (A) Moses was the one who received the law and delivered it unto the Jewish people.
- (B) "Precept" from **entoles**, commandment. We must remember that the precepts and commandments came from the Lord. They were not to be ignored but to be obeyed implicitly.
- (C) "According to the law" would be the law of Moses. God had ordained the law to guide the Israelites in their work and in their worship. They were not free to make any changes in the law.

- (D) The Hebrew writer refers in this passage to Exodus 24:3ff. The rituals differed from time to time, but these elements—blood mixed with water, scarlet wool and hyssop. Hyssop came from a tree mentioned in John 19:29.
- (E) The mixture mentioned in this verse was used for cleansing. It sprinkled both the book and the Jewish people.
- f. "Saying, this is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you" (9:20).
- (A) As the priest sprinkled the people and the book, he would utter the words mentioned in this verse.
- (B) The expression sounds very much like what Jesus said about the Lord's supper. "For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:28).
- (C) "Enjoined" from *eneteilato*, commanded. God left no doubt about His people's obligations to obey His word just as He had commanded.
- g. "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry" (9:21).
- (A) Blood of animals was sprinkled on both the tabernacle (*skenen*: tent) and on all the vessels (*skeuos*: goods, stuff, vessel).
- (B) The blood was sprinkled in order to set apart the tabernacle and the vessels for holy purposes.
- (C) "Ministry" from *leitourgias* (ministration, service). The word is generally used of ritualistic services.
- h. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding

- of blood is no remission" (9:22).
- (A) Virtually every service, every piece of furniture, etc. were purged by blood.
 - (B) "Purged" comes from **katharizetai** and probably would be better translated "cleansed." The Greek is almost always rendered "cleanse." The verb is used thirty times in the New Testament and translated "cleansed" twenty-four times. It is also translated "purify" (Acts 15:9) and "purged."
 - (C) The shedding of blood under the old covenant was essential for the eventual remission of sins.
 - (D) Under the new covenant, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.
 - (E) "But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).
 - (F) Modernistic theologians and radical feminists may object to the shedding of Christ's blood for the remission of sins, but New Testament Christians are grateful for the blood of Christ.
4. The sufficiency of Christ's sacrifices (9:23-28).
- a. "It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (9:23).
 - (A) "Necessary" from **ananke** and is used in Hebrews 7:12, 27; 9:16, 23. It was necessary because that was God's arrangement.
 - (B) "Patterns" from **hupodeigmata**, literally

to show under. The word is translated "example" (John 13:15; Heb. 4:11; 8:5; Jas. 5:10; 2 Pet. 2:6). "Copy" would not be a bad translation of the word.

- (C) The earthly sacrifices were patterns or examples of the things God had designed for this covenant.
- (D) The patterns or pictures were "purified" (cleansed) with the blood of animal sacrifices.
- (E) The "heavenly things," that is, those arrangements which God has made for the new covenant were to be purified or cleansed "with better sacrifices than these."
 - (1) Please remember that the word "better" is one of the keys to understanding the book of Hebrews.
 - (2) Christ's sacrifice was the highest heaven had to offer. Our sins are removed when we obey the gospel and have the blood of Christ applied to us.

b. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (9:24).

- (A) Christ did not make His sacrifice in the holy places made with hands, that is, the Jewish tabernacle.
 - (1) This verse is not intended to criticize the ordinances of the law of Moses. They were God ordained to serve His purposes until the gospel came.
 - (2) "Made with hands" (**cheiropoieta**) simply refers to an earthly tabernacle.

- (B) The holy places of the old covenant were "figures" of the true.
- (1) "Figures" from **antitupos** (antitype) and is used only here and in 1 Peter 3:22.
 - (2) The word "true" (**alethinós**) does not mean "true" as opposed to false; it means true as opposed to the figure or the picture. The same word is used in John 4:23: "true worshippers."
- (C) Christ did not offer Himself in the Jewish holy place but has entered into heaven itself.
- (D) He now appears in the presence of God for us.
- (1) "Presence" from **prosopo**, in the face of God.
 - (2) "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).
- c. "Nor that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place every year with blood for others" (9:25).
- (A) The sacrifices and offerings of the old covenant had to be repeated often. Hundreds of thousands of sacrifices were offered during the time the Mosaic law was in effect.
- (B) Jesus did not have to offer Himself every month or every year.
- (1) "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he lives, he lives unto God" (Rom. 6:10).
 - (2) "Who needs not daily, as those high

- priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7:27).
- (3) "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).
- (C) The high priest had to enter the holy place every year with blood to cleanse both himself and the people.
- d. "For then he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:26).
- (A) If the cleansing of our sins demanded that Jesus die often, as the animals did under the Jewish covenant, then He would have had to suffer since the foundation of the world.
- (B) The sacrifice of Christ was a once for all affair. He provided for the cleansing of the sins of all humanity by His death on the cross. There is no need for a repetition of His death.
- (C) Not "end of the world" but in the end of the age (**aionon**). At the end of the Jewish age, Jesus came to die for the sins of the whole world—both those who lived before He died and those who have lived since.
- (D) "Appeared" from **phaneroo**, to be manifest. The tense of the verb indicates it is a permanent state. What He did will continue to the end of the age.
- (E) "Put away" from **athetesin** (**atheteo**), to

- set aside, to abrogate, to annul.
- e. "And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (9:27).
- (A) "Appointed" from **apokeimai**, is laid away. This is the same Greek word used in reference to the crown which was laid up for Paul (2 Tim. 4:8).
 - (B) "Once" from **hapax**, a very common word in Hebrews, and means once for all, once never to be repeated.
 - (C) You and I are going to die physical deaths but one time. Some will experience the "second death" (Rev. 21:8).
 - (D) Where does this leave any room for reincarnation? Shirley MacLaine claims she has lived several times.
 - (E) Approximately 24% of Americans believe in the possibility of reincarnation.
 - (F) Men die once; so Christ had to die once.
 - (G) "But after this the judgment." Death is not the end; there is going to be a judgment.
- f. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (9:28).
- (A) As men have to die once, so Christ died once to overcome the power of sin in men's lives.
 - (B) His offering was to bear the sins of many.
 - (C) "Shall appear" from **ophthesetai**. We shall see Him when He comes again.
 - (D) His second appearance will be "apart from sin" rather than "without sin unto salvation."

Chapter Nine Questions:

1. Describe the Jewish tabernacle and its furniture.
2. How many times did the high priest go into the Holy place during one year? What was the purpose of his going into the Holy of Holies?
3. Regardless of the number of times the people sacrificed, they could not achieve perfect forgiveness through their activities. They were figures of that which has come in the new covenant. Explain.
4. The blood of bulls and goats was God's arrangement. But they could not take away sin. What purpose then did they serve?
5. The blood of Christ accomplishes what the blood of bulls and goats could not. How does the blood of Christ cleanse us?
6. Define the following words:
 - a. Mediator
 - b. Testament
 - c. Redemption
 - d. Testator
7. When does a testament or will become effective? When did the New Testament become applicable to men and women?
8. The tabernacle and the furniture in it were sprinkled with blood. Was it necessary that these things be sanctified with blood?
9. Can sins be remitted without the shedding of blood?
10. Christ has not entered into the Holy place; he has entered into heaven itself. What is the meaning of this?
11. Discuss: "For it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Does that passage allow for reincarnation?

Chapter 10

The Book Of Hebrews

J. Hebrews 10.

1. What animal sacrifices could not accomplish (10:1-4).
 - a. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of those things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (10:1).
 - (A) "For the law having a shadow of good things to come."
 - (1) It must never be forgotten that the law of Moses was God's law and therefore a good law. It served the purpose for which it was given.
 - (2) But it was not intended to last forever. "It was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promises were made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19).
 - (3) "Shadow" from *skian*- "shade caused by interruption of light as by trees" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 406).
 - (a) "Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:17).
 - (b) "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, says he, that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you

- in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).
- (B) "And not the very image of those things."
- (1) The contrast between "shadow" and "image."
 - (a) The "shadow" was a picture. It was good but not the ultimate reality.
 - (b) "Image" from **eikon** and is the ultimate reality. The word is used of Jesus (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15).
 - (2) The shadow pointed to the image of the good things which God had in store for the Christian era.
- (C) "Can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
- (1) The sacrifices of the old covenant served a worthy purpose, but they could not take away sin.
 - (2) They had to be offered every year. But they could not make the comers thereunto perfect.
 - (a) "Can" from **dunatai**, were not able, did not have the power.
 - (b) "Perfect" from **teleiosai**, achieve the ultimate goal or end.
 - (3) They were removed because God had something better in store for us.
- b. "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins" (10:2).
- (A) If the sacrifices of the Jewish covenant could have made the comers thereunto perfect, they would not have had to be

- offered continually from year to year.
- (B) There would have been no need for the sacrifices; they would have ceased to be offered.
 - (C) The reason they would have ceased is given: "The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins."
 - (1) Under the Christian system, our sins are forgiven—not remembered from year to year.
 - (2) "Once" from **hapax**, once for all. The sacrifices would not have had to be repeated.
 - (3) "Purged" from **kekatharismenous** (**katharizo**), to cleanse. Our English word "katharsis" comes from this Greek word.
 - (4) Once their sins had been purged—forgiven—they should have had no more conscience of sins. It would have been a cleansing once for all, just as it is through Jesus Christ. Cf. Acts 3:19—"blotted out."
- c. "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year" (10:3).
- (A) The language the Hebrew writer uses cannot be harmonized with the teaching of men like Stephen Carter and Paul Van Buren who maintain that the old covenant was an eternal agreement with the Jews.
 - (B) The sins of the Jews were not forgiven; they were remembered from year to year.
 - (C) When the high priest entered the most holy place, his work did not provide for

the complete forgiveness of sins.

- (D) The new covenant, on the other hand, completely takes away sin. "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:13). Remember that this verse is an excerpt from Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31-34).
- d. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (10:4).
- (A) The word for "able" or "can" is **dunatai** (10:1). this word is **adunaton**, not able. When the "a" is added as a prefix to a Greek word it negates that word. "Theism" means belief in God. "Atheism" means a denial of God's existence.
- (B) It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. The blood of bulls and goats were shadows of the real thing.
- (C) "Should take away" from **aphairein** (**aphaireo**).
2. Christ the perfect sacrifice (10:5-10).
- a. "Wherefore when he comes into the world, he says, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me" (10:5).
- (A) The Jews offered thousands and thousands of animals in sacrifice unto God. Josephus put the number at 255,600 but that probably was a gross exaggeration (Lightfoot, p. 185).
- (B) But the sacrifices of animals could not make the comers thereunto perfect. The

- animal sacrifices were ordained of God, but they were not intended to last throughout history.
- (C) Jesus left His heavenly home and came to this earth to be the sacrifice which would take away sin.
 - (D) He came into this world in a body which God had prepared for Him.
 - (E) This verse must not be interpreted to mean that God had not ordained and did not approve of animal sacrifices.
 - (F) The quotation beginning with the word "sacrifice" in this verse and going through verse nine is from Psalm 40:6-8. These verses provide an excellent commentary on the Old Testament truth, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).
- b. "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure in them" (10:6).
- (A) Again, it must not be understood to condemn Old Testament offerings and sacrifices. That is not what the Psalmist or the Hebrew writer is saying.
 - (B) There were times when the Jews' offerings were not accepted, but it was because of their ungodly behavior—not because the sacrifices were not God-ordained.
 - (C) But all the sacrifices were short term arrangements; they would be removed when Christ came.
- c. "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (10:7).

- (A) When it became known that the Old Testament sacrifices could not atone for sin, other arrangements had to be made.
 - (B) Jesus, the Messiah, is represented as volunteering to come to offer Himself for sins.
 - (C) Literally, "the roll of the book," referring to the book of Psalm (40:6-8).
 - (D) "It is written" from **gegriptai**, it stands written. The word means it was written and it is still true. Jesus used this word three times in resisting the devil's temptations (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10).
 - (E) "I come...to do thy will, O God."
 - (1) Whether on earth or in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ constantly did the will of God.
 - (2) Jesus said to them, "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).
 - (3) "And he who sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone; for I do always those things which please him" (John 8:29).
 - (4) "I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day: the night comes, when no man can work" (John 9:4).
- d. "Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offering thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law" (10:8).
- (A) The words in this quotation from Psalm 40 were the very words of Jesus Christ.
 - (B) He was predicting an end to the sacrificial system of the old covenant. Those

- sacrifices and offerings could not take away the sins of human beings.
- (C) Those sacrifices were offered "by the law" or "according to the law."
- e. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He takes away the first, that he may establish the second" (10:9).
- (A) He repeats Christ's purpose to do the will of God. By Christ's death on the cross, he removed the shadows of the Old Testament. He came to do whatever God wanted him to do.
- (B) "Takes away" from **anaireo**, to abolish. When used of a man it means to kill. Herod slew all the children (Matt. 2:16).
- (C) "Establish" from **stesei**, to place.
- (D) Who could ever have any doubt about the removal of the old covenant and the establishment of the new? "He takes away the first, that he may establish the second."
- f. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10).
- (A) "By the which" means "which very things." The first covenant was taken away that He might establish the second—by which we are sanctified.
- (B) "Sanctified" from **hagiasmenoi**, set apart, made holy. There was no possibility of our being cleansed of our sins if the old law had remained in effect. But we are set apart by the arrangements of the new covenant.
- (C) The ultimate sacrifice was the body of Jesus Christ. What the law could not do,

- God did through the sacrifice of Christ.
- (D) Christ offered Himself "once for all" (**hapax**)-once never to be repeated.
3. Christ has been exalted (10:11-18).
- a. "And every high priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (10:11).
- (A) The work of the priest was to stand daily and continually offer sacrifices.
- (B) He kept on offering the sacrifices.
Repetition.
- (C) "Ministering" (**leitourgon**) and "offering" (**phospheron**) the same sacrifices.
- (D) But those sacrifices-as valuable as they were-"can never take away sins."
- (1) "Can" from **dunantai**, were not able, did not have the power.
- (2) "Take away" from **periaireo**, to take from around, to remove utterly.
"Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3:16).
- (E) This verse reemphasizes the truth of verse 4: "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."
- b. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (10:12).
- (A) "This man" would be Jesus Christ.
- (B) He did not have to keep going to the tabernacle to keep on offering himself for the sins of the world. He offered one sacrifice for sins.

- (C) If Christ offered Himself one time for a sacrifice, why does the priest in the Roman Catholic Church claim that the "mass" is the "sacrifice of Christ's body" (Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 5, p. 409).
- (D) After He had offered Himself for the sins of the world, He sat down on the right hand of God.
- (E) **The New Testament and Psalm: An Inclusive Version** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). "Where the 'right hand' of God points to the power or might of God, as often in the Psalms 'mighty' or 'powerful' hand of God is frequently substituted for 'right' hand" (p. xxii).
- (1) "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he says himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make your foes your footstool" (Acts 2:34-35). The new version: "God said to my Lord, Sit at my side, until I make your enemies your footstool" (p. 184).
- (2) "But Christ, having offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, 'sat down beside God'" (p. 347). "Right hand" signifies a place of special honor; sitting beside God does not leave the same impression. This is clearly a dishonest translation.
- c. "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool" (10:13).
- (A) Jesus Christ looks to the future when He will have won the final victory. "Then

comes the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he has put all things under his feet. But when he says all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

(B) All of Christ's enemies will be made His footstool. This quotation is from Psalm 110:1.

- d. "For by one offering he has perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (10:14).
- (A) Jesus did not have to offer Himself several times or even two times. He offered Himself one time.
- (B) Through His one offering, He "perfected" for ever them that are sanctified.
- (1) "Perfected" (**teleleioken**) and shows how Jesus Christ once for all cleansed those who came to Him by faith and obedience.
- (2) The Old Testament sacrifices could not provide these benefits.
- (C) "Sanctified" from **hagiazō** and refers to their being set apart and forgiven.
- e. "Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before" (10:15).

- (A) The Holy Spirit bore witness to what had been said before from Psalm 40:7-9.
 - (B) The scripture for the author of Hebrews settled the case he had been advancing that the Old Testament law could not bring forgiveness and the New Testament does.
 - (C) "After having said."
 - f. "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" (10:16).
 - (A) We have examined this quotation in considerable depth in Hebrews 8:6-13. It is quoted from Jeremiah 31:31-34.
 - (B) The predictions of a new covenant have been overlooked by those who maintain that the law of Moses is still binding.
 - (C) Even if it were permissible to observe the old covenant, it would be unwise. The new is better in every way.
 - g. "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (10:17).
 - (A) "Sins" from **hamartion** (missing the mark) and "iniquities" from **anomion** (lawlessness, literally without law).
 - h. "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (10:18).
 - (A) Under the old covenant, there had to be a continual offering for sin ("year by year continually").
 - (B) When Christ offered Himself for the sins of the whole world, His sacrifice extended to the end of the age. There is no need for further sacrifices.
4. Drawing near to God (10:19-25).

- a. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ" (10:19).
- (A) "Boldness" from **parresian**, "openly" (Mark 8:32), "plainly" (John 10:24), "freely" (Acts 2:29), "confidence" (Acts 28:31). The word does not mean crude or rude. It involves courage in speaking what one believes.
 - (B) Because of what Christ accomplished for us on the cross, we can have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ.
 - (C) The holiest would be heaven itself where Jesus Christ has gone.
- b. "By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (10:20).
- (A) The word translated "new" (**prosphton**) means fresh, that which has recently happened. The new replaces the old.
 - (B) The way Jesus opened up is also a living way. It provides an abundant life here and eternal life here after (John 10:10).
 - (C) That new and living way has been "consecrated" (**enkainizo**) for us.
 - (1) "Consecrated" means opened, dedicated. Christ opened a way which had not been there before.
 - (2) The death of Jesus Christ provided the living way—the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).
 - (D) The language is obviously symbolic. The veil is Christ's flesh.
- c. "And having a high priest over the house of God" (10:21).

- (A) Both before the law of Moses and during that age, there were men who served as priests of God. We know very little about God's arrangements before the law came, but we know considerably more about the law of Moses.
- (B) We now have a great high priest—Jesus Christ—over the house of God.
- d. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (10:22).
 - (A) Because of what our great high priest has done in opening the new and living way, we must draw near to Him.
 - (B) "True" from **aliethines**, genuine.
 - (C) "In full assurance" means in full faith-trusting God for the promises. How do we develop that "full faith" or assurance?
 - (D) The sprinkling of this verse refers to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:18-22). It is figurative language referring to our obedience to the gospel of Christ.
 - (E) Having "our bodies washed with pure water" describes our obedience to the Lord in baptism.
 - (1) "And now why do you tarry? Arise, and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).
 - (2) "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water and the word" (Eph. 5:26).
 - (3) "Not by works of righteousness

- which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).
- (4) Peter stresses inward nature of the cleansing. "The like figure whereunto even baptism does not save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21).
- (F) The conscience is cleansed when we believe the gospel and obey it from the heart.
- e. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful who promised) (10:23).
- (A) This is the second part of the Hebrew writer's exhortation. The first was: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (10:22).
- (B) He next pleads with the early Christians to "hold fast their profession of faith." "Faith" is from **elpides** (hope).
- (1) "Hold fast" (**katecho**) is a present active verb and means keep on holding fast. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end....For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:6, 14). The tenses of the verbs are different, but the message is the same: "We must hold fast to the end."

- (2) A.T. Robertson quotes Jonathan Edwards as saying "that the sure proof of election is that one holds out to the end" (volume 5, pp. 358-359).
- (C) The word "profession" should be rendered "confession." Let us hold steadfastly to our belief in Christ and in His gospel. But what if we do not hold fast to the profession of our faith? Will that in anyway affect our eternal salvation?
- (D) "Without wavering." **Akline** means not leaning and is used only here in the New Testament.
- (E) We may waver but we know the one in whom we trust will never waver. God is faithful to His promises.
- f. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (10:24). This is the third exhortation in this context.
- (A) "Consider" from **katanoeo**, to understand fully, consider closely.
- (1) The word is used of not considering thoroughly the beam in one's own eye (Matt. 7:3).
- (2) It is also used of carefully considering the ravens (Lk. 12:24) and the lilies of the field (Lk. 12:27).
- (3) The verb is also translated "perceive" (Lk. 6:41), "behold" (Acts 7:31-32), and "beholding" (Jas. 1:23).
- (B) New Testament Christianity is a "one another" religion. We must be concerned about our brothers and sisters in Christ and about others also.
- (C) "Provoke" from **paroxuno** (our word "paroxysm" comes from this Greek

- word). **Para**, beside, and **oxuno**, to sharpen, to stimulate, to incite.
- (D) Christians must incite or inspire one another to love. How do we stimulate others to be more loving? How much would example of being loving help?
- (E) We must also stimulate others to good works. What good works?
- g. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more, as you see the day approaching" (10:25).
- (A) Christians are to provoke one another to love and good works. Do the good works include assembling ourselves to worship?
- (B) "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."
- (1) "Forsaking" from **enkataleipo**, from **en**, in, **kataleipo**, to leave. The literal meaning is to leave behind or to leave in the lurch.
- (a) "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5).
- (b) "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed into ThessalonicaAt my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Tim. 4:10, 16).

- (2) "Assembling" comes from **episunagogen (episunago)** to gather together.
- (a) The verb form is used of our Lord's gathering His people as a hen gathers her chickens (Matt. 23:37).
 - (b) The noun form is used only here in Hebrews 10:25 and in 2 Thessalonians 2:1: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him."
 - (c) But what is the assembling-Sunday morning only? Does it include other times when the elders lead us to study and to worship-Sunday night, Wednesday night, Vacation Bible School, and gospel meetings?
- (C) "As the manner of some is."
- (1) Our generation is not the only one where some have neglected the assembling of the saints. Dr. A.T. Robertson: "Already some Christians have formed the habit of not attending public worship, a perilous habit then and now" (volume 5, p. 412).
 - (2) When Christians attend only one service during the week, are they really abounding in the work of the Lord? "Abounding" means to do more than is expected, to go above and beyond the call of duty.
- (D) "Exhorting one another." "Exhorting"

from **parakaleo**, to urge, to warn, to encourage. The literal meaning is to call to one's side for comfort and support. The noun form is translated "comforter" (John 14:26) and "advocate" (1 John 2:1).

(E) "And so much more as you see the day approaching."

(1) That is, make an extra effort as you see the day approaching.

(2) What day? Is it the first day of the week or is it the second coming of Christ? I believe it means the final judgment. We are to attend the worship services and encourage others to do so in view of the final judgment.

5. Punishment awaits those who apostatize (10:26-31).

a. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins" (10:26).

(A) Does the Hebrew writer attach sinning wilfully to failure to attend services? Is failure to attend really that serious?

(B) Is it possible to sin wilfully? If it is not, the language of this verse is meaningless. If we can sin wilfully, will it affect our eternal salvation-if we do not repent?

(C) **Hekousios** denotes voluntarily, willingly.

(D) Is there a difference in sinning wilfully and sinning through ignorance?

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe

on him to life everlasting" (2 Tim. 1:16).
"Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. 1:13).

(E) "After we have received the knowledge of the truth."

(1) Literally, "after the receiving the knowledge of the truth."

(2) "Knowledge" from **epignosis**, full knowledge. In other words, the person could not plead ignorance as Paul did in 1 Timothy 1:13.

(F) "There remains no more sacrifice for sins."

(1) "No longer is there left behind" any sacrifice for sins. When one has rejected Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, there is no other available.

(2) The tense of the verb is present active indicative and points to continuing in sin, repeated acts of leaving Christ's sacrifice behind. If we continue to sin or if we persist in sinning, there is no more sacrifice for our sins.

b. "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (10:27).

(A) "Fearful" from **phobos**, in the sense of being afraid.

(B) "Looking for" from **ekdoche**, expectation.

(C) Judgment will be directed against those who continually reject the truth of the gospel.

- (D) "Fiery indignation" from **puros zelos**, a fierceness of fire.
- (E) "Devour" from **esthiein**, literally to eat.
- (F) "Adversaries" from **hupenantious**, those directly opposite.
- (G) Men cannot reject God's gracious offer of salvation and not expect to be punished.
- c. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" (10:28).
- (A) "Despised" from **atheteo**, to put at no value (**a**, negative, **theton**, what is placed, from **tithemi**, to put or place).
- (1) The verb is translated "reject" (Lk. 7:30), "frustrate" (Gal. 2:21), "disannul" (Gal. 3:15), "cast off" (1 Tim. 5:12) and "despise" (Jude 8).
- (2) The noun form (**athetesis**) is rendered "disannulling" (Heb. 7:18) and "put away" (Heb. 9:26).
- (B) Even though the law of Moses was to be replaced by the gospel of Christ, those who were under that law were required to obey its precepts.
- (C) "Died without mercy." They had to pay the penalty for violating the law. "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape" (Heb. 2:2-3).
- (D) The RSV reads: "A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses."
- (1) "At the mouth of two witnesses, or

three witnesses, shall he be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death" (Deut. 17:6).

- (2) There is a far greater likelihood of one witness's lying than that two or three might. This was a safeguard for the Israelite people.
- d. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose you, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, where-with he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (10:29)?
- (A) This is called an argument from the less to the greater. If the Jews could not escape punishment when they lived under a less than perfect law, how can we escape living on the perfect law of liberty? Hebrews 2:1-4 makes the same argument.
- (B) "Sorer" from **cheironos**, worse. (This word is used as a comparative form of **kakos**, evil).
- (C) "Punishment" from **timorias** which originally meant vengeance. The word involves helping by redressing injuries. When our legal system allows criminals to go free, they are not helping anyone.
- (D) "Suppose" from **dokeo**, to think, to seem.
- (E) "Thought worthy" from **axiothesetai** (**axioo**), to deem worthy. Axiology is "the study of the nature, types and criteria of values and of value judgments,

especially ethics.”

- (1) The man who disobeyed the law of Moses was worthy of punishment.
 - (2) Since the gospel is a greater law in every respect than the law of Moses, those who violate the new covenant are worthy of punishment.
- (F) “Trodden under foot” from **katapateo**, to tread down, to trample under foot.
- (1) The word is used literally of salt which is fit only for treading under foot (Matt. 5:13).
 - (2) It is used metaphorically in Hebrews 10:29. The idea—although not the word—is used in this verse: “If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame” (Heb. 6:6).
- (G) They tread under foot the Son of God—not “child” of God—as **The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version** translates the Greek.
- (1) The parable of the man who planted a vineyard. He went into a far country and left his vineyard to husbandmen. The owner sent a servant to the husbandmen to get fruit from the vineyard. The husbandmen beat the servant and sent him away empty. He sent two more servants who were also beaten and sent away empty. Then he sent his son who was killed. What will the lord of the vineyard do? “He shall

come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others" (Lk. 20:9-16). The application: "What is this then that is written? The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Lk. 20:17-18).

- (2) The Revised Standard Version translates **katapateo** as "spurned."
- (H) "Counted" from **hegeomai**, to lead the way; hence, to lead before the mind, account.
- (I) "The blood of the covenant" refers to the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of our sins.
- (J) "Sanctified" from **hagiazō**, to make holy, to set apart.
- (K) "An unholy thing" from **koinon**, common, ordinary.
- (L) "Has done despite" from **enubrisas** (**enubrizo**), to give insult. How could anyone treat the blessings of God in such a fashion? Is he speaking of members of the body of Christ or of unbelievers? Had unbelievers ever "been sanctified by the blood of the covenant?"
- (M) "The spirit of grace." The Bible speaks of God's grace, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 8:9) and now of "the spirit of grace."
- e. "For we know him who has said, Vengeance belongs unto me, I will recompense, says the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people" (10:30).

- (A) "Know" from **oidamen**, to know fully. We have absolute assurance that God will do what He says He will do. We can trust Him completely.
- (B) "Vengeance" from **ekdikesis**, literally "that which proceeds out of justice" (Vine, p. 1196). The New Testament often uses the word of divine vengeance (Rom. 12:19). God's vengeance is not based on whim, but on principle.
- (C) "Recompense" from **antapodidomi**, to give back an equivalent, to requite. "To me belongs vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. 32:35).
- (D) "And again, The Lord shall judge his people." "For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he sees that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left" (Deut. 32:36).
- f. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (10:31).
- (A) "Fearful" from **phoberon** and refers to the wrath of God in punishing evildoers. The word is used in the New Testament only in Hebrews (10:27, 31; 12:21).
- (B) The Bible pictures God as being gracious, loving and tender, but it also shows His wrath against those who persist in rebellion and disobedience.
- (C) "Fall into" from **empipto**, to fall in.
- (D) The God who will judge us at the end of the age is a living God who judges

men according to their deeds. He is the God of mercy, but He has no choice except to punish evildoers.

6. Christians must not draw back unto perdition (10:32-39).
 - a. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions" (10:32).
 - (A) "Call to remembrance" from **anamineskesthe** and means "remind yourselves." The verb could be rendered "keep on reminding yourselves." Is the Hebrew writer suggesting that we might forget our first love? Were the Jews of the old covenant ever accused of forgetting the "honeymoon" with God? "Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer. 2:32).
 - (B) "The former days" would refer to their early enthusiasm for the cause of Christ - "their first love" (Rev. 2:4). Was it possible for the Jews to lose their first love? Is it possible for us? If it is not possible, why would the Hebrew writer use this kind of language?
 - (C) "Illuminated" from **photizhentes**, enlightened (**photizo, phos**). The verb generally is translated "light" or "enlighten." "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit" (Heb. 6:4).
 - (D) "Endured" from **hupomone**

(**hupemeinate**) and means to remain under, to be steadfast. What afflictions they had to endure we are not told, but we know from Acts and from other books what many of these early Christians had to experience.

(E) "Fight" from **athlesin** and involved being engaged in public contests in games. "And if a man also strive (**athle**) for the masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully (**athlese**)" (2 Tim. 2:5). The word suggests the great difficulties under which Christians often have to live.

(F) "Afflictions" from **pathematon**, sufferings. The Greek is almost always rendered either "afflictions" or "sufferings."

b. "Partly, while you were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, while you became companions of them who were so used" (10:33).

(A) Some of the sufferings the early Christians endured pertained to their being made a gazingstock.

(1) "Being made a gazing stock" from **theatrizomenoi**, to bring on the stage, to hold up to derision (Robertson, volume 5, p. 415).

(2) "For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle (**theatron**) unto the world, and to angels and to men" (1 Cor. 4:9).

(3) The verb is used only here in the

New Testament. The word "theater" (**theatron**) is used two times of an actual theater. "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theater" (Acts 19:29). The same word is used in Acts 19:31).

- (B) "Reproaches" from **oneidismois**, defamation. The word is always translated "reproach" in the King James Version. The RSV renders the word "abuse."
- (C) "Afflictions" from **thlipsis (thlibo)**, to be troubled. The basic meaning of the word is pressure or oppression.
- (1) The verb is translated "narrow" (Matt. 7:14), "should throng" (Mark 3:9), "troubled" (2 Cor. 4:8; 7:5) and "afflicted" (1 Tim. 5:10).
 - (2) The noun is rendered "tribulation" (Matt. 13:21), "anguish" (John 16:21), "persecution" (Acts 11:19), "trouble" (2 Cor. 1:4), "burden" (2 Cor. 8:13).
- (D) Part of the sufferings of the early Christians pertained to their associating with those who were gazingstocks because of reproaches and afflictions.
- "Companions" from **koinonoi**, partakers, partners.
- c. "For you had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring

substance" (10:34).

- (A) We know so little about the Christians to whom this great epistle was addressed but this verse is very commendatory of their Christian behavior.
- (B) "Compassion" from **sunpatheo**, to have feeling with. Our English word "sympathy" comes from this Greek word.
- (C) There is a difference in the text from which the King James was translated and those texts which were used by later translators. The KJV reads: "You had compassion on the prisoners." The Greek literally reads: "You had compassion on them that were in bonds (**desmiois**)."
The difference makes no difference.
- (D) The Hebrew Christians took joyfully "the spoiling of your goods."
 - (1) "Spoiling" from **harpazo**, seizing, plundering. This word involves taking by force. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and **take him by force**, to make him king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15). "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). The noun form (**harpago**) is translated "extortion" (Matt. 23:25).
 - (2) "Goods" from **huparchonton**, your belongings. The rich and powerful have always taken advantage of poor

people—especially righteous poor people.

- (E) The Christians knew that fighting about earthly possessions was not the ultimate meaning to life. They had a right to defend their possessions, but they were at a disadvantage with the courts of that day. Sometimes our courts are just as corrupt. How much chance does a poor man have in our court system?
- (F) The early Christians knew they had in heaven “a better and an enduring substance.”
 - (1) The apostle Peter describes our inheritance as “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:4).
 - (2) The Hebrew writer says that Abraham was looking for a “city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb. 11:10).
 - (3) Our heavenly inheritance is better than all this world’s possessions combined. The Greek says “better possession” (*kreissona huparxin*).
 - (4) “Enduring” from *meno*, to abide. No one can take our heavenly home from us (Matt. 6:19ff).
- d. “Cast now away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward” (10:35).
 - (A) “Cast away” from *apoballo*, to throw away as being worthless.
 - (B) Is it possible for Christians to throw away their salvation?

- (C) The King James Version has "confidence" (**parresian**), but the Greek would be better rendered "boldness." Why are Christians bold? Because of what God has given us through Jesus Christ. If we turn aside from the gospel, we will lose the boldness we have in Christ.
- (D) "Recompense of reward" is from **misthapodosian**, **misthos**, wages, **apo**, back, and **didomi**, to give. God has promised a reward of eternal life if we are faithful to Him. Will the reward be ours regardless of how we live? Cf. Hebrews 11:6—"a rewarder of them who diligently seek him."
- e. "For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise" (10:36).
- (A) In view of the persecutions and sufferings which Christians have experienced, we can understand the need for "patience."
- (B) "Patience" from **hupomone**, endurance, steadfastness. The literal meaning is to remain (**meno**) under (**hupo**).
- (C) "Having done the will of God." If salvation is unconditional, as the Calvinists teach, doing the will of God is unnecessary.
- (1) If salvation is unconditional, even talking about the will of God is not logical.
- (2) Of course, there are many in the religious world who deny that men may know what the will of God is.

- (D) "You might receive the promise." Is the Hebrew writer saying that receiving the promise is contingent on having done the will of God?
- f. "Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (10:37).
- (A) "Yet a little while" comes from Isaiah 26:20. The Hebrew writer uses this expression to introduce a longer quotation from Habakkuk.
- (B) The quotation from Habakkuk was a prediction concerning the coming of the Messiah.
- (C) The Hebrew writer wanted those who had done the will of God and had suffered for the name of Christ to know they would be rewarded.
- (D) "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by faith" (Hab. 2:2-4).
- g. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (10:38).
- (A) "The just shall live by faith" is from Habakkuk 2:4.
- (1) Paul used the same quotation from Habakkuk. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just

- shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).
- (a) Are the Hebrews and Paul teaching faith only?
 - (b) "This only would I learn of you, Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh" (Gal. 3:2-3)?
- (2) There is a great difference in saying we are saved by faith and in saying we are saved by faith alone.
- (B) "If any man draw back."
- (1) "Draw back" from **huposteiletai**, to draw oneself back, to withdraw, to shrink back.
 - (2) Is it possible to draw back? If it is not, why did the inspired writer mention it? Paul used the same word in his address to the Ephesian elders: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).
- (C) If a man draws back or shrinks back, what is God's response to such behavior? "My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Does that really matter? The word "pleasure" (**eudokei**) is the word God used of Jesus Christ: "In whom I am well pleased."
- h. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them who believe to the saving of the soul" (10:39).
- (A) Obviously, there were some who did draw back or the topic would not have been mentioned.

- (B) But the writer and other faithful Christians did not belong in that category. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition."
- (1) A.T. Robertson says the word "draw back" (**hupostello**) was used in Plutarch of "stealthy retreat" and in Josephus of "dissimulation" (volume 5, p. 417).
 - (2) "Perdition" is usually rendered "destruction." Sometimes the word is translated "waste" (Matt. 26:8), "damnable" (2 Pet. 2:1).
- (C) "But of them who believe to the saving of the soul." They would be faithful unto death and would receive the crown of life. These words were intended to encourage the people in the first century and us.

Chapter Ten Questions:

1. Explain the meaning of this expression: "For the law was a shadow of good things to come."
2. Liberal theologians sometimes deny that God ordained the sacrifices and offerings of the Jewish covenant. Show from this chapter how wrong their views are.
3. One of Christ's chief aims was to do the will of God. What did He do in carrying out God's will?
4. Because of what Christ has done for us, we can enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ. Explain.
5. According to the exhortations in this chapter, must Christians hold fast to the end?
6. What does this chapter teach about being absent from the assembly of the saints?
7. Those people who deny that God will punish anyone have overlooked these message of Hebrews 10:31. Discuss.
8. What is the meaning of the following verse: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God?"
9. Define:
 - a. Gazingstock
 - b. Reproaches
 - c. Afflictions
10. The author of Hebrews pled with his readers not to cast away their confidence. Would that be serious if they did?
11. Discuss: "The just shall live by faith." Considering the teaching of the Hebrews, what does that mean?

Chapter 11

The Book Of Hebrews

K. Hebrews 11.

1. What faith does (11:1-3).

a. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (11:1).

(A) The Bible does not deal in definitions, at least, not technical definitions.

(1) Hebrews 11:1 can more properly be called a description of faith.

(2) "Whom having not seen, you love; in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:8).

(3) 1 Corinthians 13 tells us much about love, but it does not give a definition of love. But who could read that great chapter without having a deep understanding of love?

(B) What is faith?

(1) The basic meaning of the word is "trust." Does faith involve knowledge? How can I trust someone whom I do not know?

(2) How do we get faith? "So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

(3) Hebrews 11 is the greatest chapter in the Bible on faith. It shows faith in action. "By faith Abraham...obeyed God" (Heb. 11:8).

(C) "Substance" from **hupostasis**, literally that which stands under. That is also the meaning of the English "substance."

- (1) Most versions translate the Greek by the word "assurance."
 - (2) The word appears only five times in the Greek New Testament. It is rendered "confident" (literally confidence of boasting) (2 Cor. 9:4; 11:17); "the express image of his **person**—"the very stamp of his image" (RSV) (Heb. 1:3) and "confidence" (Heb. 3:14).
 - (3) "It is common in the papyri in business documents as the basis or guarantee of transactions" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 418).
 - (4) Moulton and Milligan suggest the translation "Faith is the **title-deed** of things hoped for."
- (D) "Things hoped for."
- (1) The things they had hoped for were the great promises of the gospel.
 - (2) Hope involves both wishing and desiring or expecting.
 - (3) Without hope this life would be meaningless.
- (E) "The evidence of things not seen."
- (1) The American Revised: "The proving of things not seen."
 - (2) The Revised Standard Version: "The conviction of things not seen."
 - (3) The Greek word **elengchos** (conviction) involves having proof of one's beliefs.
 - (4) Faith is based on evidence and is itself also evidence.
- b. "For by it the elders obtained a good report" (11:2).
- (A) "By faith the elders obtained a good

- report." What elders?
- (B) The word "elders" (**presbuteroi**) probably ought to be rendered men of old, that is, the men of whom he is to write.
 - (C) "Good report" is from **emarturethesan**, "had witness borne to them."
 - (D) God approved of the faith and obedience of the men who are mentioned in Hebrews 11.
- c. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (11:3).
- (A) I am not sure why the King James translators rendered the Greek "through faith." It should be translated "by faith."
 - (B) How do we "know" the worlds were framed by the word of God? We were not there; no one we have ever met was there. Is our faith based on solid evidence or are we just speculating about the origin of the universe?
 - (C) We understand (**noeo**), that is, we have intellectual apprehension by faith.
 - (D) There are really only two possibilities for explaining the world: evolution and creation. Which makes more sense—materialism or the scriptures?
 - (1) There is no evidence—scientific or otherwise—for evolution. But what about the fossils? Do they not prove evolution?
 - (2) There are no scientific laws or principles which contradict creationism.
 - (3) But I cannot conduct any experiment which proves creation, although

many prominent scientists are leaning in the direction of creationism.

- (E) "Framed" from *katartizo*, to mend, to equip, to perfect. The word is rendered "perfectly joined together" (1 Cor. 1:10). It was the kind of language a physician would use in setting broken bones or a fisherman would use of mending nets.
 - (F) How were the "worlds" (*aionas*: ages) framed? "By the word of God." Does the Hebrew writer mean that God simply spoke the worlds into existence?
 - (G) "The things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." This verse refutes a number of false theories being promoted in our day.
 - (1) Pantheism. God and the world are separate. God framed the world of things which do not appear.
 - (2) Monism. God and the world are not the same substance.
 - (3) Materialism. Matter is not eternal. God is eternal and made everything that has been made.
2. The faith of Abel, Enoch and Noah (11:4-7).
- a. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks" (11:4).
 - (A) "By faith" and "through faith" (*pistei*) are from the same Greek word. Most versions render the Greek "by faith."
 - (B) If Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice "by faith," where did he obtain the faith? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and

- hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10: 17).
- (C) Unless God told Cain and Abel what He expected of them, it would have been unfair to them to demand obedience.
- (D) The Old Testament incident: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of the flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth (angry), and his countenance fell" (Gen. 4:4-5).
- (E) "By faith...offered." He had to comply with God's command to find approval from God. "By faith Abraham...obeyed" (Heb. 11:8).
- (F) "By which" (his sacrifice) he obtained witness that he was righteous.
- (1) "He had witness borne to him" (**emarturethe**).
 - (2) He was righteous because he had complied with God's plan for making men righteous.
 - (3) The doctrine of "imputed righteousness" cannot be harmonized with this passage.
 - (4) God's plan for making men righteous under the new covenant is the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17).
- (G) "God testifying of his gifts." "Testifying" is from the same word rendered "obtained witness" (**martuountos**). God approved of Abel's offering because it was offered in harmony with God's will.
- (H) "By it he being dead yet speaks."
- (1) Not "by it" but "through it," that is,

- his faith shown by his offering in harmony with God's commands.
- (2) Abel had been dead a long time before the book of Hebrews was written, but he was still speaking to that generation.
 - (3) What was the message Abel had for future generations? God approves of our behavior when it harmonizes with His revealed will.
 - (4) "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24).
 - (5) All men and women who have died speak to subsequent generations. What message do you and I want to leave for those who come after us?

*Lives of great men still remind us,
We can make our lives sublime;
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints in the sand of time*

("A Psalm of Life," Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

- b. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (11:5).
 - (A) We are not given much information about Enoch, but we do have this verse in the Old Testament. "And Enoch walked with God, and he was not: for God took him" (Gen. 5:24). How can a person walk with God unless he knows who God is and what God requires of

him?

- (B) "Translated" from **metatithemi**, to transpose, to change.
- (1) "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law" (Heb. 7:12).
 - (2) "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, **turning** the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4).
 - (3) "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him who called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). "You are transferring yourselves" (Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 4, p. 275).
 - (4) Enoch was transposed from this earthly existence to a place where he awaits the final judgment.
- (C) Only Enoch and Elijah were removed from this earth without experiencing death. Both men walked in harmony with the will of God.
- (D) "Was not found." **Heurisko** is a very common verb in the New Testament (used 178 times). "Heuristic" has come to mean discover.
- (E) "Before his translation (**metatheseos**) he had this testimony, that he pleased God."
- (1) "Testimony" from **memarturetai**, witness. God had given Enoch testimony or witness that he was walking in harmony with God's will for his life.

- (2) "He pleased God," literally "he was well-pleasing unto God" (euarestekenai).
- (F) How many of us seek to walk in such a way as to have this testimony with God? What do we have to do to be well-pleasing in His sight?
- c. "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 them that diligently seek him" (11:6).
- (A) Enoch's translation was evidence that he was pleasing God. Enoch's faith led to his being pleasing to God.
- (B) "Without faith it is impossible to please him."
- (1) There are a great number of religious actions a man might take to impress his fellowmen. For example, he might give large sums of money to certain worthy causes—helping the poor, preaching the gospel, etc. But if these actions are not motivated by faith in God, they do not do the giver any good.
- (2) Man's behavior must be motivated by faith in God, in God's Son and God's book. Without that faith it is impossible to please God.
- (C) The word "faith" in this verse might be better translated "trust." "Trust" is essential to our relationship to God and to our fellowmen. Husbands and wives must trust each other. We have to trust our banks, etc.
- (D) "He who comes to God." When we come to God for our spiritual blessings, we

must have faith in Him.

- (E) "Must believe that he is."
- (1) We must believe in the existence of God. How can we serve God unless we know He exists and what He wants us to do?
 - (2) Dennis McCallum, General Editor, **The Death of Truth: What's Wrong with Multiculturalism: The Rejection of Reason and the New Postmodern Diversity.** (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1996). "The person who thinks he has found the ultimate truth is wrong. There is an often-quoted verse in Sanskrit, which appears in the Chinese Tao-te Ching as well: 'He who thinks he knows, doesn't know. He who knows that he doesn't know, knows.' For in this context, to know is not to know. And not to know is to know" (p. 220). How is that for ultimate confusion? Is that the ultimate truth?
- (F) We must also believe that God is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him.
- (1) We must understand the goodness of God in rewarding men according to their works (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - (2) "Rewarder" from **misthapodotes genetai**, becomes a rewarder. **Misthos**, reward, **apodidomi**, to pay back.
 - (3) "Seek" from **ekzetousin**, present participle, keep on seeking after Him. The word literally means "to seek

out" or "to seek after."

- d. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (11:7).

(A) Few men in the history of the world has shown greater faith than Noah.

(1) He had never seen a flood. He knew nothing about a flood, except what the Lord told him. He almost unquestionably was the object of many jokes.

(2) "By faith" indicates he had received information from God on the coming flood and how to avoid being destroyed by it.

(B) We do not have to wonder as to whether God has spoken to Noah. "Being warned of God."

(1) "Warned of God" from **chrematistheis** (**chrematizo**) referred to divine warnings, although the word "God" is not used in this verse. The word itself indicates a divine communication. Some examples of the use of the Greek:

(a) "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way... But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God

in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee" (Matt. 2:12, 22).

(b) "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, he says, that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

(c) "And the disciples were called (**chrematisai**) Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

(2) God's warnings today come through the preaching of His inspired word.

(C) "Of things not seen as yet."

(1) God knew what He was going to do to the earth because of man's exceeding sinfulness, but Noah's insight had to come from God Almighty.

(2) His faith was such that he took God at His word.

(D) "Moved with fear."

(1) "By faith Noah...moved."

(2) "Moved" from **eulabeomai**, to take hold well or carefully. The word "fear" is included in the Greek **eulabeomai**. **Eulabes** is rendered "devout" (Lk. 2:25; Acts 2:5; 8:2). RSV renders the phrase: "took heed."

(E) "Prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

(1) "Prepared" from **kataskeuazo**, to make ready. The word is used of preparing oneself for war (1 Cor. 14:8) and preparing an offering for

the needy (2 Cor. 9:2). The RSV translates the word "constructed."

- (2) "Ark" from **kiboton**. The ark was basically of the same dimensions as sea-going vessels today.
 - (3) Noah's preaching had not been overly successful—from an earthly viewpoint. He had very few converts to show for his many years of preaching. But he did save his house.
- (F) "By which he condemned the world."
- (1) Noah's faith and faithfulness condemned an unbelieving world—not only by his preaching but by his righteous life also.
 - (2) "Condemned" from **katekrinen**, the common word in the New Testament for "condemn."
 - (3) The world in Noah's day was wicked beyond imagination. That world needed a Noah, but they would not take heed to his preaching.
- (G) "And became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."
- (1) Only those who listen to God, believe His word and obey it can become heirs of God.
 - (2) "Righteousness" in Noah's case meant doing what God commanded. His righteousness was by faith—believing and obeying God.

3. The faith of Abraham (11:8-12).

- a. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (11:8).

(A) "By faith Abraham."

- (1) Very few men in the history of the world have had greater faith than Abraham.
- (2) Abraham was "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11).
- (3) He was also called "the friend of God" (Jas. 2:23). "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend forever" (2 Chron. 20:7).
- (4) The faith of Abraham is discussed at length in Romans 4:1-3 and James 2:21-24.

(B) "When he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed."

- (1) Abraham lived in Ur of the Chaldees in southern Mesopotamia. "Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your Father's house, unto a land that I will show you: and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him who curses you: and in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).
- (2) The key to understanding Abraham's faith is the word "obeyed." Abraham did not simply believe in God's existence; he trusted God implicitly.

How could he leave home and family if he did not trust God?

(C) "He went out not knowing whither he went."

- (1) Even if God had told Abraham where he was going, it still would have required faith to take God at His word.
- (2) But Abraham did not know where he was going. God just said, "Go," and Abraham went.
- (3) No wonder Abraham is called the "father of all them who believe" (Rom. 4:11).
- (4) Is Abraham's faith the "faith alone" type which Calvinist's promote?

b. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs of the same promise" (11:9).

- (A) "By faith" means he was operating according to God's wishes for his life.
- (B) "He became a sojourner" (**paroikesen**). The verb means to dwell beside, **para**, beside, **oikeo**, to dwell. The same word is used in the following passage. "And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Are you only a stranger in Jerusalem, and have you not known the things which have come to pass there in these days" (Lk. 24:18)? **Paroikos** means "stranger" (Acts 7:26) and "foreigner" (Eph. 2:19).
- (C) We know the land of promise was Palestine, but Abraham did not know that until he actually wandered in that land. It was promised to Abraham, to

Isaac, and to Jacob.

(D) "As in a strange country."

(1) "As in a foreign land" (RSV).

(2) The Greek literally says, "As in a land not his own" (**allotrian**, belonging to another). The word is also rendered "aliens" (Heb. 11:34).

(E) "Dwelling" (**katoikesas**) with Isaac and Jacob.

(1) The promise God made to Abraham did not apply to him alone. It was also given to Isaac and to Jacob and to the Israelite people.

(2) Although Isaac and Jacob were not the faithful men they should have been, nevertheless they also enjoyed the promise made to Abraham.

(3) Throughout the New Testament there is an emphasis on the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob (Acts 3:13).

(F) "The heirs of the same promise." "Heirs with him" from **sunkleromenon**, fellow-heirs, or joint-heirs.

c. "For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (11:10).

(A) "Looked" from **ekdechomai**, "his steady and patient waiting in spite of disappointment" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 422). The verb often conveys the idea of expectancy.

(1) How much had God revealed to Abraham about the city which has foundations?

(2) Or, are human beings so constituted that we have a longing for a better

world than this?

- (3) "Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandmen waits (**ekdechomai**) for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (Jas. 5:7).

(B) "A city."

- (1) While Abraham was looking for an earthly dwelling, this was not the city the Hebrew writer had in mind.
- (2) "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).

(C) "Which has foundations."

- (1) Abraham and his immediate descendents dwelt in tabernacles or tents (**skene**) but these were temporary and earthly in nature.
- (2) Abraham was looking for the eternal city—a city with foundations. This expression shows that Bible writers did not consider heaven a pipe dream. It was as real as their earthly dwelling.

(D) "Builder" from **technites** from which we get such words as technical, technology. The word means a craftsman, an artificer, a skilled workman. "And because he was of the same craft (**techne**), he abode with them, and wrought: (for by their occupation they were tentmakers)" (Acts 18:3). The word is also translated "art" (Acts 17:29).

- (E) "Maker" from **demiourgos**, **demi**, public, and **ergon**, a worker. The word is used only here in the New Testament. I am not sure of any great difference between the words "builder" and "maker."
- d. "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised" (11:11).
- (A) Sarah and Rahab are the only women specifically mentioned in this chapter on faith. But this comment is made about other women: "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance: that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Heb. 11:35). Rahab's faithfulness is mentioned in James 2:25.
- (B) Sarah's faith in God enabled her to conceive seed.
- (1) "Received strength" from **dunamin**, power, was able.
 - (2) "Conceive seed" from **katabolen spermatos**, to deposit seed.
 - (3) Seventy-five-year-old women do not have children except by divine intervention.
 - (4) She judged God to be faithful in what He had promised.
 - (5) None of this says that Sarah did not have doubts, but she ultimately trusted God to fulfill His promise.
- e. "Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable"

(11:12).

(A) God had promised to bless Abraham and make of him a great nation. Whether the Hebrew writer includes Christians among Abraham's seed, we are not told, but the descendents from Abraham have been a great multitude. Are the Jews his only descendents?

(B) "And him as good as dead." From a viewpoint of human reproduction, Abraham was as good as dead.

(C) Abraham's offspring are compared to "the stars of the sky in multitude" and "the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." The Greek for "innumerable" is **anarithemetos** from **arithmeo**, a, negative, and **rithmeo**, to count or to number.

4. The city God has prepared for the faithful (11:13-16).

a. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (11:13).

(A) Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob all "died in faith" (not by faith). Is he speaking of the realm in which they died? They had lived by faith in the word of God and they died in faith.

(B) "Not having received the promises." They never actually inherited the land of Canaan.

(1) There was a land promise which was fulfilled when the Israelites crossed the Jordan river into Palestine.

(2) There was also a spiritual promise

which Abraham could see only by faith and that was the promised Messiah.

- (C) "But having seen them afar off."
(1) They saw them afar off "by faith."
(2) But their faith was not mere opinion or wishing. They had seen the faithfulness of God in many ways and knew He would fulfill all the promises He had made to them.
- (D) "Were persuaded of them."
(1) The King James Version has **peitho** (to persuade) but other versions have **aspazomai**, to salute, to greet, to express good wishes. RSV translates the Greek: "greeted it from afar."
(2) Whichever version is correct, the truth remains the same. They knew about the promises God had made and those promises extended beyond this earthly existence.
- (E) "Embraced them" means they actually accepted the promises God had made and they lived accordingly.
- (F) "Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."
(1) "Strangers" from **zenoi**, foreigners.
(2) "Pilgrims" from **parepidemoi**, a sojourner in another land, to sojourn by the side of natives. Cf. 1 Peter 1:1; 2:11.
- (G) How they knew so much about God and heaven and their short time on earth, we are not told. But God had to reveal some of these great truths to Abraham and to his descendents. They had faith in God and faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17).

- b. "For they who say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" (11:14).
- (A) "For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland" (RSV).
 - (B) "Speak thus" refers to their confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims in this earth.
 - (C) Their faith was not merely dreaming. They had faith founded on God's revelation of His will for their lives, although we do not have access to all of God's revelation to Abraham.
 - (D) "Declare plainly" from **emphanizo** (emphasize) and is translated "will manifest" (John 14:21), "signify" (Acts 23:15), "informed" (Acts 24:1). They stated their case very plainly and emphatically.
 - (E) "They seek a country."
 - (1) They were not merely looking for a city; they were "seeking" (**epizeteo**) a city.
 - (2) "Country" is from **patrida**, a homeland, literally a land of their fathers.
- c. "And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned" (11:15).
- (A) "If they had continued mindful, they would have kept on having opportunity to return."
 - (B) If they had kept their minds centered on their homeland in Mesopotamia, they could have returned—but not with God's approval.

- (C) They knew they were not destined for this earth; so they walked in harmony with God's will for them even though they apparently did not always know exactly where they were going or what the ultimate outcome would be.
- d. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city" (11:16).
- (A) "Desire" from *orego*, to stretch out after, yearning after.
- (1) "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work" (1 Tim. 3:1). The second work for "desire" is *epithumeo*.
- (2) "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which **while** some **have coveted after**, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10).
- (B) The fathers were looking for a better existence than they had known either in Mesopotamia or in Palestine.
- (C) They desired "an heavenly" country. They were looking "for a city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).
- (D) Because of their faith and faithfulness, God was "not ashamed to be called their God."
- (1) Is God ashamed to be called the God of some of the cults and radical groups which claim that He is their God?
- (2) Is He ashamed to be called our God?

- (E) "He has prepared for them a city."
 (1) They were not satisfied with what they found as the home on this earth.
 (2) God knew their longing and their faithfulness and has prepared for them a city.
 (3) Are we at home on this earth or do we look for a city beyond this life?
5. The faith of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob (11:17-22).
- a. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son" (11:17).
- (A) In my judgment there is no greater example of faith in all of God's book than this incident in the life of Abraham.
- (B) "When he was tried."
 (1) "Being tried" (*peirazomenos*, present passive participle).
 (2) Some versions render the Greek "tested." The verb can be translated "tempted" (Matt. 4:1), "assayed" (Acts 16:7), "examine" (2 Cor. 13:5).
 (3) But God did not tempt Abraham since He cannot tempt anyone (Jas. 1:13-15).
- (C) "Offered" is perfect tense, an accomplished fact—in the mind of Abraham. "The act was already consummated so far as Abraham was concerned when it was interrupted and it stands on record about him" (Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 5, p. 424).
- (D) Abraham received the promises about God's blessing Abraham and making him a great nation. And yet God was

- asking him to offer up his son through which the promises were to be realized.
- (E) The King James has "offered" but the Greek should be rendered "was offering" or "was ready to offer" (imperfect tense). "The imperfect tense vividly portrays unfinished action: Abraham was in the act of offering Isaac when God intervened" (Neil Lightfoot, pp. 212-213).
- (F) "His only begotten" (**monogene**)-not his only son but the only through one the promises were to be fulfilled.
- b. "Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (11:18).
- (A) "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in your sight because of the lad, and because of your bondwoman; in all that Sarah has said unto you, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall your seed be called" (Gen. 21:12).
- (B) The position of Abraham seems to be an impossible one. God has promised to bless the nations through Isaac. Now God is asking Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice.
- (C) Abraham had the faith mentioned by John the Baptist. "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matt. 3:9).
- c. "Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure" (11:19).
- (A) "Accounting" from **logizomai**, to reckon, to suppose.
- (B) "God was able to raise him up." How

could Abraham have had such faith? So far as we know, nothing had ever been said about a resurrection.

- (C) Abraham knew the power of God. He could have reasoned from the power of God to His ability to raise people from the dead.
 - (D) "From whence," that is, from the dead. In Abraham's mind, Isaac was as good as dead. God had given the command; Abraham was prepared to obey the command.
 - (E) "Received" from **ekomisato**, to receive back.
 - (F) "Figure" from **parabole** from which we get our word "parable." Other versions translate the Greek "parable" (RV). The RSV translates: "figuratively speaking."
- d. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (11:20).
- (A) Where did Isaac get the information to bless Jacob and Esau?
 - (B) The account appears in Genesis 27:28-40. This account shows the darker side of human behavior.
 - (C) By the aid of God's spirit, Isaac was able to see some of the future for his sons. God said to Esau: "And by your sword you shall live, and shall serve your brother; and it shall come to pass when you shall have the dominion, that you shall break his yoke from off your neck" (Gen. 27:40).
- e. "By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" (11:21).
- (A) Genesis 47 records the incident the

Hebrew writer had in mind. "And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head" (Gen. 47:31).

- (B) There is no word for "leaning" in the Greek. The quotation is from the Septuagint (LXX). The Hebrew has "head of the bed," but either rendering could be correct depending on the vowel pointings.
 - (C) The sons of Joseph were Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48).
- f. "By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones" (11:22).
- (A) Joseph is one of the truly great men of the Old Testament. His courage, his moral purity, and his faithfulness are wonderful examples to men and women in every age.
 - (B) "When he died" should be rendered "when his end was near" (**teleuton**). Present active participle of **teleutao**, to finish or to close. "Finishing his life."
 - (C) "Departure" from **exodou**. The event described in Joseph's prediction is called the "exodus."
 - (D) The promise of God concerning the departure of the Israelites had been known for a long time. Joseph had enough faith in the promises of God to ask that his bones be carried to the promised land when the event occurred.
 - (E) For Joseph it was not "if" the Israelites were delivered, but "when." Joseph knew God was always faithful to His

promises (2 Pet. 3:9).

6. By faith Moses (11:23-29).
- a. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment" (11:23).
- (A) Whose faith is under consideration in this verse—the faith of Moses or his parents?
- (B) Amram and Jochebed knew God had something special in mind for Moses. How did they know? Was it parental pride and intuition?
- (C) "Was hid" from **ekrube (krupto)**.
- (D) Why was Moses hid for three months?
- (E) "They saw he was a proper child."
- (1) In the account in Exodus, the King James renders the word "goodly."
- (2) "Proper" from **asteion** usually refers to polished manners, genteel. How could his parents know at such an early age what Moses would become?
- (3) Whose child is not a goodly or proper child?
- (4) In the movie, **The Ten Commandments**, the pharaoh said about Moses: "I could see in you a worth that was above other men."
- (F) The parents of Moses were not afraid of the king's commandment.
- (1) "Afraid" from **phobeomai**. They trusted in God and were not going to comply with the king's immoral command.
- (2) Were they right to rebel against the

king's command?

- (3) What about the mid-wives who refused to kill Hebrew children (Ex. 1:15-22)?
- b. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter" (11:24).
- (A) Had God been communicating with Moses during the time he lived in the Egyptian courts? How much did Moses know about God's plan for the Israelites?
- (B) "When he was come to years" from **me-gas genomenos**, literally "having become great."
- (C) "Refused" from **ernesato**, to deny. Moses knew what was involved and would not stay in the Egyptian capital.
- (D) Pharaoh's daughter had taken Moses from the Nile and reared him as her own. Moses knew something of God's plan for his life and refused to be an Egyptian.
- c. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (11:25).
- (A) "Choosing" from **helomenos**, second aorist middle of **haireo**, having chosen for oneself, or having taken a position for oneself.
- (B) "Suffer affliction with" from **sungkakoucheomai**, encounter adversity along with someone.
- (C) He was obviously in a very high position in the Egyptian government. How could he give all of that up knowing that suffering would be his?
- (D) Does the Hebrew writer really mean

- “enjoy the pleasures of sin?” Is there pleasure in sin?
- (E) “Pleasures of sin for a season” from **proskairon echein hamartias apolausin**, literally “to have temporary pleasure of sin.”
- (F) Moses might have enjoyed temporary power, pleasure and prestige, but he would have to give an account for his behavior.
- (G) If God does not exist and if there will not be a final judgment, how can the choice Moses made be justified?
- d. “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward” (11:26).
- (A) “Esteeming” from **hegeomai**, to lead before the mind, to suppose, to consider, to count. “And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:13).
- (B) “Reproach” from **oneidismon**, literally to cast into one’s teeth. The Greek verb is also translated “shall revile” (Matt. 5:11), “upbraid” (Matt. 11:20), to cast into the teeth (Matt. 27:44). “The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth” (Matt. 27:44)
- (C) Is it the reproach Christ suffered or what we suffer for Him? Both are true. Isaiah 53 tells of the reproach Christ had to endure. Many passages tell us we too shall suffer reproach for His name.
- (D) Egypt was the most powerful nation and the richest nation in the world during

the days of Moses. Astronomy, mathematics and other disciplines were highly developed in that era.

- (E) How could Moses give all of that up to suffer for the cause of the Lord?
- (F) "For he had respect unto the recompense of reward." "For he looked to the reward" (RSV). "For he kept on looking away to the reward."
- (G) How much did he know about the reward? Where had he learned it? If it were by faith, the Lord had to reveal it to him.
- (H) "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35).
- e. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (11:27).
 - (A) Moses left Egypt but apparently not because he thought of being punished for killing the Egyptian. "Forsook" from **kataleipo**, a strengthened form of leave or leave behind.
 - (B) Moses did not fear the wrath of the king of Egypt.
 - (C) "Endured" from **kartereo**, was strong, remained steadfast.
 - (D) "Seeing him who is invisible."
 - (1) How can one see the invisible? By faith! This is not blind faith but faith founded on fact. The contact Moses had with the Lord gave him assurance to stand fast.
 - (2) This is the secret of his life—"as seeing him who is invisible."
- f. "Through faith he kept the passover, and

the sprinkling of the blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch him" (11:28).

- (A) Why does the King James Version change from "by faith" to "through faith?" In both cases the word is **pistei** -by faith. Maybe they just changed for variety's sake.
 - (B) The tense of the verb indicates the permanent nature of the keeping of the passover. The tense says, "He has made."
 - (C) God had instructed the Jews to keep the passover in view of what was going to happen. After the events had taken place they continued to keep the passover as a memorial.
 - (D) The sprinkling of the blood was to keep the destroyer away from the Israelites. "Sprinkling" from **proscheo**, to pour upon. Cf. Exodus 12:7, 22.
 - (E) Would the Jews who failed to pour the blood on the doors and lintels of their houses have been lost? Does that sound like faith alone? Were the commands of God more binding on the Jews than His commands are binding on us?
- g. "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned" (11:29).
- (A) God had given Moses assurance that they would be safe. Not all the secular powers in the universe could have hurt the Jews. They were living by faith. No harm could come to them.
 - (B) The crossing of the Red Sea was a major event in the history of Israel.
 - (1) "Then sang Moses and the children

of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider had he thrown into the sea...

Pharaoh's chariots and his host has he cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone" (Ex. 15:1, 4).

- (2) "He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand up as an heap" (Psa. 78:13).
- (3) "He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left" (Psa. 106:9-11).
- (4) "To him who divided the Red Sea into parts: for his mercy endures forever: and made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endures for ever: but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea: for his mercy endures forever" (Psa. 136:13-15).
- (5) One would think the great miracle at the Red Sea would convince the Jews once and for all that God was with them. But how long was it after they crossed the Red Sea until they

- began to murmur and complain?
- (C) "Assaying" from **lambano**, to take, "of which taking trial." "But when the Egyptians attempted to do the same were drowned." Was God cruel in causing the deaths of so many Egyptians? Some modernistic theologians answer in the affirmative, but they are dead wrong.
8. The faith of Rahab at Jericho (11:30-31).
- a. "By faith the wall of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days" (11:30).
- (A) One German scientist said the walls of Jericho fell because Joshua had learned the art of blasting. He had dynamite or a similar explosive which destroyed the walls of Jericho.
- (B) The Hebrew writer said it was by faith. Marching around the walls did not weaken the foundations and cause them to fall. They fell by the mighty hand of God Almighty.
- (C) "Compassed" from **kukloo**, to encircle. The Jews could have still been marching, but the walls would not have fallen except by the power of God.
- b. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (11:31).
- (A) Where did Rahab get her faith? Did she learn it from watching the Israelites?
- (B) "Harlot" from **porne**, prostitution. The masculine form is **pornos** and is always translated either "fornicator" or "whoremonger."
- (C) Those who did not believe what God

was showing them in various ways
perished.

- (D) Rahab could see the hand of God in what was occurring at Jericho.
 - (E) "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers (the Hebrew letter calls them spies) and had sent them out another way" (Jas. 2:25)?
 - (F) Is there a contradiction between "faith" and "works?"
9. The faith of the judges and the prophets (11:32-39).
- a. "And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets" (11:32).
 - (A) "And what shall I say more?"
 - (1) The Hebrew writer could have given a long list of heroes of the faith many times longer than he had given.
 - (2) In every age, there have always been people who were dedicated to doing God's will. The list is almost endless. The Christian era could add many names to this list.
 - (B) The Hebrew writer did not have the time to tell of all the great men and women of faith.
 - (C) Gideon (Judges 6:11-8:35).
 - (1) The Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Midianites for seven years (Judges 6:1).
 - (2) The Midianites and the Amalakites combined forces to destroy the crops

so that neither man nor beast could find food (Judges 6:4).

- (3) In their distress the Israelites cried to the Lord for help. God sent a prophet to assure the Israelites of His continuing concern for them (Judges 6:7-10).
- (4) God sent an angel to Gideon, saying, "The Lord is with you, mighty man of valor" (Judges 6:12).
- (5) Gideon asked the angel why they were subject to the Midianites if the Lord was with them (Judges 6:13).
- (6) God told Gideon that He would deliver the Israelites. Gideon wanted to know how he could deliver the Israelites from the Midianites (Judges 6:14-15).
- (7) Gideon prepared a sacrifice and made unleavened cakes from flour. The angel instructed him to take the flesh and unleavened cakes and lay them on a rock. The Lord sent fire out of the rock and consumed the flesh and the cakes. Gideon realized it was the Lord communicating with him (Judges 6:19-21).
- (8) Gideon destroyed the altar of Baal. The Midianites were very angry and determined to make Gideon pay for his behavior.
- (9) Gideon and the fleece (Judges 6:36-40).
- (10) What about the empty pitchers and lamps (Judges 7:15-18)?

(D) Barak.

- (1) Deborah was a prophetess who

judged Israel (Judges 4:4).

- (2) Deborah instructed Barak to take ten thousand men to fight against Jabin's army. Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, then I will not go" (Judges 4:4-8).
- (3) The Israelites enjoyed a great victory under Barak and Deborah.

(E) Samson.

- (1) Manoah's wife was barren. An angel of the Lord promised her a son. "Now therefore beware, I pray you, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing: for, lo, you shall conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:3-5).
- (2) The exploits of Samson.
- (3) Samson and Delilah.

(F) Jephthah...A Gileadite judge of Israel. He delivered them from the Ammonites.

- (1) What is the most memorable event in the life of Jephthah?
- (2) Judges 11-12.

(G) David.

(H) Samuel.

(I) "The prophets" ...Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, et al.

b. "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions" (11:33).

(A) The men who are mentioned in the preceding verse did not achieve victory and

success because of their ability and devotion, although they had to be faithful. They won "through faith." They followed the Lord's commands which is the true meaning of faith.

- (B) "Subdued" from **katagonizomai**, to struggle against, to overcome. **Agonizomai** is translated fight, literally to agonize. The Hebrew writer may have in mind the many victories the Jews experienced when they conquered Canaan.
- (C) "Wrought" from **ergazomai**, to work, to produce, to perform. They worked righteousness. "In every nation he who fears God and works righteousness" (Acts 10:34-35).
- (D) "Obtained promises." God had made many promises to the Jews. Some they did not realize because the promises were conditional. Others were fulfilled beyond the time they lived. But they did enjoy the fulfillment of many promises.
- (E) "Stopped the mouths of lions." There may have been many occasions when this happened, but we remember the incident involving Daniel (Dan. 6:18-23).
- c. "Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of aliens" (11:34).
- (A) "Quenched the violence of fire."
(1) "Violence" from **dunamin**, power.
(2) One example is Daniel 3:19-28.
- (B) "Escaped the edge of the sword."
(1) "Escaped" from **pheugo**, to flee.
(2) "Through faith" they were able to

save their lives.

- (3) But there were many times when the Israelites were killed by their enemies.
- (C) "Out of weakness were made strong."
(1) "Weakness" from **edunamothesan** (**dunamoo**). This word involves not having strength. "Won strength out of weakness" (RSV).
(2) We are not given a specific instance, but there are many in the Old Testament.
- (D) "Waxed valiant in fight."
(1) "Waxed" from **ginomai**, became.
(2) "Valiant" from **ischuroi**, strong.
(3) "Fight" from **polemos**, battle, war.
- (E) "Turned to flight the armies of aliens."
(1) "Turned to flight" from **klino**, to make to bend.
(2) "Armies" from **parembole**, a casting among, an insertion, in the Macedonian dialect, a military term. It can refer to a camp. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (Heb. 13:13).
(3) "Aliens" from **alotrion**, belonging to another (the opposite of one's own **idios**).
- d. "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (11:35).
(A) "Women received their dead raised to life again."
(1) Through faith certain women had their dead restored to them.

- (2) The widow of Zarephath and the Shunamite woman had their sons brought back to them (1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:18-37).
- (B) "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance."
- (1) "Were tortured" from **tumpanizo**, to beat the drum, to beat to death. Our word "timpani" (kettledrum) comes from this Greek word. It came to us through Latin, but it was originally Greek.
- (2) "Deliverance" from **apolutrosin**, redemption. They would rather pay with their lives than compromise their convictions. But if this life is all there is, why would they do that? "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:22).
- (C) "That they might obtain a better resurrection." The RSV renders that expression: "That they might rise again to a better life." But if there is not resurrection, why make any sacrifices for the cause of Christ?
- e. "And other had cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" (11:36).
- (1) Many early Christians died for their faith in Christ and their unwillingness to deny Him.
- (2) "Mockings" from **empainmon** and was used of Christ's being mocked. "And when they had platted a crown of thorns,

- they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:29).
- (3) "Scourgings" from **mastigon, mastix**, a whip. "And the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know therefore they cried so against him" (Acts 22:24). We will plan to say more about the word in Hebrews 12:6.
- (4) "Bonds" from **desmon**, stocks, usually refers to imprisonment. "For you had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34).
- (5) "Imprisonment" from **phulakes**. "In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings" (2 Cor. 6:5).
- f. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented" (11:37).
- (A) "Stoned" from **elithasthesan** (lithos, a stone). This was a means of Jewish punishment. Zechariah, the son of Jehoida, was stoned "at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord" (2 Chron. 24:21). Stephen was stoned to death (Acts 7).
- (B) "Sawn asunder" from **apristhesan** (**prizo**, to cut with a saw). Tradition says that Isaiah was sawn asunder.

- (C) "Were tempted" from **peirazo**. Some scholars think the word should be **pimprao**, to be burned. "Tempted" does seem rather mild compared to the other terms he has used.
- (D) "Were slain with the sword." This was done often in Old Testament times.
- (E) "They wondered about in sheepskins and goatskins." This was the kind of garment many of the prophets wore.
- (F) "Destitute" from **hustereo**, to be left behind.
- (G) "Afflicted" from **thlibo**, to oppress. The verb is translated "narrow" (Matt. 7:14), "troubled" (2 Cor. 7:5), "suffer tribulation" (1 Thess. 3:4).
- (H) "Tormented" (**kakouchoumenoi**), to be evil entreated, suffer adversity.
- g. "Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (11:38).
- (A) The sinful world in which these great heroes of faith lived was not worthy of them. "Worthy" from **axios** meaning value. The discipline of axiology deals with values.
- (B) They had very few places where they could live safely. So they wandered in deserts, in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth.
- (1) Frankly, I am not in a position to understand what they had to endure.
 - (2) In spite of their hardships, they remained faithful to God.
 - (3) What will happen to those who abused and mistreated God's faithful servants?

- h. "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise" (11:39).
- (A) "These" would refer to all the faithful mentioned in verses 5 through 38. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13).
- (B) "Having obtained a good report." "Good report from **marturethentes**, having witness borne to them.
- (C) "Received not the promise." That is, they did not live to see the promised Messiah. They had no doubt about His coming, but they never lived to see His day.
- i. "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (11:40).
- (A) The Hebrew worthies did not live to see the Messianic prophecies fulfilled, but those who have lived since Pentecost have seen them.
- (B) "The better thing for us" is the new covenant which God has provided through Jesus Christ.
- (C) "They without us should not be made perfect."
- (1) The Old Testament saints are not going to come up short in the day of judgment.
- (2) But God's plan was not completed until Jesus came and gave the new covenant.
- (3) The word "perfect" means complete.

Chapter Eleven Questions:

1. Some preachers refer to Hebrews 11 as "the heroes of faith." Is that an appropriate title?
2. What is faith, according to Hebrews 11:1?
3. Who were the elders who received a good report?
4. Since we were not present at the creation, how do we know what happened?
5. Outline what the author of Hebrews says about the following "heroes of the faith:"
 - a. Abel
 - b. Enoch
 - c. Noah
 - d. Abraham
 - e. Isaac
 - f. Jacob
 - g. Joseph
 - h. Moses
 - i. Rahab
 - j. Sarah
6. If one does not have faith in God, nothing he does will be pleasing to God. How do we know that?
7. Would you describe the faith of these heroes of faith as of the "faith only" variety? Why or why not?
8. The author of Hebrews did not have space or time to discuss many other heroes of the faith. But he gives a summary of what some of them had to endure. List some of the experiences of these people.

Chapter 12

The Book Of Hebrews

L. Hebrews 12.

1. Christ's example (12:1-3).

- a. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us" (12:1).

(A) "Wherefore" indicates that some arguments have gone before from which the inspired writer is drawing some conclusions.

(1) God had made promises regarding His care and concern for His people. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:19-21).

(2) The Hebrew writer has given an impressive list of men and women who stood steadfast regardless of the trials, temptations and persecutions. This recitation of the great heroes of faith was intended to give strength to the early Christians and to us.

(B) "Seeing we also are compassed about with so many witnesses."

(1) "Compassed about" means

surrounding the heroes of faith. Christians are not likely going to encounter any greater oppression and opposition than men like Moses and Joseph. We should take courage from this great cloud of witnesses.

- (2) The picture is that of a great amphitheater where men and women are watching the events taking place. The Hebrew worthies are described as if they are watching us in our heartaches and tribulations.
 - (3) The witnesses in this verse are not merely spectators. They can testify from their own experience. Moses could say to us: "Do you think you are having it worse than we did under the pharaohs in Egypt?"
- (C) "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us."
- (1) "Laying aside" (**apothemenoi**) is the word for laying off one's clothes (Col. 3:8).
 - (2) "Every weight" refers to whatever handicaps us from serving God acceptably, like pride, doubt, sloth, indifference.
 - (3) The literal rendering of the Greek is "the surrounding sin." Dr. A.T. Robertson identifies the sin as "apostasy" (volume 5, p. 432). Some other sin might be our besetting or surrounding sin.
- (D) "And let us run with patience the race that is set before us."
- (1) The tense of the verb suggests that we keep on running. We must never

think we have reached the goal.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended (laid hold): but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

- (2) "Patience" from **hupomone**, steadfastness, endurance. The word literally means to stand under. It is the word which was used of Job's patience (Jas. 5:11).
- (3) "Race" is from **agona**, conflict, struggle, fight.
 - (a) The noun form of the word (**agon**) appears six times in the New Testament and is rendered "conflict" (Phil. 1:30; Col. 2:1), "contention" (1 Thess. 2:2), "fight" (1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7) and "race" (Heb. 12:1).
 - (b) The verb form (**agonizomai**) is used seven times and is translated "strive" (Lk. 13:24; 1 Cor. 9:25; Col. 1:29), "fight" (John 18:36; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7). The verb is used only once of actual fighting. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).
 - (c) There is no assurance that our

struggle will be over until this life ends.

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

(A) If we are tempted to desert the cause of Christ because of the hardships we have to face, we should look to Jesus for strength and support.

(1) "Looking" from **aphorao**, a verb meaning to look away. The verb is a present active participle, continually looking away to Jesus. We need inspiration for life's journey; only Jesus Christ can provide for our needs.

(2) "Author" from **archegon**, captain, pioneer. Neil Lightfoot say it originally applied to a "hero who founded a city, gave the city his name and became its guardian" (p. 76). The word appears three other times in the New Testament and is rendered: "Prince of life" (Acts 3:15), "a **Prince** and a Savior" (Acts 5:31) and "captain of their salvation" (Heb. 2:10). Moffatt translates the expression, "the pioneer of personal faith" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 433).

(3) "Finisher" from **teleiotein**, a word found nowhere else in extant documents. Paul may have invented the word from **teleioo**, to perfect or to complete. The Latin Vulgate has "consummator." Jesus is the one who

originated the faith and the one who completed it.

(B) "Who for the joy that was set before him."

(1) Jesus knew the sufferings and heart-aches He would have to endure.

How can the Hebrew writer speak of "the joy that was set before him?" Christ's joy had at least two facets: The joy of returning to the Father and the joy of having done the Father's will.

(2) There was no other way to accomplish the Father's in bringing so many sons to glory.

(C) "Despising the shame."

(1) Dying on a Roman cross is not anyone's idea of joy and happiness. "Death by crucifixion was a death reserved for slaves and criminals, an experience unfit for civilized men." The Roman orator, Cicero, said concerning the cross, "Let the very mention of the cross be far removed not only from a Roman citizen's body, but from his mind, his eyes, his ears."

(2) It was shameful for anyone to die on a cross (Phil. 2:8). But Christ did not despise the shame so much as he wanted to do the will of His Father.

(D) "He is set down at the right hand of God."

(1) The verb should be rendered "has set down." The verb is perfect active: "He has sat down and still is there." The perfect tense involves a past

action with continuing results.

(2) **The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version** refuses to use the expression, "right hand," for fear of offending left-handed people.

c. "For consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds" (12:3).

(A) "Consider" from **analogizomai**, to reckon up, to compare, to weigh (used only here in the New Testament). Our word "analogize" comes from this Greek word.

(B) "Endured" from **hupomeno**, to remain under. The verb form of the word **hupomone** (patience) in verse 2.

(C) "Contradiction" from **antilogian**, to speak against. "And without contradiction the less is blessed by the better" (Heb. 7:7).

(D) When Christians know of the hatred they have to endure because they are children of God there is always the danger of becoming weary and fainting in their own words.

(1) "Weary" from **kamete (kamno)**, rendered "sick" in James 5:15. But there is no time for Christians to become weary and quit.

(2) "Faint" from **ekluo**, to loosen out, the set free, to become enfeebled. The Greek is always translated "faint" (Matt. 9:36; 15:32; Mark 8:3; Gal. 6:9; Heb. 12:5).

2. God's discipline of His children (12:4-11).

a. "You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (12:4).

- (A) Thousands and thousands of God's people have had to suffer immeasurably. We have examined that truth in Hebrews 11:33-40. They resisted unto blood, that is, they paid for their faithfulness with their lives.
- (B) "Have resisted" comes from **antikathistemi**, to stand in opposition against in the line of battle. **Anti**, against, **kata**, down, **histemi**, to stand.
- (C) "Striving" from **antagonizomenoi**, conflict over one's devotion to God. **Agonizomai** is the word generally rendered "fight" (1 Tim. 6:12).
- (D) If we expect to be popular with the world, we must not strive against sin. Opposing false doctrine and immoral behavior has never been popular with the world.
- b. "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks unto you as unto children, My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are rebuked of him" (12:5).
- (A) If they had forgotten the exhortation, they had known it in the past.
- (B) "Exhortation" from **parakleseos**. The word can be translated "consolation" (Lk. 2:25), "comfort" (Acts 9:31), "intreaty" (2 Cor. 8:4). It is one form of the word rendered "comforter" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The word is also translated "advocate" in reference to Christ (1 John 2:1).
- (C) "Speaks" from **dialegetai** (dialogue) and usually rendered "dispute" (Acts 19:8) or "reasoned" (Acts 18:4).

- (D) "Children" (**huiois**) should be translated "sons."
- (E) The quotation is from Proverbs 3:11-12.
- (F) "Do despise" from **oligoreo** and means to regard lightly. The word **oligos**, little, **ora**, care.
- (G) "Chastening" from **paideias**, discipline. Charles Williams, RSV, NASB, NIV, and other modern versions render the word "discipline."
- (1) "The whole training and education of children; whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence
- (a) instruction which aims at the increase of virtue,
- (b) chastisement, chastening" (Joseph Henry Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. New York: American Book Co., 1886, p. 473).
- (2) The English word "discipline" means "training or experience which molds, corrects and strengthens, especially the mental and moral character" (**Webster's Third New International Dictionary**, p. 644).
- (3) Greek words related to "discipline:"
- (a) **Paideuo**, verb to discipline, "chastise" (Lk. 23:16), "was learned" (Acts 7:22), "taught" (Acts 23:2), "chastened" (1 Cor. 11:32), "may learn" (1 Tim. 1:20), "teaching" (Titus 2:12). The noun form is used six times and the verb form thirteen times.

- (b) **Paideutes**, instructor, which corrected us.
 - (c) **Paidagogos**, instructors (1 Cor. 4:15), schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24-25).
 - (d) **Pais** means child, servant, maid.
- (H) How does God discipline His children? Does He send disease, famine, and tornadoes?
- (I) Does He discipline us through His word, through our elders, through fellow Christians, etc.?
- (J) "Faint" from **ekluo**, to loosen out, the set free, to become enfeebled. The word is used in Hebrews 12:3.
- (K) "Rebuked" from **elencho**, to convict, to refute, to reprove. The King James translates the word "tell fault" (Matt. 18:15), "reproved" (Lk. 3:19), "being convicted" (John 8:9), "convince" (John 8:46), "rebuke" (1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 4:2).
- c. "For whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourges every son whom he receives" (12:6).
- (A) "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord: neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loves he corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights" (Prov. 3:11-12).
- (B) When parents discipline their children—including correcting and punishing them—they are often accused of not loving them.
- (C) From a scriptural viewpoint, the opposite is the truth. "Withhold not correction from the child: for if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23:13-14). If we fail to

do whatever is necessary to deliver a child's soul from hell, is that not loving him?

- (D) Parents sometimes say, "But I love my child so much, I just cannot spank him."
- (E) A church loves its members only if it does all within its power—including withdrawing—to help them to go to heaven.
- (F) "Love" from **agapao**, the kind of love God has for His people.
- (G) "Scourge" from **mastigoo** (**mastigos**: a whip).
 - (1) Jesus used the word in the following passage. "And (they) shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. 20:19).
 - (2) Another Greek word, **mastix**, is also translated "scourge." "And they bound him with thongs. Paul said unto the centurion who stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned" (Acts 22:25)?
- (H) The church has not been given the authority to punish someone physically, but we can withdraw fellowship or "deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Cor. 5:5).
- (I) God scourges every son whom He receives. He does whatever is necessary to keep us from following evil and being lost. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-

ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

d. "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chastens not" (12:7)?

(A) "Endure" from **hupomeno**, to stand up under, to remain steadfast. If we remain faithful because of the discipline we receive, God is dealing with us as with sons.

(B) "Chasten" comes from the Latin **castigare** and means to punish. The Greek word **paideuo** is a more comprehensive word and includes warning, urging, teaching, and instructing, as well as correcting and punishing. Thayer said it means: "the whole training and education" (p. 473).

(C) What if we do not stand up under the Lord's discipline? Are we behaving like God's children?

(D) "For what son is he whom the father does not chasten?"

(1) There are ten million homes in the United States without a father. How can absentee fathers discipline their children?

(2) The Hebrew writer does not mean that all disciplinary activities are the father's responsibility, but he is the head of the house and will be held accountable for the discipline of his children.

(3) David Blankenhorn's new book, **Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem**

(New York: Basic Books, 1995), is one of the best books on the subject ever published. Dr. William Bennett has given Blankenhorn's book a ringing endorsement, as have many other prominent scholars.

- (E) If the Hebrew writer had been living in modern America, he might have asked his question a little differently. He might have asked, "Should not every father discipline his sons?"
- (F) In too many cases, the father leaves all the discipline to the mother. He is either gone or thinks it is her duty to discipline the children.
- e. "But if you be without chastisement (discipline), whereof all are partakers, then are you illegitimate children and not sons" (12:8).
 - (A) The child or adult who lives without discipline is most unfortunate.
 - (1) It proves, at least, to the child that no one loves him. Children almost instinctively understand that. It is not unusual to hear a child say, "If you really loved me, you would not let me run with the wrong crowd, or use drugs or engage in sexual promiscuity."
 - (2) An undisciplined person is an accident looking for a place to happen. All of us have witnessed what happens to undisciplined children and adults.
 - (B) God has provided for discipline for all human beings: Through the family, the church, civil government, etc. God wants

- us to learn from disciplinary activities, regardless of who does the disciplining.
- (C) "Illegitimate children" means those children who are born out-of-wedlock. Sometimes parents are ashamed of such children and may not give the attention they would other children.
- (D) We are not treating our children as genuine sons and daughters if we do not discipline them.
- f. "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live" (12:9)?
- (A) Our earthly fathers—if they are genuinely concerned about our welfare—made every effort to help us grow into mature men and women.
- (B) "Corrected" is from the same Greek word translated, "chasten."
- (1) "Discipline" (**paideuo**) includes correcting, but it is much broader than that. It involves all that children need to become decent and God-fearing adults.
- (2) If we as parents have taught and encouraged and warned and our pleadings are not heeded, then we have to correct and punish.
- (3) Does the correcting include spanking? Many popular writers refer to spanking as an assault on the child. They even infer—if they do not actually state—that all physical punishment is child abuse. Melissa A. Miller's book, **Family Violence:**

The Compassionate Church

Responds (Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1994), argues that it is inappropriate to spank a child. She lists the following as "consequences of physical punishment in children": fear, anger and hate, apathy—a lack of empathy, depression, rigidity, dissociation—the splitting of the body from emotional and physical sensations" (p. 38). She did not list the consequences of failing to use physical punishment when such is needed. Our jails are full of people who were not disciplined by any means.

- (C) "We gave them reverence." The Greek **entrepo** means to turn in or at.
- (1) "But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son" (Matt. 21:37).
 - (2) "And if any man obey not the word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed (**entrape**)" (2 Thess. 3:14).
 - (3) How can children respect parents who do not care for them and help them to learn right from wrong? Almost instinctively, children realize their need for discipline.
- (D) If we respect our earthly parents because of their discipline of us, what about our respect for our heavenly Father?
- (1) Our earthly parents generally do the best for us they are capable of doing. God always looks after our needs.

- (2) Because of His constant concern and care, we ought to submit to Him (**hupotasso**).
- (3) The Hebrew writer calls God "the Father of spirits," that is, He is the Father of our spirits.
- g. "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness" (12:10).
- (A) "They" in this verse means our earthly parents.
- (B) Our earthly parents disciplined us for a few days, that is, the short time we were under their care.
- (C) How tragic that many modern parents do not use that short time to teach, to inspire, to love and to correct their children.
- (D) "After their own pleasure" does not mean they enjoyed whatever they did for us. Punishment when necessary is not enjoyable. "Pleasure" comes from the Greek **dokeo** which means to seem. In other words, the parents did for their children what seemed right to them, but no parent is infallible.
- (1) Parents sometimes spank when they ought not to or fail to spank when they ought.
- (2) It takes all the wisdom we can muster to discipline our children properly and no one has that wisdom on every occasion.
- (3) Parents often make mistakes in their rearing of their children. But the mistakes should not prove fatal if

two conditions are obtained:

- (a) Parents are consistent in their discipline.
 - (b) They demonstrate to their children that they love them. "For whom the Lord loves, he disciplines and he scourges every son whom he receives" (Heb. 12:6).
- (E) Parents do the best they can under most circumstances, but they are not infallible. God is infallible and knows what is best for us always. He disciplines us for our profit. "Profit" from **sumpheron**, to bear together, as in 1 Corinthians 12:7: "For the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."
- (F) If we learn from God's discipline, then we become partakers of His holiness.
- (1) "Partakers" from **metalabein** (**metalambamo**), for the partaking.
 - (2) God's holiness and our need to become holy are major themes in the Bible—both Old Testament and New. "Because it is written, Be holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16. This is a quotation from Leviticus 11:44-45).
- h. "Now no chastening for the present seem to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby" (12:11).
- (A) Have you ever wondered why academic pursuits are called "disciplines?" On the university level there are disciplines of psychology, philosophy, sociology, etc.
- (1) They are called "disciplines" because it requires much discipline to master

each area.

- (2) To become accomplished in any of these areas, it takes years of study and concentration.
- (B) We speak of the discipline the Olympic competitors must exercise if they are to win or even to compete successfully.
- (C) "Now no chastening (discipline) for the present seems to be joyous."
- (1) Scholars get tired after spending thousands of hours in their respective disciplines.
 - (2) Athletes sprain their ankles, bruise themselves, get worn out from their exercises. Runners get sore feet, sore legs, sore backs.
- (D) When parents discipline their children, it may not seem joyous to either parent or child. Parents get discouraged when their children seem not to learn; children get discouraged because they think their parents are being too hard, demanding too much and may not even love them.
- (E) "Seems" is the same word mentioned in verse 10—"after their own pleasure"—**dokeo**.
- (F) "Grievous" from **lupes**, "sorrow" (John 6:22), "heaviness" (Rom. 9:2).
- (G) While we are going through the process of discipline—whether in the university classroom or in the gymnasium or elsewhere—we may chafe under the rigors of that discipline. But "afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby."
- (1) The payoff—depending on your viewpoint—makes up for the sacrifices we

have to make. Emotionally and financially, our discipline pays handsome dividends. The man who studies hard to become a commercial pilot can make as much as \$200,000 per year. The athlete who wins the Olympics in his division can make millions over his lifetime.

(2) We may often think God's discipline is burdensome, but if we learn from what He desires to teach us, the rewards are great—eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

(3) "Peaceable fruit of righteousness."
(a) We enjoy peace with God because we live righteously, soberly and godly (Titus 2:11-12).
(b) God's way of making men righteous (Rom. 1:16-17).

(G) "Exercise" from **gumnaso** (gymnasium). The tense of the verb (perfect passive participle) is a state of completion. In the process of discipline the going can really be tough, but when the discipline has served its purpose, the result can be peaceful and satisfying.

3. Christians should encourage one another (12:12-17).

a. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees" (12:12).

(A) "Wherefore" is related to God's discipline of His children. Because of the benefit we receive from His discipline, we ought to support and help one another. God saves us and adds us to His church that we may encourage one another.

- (B) "Lift up" from **anorthoo**, **ana**, up or upwards, and **orthos**, straight.
- (1) "And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (Lk. 13:13).
 - (2) "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up (**anorthoso**)" (Acts 15:16).
- (C) "Hands which hang down and the feeble knees" suggest discouragement and despair. How easy it is to give up when difficulties and heartaches arise.
- (D) The words of this verse are a reflection of Isaiah 35:3: "Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees."
- (E) Christians are to be encouragers, comforters and supporters.
- (F) Barnabas was a great encourager. "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was at Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch: who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts 11:22-24). "And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which by interpretation, the son of consolation) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus" (Acts 4:36).
- b. "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way;

but let it rather be healed" (12:13).

- (A) "Straight" from **orthas** from which we get the words like orthodox, orthodontia, orthopedics, orthopraxy.
 - (B) "Straight paths" would be those ways which God Himself has defined as being straight.
 - (C) "Lame" (**cholos**), halt, in this passage does not refer to the physically lame, but to the weak members of the body of Christ.
 - (D) "Turned out of the way" from **ektrepo**, to turn out, to twist, to put out of joint. "From which some having swerved (**astochesantes**: having missed the mark) have turned aside (**exetrapesan**: **ektrepo**) unto vain jangling" (1 Tim. 1:6). "Vain jangling" means vain talking.
 - (E) "Healed" from **iaomai** (**iatros**: physician) But the Hebrew writer is not speaking of physical healing. "Graphic picture of concern for the weak, a good argument for prohibition also" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 437).
- c. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14).
- (A) Offhand, does this verse sound like everyone will be saved, regardless of his behavior?
 - (1) R. Kirby Godsey, **When We Talk About God...Let's Be Honest**. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1996. "Universalism has a very high view of God...God's forgiveness knows no boundaries. Time is not a boundary. Death is not

a boundary. Hell is not a boundary... God's patient grace will finally win all persons to the new creation... Universalism affirms that God's grace will outlast any person's rejection of God" (pp. 202-203).

- (2) If universalism were true, how would one respond to the expression, "without which no man shall see the Lord?"
- (B) "Follow" from **diokete**, present imperative active, "keep on following peace and holiness." Christians are to be peacemakers and peace-followers. Following peace is not to be an occasional duty; it must be done at all times and with all men.
 - (1) There are some people with whom you cannot live at peace. "If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).
 - (2) "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and the things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).
 - (3) "Peace" is more than just the absence of conflict; it is a condition of harmony with God and with men.
- (C) "Holiness" comes from **hagiasmon**, sanctification, consecration. Different forms of this word are used many times in the New Testament: **hagiozo** (hallowed, sanctified), **hagion** (sanctuary, holy places, holiest of all), **hagios** (holy).
- (D) "Without which no man shall see the Lord." How can anyone read these

words and argue that all men-regardless of their behavior-will eventually be saved?

- d. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (12:15).

(A) "Looking diligently" from **episkopountes**, present active participle, "keep on looking diligently."

(1) A participle in Greek takes its force from the main verb associated with it. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness" looking diligently. Following peace and holiness requires one to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God.

(2) **Episkopountes** means to exercise oversight. The word "bishop" (**episkopos**) comes from this same word.

(3) If a man cannot fail of the grace of God, why should he continue to look diligently or carefully? If all men are going to be saved, what possible difference could failing to look diligently make?

(B) "Fail" from **husteron**, to fall short. NASB translates the verb "comes short." RSV renders the verb "fail to obtain."

(C) God's grace has appeared unto all but all are not going to be saved because some people receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1).

(D) "Root of bitterness" comes from Deuteronomy 29:18: "Let there should be among you man, or woman, or family,

or tribe, whose heart turns away this day from the Lord our God, and go and serve other gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood."

- (E) Why would a root of bitterness spring up among God's people? Could it be that they were disappointed with God or with circumstances or with their fellowmen?
- (F) Would it really matter in the long run if people were defiled? Would it cause them to be lost? If not, why the warning?
- e. "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (12:16).
 - (A) Christians have to continue to look diligently "lest there be any fornicator."
 - (1) "Fornicator" from **pornos**, male prostitute. Our word "pornography" comes from this Greek word and means writing about a prostitute.
 - (2) The word "fornicator" does not mean a person who engages in premarital sex—although that is included—but any sexually immoral person.
 - (3) Esau is not accused of committing fornication, but he did sell his soul for momentary pleasure which is what happens when human beings engage in illicit sex.
 - (B) "Profane" comes from **bebelos**. It refers to that which is trodden under foot, unhallowed. "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and

profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers" (1 Tim. 1:9). The word is always rendered "profane."

- (C) Esau is given as an excellent example of a profane person, that is, one who trampled on a great gift—his inheritance. He sold his birthright for a morsel of meat. The story appears in Genesis 25:31, 33.
- f. "For you know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (12:17).
- (A) Tragically, when Esau saw his grievous blunder there was nothing he or anyone else could do about it. Does that not happen to us often?
- (B) Since he was the older of the two boys, he would have received a larger portion of the inheritance.
- (C) "Rejected" from **apodokimazo**, a word which means to reject after examination or trial. The word is always translated either "rejected" or "disallowed." "The stone which the builders disallowed" (1 Pet. 2:7).
- (D) "Repentance" in this verse does not suggest that Esau was sorry for his behavior and sought to change his mind and his life.
- (1) Esau wanted a change of heart on the part of Isaac, but there is no indication he was sorry for his stupidity.
- (2) Esau wanted a change in his lot, but there was no place for that change.

- (E) "And Esau said unto his father, Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept" (Gen. 27:38). Once the blessing had been bestowed it could not be taken away.
4. Contrast between the provisions of the Mosaic law and the law of Christ (12:18-24).
- a. "For you are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempted" (12:18).
- (A) The Hebrew writer wants his readers to be steadfast and to know the differences between the provisions of the Mosaic law and the gospel of Christ. The two laws were very different in their manifestations and in their requirements.
- (B) "You are not come unto the mount which might be touched." In other words, they had not come to Mount Sinai. He has in mind the law which was given from Mount Sinai. The mount they came to in the old law could be touched; it was physical.
- (C) "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. And the Lord came down upon

mount Sinai, on the top of the mount:
and the Lord called Moses to the top of
the mount: and Moses went up" (Ex.
19:17-20).

- b. "And the sound of the trumpet, and the
voice of words; which voice they that heard
entreated that the word should not be
spoken to them any more" (12:19).

(A) "The sound of the trumpet." "And it
came to pass on the third day in the
morning, that there were thunders and
lightenings, and a thick cloud upon the
mount, and the voice of the trumpet
exceeding loud; so that all the people
that were in the camp trembled" (Ex.
19:16).

(B) "The voice of words." "And the Lord
spoke unto you out of the midst of the
fire: you heard the voice of words, but
saw no similitude ("form" RSV), only
you heard a voice" (Deut. 4:12).

(C) The Jews were so afraid of the super-
natural manifestations that they
"entreated" the Lord not to speak any
more in this way. "Entreated" to ask
from alongside.

(D) "That the word should not be spoken to
them any more." I wonder how men
would react today if God actually spoke
to them, as they sometimes maintain.

- c. "For they could not endure that which was
commanded, And if so much as a beast
touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or
thrust through with a dart" (12:20).

(A) These verses from Hebrews 12 show the
awesomeness of standing in God's pre-
sence and having Him reveal Himself in

such powerful supernatural ways. How could the Jews ever forget the experience surrounding the giving of the law?

- (B) "Endure" from **epheron (phero)** and means to bear. It is the same word used in Revelation 2:2: "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved (borne) by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).
- (C) God had given the Jews a commandment: "And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart."
- (1) The mount was sacred because of God's presence and because of His revelation of Himself to the Jewish people.
- (2) "And you shall set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that you go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever touches the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live; when the trumpet sounds long they shall come up to the mount" (Ex. 19:12-13).
- (D) While the physical punishment of the law is not attached to our disobeying God's commands, there are serious spiritual consequences.
- d. "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake" (12:21).
- (A) "Terrible" from **phoberon (phobeo)**. To stand in the very presence of God and

hear His voice had to be one of the most awesome experiences a human being could know.

- (B) "Sight" from **phantazo** (**phaino**), to make visible.
- (C) Even Moses was shaken by the event. "I exceedingly fear and quake."
 - (1) "I am terrified" (**ekphobeo**).
 - (2) "Quake" from **entromos**, to tremble.
And who would not tremble under such circumstances?
- e. "But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels" (12:22).
 - (A) Notice the contrast: "You are not come unto the mount which might be touched ...but you are come unto mount Sion." If men stood in awe of the events surrounding the giving of the law, how much greater their awe should be in mediating on the new covenant which cost the Son of God his life. We have repeatedly emphasized the superiority of the gospel over the law of Moses. Here is another example of that superiority.
 - (B) "You are come to mount Sion (or Zion)."
 - (1) They were awed by mount Sinai; we should be even more awed by mount Zion.
 - (2) Galatians 4:21-31 records an allegory which makes this truth very plain. "For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of

us all" (Gal. 4:25-26).

- (3) If the Jews under the old covenant had to give careful attention to that law, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

(C) "Unto the city of the living God."

- (1) Not Jerusalem in Palestine but the Jerusalem which is above—the heavenly Jerusalem.
- (2) "For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God...But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he has prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:10, 16).
- (3) The Old Testament predicted that the law of God would go forth from Jerusalem and the word of the Lord from mount Zion (Isa. 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-2).

(D) "An innumerable company of angels."
Literally, "myriads of angels."

- (1) Angels are often pictured as surrounding the throne of Almighty God.
- (2) "A thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him" (Dan. 7:10).
- (3) "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about his throne and the beasts and elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev. 5:11).
- (4) We may not be able to understand the significance of "the innumerable

company of angels," but we know that angels are in God's presence and serve Him continually.

- f. "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (12:23).

(A) The Revised Standard Version reads:

"And to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven." That seems to be more in harmony with the Greek text.

(B) The word "assembly" (*ekklesia*) refers to the church of the living God. There are not two words for church in this verse.

(C) "Firstborn" is plural and refers to Christians—not to Christ as the King James might be interpreted. It could be rendered "church of the firstborn ones." Hugo McCord translates the expression: "To the called-out firstborn people who are enrolled in heaven."

(D) "Whose names are written in heaven."

(1) The seventy who were sent on a divine mission returned with joy because the demons were subject unto them in the name of Christ. "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Lk. 10:20).

(2) "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in

- the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
- (E) "To God the Judge of all." We are not dealing with some man-appointed judge, but to the Creator and Sustainer of this universe—the one before whom all will one day stand to be judged according to deeds done in the flesh (2 Cor. 5:10). If that does not create wonder in the hearts of human beings, what could? Our Judge cannot be lightly regarded.
- (F) "To the spirits of just men made perfect."
(1) He seems to be speaking of the dead who had died in Christ and gone on to perfection in the heavenly home.
(2) Does this seem to suggest that all men will inhabit the home with God and the saints of all the ages?
- g. "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel" (12:24).
- (A) Moses was God's chosen mediator of the old covenant and did his work well. We must never downgrade the importance of Moses in the Old Testament era.
- (B) But we have a better mediator of a better covenant which is based on better promises—the main thrust of the book of Hebrews.
- (C) He is the perfect mediator because He knew both God's will and man's need. He came to earth from God and became one of us.
- (D) "The new covenant" was predicted by Jeremiah (31:31-34) and fulfilled in the coming of the Christ and the giving of the gospel (Heb. 8:6-13).

- (E) What a great honor and a grave responsibility to be a member of the new covenant with God's Son as the mediator.
 - (F) The blood of Christ cleanses us from our past sins and continues to cleanse our sins as we walk in the light (1 John 1:7).
 - (G) The blood of Abel speaks of obedience to the will of God, but the blood of Christ "speaks better things than that of Abel."
5. We must listen to what God has said (12:25-29).
- a. "See that you refuse not him who speaks. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him who speaks from heaven" (12:25).
 - (A) If the Jews were held accountable for listening to and obeying the voice of Moses, how could anyone ever justify refusing to listen to and obey the Son of God?
 - (B) The word "see" (**blepete**) indicates the seriousness of paying heed to what Jesus has said.
 - (C) "Refuse" from the same word (**paraiteomai**) in verse 19: "intreated." The word means to excuse, to avoid. In this verse it has the negative added.
 - (D) The Jews did not escape (**ekpheugo**) when they rebelled against God's law as given by Moses—a somewhat less than perfect law—how can we escape if we turn against the "perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25)?
 - (E) "Refused" the same verb in the early part of the verse.

- (F) "Much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him who speaks from heaven."
- (G) This verse summarizes the major thesis in the book of Hebrews. The old covenant was a good law; it was far superior to any other law or covenant ever given. But it is not so great as the gospel of Jesus Christ. That was the Hebrew writer's reason for using the word "better" so many times in reference to the gospel of Christ. Moses was a good mediator; we have a better mediator. The old covenant gave many good promises; we have better promises.
- b. "Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (12:26).
- (A) The voice of God then shook the earth.
- (1) "And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly" (Ex. 19:18).
- (2) "The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel" (Psa. 68:8).
- (B) "But now he has promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."
- (1) The promise the Hebrew writer had in mind was Haggai 2:5-6:
 "According to the word that I cove-

nanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so my spirit remains among you: fear not. For thus says the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and all the dry land."

(2) The expression, "yet once more," indicates that this shaking will be final. The "once" is used of the final sacrifice Christ made for our sins. "So Christ once suffered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

(C) Again it is easy to understand the comparison of the old covenant with the new. All of the comparisons and contrasts in Hebrews are intended to show the superiority of the new covenant over the old. In the giving of the old law, God shook the earth. In the giving of the new, He shook the heavens also.

c. "And this word, Yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (12:27).

(A) "This word" refers to the prediction Haggai made concerning the ending of the old covenant and the establishment of the new.

(B) "Yet once more" means once and once only—nothing beyond that point.

(C) "Signifies" from *de loo*, present active

- indicative. It has this present significance.
- (D) "The removing of those things that are shaken."
- (1) "Removing" from **metatithemi** is rendered "were carried over" (Acts 7:16), "are removed" (Gal. 1:6), "being changed" (Heb. 7:12), "translated" (Heb. 11:5) and "turning" (Jude 4).
 - (2) All created things are to decay and perish. "They will perish...they shall wax old as does a garment" (Heb. 1:11).
 - (3) Does this expression also include those practices and ceremonies of the law which were removed when the gospel came?
- (E) "As of things which are made" would primarily refer to the created order.
- (F) "Those things which cannot be shaken."
- (1) Does that phrase suggest some universals, some absolutes?
 - (2) The gospel of Jesus Christ was given until this world is no more. None of the provisions of the gospel can ever be altered or removed.
- d. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28).
- (A) "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved."
- (1) "Wherefore" indicates the nature of those things which cannot be moved -like the kingdom of verse 28.
 - (2) "Receiving" present tense shows they were receiving the kingdom then-not

many thousands of years in the future.

- (3) "Kingdom" has to refer to the church (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:9).
 - (4) Christians will receive the eternal kingdom at the end of the age (2 Pet. 1:11).
 - (5) Nothing anyone can do can alter the nature or the existence of the kingdom of God. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it.
- (B) "Let us have grace." The word "grace" ought to be rendered "grateful." "Let us show gratitude" (NASB). "Let us offer to God acceptable worship" (NASB).
- (C) "Whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."
- (1) If he is speaking of a kingdom to come, how can he use the expression, "we may serve God?" The Hebrew writer, like all New Testament Christians, was in the kingdom of God.
 - (2) "May serve" from *latreuo*, to offer service to God. The word does not specify the kind of service the Hebrew writer had in mind. The word is used twenty-one times in the New Testament. Sometimes the word is translated "worship" (Acts 7:7, 42; Phil. 3:3).
 - (3) "Acceptably" from *euarestos*, similar to the statement in Matthew 17:5: "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." The Revised Version usually has "well-pleasing."

- (4) "Reverence" from **eulabeis**, simply means fear in the sense of respect or awe.
- (5) "Godly fear" from **deous**, fear as the **deos** becomes **phobos**" (Vincent, volume 4, p. 559).
- e. "For our God is a consuming fire" (12:29).
 - (A) "For" gives a reason for serving God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.
 - (B) Would it surprise you that some theologians think such language is unchristian and even anti-Christian? How could our loving God be a "consuming fire?"
 - (C) "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Deut. 4:24).
 - (D) Is it any wonder the Hebrew writer said, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31)?

Chapter Twelve Questions:

1. Who constituted the "great cloud of witnesses?"
2. In the race of life, we shall encounter many heartaches and troubles. How can we make it through?
3. Hebrews 12 has a lengthy discussion of "chastisement."
 - a. What is the meaning of "chastisement" or "chastening?"
 - b. Can we know that God is chastening us when we suffer some calamity? Give some examples.
 - c. Does God always chasten or discipline those He loves?
 - d. If we are without discipline, is that a sign we are

- being unfaithful?
- e. Are fathers supposed to discipline their children?
 - f. Does discipline always seem to be pleasant?
 - g. Parents may make mistakes when they discipline their children. Does God ever make mistakes?
 - h. The ultimate goal of all discipline is self-discipline. Discuss.
4. One prominent Calvinist theologian says holiness is important, but one does not have to be holy to be saved. What does the author of Hebrews say about that?
 5. If a man fails of the grace of God, will he still be saved?
 6. What was Esau's mistake?
 7. The people under the Jewish covenant looked to Mt. Sinai for their guidance. Christians look to another mount. Discuss.
 8. The author of Hebrews uses a number of terms to describe the new covenant. Examine each of them and explain their meaning.
 - a. The city of the living God.
 - b. The heavenly Jerusalem.
 - c. An innumerable company of angels.
 - d. The general assembly and church of the firstborn.
 9. The Jews were required to listen to Moses. We must listen to the one who speaks from heaven. Show from your study of Hebrews that Christ is the better spokesman.
 10. What is the kingdom that cannot be moved? Is it the church?
 11. Discuss: "Our God is a consuming fire."
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Chapter 13

The Book Of Hebrews

M. Hebrews 13.

1. Exhortations to Christian conduct (13:1-6).
 - a. "Let brotherly love continue" (13:1).
 - (A) "Brotherly love" from **philadelphia** (**philos**, love, and **adelphos**, brother).
Other uses of the Greek:
 - (1) "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).
 - (2) "But as touching brotherly love, you need not that I write unto you: for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (1 Thess. 4:9).
 - (3) "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22).
 - (4) "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Pet. 1:7).
 - (B) He does not admonish the early Christians to have love for one another; he says "let it continue" (**meno**: abide).
 - b. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (13:2).
 - (A) "Be not forgetful" indicates the duty of Christians to show hospitality. The literal rendering of the Greek means: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to stranger"

- (NASB).
- (B) "Hospitality" from **philoxenia**, love of strangers (**philos**, **xenia**, strangers).
"Given to hospitality" (1 Tim. 3:2), "lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8) and "use hospitality" (1 Pet. 4:9).
 - (C) Obviously, one must be careful about dealing with strangers, but we do owe obligations to those who have need of help from us. We must not endanger our families.
 - (D) "Entertained" from **xenizo**, to receive a guest (**xenos**, a guest).
 - (E) "Angels" from **angellos**, messengers.
The Hebrew writer was apparently speaking of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 18 & 19).
- c. "Remember them who are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity, as being yourselves in the body" (13:3).
- (A) "Keep on remembering them who are in bonds."
 - (1) When men and women are locked away in prisons, we have a tendency to forget them. But if anybody in this world needs the prayers and support of others, it is our prisoners.
 - (2) "Bonds" from **desmion** (**deo**: to bind) usually refers to prisoners.
 - (B) "As bound with them." **Sundesmos** that which is bound together. In other words, we are to strive to understand what they are experiencing. We need to remember that many of those who were in prison in the first century were there because of their faith.
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- (C) "Suffer adversity" from **kakouchoumenoi**, "evil entreated" (Heb. 11:37). A similar word appears in Hebrews 11:25: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."
- (D) "As being yourselves also in the body." Ezekiel speaks of sitting where the people sit. "Then I came to them of the captivity of Talabib, that dwelt by the river Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days" (Ezek. 3:15).
- (E) The principle we are studying can be applied in so many areas: poverty, sickness, nationalities, etc.
- d. "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (13:4).
- (A) "Marriage is honorable in all."
- (1) There is no verb in the Greek. Dr. A.T. Robertson prefers: "Let marriage be had in honor." So do the NASB and RSV. There really is no fundamental difference in the various translations.
 - (2) A great number of Americans think marriage has outlived its usefulness. Dr. Margaret Mead thought we ought to look for another way of relating. Her book, **Male and Female**, suggested two kinds of marriage: Personal and parental.
 - (3) Marriage is not held in honor when men and women are free to get rid

of their mates as they would a used car. The no-fault divorce approach has destroyed millions of marriages and ruined the lives of millions of children.

- (4) Churches of Christ must preach the truth on marriage and encourage our young people to marry wisely and to build strong, stable homes. We have not done well in this area.
 - (5) Marriage is honorable because God Himself designed it and it meets the needs of most human beings. But no one is required to get married to be a faithful Christian. Paul strongly endorses celibacy. Is celibacy more honorable than marriage, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches?
- (B) "The bed undefiled."
- (1) "Bed" from **koite** which means sexual intimacy. The word comes into the English in the word "coitus" which also means sexual relating.
 - (a) The word is translated "conceived" (Rom. 9:10) and "chambering" (Rom. 13:13).
 - (b) Paul joined the word "bed" (**koitai**) and the word "male" (**arsen**) to form a word which means homosexuality (1 Cor. 6:9). The word literally means a male bedfellow.
 - (c) Paul teaches very plainly that marriage is honorable for human beings. He also shows that the sexual side of marriage has God's

approval. Proverbs 5:19-21; the Song of Solomon; and 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 all teach the same truth.

- (d) Yet many Bible critics accuse the Bible of being anti-sex just because the Bible specifically condemns premarital sex, adultery and homosexuality.
- (2) "Undefined" from **amiantos**, free from contamination. The bed becomes defiled when either partner becomes involved with someone outside the marriage bond.
- (C) "Whoremongers" is from the Greek **pornous**, all who are sexually immoral—not just those who engage in premarital sex.
- (D) "Adulterers" from **moichous**, generally applied only to those who are married.
- (E) "God will judge." Men may not disapprove of sexual immorality, but God does. In our society, it is sometimes glorified, but it is always wrong. There are no extenuating circumstances.
- e. "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you" (13:5).
 - (A) "Conversation" from **tropos**, way, or manner of life. Do not allow your life to be dominated by the love of money.
 - (B) "Covetousness" comes from several different Greek words:
 - (1) **Epithumetes**, someone who lusts after (1 Cor. 10:6).

- (2) **Pleonexia**, a desire to have more, an over-reaching.
 - (3) The word in our text is **aphilarguros**, a, not, **philos**, love, and **arguros**, silver-not a lover of silver.
 - (4) Are Americans materialistic people? Are members of the body of Christ materialistic? Am I materialistic?
- (C) "Be content" from **arkeo**, to suffice, to be content with (Lk. 3:14).
- (1) "Not that I speak in respect to want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content (**autarkes**: self-sufficient, adequate, needing no assistance). I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:11-13).
 - (2) "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6). "And having food and raiment let us be therewith content" (1 Tim. 6:8).
 - (3) Can we be content with food and raiment? Will we be content with food and raiment? Would we worry if we did not have more (Matt. 6: 25-33)?
 - (4) Are not worry and contentment antithetical?
 - (5) Does being content mean we are not to work to better our station in life and to have to give to others?

- (D) "For he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." The inspired writer used five negatives to stress the truth that God will never leave us, nor forsake us. When the world seems to be turned upside down and nobody seems to care, it is good to know that our Lord will never leave us. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (life's necessities) will be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).
- f. "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (13:6).
- (A) The Lord's promise not to leave us or forsake us gives us boldness and courage to say: "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me."
- (B) The word "boldness" (**tharreo**) basically means to have courage. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight): We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6-8).
- (C) The confidence comes from the revelation of truth which God has made—not through our goodness or knowledge.
- (D) "The Lord is my helper." God looks after His own. "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psa. 23:1).
- (E) "I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Many of those who were martyred

for the cause of Christ went to their deaths with a smile on their lips and a song in their hearts.

2. Warnings (13:7-16).

a. "Remember them who have rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (13:7).

(A) The Bible lays great stress on remembering. The Old Testament constantly encourages the Jews to remember what God has done for them, especially in delivering them from Egyptian bondage.

(B) "Remember" from **mnemoneuo**, to be mindful, to keep in mind. The verb is present active imperative and means to keep on remembering.

(C) Those who have the rule over you would certainly seem to be the elders of the Lord's church.

(1) "Rule" from **hegeomai** (present middle participle) and simply means to lead.

(2) The noun form is translated "governors" (1 Pet. 2:14). The meaning of the word would be governed by the context.

(D) "Who have spoken unto you the word of God." This expression may include the preaching of the apostles, but we have no way of knowing. But the elders are responsible for continuing to teach the word of God.

(E) "Whose faith follow."

(1) The NASB reads: "And considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith."

- (2) The Greek rendered "follow" as **mimetai** and means to mimic or to imitate.
 - (3) Elders and others in positions of leadership should be examples to the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
 - (4) How can anyone teach what he does not live? Jesus urged His followers to observe what the Pharisees were teaching, but "do not follow their works; for they say and do not" (Matt. 23:3).
- (F) "Considering the end of their conversation."
- (1) "Considering" from **anatheoreo**, to look up a subject, to investigate, to observe accurately. The word is used only here and in Acts 17:30: "For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."
 - (2) "Conversation" from **anastrophes**, manner of life. RV has "issue of life." NASB: "the outcome of their way of life."
- b. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (13:8).
- (A) The word concerning Jesus Christ which was preached to the Hebrew Christians was eternally true. The Christ who existed yesterday exists today and will forever.
 - (B) The statement shows that Jesus is of the

same nature as God the Father. "They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as does a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same and thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1:11-12).

(C) Our Adventists friends teach that because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever that His law does not change. The book of Hebrews shows that position to be false. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also in the law" (Heb. 7:12). "He takes away the first that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:9-10).

(D) Although God does not change (Mal. 3:6), He has changed His covenants or laws. Even the Adventists admit that we are not to offer blood sacrifices or to burn incense or to keep the passover.

c. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (13:9).

(A) "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."

(1) If there is no possibility of being lost, why worry about "divers and strange doctrines?"

(2) "Carried" from **paraphero**, to lead along (Jude 12), to carry past (Mk.

14:36), to lead astray. Is there a possibility of being led astray?

- (3) "Divers" from *poikilais*, literally many colored. A modern rendering would be "varied" (NASB) or various, "diverse" (RSV). Different would not be a bad translation.
 - (4) "Strange" from *xenos*, foreign.
"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which will try you" (1 Pet. 4:12). In this verse it probably means "unheard."
- (B) "For it is a good thing that the heart be established by grace."
- (1) The Hebrew writer was urging Christians in every age to be stable, to live according to God's grace.
 - (2) We are established by grace when we follow the directions which God has revealed in His word.
- (C) "Not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."
- (1) One of the strange doctrines probably related to eating of certain foods.
 - (2) Greek philosophy had influenced many in the early church. They avoided eating the flesh and animals. There is no scriptural justification for that position. The modern animal activists need to take a lesson from this, although they probably could care less about the teaching of the Bible.
 - (3) Eating or not eating certain kinds of foods was not of grave concern to

Paul. Not influencing a brother to sin was of prime importance and should be today.

- (4) "Occupied" from **peripatountes**, literally walking around. Some of the early Christians continued to be governed by some of the restrictions of the Jewish law.
- d. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (13:10).
- (A) The Jews had an altar under the old covenant which was given by God for the worship of His holy name.
 - (B) Christians have a spiritual altar and not a literal one.
 - (C) Those men and women who still strive to serve God under the old covenant have NO right to eat at the spiritual altar.
 - (D) "Serving the tabernacle" would apply to keeping the law of Moses—any of it. The Galatian letter shows how dangerous it is to strive to be saved by the law (Gal. 5:4-5).
 - (E) The book of Hebrews has made the truth so plain it would be difficult to misunderstand.
- e. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp" (13:11).
- (A) The Hebrew writer was speaking of the Day of Atonement. The animals which were sacrificed on that day were not to be eaten. The animals were carried outside the camp and burned.

- (B) "Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt" (Lev. 4:12).
- (C) "Sanctuary" from **hagia** (holy place).
- f. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (13:12).
- (A) There are similarities between the offering of animals under the old covenant and the offering of Christ under the new.
- (B) Hebrews 9:13-10:18 contrasts the sacrifices of the old law and Christ's sacrifice under the new.
- (C) "Sanctify" from **hagiazō**, to set apart. His death set his followers apart from sin and from the law by His blood.
- (D) He suffered outside the gate. "And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha" (John 19:17).
- g. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (13:13).
- (A) The tense of the verb says, "Let us keep on going to him."
- (B) Christians may not follow the teaching of the law of Moses. We have to go with Jesus to Golgotha, figuratively speaking, "bearing his reproach."
- (C) "Bearing" from **pherontes**, to carry along.
- (D) "Reproach" from **oneidismos**, to cast

into the teeth. "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you" (1 Pet. 4:14). "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb. 11:26).

- h. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (13:14).
 - (A) Anyone who thinks we have a continuing city on this earth has closed his eyes to reality.
 - (B) Every time we go to a funeral home it ought to remind us that here we have no continuing city.
 - (C) "Continuing" from **menousan**, "an abiding city." Abraham "looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).
 - (D) We should be seeking for a continuing city, but are we? Or are we satisfied with the one we have on earth?
- i. "By him, therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (13:15).
 - (A) "By him," that is, by Jesus Christ.
 - (B) We are not to offer animal sacrifices to God anymore. Those sacrifices ceased with the cross.
 - (C) But we are to offer the sacrifice of praise to God. Our sacrifices are spiritual in nature—not carnal.
 - (D) "The fruit of our lips" would include giving thanks to his name in prayer and praising his name in song.
 - (E) Is praying to God by way of the rosary any more carnal than using mechanical instruments of music in the song service?

- (F) Paul classifies giving as an act of sacrifice to God. "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God" (Phil. 4:19).
- j. "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (13:16).
- (A) The Hebrew writer does not specify what doing good means, but we have many instructions—both in the book of Hebrews and elsewhere—about doing good. The entire Christian life could be compassed under that heading—preaching the gospel, worshipping God, helping the needy, visiting prisoners, etc. Doing good means doing what God says is good.
- (B) "Communicate" from *koinoneo* which means having fellowship. The verb form is used in the following verses.
- (1) "Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality" (Rom. 12:13).
 - (2) "It has pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles **have been made partakers** of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things" (Rom. 15:27).
 - (3) "Let him that is taught in the word **communicate** unto him that teaches in all good things" (Gal. 6:6).
 - (4) "Now you Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no

church **communicated** with me as concerning giving and receiving but you only" (Phil. 4:15).

(5) Other passages: 1 Timothy 5:22; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 4:13; 2 John 11. The word "communicate" in Hebrews 13:16 in a noun-not a verb. The noun is used twenty times in the New Testament.

(C) How easy it is to forget those who really need financial help: missionaries, poor families, etc.

(D) These are the sacrifices with which God is well pleased.

(1) Many of us cannot and should not go into mission fields, but we can support with our prayers and with our money.

(2) We can and should pray for those engaged in working for our Lord- whatever the field or the area.

3. Concluding exhortations (13:17-25).

a. "Obey them who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they who must give an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (13:17).

(A) "Obey" is not from the usual word rendered "obey." The most common Greek word translated "obey" is **hupakouo** and is used twenty-one times in the New Testament.

(B) The word the Hebrew writer used is **peitho**, to persuade. This word is used fifty-five times but is translated in the King James Version "trusted" (Lk. 18:9),

- “persuaded” (Lk. 20:6) and “have confidence” (2 Thess. 3:4). It is rendered “obey” or “obedience” very few times.
- (C) Some writers have attempted to make a major distinction between these two words. They say that obedience to church leaders must come as a result of persuasion. Should not all obedience on the part of adults come after persuasion?
- (D) Those leaders who ride roughshod over members are not being wise. They must teach, encourage, warn, exhort and persuade.
- (E) “Those who have the rule over you” would have to be elders of the church.
- (1) There are some among churches of Christ who advocate “evangelistic oversight.” That simply is not a Bible position.
- (2) Some churches have bishops as distinguished from elders. There is no justification for that practice. Catholicism grew out of this perversion of the scriptural way of organizing the church.
- (F) “Submit” from *hupotasso* means to rank under or to array under. We have talked at length about his word under Hebrews 2:5, 8; 12:9.
- (G) Elders of the Lord’s church are to watch for the souls of those who lead.
- (1) “Watch” from *agrupneo*, which literally means to watch after sleep. Jesus used the same word in reference to watching for his second coming. “And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch” (Mark 13:33).

The word is used only four times in the New Testament.

- (2) Elders are to watch for the wolves which threaten the flock (Acts 20: 28-32).
 - (3) They must watch for opportunities to encourage every member to grow to his full potential.
- (H) Elders have to give an account for those who serve under them: preachers, deacons, members.
- (1) There is an awesome responsibility. That is the reason elders are to meet the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It is not a light thing to accept the responsibility of an elder.
 - (2) This does not mean elders cannot be saved if any of the members are lost, but they must strive to keep them faithful in God's service. When they see a member going astray, they must do all within their power to correct that member.
 - (3) The Bible calls elders "shepherds." Good shepherds strive to protect and to guide the sheep.
- (I) All elders would like to be able to say in the judgment, "Lord, here are the ones thou hast given to me. They are all safe and sound." What a joy!
- (1) Obviously, members are to make it as easy as possible for the shepherds to guide the flock.
 - (2) We are not to be stubborn and hard-headed, but obedient and

submissive. That does not mean weak, but humble and meek.

- (3) But what if I disagree with the elders of the church? We must honor them enough to go to them and thrash out any differences. If it is just a matter of opinion, we should yield to their judgment.
- (J) What a disappointment it will be in the judgment to see those who rebelled against God's law and the authority of the elders turned away from eternal life! The word rendered "grief" (*stenazontes*) means "groaning." What a day of groaning that will be!
- (K) We may revel in our freedom from restraints in this life, but turning aside from following God's law will not be very profitable for those who do it. By implication, it will be hurtful and pernicious.
- b. "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (13:18).
- (A) Language such as this has led some to argue that Paul was the author of Hebrews.
- (B) "Pray for us" is an expression one finds often in Paul's writings that does not prove his authorship of Hebrews.
- (C) Since human beings are not always able to judge their own motives and behavior, it is appropriate that we be modest in speaking of our own spirituality. "For we trust we have a good conscience."
- (1) Having a good conscience is dependent on living in harmony with

our beliefs.

- (2) A good conscience does not mean one is living in harmony with God's will, however.
 - (3) Many immoral people live with a good conscience because they have never been taught right and wrong. Or the conscience can be seared with a hot iron.
- (D) "In all things willing to live honestly."
- (1) Many of us live honestly in our business dealings, but are not honest in our personal relationships.
 - (2) Many marriages are in trouble in the United States because we do not treat our spouses and other family members as honestly as we do our clients or business associates.
 - (3) Christians are to be honest in all things.
 - (4) The word "honestly" (**kalos**) means nobly, honorably.
 - (5) The noun form of the word (**kalos**) is almost always translated "good." "And let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). The adverb form is used thirty-seven times. "One who rules **well** his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. 3:4).
- c. "But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner" (13:19).
- (A) "Beseech" (**parakaleo**: literally to call to one's side) means to beg, to urge, to warn, to comfort.

- (B) The Hebrew writer believed in the power of prayer. He wanted his brothers and sisters to pray for him that he might be restored to them sooner.
- (C) While the language reminds us of Paul's writing, it could be said probably of every New Testament Christian. There is not one word in the context which Paul alone used. That is the reason we must be careful not to attribute authorship strictly on the basis of language. Many prominent scholars have made that blunder.
- d. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (13:20).
- (A) Why "the God of peace?"
- (1) God desires to arrange for peace between Himself and men and between men and men. "For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances: for to make in himself of two one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you who were afar off, and to them who were nigh" (Eph. 2:14-17).
 - (2) Paul says, "The peace of...the God of

peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:7, 9).

(B) "That brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus."

(1) It is fascinating and instructive to examine the many contexts in which inspired writers emphasize the resurrection of Christ. God brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus.

(2) Virtually every New Testament writer makes the resurrection of Christ the centerpiece of the truth of the gospel. Are we teaching the same truth as effectively as did the apostles and other early preachers? If not, could that have any bearing on the growth and stability of the church?

(3) Edward Gibbon, the author of **The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire**, says the early church grew because of its emphasis on the doctrine of last things. Whether that is true, we certainly ought to preach the second coming, the resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell.

(C) The Hebrew writer calls Jesus "that great shepherd of the sheep."

(1) "Shepherding" is one of the major themes of the Bible.

(a) "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psa. 23).

(b) The shepherds in Israel were feeding themselves, but they were not feeding the flock (Ezek. 34).

(c) Jesus is the shepherd (John 10).

(d) "Feed (literally, shepherd) the

flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory which fades not away" (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

(2) Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep because He can provide for all our needs. He always cares for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:11, 14).

(D) "Through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

(1) The New Testament stresses the essentiality of Christ's blood being shed for the remission of our sins.

(2) It was His blood which brought the everlasting covenant. The covenant is everlasting because there will be no other to replace it. It will last until the end of the age.

e. "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (13:21).

(A) The expression, "make you perfect, comes from **katartisai** (**katartizo**) and means to equip, to make ready, to render

fit, to complete.

- (1) The word is used of the mending of nets (Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19).
 - (2) It is rendered "restore" (Gal. 6:1).
 - (3) It does not necessarily imply restoring that which is damaged. It has to do more with right ordering and arrangement (Vine, p. 846).
 - (4) 1 Corinthians 1:10 translates the verb "perfectly joined together."
- (B) Christians are to be made ready or equipped for "every good work?"
- (1) How do we get ready or equip ourselves for "every good work?"
 - (a) We must study God's word to be able to determine what every good work is. A work is not necessarily good just because some person decides it is.
 - (b) Once we have determined what good work is we are to pursue it with great vigor.
 - (2) Our goal is to do the will of God from the heart. "I do always those things which please him" (John 8:29). Jesus said to the Samaritans, "My meat is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish the work" (John 4:34).
 - (3) We could not do His will without His grace and mercy. "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who

works in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

- (C) "Working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight."
(1) If we want to know what is well-pleasing in His sight, we can go to one source only: the inspired word of God.
(2) Men have no right to determine on their own what will please God.
- (D) Whatever we do, if we want to please God, we must do it "through Jesus Christ." This expression ought to settle once and for all the question of Christ's place in the scheme of human redemption. It is through Christ and Christ alone that we are saved and through whom we glorify God.
- (E) "To whom be glory forever and ever." Is he talking about glorifying God (v. 20) or Christ (v. 21)? How can we do one without the other?
- f. "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words" (13:22).
(A) "Beseech" (**parakaleo**) means to urge, to beg, to warn.
(B) "Suffer" from **anecho**, to bear with, to hold yourselves back from (Col. 3:13).
(C) "The word of exhortation" (**tou logou tes parakleseos**) is the Hebrew writer's way of describing the entire Hebrew letter.
(D) "Exhortation" is from the same Greek word rendered "beseech." It is a part of the same word translated "comforter." The Hebrew writer was urging his

readers to pay close attention to what he had written to them. It was then and it is now a very important message.

(E) "I have written a letter unto you in a few words."

(1) The time we have spent on the letter and the scope of it may not seem like a letter expressed in a few words, but it covers so many subjects and so in depth.

(2) Years ago, John Owen wrote several volumes on Hebrews. Its treasures are inexhaustible. We could turn around, go through the book again, and profit greatly by so doing. I have gotten more from the book this time through than ever before.

g. "Know that you our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you" (13:23).

(A) Some writers have taken this verse to indicate Pauline authorship.

(B) We know of Paul's intimate relationship with Timothy, based on his statements in Philippians 2:19-24; 1 & 2 Timothy.

(C) But that does not prove Paul wrote Hebrews. There were probably many preachers who knew and loved Timothy.

(D) The Hebrew writer wanted his readers to know that Timothy had been "set at liberty." We do not have any information about Timothy's imprisonment, but that probably was what the Hebrew writer had in mind. Or it may have been freedom to preach in places he had been forbidden to preach.

- (E) If Timothy came to the Hebrew writer, they both would pay a visit to the Hebrew Christians.
- h. "Salute them who have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you" (13:24).
- (A) "Salute" (*aspazomai*) means to greet, to welcome. The verb form is used sixty times in the New Testament and the noun form ten times. "Salute one another with a holy kiss" (Rom. 16:16). "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you" (Phil. 4:21). Paul used the same Greek word in both instances.
- (B) "Them who have the rule over you" would refer to the same persons mentioned in Hebrews 13:7, 17: elders in the Lord's church.
- (C) Not only were the elders to be greeted, but so were all the saints.
- (D) We have no idea concerning "they of Italy." We are not given any information and it is pointless to speculate.
- i. "Grace be with you all. Amen" (13:25).
- (A) The word "grace" does not provide any insight into the authorship of Hebrews since virtually every New Testament author uses the word.
- (B) The Hebrew writer prayed that God's grace might be with the recipients of the letter. How desperately all Christians in every age need the grace of God!

N. Conclusion.

1. The book of Hebrews offers some information and insights which are found no where else in

the scriptures. In addition, it provides additional information on many subjects which are discussed elsewhere in the scriptures.

2. Christians and non-Christians alike would profit greatly by a careful and regular study of this great book. It refutes many false doctrines and strengthens everyone who reads it with understanding and appreciation.
3. May God help us all to be stronger Christians by our careful study of Hebrews!

Chapter Thirteen Questions:

1. What is the meaning of "brotherly love?"
2. Can you name someone who entertained strangers and learned they were entertaining angels unaware?
3. Since men usually go to prison for violating the law, should we not forget about them? Were there other reasons in the first century for men's being imprisoned? How should we regard prisoners?
4. The author of Hebrews exalts marriage and the sexual relationship in marriage. But he condemns all sexual immorality. How does this view of marriage compare with the view of many modern Americans?
5. Covetousness and contentment cannot be harmonized. Discuss.
6. Should not Christians be comforted when they realize how much God cares for them and looks after their needs?
7. Christians should remember the men who rule over them. Should we not imitate their behavior?

8. The early church faced many false teachers. Were Christians to be wary of false teachers? Do we face the same problems in our day?
9. Our earthly existence is temporary. Should we, like Abraham, seek a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God?
10. What sacrifices does God accept?
11. What does communicating mean?
12. How do we determine what doing good means?
13. Discuss each of the following admonitions concerning elders.
 - a. "Obey them who have the rule over you."
 - b. "Submit yourselves."
 - c. "They watch for your souls as they who must give an account."
 - d. "That they may do it with joy and not with grief."
14. The author of Hebrews calls Jesus "the great Shepherd of the sheep." What does Jesus do as our Shepherd?

The questions in this book are not meant to be exhaustive, but are designed to serve as a general guide to learning the message of this great book. It is my sincere hope that you will formulate more questions as you study and teach Hebrews. The message of Hebrews would go a long way in helping to remove some of the confusion that surrounds the relationship of the gospel to the Mosaic covenant. May God help us to know His word and teach it diligently to others!

