



HEBREWS

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INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Instructor: Warren Wilcox

Biography:

Warren Wilcox was a native Texan. He and his wife Carolyn have three children, two boys and a girl. He held a Master's degree in education from Abilene Christian University. He was a former director of the Bear Valley Bible Institute of Denver and served as an instructor there until his death in 2008. He was in great demand as a lecturer not only in the United States but in all parts of the world.

HEBREWS INTRODUCTION

I. NAME OF THE EPISTLE AND ITS RECIPIENTS.

- A. "To the Hebrews" is found in all our present manuscripts.
- B. Definitely written to those familiar with the Jewish system of belief and worship. All contrasts in the epistle are with Jewish Old Testament "types."
- C. Probably written to those in Palestine who were Jewish Christians.
 - 1. Many early historians agree.
 - 2. Certain passages indicate as much:
 - a. Jewish practices - 12:13.
 - b. Deprived of possessions - 10:34.
 - c. Sacrifices were still being offered when this epistle was written - 8:4; 10:11.
 - d. From Italy (?) - 13:24.
 - e. Apparently a day of severe trial ahead - 13:24.
 - f. Had not yet resisted to blood - 12:4.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK.

- A. Shows proper relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- B. Explains more fully the Old Testament passages.
- C. Contains sublime descriptions of the dignity and glory of Christ.
- D. Shows the excellence of Christ's sacrifice.
- E. Demonstrates the superiority of Christ's gospel.

- F. Contains important “exhorting” passages. The writer is trying to get these points over to his readers.
- G. Is of superior literary style.
- H. One must think “Jewish.” How did the Jews think? What did this letter mean to them when they read it?
- I. Was most likely written to Jews in Palestine.
- J. Written about 64 or 65, but definitely before A.D. 70.

III. PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.

- A. To prevent apostasy from Christianity to Judaism by showing the superiority of the basic parts of the new covenant over the old covenant.
- B. In God’s foresight He shows the uselessness of leaving the truth today and going into man-made religions (denominations).

IV. WRITER OF THE BOOK.

Only God knows who the human author is.

V. STYLE OF THE EPISTLE.

It is written in the most elevated Greek in the New Testament, and comparable to Luke 1:1-4.

VI. DATE OF WRITING.

The date depends upon who the human author is. However, if it is Paul or any of his close associates (as most believe to be the case) the date would be about 64 or 65, but definitely prior to A.D. 70.

VII. EARLY EVIDENCE OF ITS BEING CONSIDERED SCRIPTURE.

- A. It is quoted as Scripture by Clement of Rome in A.D. 96.
- B. Justin (Martyr) quotes it in A.D. 140.
- C. It is found in the oldest versions of the New Testament.

- D. It is found in the oldest listings of the New Testament books.
- E. All its doctrines are in harmony with all other New Testament Scripture.
- F. It is quoted in a number of the Nag Hamadi texts.

Gnosticism and Biblical Studies (page 90):

“Perhaps the biggest puzzle in the New Testament is the question of who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. The fact that its authorship could not be settled weighed heavily in the arguments against its canonicity. Now the Nag Hamadi texts show that by A.D. 140 the Epistle was widely used by both the Western and Eastern branches of the church. Such wide usage is attested in the *Gospel of Truth*, the *Gospel of Philip* and the *Apocryphon of John*.⁵ Its early acceptance throws the burden of proof upon those who, in the second and third century, wanted to reject that Epistle.”

⁵In *E.V.* cf. 19.13-17 with Hebrews 8:11; 19.35 f. with Hebrews 8:10; 20:10 with Hebrews 2:17 (the only place where ‘merciful and faithful’ are coupled in the New Testament); 26.2 with Hebrews 4:12; 38.10 with Hebrews 1:5; 5:5. In *A.J.* cf. 75.24-28 with Hebrews 12:16-17; 75.22 f. with Hebrews 10:26-27, 39; 78.2 f. with Hebrews 4:9. An allusion to Hebrews 12:18 may be found in *A.J.* 47.33. In the *Gospel of Philip* the following citations from or allusions to Hebrews may be seen: Saying No. 82 and Hebrews 4:11; Saying No. 76 and Hebrews 9:2 ff.; Saying No. 125 and Hebrews 6:19-20; 10:20. Some think Philip is specifically Valentinian. If so, that fact would indicate that its author and the author of *E.V.* (both representing Western or Roman Gnosticism) provide a second-century witness from the Western church for the authenticity of Hebrews. Additional instances of the use of Hebrews by *E.V.* can be seen in the work by Soren Giversen cited in the bibliography.”

VIII. CHARACTER OF THE ORIGINAL READERS.

- 2:3 - Were not brand new Christians.
- 2:4 - Lived in the age of miracles; therefore, during the first century.
- 3:1 - Were Christians.
- 3:12 - Were in danger of apostatizing.
- 5:12 - Had been Christians long enough that they should be teachers.

- 6:1 - Had slipped and become immature, apparently by choice.
- 6:10 - Were doing the works of Christianity, but were leaving sound doctrine.
- 6:11-12 - Were not all remaining faithful.
- 10:32-34 - Underwent persecution, lost material possessions, but had accepted their lot and identified with those being persecuted publicly. They were to continue to offer themselves.
- 10:36 - Had once done the will of God, but if they reverted back to Judaism they would lose heaven.
- 12:4 - No one in their group had been killed for their faith yet. Probably second generation Christians as the first generation had been persecuted and some had been killed.
- 12:16 - Were having moral problems. Judaism had only one relief from moral responsibilities: the Mosaic rules concerning divorce and remarriage.
- 13:4 - Were observing Jewish or Pagan meat regulations.
- 13:5 - Had lost their possessions and were now covetous, not depending on the Lord. God will never desert them (or us).
- 13:7 - Had those who ruled over them, perhaps elders and/or those who had special gifts (cf. 17 and 24). Remember those who have helped you in your Christianity.
- 13:9 - Were being taught error. They were being tempted to follow clean and unclean food laws.
- 13:18-19 - Knew the writer of this letter and his circumstances.
- 13:23 - Were familiar with Timothy.
- 13:24 - The author was either in Italy sending greetings, or the author had some from Italy with him sending greetings back to their acquaintances in Italy. The message is the same (and true) whether sent from Italy or to Italy.

IX. KEY WORDS.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Number of times in this epistle</u>
Once (for all)	8
Perfect	9
Tent (tabernacle)	10
Without (apart from)	13
Sacrifice	15
Heaven	16
Covenant	17
Promise	18
Blood	20
Offer (offering)	20
Holy	22
Son	24
Sin	25
Better (the <u>key</u> word)	13

See “Better Things In The Book Of Hebrews” in the Appendix.

X. OUTLINE.

- I. Superiority of Christ over prophets and angels 1:1-2:4
- II. Superiority of Christ’s humanity 2:5-18
- III. Superiority of Christ over Moses (and warnings based on Israel’s history)..... 3:1-4:13
- IV. Superiority of qualifications of Christ as High Priest..... 4:14-5:10
- V. Necessity of growth to maturity in order to realize the hope found in Christ’s priesthood 5:11-6:20

VI.	Superiority of Christ's priesthood over Aaron's priesthood	7:1-8:5
VII.	Superiority of the New Covenant because of better promises	8:6-13
VIII.	Superiority of Christ's priesthood because of His service in a better tabernacle	9:1-14
IX.	Superiority of the New Covenant based on the death of Christ	9:15-28
X.	Superiority of Christ's priesthood because of a better sacrifice	10:1-18
XI.	Exhortation based on the priesthood of Christ	10:19-39
XII.	The steadfastness of real faith	11:1-40
XIII.	Exhortations to have the same kind of confidence and perseverance as those in chapter 11	12:1-29
XIV.	Practical exhortations	13:1-25

XI. SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE ENTIRE EPISTLE.

The covenant of Jesus is better because it is perfect. In His covenant He serves as the better priest who offers a better sacrifice of His own blood. He is the perfect Son through whom we, by following, can have our sins forgiven and become sons of God so that we might partake of the better promises.

HEBREWS EXPOSITION

- I. **SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST OVER PROPHETS AND ANGELS.....1:1-2:4**
 - A. **Christ Superior To Prophets..... 1:1-3**

VERSE 1:1

In each instance, when Christ or Christianity is compared to anyone or anything in the Mosaic age, the one or subject being compared to is never belittled but built up to their proper place and then it is shown that Christ and Christianity are superior.

No introduction to this epistle showing who the human author is, but begins with one of the most important arguments of the book, that is: Christ is superior to all other mediators and messengers by whom God has ever spoken, and that Christianity is far superior to Judaism. This refers back to both the Patriarchal and Mosaic ages.

As noted, the epistle begins unusually without an epistolary salutation - no author or reason why no salutation is given.

Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles, did not feel worthy or want to prejudice Jewish Christian leaders in Palestine.

The apostle doing the writing deliberately avoided his name so as not to confuse his readers with the Apostle, Christ, of 3:1.

Better: technically, this is not an epistle, but a homily (see 13:22).

God . . . spoke - God has spoken to man (1:1-2) - confirms authoritativeness of Jewish system (Pink). [Idea - explain excellent use of Greek because it was going to the Hebrew church and that which they had learned would be more “bookish.” Therefore, Paul might have written it by using his Greek book and working it up that way very well. Also, he would want to impress the “mother church” (some say).]

At various times (πολυμερTM) - a part (portions) at a time.

In different ways (πολυτρόπως) - methods, manners, in many parts, or parcels such as voice (Ex 24:2), fingers (Dan 5:5; Ex 31:18), dreams and visions (Dan 2:1; Gen 40), etc.

God did not reveal everything all at once. The Old Testament was given in “portions” and at wide intervals even though each part was perfect and accurate truth. No revelation was given to correct past revelation - each portion was a part of the total message revealed by God according to His plan.

Illustration: the difference between Exodus and Deuteronomy. In Exodus the law was given to a nomadic people. Therefore, some of the laws had to change to fit a settled people. The progression was one from promise to fulfillment (Bruce, p. 2).

Key: The contrast to “different ways (divers portions)” is revelation all at once (v. 2). This is Christianity (cf. Jude 3). If not, then those who had already died by the time the epistle of Hebrews was written did not really know what to do to be saved and how to live the Christian life! (See Acts 20:27 - “the whole counsel of God.”) Also then, speaking in tongues and miraculous gifts were to confirm the word as it was completely revealed!

In time past - (πάλαι) - “of old” - the Old Testament was God’s word to the Jews.

To the fathers - it would appear he is speaking of the fathers from Abraham or Moses following the Jewish line.

By the prophets - the Holy Spirit used them.

God spoke to men through prophets (God spoke - He just used the prophets).

Abel is called a prophet (Lk 11:50,52), as are Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32).

Literally, a prophet was “one who spoke for another.” Here it was used of “one who spoke for God.”

In a technical sense this would include anyone speaking by the authority of and for another. Here it is speaking of those prophets sent by God.

VERSE 2

Has . . . spoken (λαλήσας) - aorist tense showing this revelation is final and not to be continued.

In these last days - has at the end of these days. The writer sets forth his first major contrast with the whole book. All of the arguments in this epistle follow this pattern.

1. The closing period of the Jewish age (the days of the Messiah), or
2. The Christian age, or
3. The closing period of the prophetic era including the ministry of Christ and His apostles (Dan 2:28; 10:14; Acts 2:16).

4. All three.

The correct view is (3).

It was a mistake not to know that the Jewish Age would end and that a new era would begin. Compare Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jews divided time into two segments: "Present Age" and "Age to Come", never sharply defining the dividing line between Jewish Age and Messianic Age since the death of the Messiah was not in their thinking. (Milligan)

In this epistle "world to come" (2:5), "age to come" (6:5), "time of reformation" (9:10), and "city to come" (12:22) do not all mean the same thing – the church.

Has . . . spoken to us by His Son - what prophet had been His Son? None!

First, He spoke on earth (2:3-4).

Now, as opposed to the old covenant, He speaks through His Son. "His" is not in the Greek. Therefore, He speaks "through Son" or "in Son," as if we would say "in Greek" or "in English."

Wescott says: "The absence of the article fixes attention upon the nature and not upon the personality of the Mediator of the new revelation. God spoke to us in one who has this character that He is Son."

"Has spoken" (ἐλάλησεν) - 1st aor. act. Part., therefore, the speaking has already been accomplished once for all time (see Jude 3). His word was not completely uttered until Christ came; but when Christ came, the word spoken "ἐν" Him was indeed God's final word (Bruce).

Must see John 16:12-15. Note: He once spoke through the prophets, but now shows personal interest by speaking through (ἐν) His Son. The importance of the message, therefore, is shown by the messenger (greater and more personal). In the Jewish way of thinking the son is equal to the Father (Jn 5:18). Therefore, Jesus is equal to God the Father.

Nichols' *Expositor's New Testament* (p. 249): "This revelation was final because made by one who in all He is and does reveals the Father." When Jesus revealed the Father, what else is there to reveal (see Jn 1:18; Col 1:15; Jn 10:30;

14:9-10; 2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3)? What else is coming? There are no more "portions" needed today!

Chain of command - John 8:20; 17:8; 2 Timothy 2:2; Deuteronomy 18:15-18; cf. Acts 3:22.

THE WRITER OF THIS BOOK NOW GIVES SEVEN CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

FIRST CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

Whom He has appointed heir of all things - what prophet was ever heir of all things? None! Compare Psalms 2:7-8; 10:1 (on heir); Galatians 3:16-29.

The Hebrews' problem was that of realizing Jesus was indeed appointed heir of all things. They failed to realize and accept the true significance of Jesus.

Heir (κληρονόμον) - meaning:

- (1) One who acquires anything by lot, or
- (2) One who inherits anything by the will or appointment of another (Milligan, p. 52).

Obviously Jesus did not become heir by chance since it was God's eternal plan (Eph 3:11; 1 Pet 1:20). Therefore, definition #2 applies.

Psalm 2:7-8 ("You are My Son, Today..."); Psalm 110:1 ("The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'").

Through Him all nations of the earth would be blessed (Abraham contrasted with us - Gal 3:16-29).

What did He inherit? Examples of inheritance:

Everlasting dominion, glory and a kingdom (Dan 7:13-14).

All power under heaven (Mt 28:18; Rom 1:4).

All things (Mt 11:27; Jn 3:35; 13:3).

Throne of David (Lk 1:32).

All judgment (Jn 5:22).

Authority over all mankind (Jn 17:2).

Heir of God (Rom 8:17).

Lord of the living and the dead (Rom 14:9).

All things subject to Him (1 Cor 15:27).

Above all rule, power and dominion (Eph 1:10,21).

Name above all (Phil 2:9-10; Heb 2:8-9).

Therefore, His being heir is dependent upon His Sonship, i.e., Eternal Son equals Eternal Heir, but received at resurrection (Rom 1:4; Acts 2:36; Phil 2:5-11).

Also compare Luke 10:22; 1 Peter 2:22; Galatians 4:7.

His being heir is dependant upon His being the Son (this is key).

Christ received the inheritance *after* His resurrection (Isa 9:6-7; Mt 28:18; Acts 2:36; Phil 2:5-11; Rom 1:4).

Seven things about the superiority of Christ: He...

1. Is heir of all things,
2. Made the world,
3. Is the effulgence of God,
4. Is the express image of God,
5. Upholds all things,
6. Made purification of sins and
7. Sat down at the right hand of God.

SECOND CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

Through whom also He made the worlds - this distinction throws light on Jesus' relationship to the creation, implying that Jesus was not the absolute, independent Creator, but rather the intermediate agent in creation (Dana and Mantey, p. 102).

What prophet of God has ever made (or would ever make) such a claim? None would! Jesus is the only one who made the world (Col 1:16; Jn 1:3; Heb 1:10-12; 3:3-4).

Summary: Thus, the man Jesus, the Revelator, is God's Son, Heir, and Creator.

What prophet was? None was!

Worlds (αἰTMνας) - history of the word: originally it meant the world order as it existed at that particular time. And then, at another particular time, that era would be called "the world," and so on down throughout history, so the plural word is used even though it refers to only one physical earth.

VERSE 3

THIRD CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

Brightness (ἀπούγασμα) - effulgence - light beaming from a luminous body. This is like the beam from a flashlight, not the flashlight itself.

Jesus, then, is like a light beam coming from the Father (Col 1:15).

His glory (δόξης) - God's full manifestation - all the attributes of God (Col 2:9).

FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

Image (χαρακτήρ) *of His person* - not the same as Colossians 1:15, but is like a coin and the die (mold) it is made in.

See John 14:9 - "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

A similar word is εἰκὼν used in Colossians 1:15 and 2 Corinthians 4:4, but it is not as emphatic (Bruce, p. 54).

The word here represents the impression left by a signet ring in wax - an exact image of the original.

Of His person (ὑποστάσεως) - person, being, nature, inner nature (exact image and expression of God's nature or essence). Also "substance" (ASV), "person" (KJV, NKJV), "being" (NIV), "nature" (NAS).

The interpretation of this led to great controversies in the 300's (Arius controversy - Athanasius won!).

According to Vine, the word means substance, essence, or inner nature (“substance” KJV, NKJV; “assurance” ASV, NAS) [used two other places in the book - Heb 3:14; 11:1]; (“confidence” ASV, KJV, and NKJV).

In the Greek the meaning is “what is standing under” or “essence.” Jesus is the exact essence of God the Father. Therefore, Jesus is God. He is not made up of, or consist of, some other created material. His being, essence, is deity.

Concerning the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ idea of Jesus being a created being, this could not be the case if the same word (essence) is used because it would be eternal.

The point: Christ is the tangible, visible representation of God (Jn 14:9). When you see the way Jesus thinks, feels, desires, wants, etc. you know that is the exact way God thinks, feels, desires, wants, etc.

Here again we see the Hebrew Christians’ problem of accepting Jesus without accepting the full nature of Him. They still felt that God wanted them to keep the Old Law. Thus, they failed to see the essence and true identity of Christ. “It is not what Christ has received from God, but what He is that is so important” (Lenski).

FIFTH CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

Upholding all things by the word of His power - what prophet ever did? None!

Power (φέρω) - hold or held together (cf. Col 1:17; Psa 33:6-9).

All things held together by the power of God through Jesus (atoms, etc.).
(See Psa 33:6-9; Isa 55:11; 2 Pet 3:9-12.)

Jesus’ power was manifested by His word (ῥήματι).

Creation, raising the dead, healing, etc.

“Word of his power” is a Hebraism meaning his efficient command (Barnes).

SIXTH CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

When He had by Himself purged our sins - Christ is a Priest (1 Pet 2:21; Heb 4:15; Rom 5:6-10; 2 Cor 5:21).

Had purged (ποιησάμενος) - having accomplished for all time - (this is also aorist) not something yet to be done (Rom 5:6-10; 2 Cor 5:21), not just Revealer, but also Redeemer.

SEVENTH CHARACTERISTIC OF JESUS AS THE SON OF GOD.

Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high - Christ is a King (cf. Psa 110:1; 109:1; Acts 2:33; Heb 1:8; 10:12; 12:2).

1st aor. act. - took His seat; a formal and dignified act (Robertson).

A place of honor.

Inheritor of the throne.

Indicates subjection only to the king (1 Cor 15:28).

Place of endearment (cf. Psa 110:1; Heb 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).

Sat down - priests on the earth stood while serving in their functions and duties. However, Christ is seated because His sacrificial work is completed.

Conclusions:

1. Christianity is revealed through Christ, who is God's Son and heir; manifests God as creator, sustainer and redeemer; and, thus, is superior to the prophets.
2. Jesus is:
 - a. Prophet ("spoken to us" - vv. 2-3),
 - b. Priest ("made purification of sins" - v. 3) and
 - c. King ("on the right hand of God" - v. 3).

B. Christ Superior To And Contrasted With Angels 1:4-14

The problem with angels:

1. Barclay (p. 7ff) - "In seeing our writer's concern to show the proper place of angels, angel exaltation seems to have been a problem and possibly had taken or fulfilled the place of Jesus in the Jewish mind (they were considered next to God in rank). The Jews may have looked upon them as

intermediary between themselves and God. In destroying such a concept, our divinely inspired author sets forth the superiority of Jesus as opposed to the place, purpose, and function of angels. He does so with the use of the Old Testament, which the Jewish people completely accepted” (Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel).

2. Nobody really knows the origin of this controversy. Some claim a Gnostic influence [?], but the Jews also had a peculiar concept of angelic beings. We only know the teachings as they are given here in order to refute their concept.

VERSE 4

Jesus is better (superior).

1. His name is greater (vv. 4-5).
2. Angels worship Him (v. 6).
3. Angels are mere messengers, but Jesus is the king who sends the messengers (v. 7).
4. God calls Jesus God (v. 8).
5. His superiority is shown by His being anointed (v. 9).
6. He is the unchanging creator (vv. 10-12).
7. Angels are ministering spirits - Jesus is Lord (vv. 13-14).

Notice the translation in the TEV - *The Son was made greater than the angels, just as the name that God gave him is greater than theirs.*

And the NIV - *So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs* (cf. Eph 1:21; Heb 8:6).

Having become - showed Himself better than angels. Compare Philipians 2:8-10.

THE WRITER NOW PROCEEDS WITH SEVEN ARGUMENTS THAT JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS.

FIRST ARGUMENT (VV. 4-5): HIS NAME IS GREATER.

Inherited - in an official sense only as He had always had the inheritance.

A more excellent name - by virtue of His supreme authority as Christ and Son of God. This is not something He earned because He is deity - a member of the godhead (Phil 2:8-10) therefore, inherited as a Son.

Name - the Person. Compare Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:21; 3:14-15; 5:20; Philippians 2:9; Matthew 18:20; 28:19; Colossians 3:17; Jn 14:13.

Farrar says: "This does not mean that Jesus was at some time in history inferior and worked his way up to being better than angels, but rather that he proved himself to be better than angels by his life, work, death, etc."

Was He God? Yes, but Jesus was also a man. As such He was a little lower than the angels (2:7), but by His resurrection He was declared to be the Son of God with power (Rom 1:4). So His name makes Him superior to the angels (W.W.).

"This has reference to the particular event in the history of the 'Son of God' incarnate by which he was instated in a position of sovereignty and invested with power; an event which in respect of investiture with power surpassed everything that can previously be ascribed to him in his incarnate state."

VERSE 5

The answer to these two questions is - NONE!

For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son . . . ?" The word *for* shows verse five is the explanation of verse four.

God is an eternal Father. Therefore, there must of necessity be an eternal Son! A spiritual relationship (somewhat anthropomorphic - beware, all analogies breakdown - e.g. who was His mother?).

My Son - John 5:17,18.

Today I have begotten you - begettal theologically is begotten from the dead at the resurrection. Compare Acts 13:33 which is an application of Psalm 2:7 also.

Begotten (γενγέννηκά) - in the first century this referred to a new life. This term was used of kings when they came to power; thus, its usage here (Rom 1:4).

Micah 5:2 shows the second person of the Godhead is eternal (both Psa 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:12-14 are referring to the resurrection).

This verse is from Psalm 2:7 and we have an inspired commentary for it in Acts 13:32-33. Here it is declared that “this day” was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. “He was born from the dead, and God, who raised him, thus demonstrated that he was His Son” (Johnson).

“He who was the Son of God from everlasting entered in the full exercise of all the prerogatives implied by His Sonship, when after His suffering, had proved the completeness of His obedience He was raised to the Father’s right hand” (Bruce, p. 13).

See Barnes in connection with the eternal Sonship of Jesus (p. 1731).

Westcott explains as follows: “The term marks the communication of a new abiding life, represented in the case of an earthly king by the royal dignity, and in the case of Christ by the divine sovereignty established by the resurrection of the incarnate Son, which His ascension was included.”

Side note on the meaning of “only begotten” - “We should not read too much into ‘only begotten.’ To English ears this sounds like a metaphysical relationship, but the Greek term means no more than ‘only’, ‘unique’.⁹³ It is used, for example, of the widow of Nain’s ‘only’ son (Luke 7:12; cf. also Luke 9:38). It is used of Jairus’s daughter (Luke 8:42). Perhaps even more instructive is the use of the term with reference to Isaac (Heb 11:17), for Isaac was not Abraham’s only son. But he was ‘unique’. He was the only son given to Abraham by God’s promise. Used here, though the word does not necessarily indicate a metaphysical relationship, it does at the least show that Jesus is God’s Son in a unique way. No other is or can be the Son of God as He is.

⁹³It should not be overlooked that μονογενής is derived from γίνομαι not γεννάω (one v, not two). Etymologically it is not connected with begetting.” (Morris, Leon NICNT, p. 105)

The angels were involved in giving of the Law of Moses so it was needed to show Christ’s superiority (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19).

I will be to Him a Father.

This quote is from 2 Samuel 7:12-14.

Also referred to in Acts 2:30ff, where this double-fulfilled prophecy is shown. God had sworn to David with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne. He looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Christ. Therefore, it

was a spiritual throne. David, of course, did not see this fulfillment in Solomon as its completeness. Note also that Jesus never sinned, but Solomon did; all of the prophecy need not totally apply in its second application. The second fulfillment is always the greater fulfillment.

Thus, the name (authority) equals the “person” of Jesus. He is greater because of whose Son He is, not just what He is. There is no such name given to angels.

VERSE 6

SECOND ARGUMENT (V. 6): ANGELS WORSHIPED HIM.

Only the superior is worshiped.

Revelation 22:8-9 - angels do not receive worship.

Into the world (οἰκουμένην) - the people, the inhabited world.

This is not the normal word for world (κόσμος), the habitable globe or earth (Acts 17:6). It is used also in 2:5 - “world to come.”

Thus, the writer explains. God was to bring Jesus back again where people are (or refers to when He was brought to where people are - not past tense).

If this refers to the first coming of Jesus then we must refer to Luke 2 (where the angels announce it to the shepherds, etc.).

If this reference is to Jesus’ second coming, then we go to 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

There is no problem with either view.

Into the world is an adverbial phrase, not a phrase modifying “firstborn.” Therefore, “brings into the world.”

Also in NIV - *Again* (πάλιν) can mean:

“Secondly,” or

“He brings in again” (cf. 2 Thess 1:7-9).

When He brings in.

“Firstborn” - either of three meanings.

1. “From the dead” in only one particular sense; i.e., first to be resurrected never to die again (this is the contextual meaning - it goes back to “begotten”).

Side point - What about the saints of Matthew 27:51-53? These resurrected saints were a manifestation of the power of God to be able to bring forth people from the grave. There is no reference that these were resurrected to go to heaven; instead, they were resurrected to go into the city to preach - resurrected as was Lazarus. There have also been no legends passed down or historical accounts concerning them, so they must have later died again as mortals. But even if they had been raised to go to heaven, Jesus was still the “firstborn” (note v. 53). Compare Quadratus 125 A.D. - Eusibius’ *Ecclesiastical History* (Vol. 4, 3-2). See also Mattox, p. 68

2. It can refer to one who is to inherit because he was born first.
3. “The Hebrew mind would also understand “firstborn” as the one who is preeminent [Rev 1:5; Col 1:15; Rom 8:29. See Ps 89:27 (Title of Messiah - a prophetic passage) and Ex 4:21ff to show “firstborn” = most important, like Joseph, etc.; Jeremiah 31:9 shows that Ephraim was second born]. Jews referred to God the Father as “Firstborn of all the world” (Clarke).

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

The point is not when He is or was to come into the world, but that angels worship the firstborn. The Inferior worships the Superior.

This quote is from Psalm 97:7 (Deut 32:43 - Septuagint - see Bruce, p. 16).

“Angels” here translates “gods” from the Septuagint in the Old Testament. In this instance “gods” = “angels” = “mighty ones” (cf. Jn 10:34-36). Therefore, Jesus is superior (Rev 22:8-9).

VERSE 7

THIRD ARGUMENT (V. 7): ANGELS ARE MESSENGERS SENT BY GOD.

Quote from Psalm 104:4 - angels are used by God just as He uses the winds (spirits in NKJV - drove back the Red Sea) and flames of fire (destroyed Sodom, etc.).

God makes angels do things, but scriptures never say Jesus is made to do anything (Jn 10:17-18). He is obedient by His own volition.

VERSE 8

FOURTH ARGUMENT (V. 8): GOD CALLED HIM GOD.

But to the Son He says - the son in Hebrew society was equated to his father. Whatever the father had was also his son's. This included property as well as authority. So, by calling Jesus "Son," God is equating Jesus with Himself.

O God - Jesus is called "God" by God. This is articular vocative and is a quote of Psalm 45:6. The Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe Jesus is God and, therefore, go to great lengths and strange twists of translating to avoid the true meaning of this verse.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible says, "Thy throne is God," but:

O God as part of the subject is correct because both *thy throne* (ὁ θρόνος) and *O God* (ὁ θεός) have the article "ὁ." Therefore, neither is to be the predicate nominative and both have to be the subject (this is called the articular vocative).

The Septuagint understands *O God* as vocative - see ὁ θεός as "vocative" in Luke 18:11,13 (ὁ θεός = God); 8:54 (ἡ παῖς = maid).

Throne is symbol of dominion or rule, meaning His rule is perpetual (Barnes, 1228, cf. Lk 1:33).

In the Chaldee paraphrase, and in all ancient versions, it is so understood also as "Your throne, O God, is forever."

In the Old Testament there is no alternative reading as in the New Testament.

In Hebrew thought the occupant of the throne of David was regarded as God's representative, and in this sense the king could be addressed as God (Guthrie, p. 76).

A scepter of righteousness - a sign of authority and rulership.

His kingdom is characterized by uprightness and justice (Nicoll, p. 256). The point is that His rule is declared to be a righteous one; He is righteous, He rules by righteousness and He is God.

Compare Isaiah 61:1,3 with Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38.

VERSE 9

FIFTH ARGUMENT (V. 9): SUPERIORITY SHOWN BY HIS ANOINTING.

Jesus is *anointed* (Lk 4:18ff) - set aside for a special purpose (quote from Psa 45:7).

Anointed (ἔχρισέν) - used of kings (Isa 10:1), priests (Ex 28:41) and prophets (1 Kgs 19:16).

Oil of gladness -

The anointing that God did had joyful effects to it.

“Messiah,” “Christ” and “Anointed” are identical, being the same word. His anointing was joyous because He loved righteousness and fulfilled all the requirements of God’s dealing with man and his problem of sin.

Note: The primary reference is not to a king’s coronation, but as symbolic of blessing and joy connected with custom of anointing the head at feasts; cf. Deuteronomy 28:40; Psalms 23:5; 92:10; Matthew 6:17; et al (Coffman, p. 141).

Also, you would not say God has anointed Thy God - articular vocative again [ὁ θεὸς (God) ὁ θεὸς σου (Thy God) “has anointed” (verb)]. Therefore, in verse 8, ὁ θρόνος (Thy throne) σου ὁ θεὸς (O God) is (verb).

Fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1.

Jesus claimed fulfillment (Lk 4:18,21; cf. Acts 10:38). The Holy Spirit anointing Him officially empowered Him to do the work of the Messiah.

Jesus has always been Messiah, but emptied Himself of the prerogatives of deity. He was officially made the “anointed one” at His baptism.

Above (παρὰ) - with the accusative means “to the side of, beside, along, beyond” (Dana and Mantey, p. 108).

Fellows - (μετόχους) - companions [NAS] of the bridegroom. If so, Christ is anointed over the church. He is still superior.

More superior than His fellows, or any associated with Him.

VERSE 10

SIXTH ARGUMENT (VV. 10-12): JESUS IS THE UNCHANGING CREATOR.

You, Lord - "Lord" is not found in the Hebrew, but is put in the Septuagint.

A quote from Psalm 102:25-27; David had reference to Jehovah (vv. 18-22), but the Hebrew writer here applies it to Jesus as the Creator; Psalm 102:24 and Hebrews 1:2 ("made the worlds") obviously showing that vv. 10-12 refer to Jesus who made the worlds (Barnes, p. 1229). Go back to v. 8 to see the connection with Son.

In the beginning - this is a reference to the beginning of time (creation) since eternity has no beginning; "The heavens are the work of Your hands" (Col 1:17; Heb 11:3; Jn 1:3; Heb 3:3-5).

He was not just an arranger of what God created (Vine, p. 17).

Laid - aorist tense - denies that continual creation is scientifically correct. This agrees with the First Law of Thermodynamics.

Compare Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 11:3; 13:8; John 1:3.

VERSE 11

They will perish (ἀπολοῦνται) - compare 1 John 3:8. Middle voice - "They will destroy themselves" (cf. 2 Pet 3:10). [JW version says the same thing]; to be lost, pass away, ruined (e.g. Mt 9:17; Mk 2:22; Lk 5:37; Jas 1:11; 1 Pet 1:17; Rev 18:14; Jn 6:27); main idea of this word is loss of well being (Arndt and Gingrich). This agrees with the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

But You remain - the contrast is between what will happen to the creation as opposed to the Creator.

The only way this can be a contrast is that the world will be destroyed with Jesus continuing forever. If this refers to a renovated, but same earth, then this would be a parallel and not a contrast as is apparently in the mind of the author. Compare 1 John 3:8 and 2 Peter 3:10,11 ("destroy" works of the devil).

Will grow old - as clothes are taken off when worn out and replaced with new. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

Will grow - become, wax (παλαιωθήσονται), same word as found in 8:13. Creation is subject to the Second Law of Thermodynamics; it will become useless or obsolete (Isa 50:9; 51:6 - Arndt and Gingrich).

Will fold them up - roll them up as a garment (ASV) - removed from service (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1).

VERSE 12

Changed - i.e., like old clothes taken off and replaced with new ones; not renovated or changed into eternal nature like man (same word used in 1 Cor 15:51-53); thus a “new heaven and earth to come.”

Changed from a physical nature to a spiritual nature.

But (δε) *You are the same* - compare Hebrews 13:8. Here, again, the word renovation cannot apply and still have a contrast.

And Your years shall not fail - heaven and earth's years will end, but not Jesus' (Mt 24:35).

VERSE 13

SEVENTH ARGUMENT (VV. 13-14): ANGELS ARE MINISTERING SPIRITS.

Jesus is Lord of all - “*But to which of the angels has He ever said...*” implied they are sent by the Son (the saved are served by angels, but Jesus is over them all).

Angels are spirits.

Angels are continually sent forth and, therefore, are on missions.

Angels are to do services - even for Christ (see Psa 91:11).

Quote from Psalm 110:1 - “... Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” (most often quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament - Fudge).

Used in Acts 2:34-36 and Hebrews 10:13.

Till - refers to the second coming and that Christ is now reigning over His kingdom (1 Cor 15:25-26; cf. 1:3).

Footstool - totally defeated (cf. Josh 10:24).

VERSE 14

Are they not all ministering spirits (λειτουργικά) - public service (angels obey God - Psa 103:20-21).

The construction of the question requires a “yes” answer.

Sent forth (ἀποστελλόμενα) is durative action; therefore, they are ministering constantly for Christians (Robertson; Vine); thus, angels do help, but we don't know how or what they do. It is unnecessary for us to know since we do not control them (also implied they are sent by the Son).

For those who will inherit salvation - angels do service for Christians who will one day be with God (angels are not dead humans - cf. 2:16).

Inherit - if an inheritance, we cannot earn salvation!

We have salvation now, but will also receive salvation. We have it in promise now, and in fruition, or actuality, later.

The significance of this whole argument is this: since those who are under Christ serve Jesus the Savior, who dictates and rules, and angels serve him and those who are saved, then Jesus controls the angels, saves the Christian, and is superior to angels. If they are sent to serve Christians, how much more do they serve the Son? (Fudge, p. 23).

Stop! Where did the author get his authority for this whole argument from? The Old Testament scriptures!

See “Typical Use Of The Old Testament” in the Appendix.

C. Conclusion - His Gospel Is More Binding Than The Law2:1-4

VERSE 2:1

Therefore refers back to 1:1,4. Pay attention!

Deuteronomy 18:18-19 compare John 12:49,50.

Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19 compare 1:6-9.

We must - “ought” in older translations - (δε ϕ) on account of this, because of this it is necessary. It is a “must” not an “ought;” also used of bishops in 1 Timothy 3:2, “a bishop must (δε ϕ) be blameless.”

We - the author includes himself, all are included.

More earnest heed - emphasized. We must give much closer attention to what we have heard of Jesus' word. This shows the importance of the message (the things that were heard - the gospel) cf. 12:25.

"Lest (NAS) haply we drift away." "We" is the same as the "we" above, signifying that the author could also drift away. (Our first mention of theme as a warning.)

Lest (haply) we - in older translations means "by chance," "in case." The word for "haply" is not in the Greek.

Other related words – hap, happenstance, happen and happy.

Lest - this means apostasy is possible - not "once saved, always saved" (Jas 5:19-20; 1 Jn 1:1-10).

Drift (παρᾶρυTMμεν) - used of a ship slowly slipping from its moorings, or snow slowly melting from a dead soldier's body. This is referring to very slowly apostatizing.

This verse plainly states that Christians can lose their souls. We can fall from grace!

This verse is the first time the theme of the book is stated.

VERSE 2

For if - "since" - first class conditional.

There are four classes of conditional sentences in Greek:

1st class - the condition is assumed to be true (translate as "since" or "if").

2nd class - the condition is assumed to be false.

3rd class - the condition (in the future) is assumed to be true (example Jn 14:15).

4th class - the condition (in the future) is assumed to be false. (This class is not used in the New Testament.)

The word spoken through angels - this could mean the Law of Moses or it could refer to when angels announced a coming judgment and it came true, as opposed to the Old Testament per se.

Through (διὰ) - "by means of."

Where does the Bible say that the Law was spoken by angels? In the following references it says "spoken," not "given" (Duet 33:2; Psa 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19). "How" they did it is unimportant (Josephus confirms - *Antiquities* XV,5,3).

A Liberal named Plummer says, "The idea that angels were used in giving the Law goes back to an alteration of Deuteronomy 33:2 in the Septuagint and this is in keeping with mere tradition."

Thus, through the instrumentality of angels God gave the Law (cf. Rev 22:8-9 for that same method in New Testament revelation), but perhaps not the Ten Commandments since they were given by God's own power ("finger of God").

However, note the number of laws in Deuteronomy. We do not know what else God did during Moses' stay of 40 days (80 total) on the mountain (cf. Deut 5:3-4,22-23; 18:16 - God spoke the Ten Commandments; maybe angels "gave" or "spoke" the rest).

The point: If Jesus is superior to angels, and if the "law" that the angels spoke proves steadfast ("unalterable" - NAS), His example of how "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (not in NAS), then what do you think God is going to do with the law that He gave through His Son? How strongly do you think He is going to enforce it? (See Deut 18:15-18.)

Proved steadfast - unalterable, it was not broken or destroyed. Again, this is the point - not that angels were involved but that the Law was unalterable.

Transgression (παράβασις) - transgression of a positive command; breaking a command. Sins of commission.

Disobedience (παρακοή) - disregarding and neglecting to obey (Mt 18:17; Rom 5:19). Sins of omission.

Thus, we are guilty by acts of sin, as well as neglect - commission and omission (Rom 3:23-25).

Just reward (ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν) - you will receive your just pay or reward; you will get what you deserve.

If you were punished under a law given by angels, how much more will the law given by God's own Son be enforced?

VERSE 3

How shall we (emphatic) *escape*? Point: if the above is true of the law or messages of angels, how is one to escape the result of neglecting the message of the Son?

ἀμελήσαντες - "having disregarded." Some already had! ". . . how shall we escape *neglecting* so great a salvation?"

There is no "if" in the Greek.

So great a salvation - i.e., that Christ gave; salvation in the gospel.

Three ways to show the greatness of this salvation:

1. It was first proclaimed (spoken) by the Lord Himself (cf. 1:2).
2. It was confirmed by those who heard Him (Lk 1:1-4).
3. It was certified as being by God with miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:1-4). Therefore, it is not just a reference to eyewitnesses, but a claim of inspiration.

Author problem: Some argue strongly here that because it says it was confirmed unto "us," that is those who heard it from Christ, that the author must not have been Paul because of Galatians 1:12. However:

The author identifies with his readers ("we") in several places (vv. 1 and 3; 6:3); "our" (3:14); "us" (4:11,14; 6:1).

The author is not primarily teaching authorship here.

If it were Paul, this would not contradict Galatians 1:12 since that shows from where he received his gospel; it could still be confirmed by those who heard Christ teach.

Main point: The gospel received was confirmed by those who heard it from Christ. Thus, the subject is not myth, folk-tale, or made-up stories, but a confirmed, historical teaching just as clear as any other writing of history.

It is a salvation "in Christ who is so very much greater than the prophets and angels."

VERSE 4

God also bearing witness - (i.e., the confirmation). The purpose was to confirm the word (Mt 11:2-5; Jn 3:2; 20:30-31). Note the words here used for “miracles” are the same as in Acts 2:22,32.

He is not confirming only the message, but the salvation itself.

Sometimes the following four are used synonymously, but not here.

Signs (σημείους) - miracles done for a particular purpose - to prove and confirm the message; emphasizes their design or purpose; function (Mk 16:17-20).

Wonders (τέρασι) - emphasis is upon their nature; held in awe; the effect. The results of the sign - the awe which remained afterward.

Various miracles - (δυνάμει) - emphasis is upon their origin; power from God; might.

Gifts (μερισμοῖς) - distributions) *of the Holy Spirit* (obj. gen.) - something they did not learn nor achieve (compare with today’s “tongue speaking”). Everyone did not have the same; the emphasis here is on their distribution. Note: not the same as signs, wonders or miracles for they are enumerated in 1 Corinthians 12 and include word of wisdom, knowledge, gifts of prophecy, interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits and faith.

According to His own will - these gifts were distributed according to His own will (as in 1 Cor 12:11). “... but one and the same Spirit works all these things distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”

This explains why Cornelius could not “pass them on” like the apostles could (see Jn 10:41 to show that the Jews knew why God gave signs).

It was God’s will that only the apostles could pass on these gifts.

Summary (from Erdman’s commentary, p. 39): “It is not want of evidence that turns one from the Christian faith, nor can it be the discovery that Christianity lacks foundation in historic fact. Apostasy is caused by the failure to face evidence by indifference to a divinely attested gospel. If we are not to drift away from our Christian conviction, we must give earnest heed to the things which we heard. We must more fully appreciate and more constantly appropriate in personal experience the message of salvation which was first spoken by the Lord.”

II. SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST’S HUMANITY.....2:5-18

New Section - The Humanity of Jesus (His humanity is superior to all other men).

Why bring up Jesus' humanity? Why did Jesus have to have a body?

1. If He were only a man, how could Jesus be what He said He was previously?
2. Angels do not die, but Jesus did. Why?
3. If the Old Law was hard to keep, how much harder must this New Law be if He is so superior?

The author's approach: Jesus had to become human in order to have a body and, as a human, He had a superior accomplishment more than any other human. He had to have a body in order to die!

A. Mankind Given Dominion Over All Creation Below Himself 2:5-8

Verses 5-8 are about men and 9-18 are about Christ.

VERSE 5

The world to come - from the vantage point of the original readers this was a period of history still future. It is our present age, not the second coming. The word refers to the inhabited world (οἰκουμένην - used in 1:6).

Johnson: literally, "the inhabited earth in the future (μέλλουσαν)." The Jews called the Jewish dispensation "the present world." The dispensation following it would then be "the world to come." That dispensation is the age in which we are now living.

Verse 7 shows that the "world" God was going to create was the one of Genesis 1:26-28.

The Jews would not interpret the phrase "world to come" as heaven, nor can it refer to a millennial age as some argue.

Not . . . of which we speak, in subjection to angels - neither the world He was going to create nor Messianic Age was entrusted to angels even though the Old Law had some connection with them (this context seems to reflect this).

This is the author's transition statement. It means that angels are not the ones who are in charge of the "world to come" (cf. 2:16 which seems to confirm this position).

In other words angels are not in charge of this present world, this globe, this earth!

VERSE 6

But one testified in a certain place.

This shows their familiarity with the Old Testament. This simply shows that he knows his readers are familiar with the reference to which he refers (Psa 8:4-6); common to Philo and the Rabbis (Ferrar, p. 71).

This verse indirectly shows the inspiration of the Old Testament.

Jews did not have chapters and verses as we have them today, so this was their way of showing that the statement was made by someone somewhere in their Bible (the Old Testament).

Chapters were added in the 1200s A.D.

Verses were added in the 1500s A.D.

What is man - all men.

Son of man - all men - used as a reference to "man."

This is not always (as here) a reference to Jesus. Seven reasons this does not refer to Jesus:

1. "Son of man" is not peculiar to Jesus alone (Ezek 2:1).

It means that He has the characteristics of man just as a "son of obedience" has the characteristics of one who obeys.

2. In verse 8 this "son of man" did not have all things subject to him. This also contrasts him with Jesus (v. 9). Also see Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:20-22.
3. There is no definite article before "son of man" in the Greek. It would be more accurately translated "a son of man."
4. The context of the book of Hebrews is against it. This is a comparison between men and Jesus. Therefore, both cannot mean Jesus.

The book of Hebrews in its arguments:

Always holds up something's greatness,

Then shows that Jesus (or the gospel, or sacrifice of Jesus, etc.) is superior to it. If the reference here is to Jesus there is no contrast, but if it is to man the contrast is valid.

5. This is a quote of Psalm 8:4-6 and the context from which it was taken was about mankind in general, not a messianic reference.
6. The is Hebrew parallelism.
7. *That You take care of Him?* (ἐπισκεπή) - Jesus did not need tending, or to be cared for, only mankind.

You take care of him or *visits* (ἐπισκεπή) - constant help. This is always used in the New Testament in a good sense (e.g., a physician coming). (Cf. Jas 1:27 and Mt 25:36.) "Son of man" here means "humanity." This verse says it is mankind who benefited from God, not Christ.

VERSE 7

Compare Genesis 1:26-28.

A little lower than the angels - a little less than the divine nature.

This is a quote from the Septuagint.

The ASV and NAS Old Testaments read "lower than God" with footnote reading "or angels - Heb. 'Elohim.'"

Westcott: "The original meaning is probably less definite than either 'a little less than angels' or 'a little less than God'. It would more nearly correspond to 'a little less than one who has divine nature'" (p. 44).

Some manuscripts read "for a little while lower." The difference is irrelevant - man is lower than God, angels, and the divine nature. The Old Testament has it "little lower than" and no footnote difference. See Luke 20:34-36.

Note: every time the Bible says we become like God (divine) it specifies how (cf. 2 Pet 1:4) we become partakers of divine nature. God is involved in the Christian life!

Here: escaping corruption of Genesis 3 - "knowing good and evil."

You crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands - this defines "world to come" of verse 5.

In Genesis chapter 1 even spiritual death was subject to man, but he lost this in Genesis chapter 3. Again Jesus is superior because He gained this back for mankind.

VERSE 8

You have put all things in subjection under his feet - man does not now have dominion.

Man was made to be over everything created (cf. Gen 1:26-28). Man, in his original state, was ruler over all. Such was the case in the garden but, after the fall, man was no longer so privileged.

For in that He put all in subjection under him - He = God; all things = of creation; him = man. He left nothing that was not subjected to him.

But now we do not yet see all things put under him - the same as Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:27. Things have changed. See verse 9b for what man lost and Jesus regained - dominion over death.

The contrast is between the humanity of Jesus and the humanity of men.

In our humanity we lost control over death (spiritual).

But, Jesus in His humanity regained control over death (spiritual) for us.

B. The Contrast With Jesus.....2:9-18

VERSE 9

Five reasons Jesus had to come in the flesh:

1. God cannot die. He needed a human body in order to die. He did not owe us anything, but did it because it was His plan.
2. So that He could die in order to gain power over the devil (v. 14).
3. To deliver us from fear of death and from bondage (v. 15).
4. To be a faithful High Priest as a result of the things He suffered and, thereby, knows how to help those who are tempted (vv. 17a,18).
5. To make propitiation for sins (v. 17b).

Three things this section shows:

1. The ideal of what man should be - kin to God, and master of the universe.
2. The actual state of man - frustration instead of glory. Man should be king but has become a slave.
3. How the actual can be turned into to the ideal. That change is brought about by Christ's suffering, death and glory afterward. Man should be, but without Jesus cannot be.

But - now referring to Jesus.

Made a little lower than angels - compare Philippians 2:5-7; Hebrews 9:14 (διὰ); Matthew 12:28; John 1:33-34. Jesus did not give up His deity or divine nature just because He became human.

Illustration: The story of a king who decided to go out to see what life was like in his kingdom, so he took off his kingly robes, his crown, left his throne, and put on old clothes and went out to live in his kingdom as a peasant. But was he still king? Yes!

Thus, "emptying Himself" of His prerogatives as deity required His need of help from God through prayer, the Holy Spirit, etc., but it did not keep Him from being who He was. Therefore, even while here, He could be worshiped and was not just a man. Plus, angels do not accept worship at all.

Glory and honor - the same words in the Septuagint used for the high priests' garments. Think Jewish! This inferred, to those Jews, that Jesus was also superior to the high priests and performed some priestly function.

The words "glory and honor" that are used here are the same two words (and same order) that are used in the Septuagint to describe Aaron's high priestly garments. This may add to the priestly theme of the book (Ex 28:2).

This crowning was prophesied in Isaiah 53:12 that He would so receive glory and honor. Philippians 2:8-9. Faithful Christians shall receive the same at His second coming (1 Pet 1:7; Rom 8:17).

By the grace of God - Christ died on the cross by God's grace. God's grace is not always so pleasurable as we would like it to be.

Some have said this is almost John 3:16 rephrased: the idea of Jesus' dying, by the grace of God, to result in the benefit of us.

Might taste death - there are possibly three kinds of death for us that Jesus overcame in His death and resurrection:

1. Justification for physical existence (see "Romans 5:12-21 Paraphrase" in the Appendix); i.e., allowed man to live.
2. Spiritual, if obeyed (Eph 2:1).
3. Or "second death" as in Revelation 20:14. Eternal as opposed to never being resurrected - with the resurrection (1 Cor 15:22; Jn 5:28-29).

The law of sin and death has always been in effect from the garden of Eden, i.e., "... in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die." Therefore, any time man has sinned, because of God's holiness, man has always deserved death. However, throughout history God has not enforced this penalty because of His grace and foreknowledge concerning Jesus' sacrifice. Therefore, when Jesus came and died, it was to show God to be righteous in His previous acts (Rom 3:25), to taste of death for every man, and to officially take away the law of sin and death (Rom 6:23; 8:2).

For everyone (ὕπερ παντός) - not just for all men but for "all things." Every man includes those prior to the cross.

For (ὕπερ) - should be translated "in behalf of."

Conclusion: What man lost through sin, God, by taking on flesh, regained. And He had to do it. Jesus' humanity is superior.

1. Mission Accomplished Because Christ Was Perfected Through Suffering 2:10-13

VERSE 10

Fitting for Him - God.

It was fitting for God's purpose because He wanted to accomplish His plan. It was thus "morally necessary for man, and morally possible for God" (Farrar, p. 74) i.e., to accomplish His eternal purpose.

For whom are all things and by whom are all things.

Compare Romans 11:36. God made the world and all things in it so He wants to bring them to His glory.

By whom are all things - God as the creator here, and Jesus as the creator in 1:2-3,10-12. The Hebrew author sees no difference between them as far as being deity is concerned.

Bringing many sons to glory - this was His plan from before the worlds were made.

He draws them - John 6:44-45; 12:36.

He calls them - 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

Conditions – hearing and learning.

The Hebrews' problem was that they had heard and learned, but now were turning away.

Author (ἀρχηγὸν) - meaning leader, pathfinder, pioneer, captain, prince. The same word is used in 12:2 of Jesus, and also in Acts 3:15; 5:31 (“prince” in ASV and NAS). It literally means the “chief leader” (one who first takes part in that which he established - Westcott).

Perfect through sufferings (διὰ παθημάτων τελειTMσαι) - “perfect” means reaching the desired end.

Was Jesus imperfect? No, here (τελειTMσαι from τέλος - cf. 5:14; Eph 4:13) means complete, or reaching the designed end; mature or full grown (cf. also 5:9; 7:28). Compare with how we are made perfect through suffering (Jas 1:2-4). Therefore, God’s plan depended upon the death of Jesus to “bring many sons to glory.”

If Jesus, the Son of God, had to suffer so we might be sons, we, too, will suffer in bringing other sons to glory (1 Pet 2:20-21; 2 Tim 3:12).

This refutes premillennialism. Jesus had to have a body so that He could die, not set up a millennial reign. Jesus came to earth to die not set up a kingdom!

VERSE 11

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one -

Both He (Jesus) that sanctifies and the sanctified (Christians) are of (ἐξ) one (God). Both are begotten: Jesus (Heb 1:5) and Christians (Jas 1:18; 1 Cor 4:15; 1 Pet 1:23).

Jesus was begotten at His resurrection (Heb 1:5), and Christians are begotten at their resurrection (in baptism - Rom 6:3-5).

Sanctifies . . . sanctified - both are present participles and denote the continual benefit of Christ's work (Westcott, p. 50).

Are all of one should be *are all out (ἐξ) of one* - the Father - compare Romans 8:29.

Johnson: He who makes men holy by purging them of their sins, and those who are made holy are all of (ἐξ - "out of") one. We are made of one nature because He took our nature and suffered. Hence, He is not ashamed to call all the saved, though they are mortals, by the name of brethren.

Are Christ and Christians of the same nature then? Yes, but only in that God is our Father - not as deity!

We are brethren. We and Jesus are in the same family - the family of God.

For which reason He is not ashamed - since both are of common origin.

This shows His divinity because man would not be ashamed of men.

Do not think of Him as "just" human. These Jews were thinking of Him as a human only.

Note the reverse teaching of this passage also shows virgin birth by inference: if He were all human only, there would be nothing for Him to be ashamed of; He is more than just human, otherwise the statement is ridiculous. Also, He has human beings (Christians) who are His spiritual brothers (2 Pet 1:4).

Jesus is God, but He is your brother; not just because of the flesh, but because you are both in God's family. Compare Galatians 3:29 - we are heirs, but Christ is heir (Gal 3:16). Therefore, we in Christ are part of the seed promise made to Abraham. Relate this to Hebrews 2:16: gives help to "seed of Abraham."

VERSES 12-13

Jesus, as man, worshiped God. But Jesus also received worship as God (Mt 2:2; 18:26).

THREE POINTS FROM THIS QUOTE TO SHOW JESUS' HUMANITY (all are proofs from the Old Testament).

This is a quote from Psalm 22:22. The language quoted is ascribed to Christ but is addressed to God.

POINT NUMBER 1 IS THAT THE SPEAKER CALLS THE WORSHIPERS "BRETHREN." He has declared God's name to His brethren - John 17:6,26.

Note: "I (Jesus) will declare (proclaim) your (God's) Name to my brethren (disciples, apostles - Mt 12:48-49; 25:40; et al)..." To make known the character and perfections of God; to make them acquainted with God (Barnes).

"Name" = character, etc. of one - e.g. "He has a good name." Must see John 17:6,26. Midst of the congregation - He was involved with activities of man. "I will sing thy praise..." (Mt 26:30 only recorded place) shows He was with them as brethren and participated in worship with them.

I will sing - as a man, Jesus and the apostles sang (Mt 26:30). Compare Mark 14:26 (and in the synagogue perhaps?).

POINT NUMBER 2 - *I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM* - it is never said in the Bible that Jesus believed in God; it always states that He had trust in God.

He would put His trust in God - this quote comes from one of these: Psalm 18:3; 2 Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 8:18.

Trust (πεποιθώς) - note that the word used here is not "faith." It was impossible for Jesus to have faith in God. He knew God the Father personally; He is God. When faith turns to sight, it is no longer faith (Heb 11:1)!

We need to have faith in God, but we also need to have trust in God. Trust means that we absolutely believe that He will take care of us. Jesus so trusted in God! Compare 1 Peter 2:23 and us (4:19).

Never in the New Testament is Jesus used as an example of faith or belief. This indirectly proves His deity!

POINT NUMBER 3 - *HERE AM I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME* - Quote from Isaiah 8:18; compare John 10:29-30. He calls them both brethren and children because He is both God and man.

I - Jesus.

Children - Jews. We are brothers and children at the same time.

It is tremendously difficult to talk about Jesus as we do to each other because just as soon as we get something down in our mind, it changes. This is a mark of inspiration of the New Testament, because mythological writings do not have such a characteristic. They would include things that man could conceive concerning God because with them, God is made in the image of man, not vice versa.

2. It Was Necessary For Him To Become Man.....2:14-18

VERSE 14

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same.

I.e., flesh and blood (Jn 1:14).

God did not make Jesus a full grown human being (which would have been characteristic of a Greek mythological god); compare Mohammed's speaking at birth.

Therefore, Jesus came in our nature, and in the same way as man. Why? To destroy Satan's hold on man.

He Himself - Jesus. This is written in the emphatic!

Same - flesh and blood.

That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil-

God's plan by design required that God die (i.e., Jesus) so that through death, He "might bring" (1st aor. subj.) once for all to nought Satan's power of death.

Destroy (καταργήσῃ) - render useless, render impotent, so that even though Satan might have the power, it does not do him any good; thus, Jesus rendered his power of death useless to obedient believers by His own power over death.

"Though physical death still exists, its power, namely, to keep man dead, is gone via the sacrifice of Christ" (Lightfoot, p. 78).

"Power" (might) of death - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:55-56 - sting (power) of death is sin.

The power of an insect is in the sting. To remove the sting of an insect is to remove its power. Therefore if the power of sin is removed where is the power of death? Removal of sin ensures that death's sting is gone.

Καταργήση is not exactly power (δύναμις) nor authority (ἐξουσία) but the grasp or hold (κράτος). The devil tempts men, and then charges them before God. He brings punishment upon those who sin. Jesus has already taken the punishment; now man can have life because Christ has died. Satan is utterly powerless against the pure sinlessness of Christ.

The devil was not destroyed at Jesus' first coming (obviously), but his power is rendered useless and he will be destroyed at the second coming (Rev 20:10). If God had destroyed Satan at Jesus' first coming, then choice and faith would have been eliminated.

This goes back to the sin and death concept.

"By Christ's sacrifice the Devil (who would be the one who received 'sinners' that deserved the second death) would not get the sinner (who had faith in Christ) because the law of sin and death would be for him (the sinner who had faith in Christ) void, therefore all the Devil's work to get him (the sinner who had faith in Christ) was 'useless'" (unknown source).
Read Romans 8:1-4.

VERSE 15

Fear of death - we are released by the blessed hope of a glorious life to come; cf. 2 Timothy 1:7 - "For God has not given us a spirit of fear."

"...and might deliver those who, through fear of death, were subject to slavery all their lives" (NAS).

Philo quotes Euripides to establish that "a man who has no fear of death can never be a slave!"

Note these three things that cause us to fear death (death might be a metonymy for all the things that go along with it):

1. Pain and misery, which often accompanies death - the answer is to look beyond pain to a better world without sorrow (Rom 8:18).
2. Corruption of the body - the answer is that we will be like Him (1 Jn 3:2).

3. The uncertainty of what lies beyond - the answer is the promise we have of eternal life (1 Jn 5:13).

From these God can deliver us. Therefore, we are not in slavery to the “fear of death” any more.

“Bondage” (NAS - “subject to slavery”) to fear of death. If one dies enslaved to sin, the law of sin and death applies and one is thus condemned (cf. 6:15).

Compare Romans 6:16-18, still slaves but in a good way.

Also, if we are afraid we are not going to get anything after death we become slaves to sin here: like, “You only go around once in life.”

VERSE 16

For indeed He does not give aid to angels - literally translated, “...not of angels does He take hold.”

He - Jesus.

“He did not lay hold of an angel form in order to save angels, but the human form and nature, in order to be man’s Savior” (Johnson).

Give aid (ἐπιλαμβάνεται) - same word used in Septuagint of God when it says, “He ‘took hold’ of his people by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.” Therefore, it means to “take hold of to help” (Ex 13:3; Jer 31:9 quoted in 8:9).

Christ’s sacrifice is not to redeem fallen angels (2 Pet 2:4-5; Jude 6).

Seed of Abraham - they thought they could get nearer to Abraham by going back to Judaism, but God says, NO!

Parallel to Galatians 3:25-29. Why? See Galatians 3:7,9.

If he were just talking about humanity, he would have used Adam! Therefore, He only helps faithful, obedient Christians.

There is no help given to angels for salvation.

VERSE 17

Therefore (ὅθεν) - “thus,” “since,” “because of” the help He gives to the “seed of Abraham,” it behooved Him to be made like His brethren.

Had to be (ὤφειλεν) - He was obligated. The usage here is the “nature of the matter being considered” (as in Mt 18:28 - “owed”) - that nature being the salvation of man (Nicoll, p. 267). If man was ever to be saved it was absolutely necessary for Jesus to be made like His brethren.

He was obligated because of God, not because of us.

The obligation was to complete God’s plan.

Merciful and faithful.

Merciful (to men) - even though God knows everything, in order for Him to be one that we know is merciful, we would want Him to experience that which we do. Jesus has experienced every single category of temptation that we experience today, or ever will!

Faithful - to us and God in perfectly accomplishing the will of God (3:2).

That (ἵνα) - “in order that.”

A merciful and faithful High Priest - He went through the agony, not for His knowledge, but that we would know He experienced it and thus makes Him more merciful and faithful in our minds even though His omniscience had already accomplished it for Him.

This is the writer’s first mention of Jesus as “High Priest” (alluded to in 1:3 and 2:9). This becomes his theme.

In things pertaining to God - a duty of a priest, here the High Priest.

To make propitiation (ἰλάσκεσθαι) - covering, lid, mercy seat.

He came to become a “sin covering” - a covering for our sins.

If He was to make propitiation for the sins of His brethren, then He had to be made like them because of God’s plan.

Propitiation - “covering”; same word as the Hebrew word for “mercy seat” (used again in 1 Jn 2:2 and 4:10; Rom 3:25).

Note the purpose of Jesus' coming - Jesus took on flesh in order to die, not to be a physical king of a physical kingdom! This refutes premillennialism.

Some Old Testament passages which the Jews misunderstood to refer to an earthly kingdom and Messiah: Psalm 72:7,17; Psalm 89:36-37; 110:4; Isaiah 9:7; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14; Micah 4:7; (Jn 12:34.)

VERSE 18

Tempted - since Jesus experienced temptation as man, He can help man in his time of need.

He was touched with a feeling of our infirmities and will come to us as our Elder Brother with help in every time of need (cf. 4:15-16).

Jesus helps us in our temptations by giving us three things (cf. 1 Cor 10:13):

1. Strength (not beyond what we are able to bear - Phil 4:13; 1 Cor 10:13; Eph 6:13).
2. Consolation (common to man - cf. Mt 9:11; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 10:13; Jas 1:2,12; 1 Pet 1:6-7; 4:12; 5:9).
3. Deliverance (way of escape - 2 Pet 2:9; Heb 2:19; 1 Cor 10:13).

Aid - help along.

Transition (conclusion): Jesus' body allowed Him to complete God's plan to regain for man the dominance he had over death in the garden.

III. **SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST OVER MOSES (And Warnings Based On Israel's History).....3:1-4:13**

A. Christ Greater Than Moses3:1-6

VERSE 3:1

Therefore (ὄθεν) - i.e., since Jesus has taken on humanity, and since He has been sacrificed, He knows how to help.

Holy brethren (ἅγιοι) - set apart, holiness accomplished through separation from sin (cf. 1 Cor 1:2 - "saints"). These saved (sanctified) brethren are about to fall. This is proof a Christian can fall from grace.

This is the first proof that the readers were Christians.

Partakers of the heavenly calling - “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4).

Partakers (μέτοχοι) - “sharers (1:9; 12:8; see 3:14 - same as “partook” in 1:9 and 2:14).

Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Thessalonians 2:14.

This is the second proof that the readers were Christians. This must refer to the calling of Christians:

2 Thessalonians 2:14	-	called by the gospel;
Philippians 3:14	-	the upward calling;
1 Thessalonians 4:7	-	to an upward state;
2 Peter 3:11;	-	“
James 1:9.	-	“

Not an earthly, lustful calling, but a “heavenly calling” to be sons of God. Also superior to Moses’ call.

Many passages regarding the Messiah were commonly mistranslated and therefore misunderstood. Some are:

Psalms 72:7,17	Psalms 89:36-37	Psalms 110:4
Isaiah 9:7	Ezekiel 37:24-25	Daniel 2:44
Daniel 7:13-14	Micah 4:7	John 12:34

Consider (κατανοήσατε) - to perceive, understand, contemplate, discern, to have regard to; to think about for some time and really concentrate on it. Vine says, “learn thoroughly.”

The author wanted his readers to sincerely recognize who Jesus is and how great He is.

Their problem was that they were about to go back into Judaism; thus, before they make such a decision, he says to “consider,” “think about,” “meditate upon” Christ, especially as Apostle and High Priest.

Continuous sense - always consider Jesus as Apostle and High Priest.

Apostle (ἀπόστολον) - this summarizes his first argument of the book (1:1-3): Christ as a superior “message-bringer” over the prophets and angels (“one sent;” cf. Jn 17:3; 20:21; Lk 4:43). “And this is eternal life that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” Thus, Jesus was an apostle sent from God.

Compare John 3:34; 5:36; 8:26; 20:21 (“...as the Father sent Me, so I send you”); Luke 4:43 (“...for I was sent for this purpose”).

High Priest - they had confessed Him as this (cf. Mal 3:1). This summarizes the second argument (1:4-18) - Christ as superior humanity in that He alone is the High Priest for propitiation of sin.

Of our confession - i.e., the religion we profess (the apostles and holy prophets whom we acknowledged as ours when we embraced the Christian religion - Barnes); “Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (Jn 12:42).

The importance of confession is shown.

This is the third proof that the readers were Christians.

The point: you have already confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior, why give up all that He has to offer for an inferior system given previously?

Farrar says: “This seems to have a deeper meaning than just merely the one whom we confess. It seems to have the reference to our profession of the faith which has its source and authority in Jesus the Apostle and High Priest.”

Emphasis is on trying to get them to realize that this is the one they had looked to, who is our authority, our High Priest, our Apostle, whom we have appealed to before, and have taken advantage of what He has done for us; why not consider such facts before going back? These offices were held by Moses (apostle) and Aaron (high priest) in Old Testament (Moses considered here and Aaron in chapter 5). Jesus Christ takes place of both (Mal 3:1 - “messenger,” “His temple”). This previews the rest of book (Moses here and Aaron for the rest).

Jesus - is placed at the end of the sentence in the Greek text for emphasis.

VERSE 2

Faithful - four ways to consider Jesus’ faithfulness:

1. Jesus was faithful to God who appointed Him - in becoming a man (Phil 2:5-7). He emptied Himself (Phil 2:5-7).
2. Jesus was faithful in temptations. Matthew 4 with parallel in Luke 4:13 - Satan only left Him for a while, he returned to continue tempting Him. Luke 22:28 are trials after Matthew 4; Satan left for only a “season” (cf. Heb 4:15).

3. Jesus was faithful in His work - especially giving the glory to God (Lk 22:28). In His miracles (works) - His effect was to cause people to glorify God, not Himself (Jn 17:4; cf. Moses at the rock - shall "we"...?).
4. Jesus was faithful in His death - sacrifice (Mt 26:42; Jn 19:30; Heb 5:8-9).

The point: If He was faithful in all these things, then, with Him as a High Priest, you have nothing to worry about. We thus know that He is even now faithful to the promises He gave while here and through His apostles.

Appointed (ποιήσαντι) - "officially appointed" (e.g. 1 Sam 12:6). Same word used in the following two references: Mark 3:14 ("appointed the twelve") and Acts 2:36 ("God has made Him Lord and Christ").

His house - God's house (Num 12:7).

Note the way he argues. The writer never emphasizes weaknesses. Moses was a faithful leader; this the writer emphasizes and brings (as with all his arguments) the fact to its most important state, and then shows Jesus superior to it. The author is consistent in this and in his Father's business (Lk 2:49; Jn 17:4).

VERSE 3

More glory - Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses (vv. 3-5). Why?

1. Because of who He was: Deity, His person.
2. Because of His resurrection.
3. Because of His being equal with the Father, Heir, at the right hand of the Father.
4. Because He is reigning over His people (cf. 2 Cor 3:7-11); the laws they represent are as different as Moses and Jesus are.
5. But mainly (in this context)...because the builder is greater than his building, Christ is more important since He built the House (Mt 16:18; National Israel, and the church) of which, and in which, Moses was a member!

Moses represents the Old Law - Luke 24:44.

Compare the transfiguration (Mt 17:1-9).

Glory of Jesus:

Jesus was (is) the most famous person in the world.

John 17:4 - He was directly commissioned in heaven by God.

Acts 2:36 - He is Lord and Christ.

1 Peter 1:21 - He was raised never to die again.

Matthew 17:5 - He is the Christ, superior to Moses and Elijah.

He - Jesus, or there is no comparison.

VERSE 4

Cause and effect argument - Isaiah 44:24; 43:10; Malachi 2:10.

“God” and “Jesus” are used interchangeably (cf 1:10).

For every house is built by someone - note the cause and effect argument. If a house exists, there has to be a builder (cosmological argument). Note these syllogisms:

Major premise: God built all things (here) [Isa. 44:24 (no article in Hebrew); cf. Isa 43:10; Mal 2:10; Jn 1:6,12,13,18 also do not have the article].

Minor premise: Jesus built all things (1:2) [Mt 16:18; 1 Cor 3:16].

Therefore: Jesus is God!

Major Premise: Thus, Moses was faithful in God’s house (vv. 2, 5).

Minor Premise: Christ built God’s house, of which Moses was a part.

Therefore: Christ is superior to Moses. Christ is the builder of God’s house, of which Moses was a part.

VERSE 5

And Moses indeed was faithful - Moses had meekness in that he subjected himself to the will of God.

Moses was the man the most subjected to God's will, therefore the meekest man on earth (Num 12:3, 6-8).

Such a statement is evidence of inspiration since Moses could not have known such a fact of himself

Servant (θεράπων) - a hired servant as opposed to a slave (cf. Num 3:7; 12:7). These words in the Septuagint are same as here.

Johnson: "Moses was a waiting man in the Lord's house, but Christ, the Son, is Lord over the house, his own church" (church in the wilderness).

For a testimony (μαρτύριον) - "for a witness."

In these ways:

1. Was the herald of a doctrine to be published later (Deut 16:15-18; Jn 5:45-46).
2. Type of a coming prophet (Deut 18:15; Mt 16:14).
3. An example for all to learn from (1 Cor 10:6,11).
4. House of which Moses was a part and in which he served was full of typological relationships with the church.

Would be spoken afterward - shows the Law of Moses was not the final law!

VERSE 6

Moses was in the house, but Christ is over the house. Moses was a servant in God's house, of which he was a part. Christ is the Son over God's house (Jn 5:18 - Son = Father; head - Col 1:18; Eph 1:22ff).

First time "Christ" is used in Hebrews and is same as "Messiah," the one for whom they were looking.

Whose house we are - 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Timothy 3:15.

This verse describes the house as consisting of Christians:

- 1 Peter 2:5 - "Spiritual house" versus physical.
- 1 Timothy 3:15 - "House of God" is the church.

If we hold fast - not just anyone, and not every Christian, but only if (cf. 10:23).

Means: if we have confidence.

Hope - in Jesus and Him only - compare 6:19-20; Acts 26:6-8; 28:20.

This shows the definite possibility of apostasy. Otherwise, the verse is a ridiculous statement.

Confidence (παρρησίαν) - not the same as usage in 1:3; based upon the hope that we have because of Jesus (cf. 4:16; 10:19, 35); "Inward state of full and undisturbed confidence" (Milligan); not because of works and deeds (Gal 6:14; 1 Cor 1:31) and the boast ("glory" - ASV) of our hope; note: they would do "good deeds" even if they went back to Judaism.

Rejoicing - if we do not glory in spiritual things, we will glory in material ones. Compare especially the Jews who were accustomed to seeing objects used in worship - they did not have those objects now and were worshipping in spirit, so they desired to go back.

Firm to the end - (key phrase) - "firm" (βεβαίαν) - same exhortation found also in 3:14 and 6:11. (The word "firm" is probably not in the original letter to the Hebrews.)

It is a feminine adjective and not in agreement with neuter noun "glorying."

It is not in Vaticanus or Chester Beatty papyrus (Tyndale, p. 80).

Therefore, you cannot have the glorying of your hope being something physical that you see (Job 31:24-28).

Hope is connected with our resurrection (read Acts 26:68; 23:6; 24:15).

Summary of 3:1-6: Four reasons to consider Jesus superior to Moses:

1. He was faithful above all other men.
2. He was the anointed one of God.
3. He was worthy of more glory than Moses or any other man.
4. He was a Son over God's house.

Transition (conclusion): the connection of 3:7-4:13 (not just an exhortation).

1. Compares people with those of Old Testament who were in God's house.
2. Just because the Jews had been in God's house did not mean they automatically had it made to go into the promised land. They had to remain faithful to the end, even though God delivered them out of bondage to go to the promised land. Christians (saved people) are in God's house, but that does not mean they will automatically make it to heaven, even though God saved us out of bondage of sin to go to heaven.
3. This argument refutes the impossibility of apostasy. The connection, then, is between Moses and Christ and the similar concept of apostasy possibility.

Refutation by "once-saved-always-saved" people: "They just died physically which was their just punishment; But spiritually they still went to heaven." Answer: This is a type and all types are physical, while all antitypes are spiritual. So, this does not tell us if the Israelites were saved or not, but does tell us they could, or that we can be lost.

B. A Warning Based On Israel's History.....3:7-19

7-12. The connection here is that if the people under Moses could fall away from God's house, so could they fall away from Christ's (and God's) house - the church. He uses the unfaithfulness of Israel in Numbers 13-14 to contrast with the faithfulness of Jesus - then (cf. today versus then).

VERSE 7

As the Holy Spirit says - inspiration - Psalm 95:7-11.

Not "said" but "says;" presently, not just back in the first century.

Today (σήμερον) - any day, immediate action (cf. Jn 9:4). Not just a reference to a day of the week, but "right now" while there is opportunity; same as "now" (1:2).

Voice - reference back to 1:2 where Jesus is the one who is used by God to speak to us His will today. So in application, He is not talking about God's voice back in the wilderness, but rather Jesus' voice in giving the New Law (Heb 1:2).

This quotation refers to the context at the waters of Meribah.

VERSE 8

Most likely it has to do with the forty years' wandering or to Kadesh-Bernea (Deut 8:1-3).

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion (Psa 95; 106:32ff; Num 20:13, 24; 27:14) - struck rock instead of speaking to it. Psalms say in the ASV: "as at Meribah." Meribah means "contention; quarrel; strife."

We harden our own hearts.

In the day of trial in the wilderness - "massah" = trial. This word is used in Exodus 17:1-7 (i.e., in reference to the "rock") and probably refers to the entire forty years' wanderings.

VERSE 9

Where your fathers tested Me - a test, a full trial, thoroughly put to the test.

This is in direct violation of Deuteronomy 6:16 which states, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted Him in Massah."

As a result of provoking God, only two entered the promised land. God was indignant at their unbelief even after they had seen His mighty manifestations. They doubted God's judgment and wisdom and showed that even knowing His greatness and word asked, "Where is His power?"

And saw My works forty years - Deuteronomy 8:1-3, God led them forty years.

It amazes us that they turned against God with all His manifestations and miracles; but, they might look at us and say, "It's always been a mystery to me how anybody who knows that God sent His own Son down to earth to live, die, and be resurrected for them to have all the glories of the gospel, could ever turn their backs on Him."

Tested - compare this with the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit - they were there! Hewitt says the author may have seen a connection between the forty years of Israel and almost the same amount of time the church had seen the works of God (2:4 - p. 82).

VERSE 10

Therefore - not in the Psalm, but used here to clarify.

I was angry - righteous anger.

With that generation - all of those above twenty years of age.

They always go astray in their heart - not just mistaken, but their heart was wrong. Compare James 5:19-20; 1 Peter 2:24-25; Deut 9:24.

And they have not known My ways - they knew technically from the Ten Commandments, but they obviously did not agree or obey. Their disapproval of the commandments is shown by their disobedience.

VERSE 11

I swore in My wrath - Numbers 14:30-35. "They shall not enter into My rest"; literally, "if they shall come into My rest" - it is an elliptical Hebrew form of oath, like "if I let you do that" (Alford, Wuest).

This is one of the oaths God makes in the book of Hebrews; His point: I will not save you merely because you have been delivered out of slavery, if you put Me to the test - rejecting My Son. Apostasy is possible and His application is to the Christian!

Rest - is introduced, but not dealt with (Deut 12:9).

VERSE 12

FOUR WAYS TO PREVENT APOSTASY (vv. 12-14).

FIRST METHOD OF PREVENTION - PAY ATTENTION TO THE FAITH!

Remember the evidence in 3:1; holy brethren; partakers of heavenly calling; our confession.

Beware (βλέπετε) - "take heed or care", "look out!" (Cf. 1 Cor 10:11-12). (Present imperative - "be constantly seeing to it".)

Brethren - again adds to the argument that the author is addressing Christians (cf. 3:1).

Lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief - there is no such thing as a good, moral man who is not a Christian. In his heart there is unbelief and, therefore, he is evil.

In God's eyes, if you are not a Christian, you are evil and in your sins! There is no such thing as a good non-believing person according to God.

Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am He, ye will die in your sins" (Jn 8:24). Again, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been

judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (Jn 3:18; 8:24; cf. 11:6).

In departing (ἀποστῆναι) - falling away - to apostatize, to stand off from.

Literally, “to stand away from” and is the opposite of drawing near as in James 4:8; Hebrews 4:16. Therefore, we are either standing away from, or drawing near to God - one or the other. We cannot do both at the same time.

Hewitt Tyndale (Baptist position) - “He urges his readers to go the whole way for apparently they had stopped short of embracing the true Christian faith” (once saved commentary). If they say this, ask them when were they were in “bondage.”

You cannot depart from somewhere you have never been. They were departing from Christianity, they were falling from grace!

How to deny the impossibility of apostasy using Hebrews 3:1-12:

Show that they were definitely Christians.

Show that merely because people are released from bondage and have a very spiritual leader, does not automatically guarantee entry into the promised land (with Christians, our leader is Christ, but no unconditional guarantees are made). The books *Life in the Son* and *Elect in the Son* by Robert Shank are recommended.

From the living God - (9:14; cf. 10:31); 12:22 (word is living - 4:12; way is living - 10:20). God is active in the life of Christians. If they leave Christianity, they also leave the God of their fathers. This shows His immortality and greatness.

VERSE 13

But - instead of. This expresses what to do instead of falling away.

SECOND METHOD OF PREVENTION - EXHORTING ONE ANOTHER.

Exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today” - we do not do this. This is a duty of each Christian, not just one or two of us. As a body of Christians we fall very short of fulfilling this command!

Exhort or encourage (παρακαλεῖτε) also translates, when a noun, as “advocate” or “comforter” and means to “call alongside of,” or “to call someone to your side to say something.”

This is mutual strengthening. It is a command.

Paul separates teaching and exhorting as separate instructions (1 Tim 6:2). "Teach and exhort these things."

Peter is an example of exhorting. After his sermon of Acts 2 the writer says: *And with many other words he testified and exhorted...* (Acts 2:40).

Note the durative, continuous action of the verb.

Day by day many fall from the church because we fail to exhort one another. In this respect, we fall short of restoring New Testament Christianity.

THIRD METHOD OF PREVENTION - WHILE IT IS CALLED "TODAY."

Recognize the urgency of doing it "Today" (see Jn 9:4), i.e., while there is still time.

Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin - the reason for daily exhorting each other - to avoid being hardened (Gen 3:13; Rom 7:11; Col 2:8; Mt 13:22; Jas 1:22).

Hardened (σκληρυνθῆ) - aorist passive subjunctive; sin does the hardening to you. When your conscience is not pricked any more, you are hardened and it was because sin deceived you.

But you are still responsible in that you could have resisted the sin, thereby not giving the sin an opportunity to deceive you.

Note how you now justify what you once condemned; "spiritual sensitivity."

James 1:22; "sin deceived me" (Rom 7:11); Ephesians 4:22.

Sin deceives by making false promises of happiness and security (Gen 3:13; Col 2:8; Mt 13:22).

We need each other to tell us of our sin.

In Greek, there is a "the" before sin. Therefore, this refers to apostasy (Wuest; cf. v. 12).

VERSE 14

FOURTH METHOD OF PREVENTION - ENDURE TO THE END.

For we have become partakers of Christ - participants, companions, partners, fellows; used also in 3:1 (cf. Lk 22:30; 5:7; Rom 8:17; Rev; Heb 1:9) - idea expressed as “joint heirs;” we not only have Christ living in us, but we also partake of the things that Christ became, as partakers of benefits and glory (Vincent).

We are partakers of Christ, i.e., what He inherits (cf. 3:1 heavenly calling), only by faithful endurance (2 Pet 1:4).

Note the change of pronouns from “you” (v. 13) to “we” (v. 14); the author identifies with the readers in some areas, and separates himself from them in other areas.

If we hold the beginning of our confidence (ὑποστάσεως) - substance.

Conditional: *IF* (ἐάνπερ - if indeed) we hold fast (another refutation of “impossibility of apostasy”); and the author includes himself by saying “we.” Why say “we (Christians) have become partakers” then say it is “if we hold fast...firm until the end?”

Confidence (ὑποστάσεως) - assurance (NAS).

Same Greek word as 1:3.

Means “standing away with” (v. 12) and “standing under” (v. 14). “Substance,” “nature (NAS),” “person (KJV),” (used again in 11:1).

Here, it is the basis or foundation upon which something is built; the basic thing upon which our Christian faith stands. In this context it refers to Christ’s Law as opposed to Moses’ Law.

Steadfast to the end (τέλους) - firm unto the end; there is no retirement from Christianity!

Use these four methods of prevention as a sermon (3:12-14):

1. Give heed (pay attention) to our faith (v. 12) - (2 Pet 3:18; Col 3:16).
2. Exhort one another diligently (v. 13).
3. Recognize that it must be done today and regularly, day by day, i.e., now or your conscience will become seared (v. 13).
4. Endure to the end (v. 14).

VERSE 15

Repeat of verses 7,8 for much emphasis and warning.

VERSE 16

Who heard God's voice and rebelled against Him? Actually it was all the people who were led out of Egypt by Moses - TEV.

Relation between unbelief and disobedience (vv. 16-17).

Rebelled (παρεπίκαναν) - revolted, provoked, caused embitterment.

All - overwhelmingly large number; all but two were numbered - Joshua and Caleb.

VERSE 17

Was it not those who sinned - all had died because they sinned (i.e., rebelled, apostatized).

VERSE 18

And to whom did He swear - when the oath was made in Numbers 14:30 and Deuteronomy 1:34-35 the word "rest" was not used.

That they would not enter His rest - transition phrase to next section in the epistle.

But to those who did not obey (v. 18) same as *unbelief* (v. 19).

Compare *unbelief* with *disobedience* in John 3:36: "He who believes (ὁ πιστεύων) in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe (ὁ ἀπειθεῖς) the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

This is a parallel to the last half of James chapter 2. James does just the opposite (2:14-26) where belief equals obedience.

VERSE 19

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief - the conclusion is that if we do not obey we do not believe!

Application: If we believe in something, that belief will be shown in action:

Believe in helping orphans? What do you do?

Believe in helping widows? What do you do?

Believe in helping the lost? What do you do?

If we do nothing, we have an evil heart of unbelief!

Summary - do not let obstacles cause you to fall away and miss the land of promise.

A parallel warning based on this forty year period is in 1 Corinthians 10:5-11.

C . The Rest For The People Of God.....4:1-10

Comments:

1. Here now he draws the parallel between those who did not enter the “rest,” that would have been in Canaan, with those to whom he is writing who are not going to enter God’s rest that still remains if they apostatize. Israel failed to enter their “rest” because of unbelief (disobedience), the “rest” is still assured to those who are remaining faithful.
2. His point - to get them to look at their history and not repeat the mistakes of their forefathers, the Israelites (3:7-4:13).
3. His argument:
 - a. To show that even though they had come out of Egypt, if they did not stay faithful they could fall (3:7-19).
 - b. To show that even though the Israelites did not enter His real rest his readers, if they remained faithful, still could (4:1-13).
 - c. Shows that unfaithful people today will not enter God’s rest; He will not let them.
4. The problem is they wanted to go back into Judaism because they thought the “rest” was open only to Jews.
 - a. The Jews thought they had two rests: the Sabbath and the promised land. Therefore, they asked, “What else is there?”
 - b. But he says, no! The rest that was open then is still open now. It never has been “closed,” but it now comes through Christianity.

VERSE 4:1

A promise remains - implies the promise has not been fulfilled, but is continual.

The remaining rest for God's people is more important than the one promised the Jews; if it is with Judaism it is unattainable.

It is the promise to enter the rest (the one that remains possible).

His rest - "rest" here is not a physical one, but a suspension of our Christian work on earth; simply put, it is "heaven."

Read 9:15 without the parenthetical phrase.

Let us fear (φοβηθTMμεν) - compare Galatians 4:11.

Come short - in Kadesh-Barnea. We too, as Christians, can come short of receiving the promised rest (heaven).

VERSE 2

Gospel - compare Exodus 6:6-10 - good tidings.

To the Israelites it was deliverance from Egypt and receiving the promised land.

To Christians it is Jesus Christ, Christianity (the church), and heaven.

Did not profit them - "the word is worthless unless combined with their faith" or "they did not put faith in what they heard."

Because of unbelief AND lack of unfaltering faith shown through obedient works. It is the same with us under the gospel.

The average Christian today has had too much preaching and teaching compared with the amount of training he should have had. As a result he substitutes hearing for doing.

Elders and preachers need to exhort Christians by telling them how to do what they know to do!

Matthew 13:13-16 - only one of two things happens when you hear:

You believe and respond, or

You reject and harden your heart which makes it much harder to respond later.

James 1:22; 2:22 - God gives us *grace* to hear, not faith.

Verses 3-5 show that God had intended rest for believers from the foundation of the world.

VERSE 3

Have believed - at one time we made up our minds to believe for all time.

Do enter - are entering.

The works were finished (cf. Mt 25:34; Jn 14:1-4). This may be that Christ is finishing the availability of heaven to us by His sacrifice, blood, etc.

From the foundation of the world - if it is true that there has been a rest since the foundation of the world, then why did Jesus say, "I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:1-3)? (See also Mt 25:34 - "kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world").

Answer: The sacrifice of Jesus was lacking from the foundation of the world. Propitiation requires bloodshed, offered and accepted (Rom 3:25) in exchange for the rightful punishment of the sinners. Once accepted, the "door" was opened for the saved to enter the "rest" (place) prepared before the foundation of the world.

Transition to verse 4 (key) - the heavenly rest is an antitype of a previous historical (typical) rest. Any time he uses "rest" he will use it as a type of what is coming up - (antitype) for the Christian - the thing left for the Christian to enter into.

NOTE: Be careful! Do not try to tell the Hebrew writer how to use the word "rest." He often uses it in a way that may not agree with what we wish in a given place. Basically he uses it to refer to that place for the faithful whether it be physical, spiritual or upcoming; ("upcoming" in the sense that it may be possessed by God's given promise and a faithful obedient life).

VERSE 4

In a certain place - "somewhere" (που) - "in a place" - Genesis 2:2; i.e., "as we know" or "to quote familiar words" (Westcott, p. 96).

Compare Genesis 2:2-3 - seventh day - rest of God from creation. God was not tired after His creating! The word rest carries the idea of "ceasing from."

Why was God “resting?” This is not a physical rest; neither will ours be a physical rest. We need a rest from the works we do as Christians. Just as God ceased His acts of creating, we will cease doing the works which He “created aforetime that we should walk in” (Eph 2:10).

Premillennialists believe Jesus is to return to this physical earth and give the faithful the “rest” in the land that Joshua had failed to give them. BUT Joshua had given them that “rest” in the land.

In fact, they were in the land right then when this letter was being written to them! There are several passages which show that Joshua’s rest was fulfilled -

Joshua 22:4 - And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan.

Joshua 21:43 - So the LORD gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it.

Joshua 21:44 - And the LORD gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hand.

Joshua 21:45 - Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.

Joshua 23:14 - Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.

Joshua 23:15 - It shall come about that just as all the good words which the LORD your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the LORD will bring upon you all threats, until He has destroyed you from off this good land which LORD your God has given you.

Joshua 23:16 - When you transgress the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and go and serve other gods and bow down to them, then the anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you will perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you.

1 Kings 4:21 - *Now Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt; they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.*

Nehemiah 9:8 - *You found his heart faithful before You, And made a covenant with him To give him the land of the Canaanite, Of the Hittite and Amorite, Of the Perizzite, the Jebusite and Gergashite - To give it to his descendants. And You have fulfilled your promise, For You are righteous.*

God rested - "God began His rest after creation and He is never said to have completed it. This implies His rest continues still and may be shared by those of faith and obedience" (F. F. Bruce - emphasis added).

This is a typological relationship. The Hebrew author uses God's rest to show that the Sabbath rest was prophetic of a larger fulfillment of a rest.

Of the seventh day - four "rests" used in chapter 4:

1. Sabbath day rest (God).
2. God's rest from creating.
3. Promised land rest – Canaan, Joshua's rest.
4. David's rest in Psalms (i.e., eternal - heaven).

All these refer to the fact that God has always said there would be a rest, even today, open to all who believe and obey.

VERSE 5

This disqualifies the Sabbath they have observed for 1,500 years so this must be heaven.

This could not be a promise that the physical rest of the Sabbath day was the one remaining at the time of this writing; they already had had the Sabbath (even for 400 years before Psalm 95 was written).

This is his third usage of Psalm 95:11, for the same purpose, that God's rest is only for the faithful.

VERSE 6

It could not be the land of Canaan, as they have been there for 1,400 years.

It remains that some must enter it - and those who formerly had good news preached to them (those in the wilderness) failed to enter because they were disobedient.

Disobedience is translated from ἀπειθειαν (same word in 3:18) which is made up of πείθω, “to persuade,” and alpha privitive (α) which makes the compound word meaning “not-persuaded.”

The Israelites did not fall because they could not accept the facts, but because they failed to act, not being persuaded by the facts which they heard.

VERSE 7

He again defines a certain day (see 2 Cor 6:2 - “Now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation”).

Today (σήμερον) - day of opportunity. Emphasis on entering now, during the Messianic era. We will not be able to after this “Today”

After such a long time - time between Moses and David.

As it has been said - refers to Psalm 95:7.

Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts - they were about to give up Christianity for the old “type” instead of accepting the “antitype.” The “type” was the physical rest which is not the real rest promised. This is true because David’s words show that a rest still existed even at that time.

VERSES 8-9

Therefore - this must be another day - a future rest (Jas 22:4; 21:43-45; 23:14-16; 1 Kgs 4:21).

Compare Ezekiel 48:9-22; 12:22; Matthew 11:28-29; Revelation 14:13.

For if Joshua had given them rest - if Joshua’s rest was the final rest, God would not have used David 400 years later to speak of another day of rest.

Note: Jesus is superior to Joshua because He can give real rest while Joshua gave only typical rest.

VERSE 10

“For he (the saved one) who is entered into (God’s) rest hath himself (the saved one) also rested from his (own) works of obedience as God did from His works of creation” (Fudge, p. 47).

For he - a saved person.

His rest - God's rest.

Himself - saved person.

His works - his own Christian works of obedience - Ephesians 2:10.

This is definitely not the seventh day rest (or Sabbath).

Seventh day Sabbath rest was followed by six more days of labor (unrest) every week, but verse 10 says rest from labor as God rested (God’s rest still continues, He had not gone back to His creating work). See Revelation 14:13 - *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors for their deeds follow them”* (cf. 2 Cor 5:10 “deeds”).

The Sabbath rest was commanded, but this rest of God was always promised (4:1).

Even if this were a reference to the Sabbath, there are no instructions as to how to use it! (See Appendix for “Jewish Boys’ Regulations”.)

The word used is not the same as any other in Old or New Testament.

Κατέπαυσεν is the word for “rest” eleven times all through this section (except verse 9).

The usual word for Sabbath was “Sabbaton.” This one is “Sabbatismos” (verse 9).

This is NOT Canaan, not the “shadow” of the Sabbath which was observed every seven days. This was the real genuine rest which God began on the seventh day (TDNT “Sabbaton”).

Seven reasons this does not refer to the Sabbath day rest:

1. If this is the seventh day it would be silly, because the Law of Moses already had the Seventh day (Sabbath) rest.

2. The day was “fixed” 400 years after the Sabbath day had been given.
3. The Seventh day rest was followed by six more days of unrest.
4. The Sabbath day rest was commanded. The rest that remains is a promise.
5. If this is the Sabbath day rest then there are no instructions on how to use it.
6. The word used for “Sabbath rest” is κατάπαυσιν.
7. How diligent does one have to be to enter Saturday (the Sabbath - v. 11)?

D. Exhortations And Warnings Based On This Argument.....4:11-13

VERSE 11

Exhortations and warnings are based on this argument (vv. 11-13).

Be diligent - why, if Calvin is right? How diligent do you have to be to enter Saturday?

Compare 2 Peter 1:5,10; 3:14.

Those Israelites showed apostasy is possible.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that REST - means to strive hard to enter (σπουδάσωμεν) the rest (heaven). This refutes the idea of predestination! Also, just because you are under Christ, you do not automatically go to heaven.

Reason for diligence: *lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.* This refutes “once saved, always saved.”

Lest anyone fall (to be taken absolutely; not fall into the same example - Vincent, p. 426) through following the same example (ὑποδείγματι) of disobedience (ἀπειθείας).

Compare Numbers 26:65. Notice that numbers do not sway God’s decisions; God does not (by Old Testament example and teaching) have any respect for those in error - even stricter in the New Testament (1 Cor 10:6,11,12; Acts 17:30; Heb 2:2-3). Remember this when teaching the truth about church discipline!

VERSE 12

Compare John 12:17.

For - the reason to give diligence.

Word - the Bible, not Jesus. The apostle John is the only one who calls Jesus “the Word.”

Six reasons this does not refer to Jesus:

1. The context is not about Jesus. It is talking about the preached word or the written word.
2. “For” refers to the promise of rest and the warning not to come short of it (the written word).
3. There is no definite use of the word “logos” as referring to Jesus.
4. The emphasis of this letter is that Jesus is the Son of God NOT the Word of God.
5. “Active” and “sharper” are not used of Jesus Himself.
6. Jesus is not referred to as a “two-edged sword.”

Living - because it is backed by a living God (Heb 10:31). This is not a dead letter.

Powerful - (ἐνεργῆς) energy - it is doing something effectual (cf. Isa 55:11; Rom 1:16).

Sharper - it penetrates into the soul.

Sword - (Rev 1:16; 2:12,16; 19:15, 21; Eph 6:17; Isa 11:4; 49:2). This type of sword was the ultimate in weapons (2 Cor 2:15,17).

Piercing - examining a man thoroughly.

The point is not that it divides but that it penetrates to the soul, spirit, joints and marrow.

Soul and Spirit - the invisible part of man.

Joints and marrow - the inner man - carnal aspect.

Discerner - judge (cf. Jn 12:48).

Thoughts - emotions or notions. This includes our fleeting thoughts as opposed to sustained thought.

Intents - it even goes to the deep thinking of a man and would quickly detect hypocrisy.

The whole point is that these people could not deceive God's word - they will either believe and obey or disbelieve and disobey and God's word will know without any error which way you are going.

VERSE 13

And - additional thoughts on this subject.

The perfect insight.

Hidden - there is nothing so hard and so strong (i.e., protected) in a man that it can hide from the judgment of God's word.

Naked (γυμνὰ) - gymnastic without clothes, naked, open. It refers to an ancient practice of gymnastics in the nude, therefore, unhidden.

From church history: in the third and fourth centuries, the girls in the "nunneries" used to pray to the saints to hide their sins from Jesus so that He would not find out about them.

Open (τετραχλισμένα) - actually "to bend back the neck" (Robertson, p. 282), "having been laid open". The idea is that of being helplessly exposed to death as a lamb's chin is held up to expose its neck for killing (Archer, p. 33).

God cannot be deceived! How terrifying it will be to stand before God without the blood of Christ! There is NOTHING you can do to get away from the authority and consequences of God's (the source) word.

We must give account - accounting term - to have the blood of Christ cover all our debts (sins). One too many debts and we go to hell (this does not infer salvation by works). Compare Romans 2:6,16.

This is a Greek idiom, an accountant's phrase meaning that the right-hand page had to balance with the left-hand (like an audit or examination - an account rendering). Romans 2:6,16. This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ as my gospel declares.

IV. THE SUPERIOR QUALIFICATIONS OF CHRIST AS HIGH PRIEST.....4:14-5:10

Earlier the author said to consider Jesus as High Priest. Now he tells why He should be considered in connection with His qualifications as High Priest. Those to whom he is writing were very familiar with the function of the high priest in the Mosaic economy for atonement.

1. At the very center of the Hebrew religion was the sacrifice.
2. At the head of the sacrifice was the high priest.

A. His Exalted Character And Reasons For Being High Priest 4:14-16

THERE ARE FOUR CHARACTERISTICS GIVEN IN VERSES 14-16 FOR JESUS BEING OUR HIGH PRIEST TODAY.

VERSE 14

“Confession” refers back to 3:1.

FIRST CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR HIGH PRIEST: He *has passed through the heavens*. No Aaronic priest could make such a claim.

John 3:13 - *No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven*. This is heaven itself (Heb 9:24).

No other high priest passed through the heavens. If they did they had died and were no longer high priest.

The idea of “heavens” was a common Jewish concept. They had three heavens: atmosphere, space and dwelling place of God.

One of the very things that disturbed them was part of the cause of His greatness, i.e., His absence.

Compare Hebrews 7:26; Ephesians 4:10.

SECOND CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR HIGH PRIEST: He is named *Jesus, the Son of God*.

No other high priest had such a title (he could have just said “Jesus”, but a number of Jews already existed with that name).

One of the problems of the Hebrew readers was that they wanted a tangible high priest. (Catholic converts to Christianity have similar problems.) They missed the pomp and splendor of the old religion.

Hold fast our confession - do not revert back into the old priesthood (cf. 3:1).

VERSE 15

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

THIRD CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR HIGH PRIEST: He was tempted as we, yet without sin.

The author uses the double negative to emphasize the positive: “not for we do not have.” Therefore this means “we definitely have a High Priest who for sure can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Christ is still “man” also - 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 17:31.

Jesus knows how strong our temptations and problems are. He relates to us based upon His own similar experiences. Compare 2:18 and 1 John 2:15-17.

In reality, He was tempted more than we but did not sin!

VERSE 16

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

Boldly (near) - the word that would be used of the high priest as he drew near in his official duties.

Boldly - confidence - cf. Ephesians 3:11-12.

FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC OF OUR HIGH PRIEST: He is at the throne of God to give us grace and mercy to help in time of need.

An Aaronic priest could only go before the symbolic throne, but Christ is there before the real throne in person interceding for us (emphasizes the Old Testament inadequate process of sacrifice, priesthood, etc.).

“Draw near with boldness” (ASV) in order to get forgiveness. With Jesus, who does hear us, before God. Through faith we have confidence (Eph 3:11,12; Heb 10:19,35,36).

Through Him we can draw near - directly now where it was once a year, and then only at a distance and representatively.

Greeks used this figure of speech as a typical expression for approach to deity.

Any flaw in any priests under the Levitical system disqualified them to serve (Lev 21:17-21).

Note the difference between “mercy” and “grace:”

“Mercy” refers to forgiveness.

“Grace” refers to the power we need to overcome trials, His power to supply our needs, etc. (Jas 4:6 uses the same idea). (Heb 2:9 in reference to the cross; see 1 Cor 10:13.)

“In time of need” (literally, “we might find into well timely aid”). An English idiom might be “just in the nick of time” or “just by the skin of your teeth.” (Cf. Lk 18:1-8.)

Not *obtain* but *receive* - His love has it ready to give.

B. Qualifications And Functions Of Old Testament High Priest 5:1-4

There was nobody more respected in the whole Jewish world than the high priest.

The old covenant characteristic - a kingdom with priests; the new covenant provides a kingdom of priests.

Purpose - had to show that those who had forsaken the Jewish religion with its highly esteemed high priests had not given up anything but had gained much with Christ as High Priest.

The qualifications of the high priest listed here:

1. He was taken from among men (1).
2. He must have something to offer (1 and 3).
3. He served as mediator between man and God (1).
4. He must be acquainted with the weaknesses of man (2 and 3).

5. He was appointed by God (1 and 4).

VERSE 5:1

Moses was a mediator but not a high priest.

Every high priest - this would include both Aaronic and Melchizedekian.

Not to refute a Mormon order; this context only refers to Aaronic priesthood. See qualification #2 above.

Taken from among men - such as Aaron and all of Israel's high priests.

Appointed for men - to officiate and intercede on behalf of his fellow-men, therefore needed by man, not God!

In things pertaining to God - i.e., "mediator."

That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins - sometimes synonymous as in Genesis 4:3-5.

Gifts were free-will offerings (thank-offerings).

Sacrifices were sin offerings (expiatory) - "sins" modifies "sacrifices" only.

Here contrasted and in 8:3 and 9:9.

Note: What sacrifices do Mormon priests offer today?

VERSE 2

Compassion (μετριοπαθε φv) - to feel in between, in reference to one neither too strict or too lenient.

Going astray - those who know God's will but go astray by yielding to temptation.

Compare Numbers 15:30-31, sin of the "high hand" - a sin of rebellion against God not forgiven. Judgment was the responsibility of the high priest who was to "have compassion" ("bear gently"), i.e., judge honestly. Many, however, must have been too liberal (lenient) because the measures levied by God to deal with idolatry were apparently ignored. The high priest could feel for others because he, too, was tempted.

He dealt with two groups of people:

Ignorant (ἀγνοο—σιν) - those who through neglect did not know the word of God, compare 9:7.

Led astray (πλανωμένοις) - misguided (NAS), *Erring* - those who knew God's will but fell away to temptations. A first sin leads to the second, etc. (NKJ - going astray).

Beset by weakness (περίκειται ἀσθένειαν) - "compassed with infirmity" - in order to be merciful it was needful that the high priest be in sympathy with men by experiencing the same temptation and infirmities. Christ did this by taking on human nature.

VERSE 3

Because of this - his own infirmities, weaknesses just spoken of.

For the people - he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins for the people.

Also for himself - on the Day of Atonement (once a year, Lev 16) he offered sacrifice for himself first and then the people - thus, we see the inadequacy of the old high priests.

Milligan: "This he did not only on special occasions and for special offenses (Lev 4:3-12 (Read), but also in all the regular daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly sacrifices that were offered for the sins of the nation (anytime); in all these there was an acknowledgment of his own guilt, as well as the guilt of his brethren" (p. 151).

VERSE 4

And no man takes this honor to himself - scripturally, nobody took this upon himself (Num 21:26; 26:10-14).

But he who is called by God (καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) - called, especially used for the call of the gospel, cf. 9:15, *just as Aaron was*.

It was necessary to be born into the priestly tribe. Thereby, being appointed by God to be a high priest. ("Called" here is not the same as v. 10.)

Aaron: Exodus 28:1; Leviticus 8:2.

Compare Numbers 20:26; 26:10-14; Korah usurped, Numbers 26.

The same is true with Christians - we must be born into the family (church).

C. Christ's Qualifications Compared With Its Aaronic High Priest.. 5:5-10

VERSE 5

Christ's qualifications as High Priest listed here:

1. He was called, or appointed, by God (vv. 5-6,10).
2. He was taken from among men (v. 7).
3. He had something to offer (vv. 8-9).
4. He was acquainted with the infirmities of men (v. 7).
5. He served God for man (vv. 7-10).
6. He completed God's will by virtue of His suffering (vv. 8-9).

Christ did not glorify himself (Jn 8:54) - God glorified Christ. Jesus did not usurp this position.

But - contrast to Christ having to glorify Himself.

Begotten - not of Mary but by the resurrection.

VERSE 6

As he also says in another place (Psa 110:4) - this is a refutation of the Mormon Melchizedekian priesthood. This scripture says "you" (σύ) is singular, not plural. Therefore, there is only one priest in this order, and that priest is Jesus! *You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek; not the order of Aaron*. This is a concept the Jews could not accept; to them a priest could never function as both priest and king.

These two verses bring together two important titles - Jesus as Son (v. 7) Psalm 2; and Jesus as Priest (v. 4) Psalm 110. These two titles are also brought together in 4:14 and 7:28. He begins (4:14), has in middle (5:8, 5-6), and ends priest section with Son = priest (7:28).

Bruce (optional): "From Jonathan Maccabeus onwards, the chief priesthood and the chief civil power in Israel were combined in one person; but even if some justification for this unwonted combination was sought in the tradition of Melchizedek's royal priesthood, the justification was empty, for the Hasmonaeans had nothing to do with Melchizedek. The community of Qumran refused to recognize their usurpation of the sacred office preferring to cherish the hope of a day when the legitimate line of Zadok (Mt 1:14) would again be invested with the high

priestly dignity in a purified temple in a new Jerusalem. But even so, this hope did not envisage the union of priesthood and kingship” (pp. 96-97).

VERSE 7

Offered up (προσενέγκας) - (5:7; 7:27; 9:14, 28; 10:12). This word occurs sixteen times in Hebrews - always a priestly act (Pink, p. 243).

Vehement cries - a cry that man does not choose to utter but comes as a result of stress, tension and pain.

And tears - shows Jesus was very human!

To Him who was able to save Him - what God is able to do is not what God is always willing to do (Eph 3:20).

Heard (εἰσακουσθεῖς) - an unusual verb meaning “heard and answered” (same word used in Psa 22:24, a Messianic psalm, and one Jesus quoted on the cross).

Godly fear (εὐλαβείας) - “Your will not Mine.”

Save Him from death - not God’s will, therefore not given (cf. Mt 26:38-39; Jn 12:27; 18:11; Mt 20:22; Lk. 22:42.)

What did Jesus pray for in the garden when He asked for the cup to be taken away? Some theories are:

It is for deliverance from giving in to death spiritually.

He was praying not to die of sorrow before the cross.

The cup represents Satan’s forces.

He was praying to be brought out of death into life safely (the resurrection).

He prayed for a shortening of the agony and sorrow in the garden.

The extreme desire of deity not to be separated from deity (never before in eternity), and the very idea of deity being made sin (having never had sin).

Assuming this refers to going to the cross. If Jesus cried and was heard and answered, why did He die? Note these possibilities:

His prayer was answered “no” in terms of God’s will.

Was heard for His “godly fear” (piety - NAS; reverent submission - NIV).

εὐλαβείας - religious reverence for God with an anxiety not to offend Him, thus showing voluntary submission to His will.

“The true answer was to give him the cup and thus accomplish through him the faultless will of God. To have saved him from death would not have answered the εὐλαβείας of his prayer.”

Therefore, His prayer was answered with respect to “Thy will be done.”

Side point: The “cup” did not refer to His death on the cross. Note these four viewpoints (others’ views / possibilities):

1. *Save Him from death* (ἐκ not usual ἀπό) - literally is “saved Him out of death.” Thus, He would be brought out of death into life safely, i.e., the resurrection.
2. Delitzsch says that what Jesus prayed for, what He wanted to be delivered from, was succumbing to death spiritually, i.e., to giving in.
3. Based on Matthew 26:38 [“My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto (deeply grieved to the point of) death”] that He was asking to be delivered from dying before He got to the cross. Luke (22:43) records an angel coming to Him for strength.
4. The “cup” meaning a shortening of His agony and sorrow. “Cup” does not always have to mean “death” (Mt 26:38-39; Jn 12:27; 18:11; Mt 20:22 - the closest thing in context to “cup” is His agony and sorrow, cf. Jn 12:27).

It is not logical that He feared death like we might because of His knowledge of what glory was to come for Him (“I go to prepare a place”; “today you shall be with Me in paradise;” etc.) Early Christians went voluntarily to death even without such absolute knowledge!

Warren Wilcox: “I believe it was death in and of itself that Jesus was afraid of - our death is what we deserve, but Jesus had to be made sin. We do not know what that means experientially. We are too much of a sinner to grasp that consequence.”

VERSE 8

Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience (ὕπακοήν) by the things which He suffered.

He was acquainted with man's weakness (v. 2).

Albert Barnes: This cannot mean:

“That he did not know what obedience was.”

“That he was indisposed to obey God before he suffered; That he had, perversities of nature, leading to rebellion, which required to be subdued by suffering;”

But rather he was:

“Willing to prove / show the power of obedience even through sufferings.

To become personally and practically acquainted with the nature of such obedience in the midst of protracted woes (adverse circumstances)” (p. 118).

A play on words (Robertson).

He learned - ἔμαθεν.

He suffered - ἔπαθεν (2nd aor. act. indic. of πάσχω).

He always did His Father's will but grew in experience, in wisdom and stature as well as in power and in sympathy with us.

God likewise tells us to obey and endure even in suffering, as did Jesus (1 Pet 4:1).

Before coming here, when did Jesus ever have to obey the will of another? Never! Therefore, even though omniscience would assure us He knew what obedience was without experience, He might have been charged as one who did not have the necessary qualifications to judge us for failing to obey. For example: Philippians 2:8 “and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death of the cross.” Thus, Jesus had to obey the will of God. Also, in suffering, He learned by experience and obedience.

Another commentator: “He learned the obedience (Greek - THE obedience - i.e., what God had Him come for. Jn 8:29 - And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him) in that the

experience was new to him. There is a difference in a willingness to obey and a knowledge of what obedience is having performed the deed of obedience.”

Johnson: “He claimed no special exemptions because he was the Son, but learned and taught obedience in the supremest test that the world ever saw. He learned obedience experimentally.”

VERSE 9

Having been perfected (τελειωθεῖς) - not perfected as a man, but by His suffering and death to complete God’s plan for man’s redemption (i.e., the Messiah). Therefore, Jesus had something to offer: Himself.

Perfect which means when carried out, the purpose for which it was made and designed; has to do with function not abstract perfection. In other words the object or person had reached the designed end of THE obedience.

Jesus was always perfect (abstract), but He was not “perfected” (function) until He died on the cross, i.e., He had not carried out that for which He was designed or purposed - to offer a sinless sacrifice for man’s redemption.

He is *author* (source and cause) of *eternal salvation* (cf. 9:12 - eternal redemption; 9:15 - eternal inheritance; 13:20 - eternal covenant) - a mediator (v. 9b).

As a result of His superior qualifications He was the author.

Jesus served God in behalf of mankind.

Therefore, He acts as our mediator to those who believe and obey Him. The Old Testament high priest did not mediate prayers.

Author (αἴτιος) - means that which causes something. He actually caused our salvation. This is not the same word used in 2:20.

Obey (ὑπακούουσιν) - means “to listen and obey” (pres. ind. act.) - always be listening (cf. 1:2) and always be obeying (this was their problem). Compare James 1:18-22; Romans 1:5; 16:26. Salvation is only to those who obey Him.

Source of *eternal salvation* - not temporary; contrast with the Old Testament sacrifices.

Taken from among men, appointed (designated) by God, had something to offer, served between man and God, and was acquainted with man’s weaknesses. Thus, Jesus met all these qualifications required to be high priest - spiritual and physical.

VERSE 10

Called by God (προσαγορευθείς) - named or designated by God, not called by God (“addressed as” or “styled as” - Westcott).

Not the same as word “called” (καλούμενος) in verse 4, nor “appointed” (καθίσταται) in verse 1.

Note three major areas of qualifications:

1. He is the Son of God; ASV - “named of God.”
2. He has true and perfect humanity or sympathy (because He had humanity He could die, suffer, understand more, learn obedience, etc.).
3. The superior, official dignity of His priesthood: made High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (priest and king). Know Zechariah 6:12-13. (This, of course, was impossible under the Mosaic system, thus, showing the old economy to be passing away!).

V. THE NECESSITY OF GROWTH TO MATURITY IN ORDER TO REALIZE THE HOPE FOUND IN CHRIST’S PRIESTHOOD5:11-6:20

Why is this section a necessary element in the author’s development? Because, as Jews who wanted to go back into Judaism, they could have soothed their consciences and accepted Christ as superior to prophets, Moses, and humans, but they could not go back and mix that with Judaism and accept the Melchizedekian priesthood of Christ. The Old Economy cannot be mixed with the New. Thus, this section is an admonition that they had not grown spiritually to the point of accepting the Melchizedekian priesthood concept as related to Christ (his next topic). They were trying to accept Christ and the Old Law - this section helps them be prepared to not use the Old Law at all.

A. Author Desires To Continue To Speak Of Christ’s Priesthood, But Hindered By The Listeners Inability5:11-14

VERSE 11

Of whom we have much to say - about Melchizedek, not Christ.

ASV - “hard of interpretation;” NAS “hard to explain;” (this construction shows the difficulty was on not the part of the writer, BUT the reason was because they were “dull of hearing” (used in 6:12, sluggish; νωθοὶ - only used two places in the New Testament) therefore the concept is understandable (2 Pet 3:16 is a similar idea; 1 Cor 14:20 - do not become young children in understanding yet in

evil be babes, but become full mature in understanding) but they had not grown to this point of understanding.

Hard of hearing only to the dull of hearing - to their own destruction (2 Pet 3:16).

The reason Melchizedek was hard to understand was because his priesthood was a type of Christ's priesthood and that must be understood before the Hebrew writer goes on in his argument.

Dull - sluggish in James 1:19. Also lazy, stupid or slothful.

B. All Christians Are Responsible For Teaching Others.....5:12-14

VERSE 12

By this time - God does have a time table. They failed because they did not redeem the time.

Compare Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 5:16.

You ought to be teachers (ὀφείλοντες) - means obligation. You "must" be teachers, there is no choice.

Obligated by reason of time.

Teachers - experts.

God has the "timetable," we do not; but we are to be teaching regardless of the degree we are capable: personal work, tracts, classroom, preaching, etc.

How does this harmonize with James 3:1? You must be a teacher, but must also recognize the responsibilities that go along with it. Some use these two passages to say that everyone does not have to be a teacher; but this is about as logical as saying, "We should not set an example because we are going to be held accountable for the example we set (because we have restrictions on both of these, too; Rom 14)." Matthew 18:7 woe if cause to stumble you have need again for someone to teach you again.

Their problem, then, was that they had to let the fundamentals of the oracles of God slip from them (cf. 6:1-2). Note that a person who lacks the Christian "graces" (2 Pet 1) is blind and cannot see what is far off. They wanted to see a high priest (that which was "near") and, because of their problem, they failed to develop beyond the rudiments (to teach you the elementary principles) and even forgot them.

The first principles - see "First Principles" in the Appendix.

Of the oracles of God - consistently refers to inspired messages, written or verbal (1 Pet 4:11); in the early church it referred to the Old Testament.

You have come to need milk and not solid food - reverse progression or growth:

Corinthians had a similar problem - 1 Corinthians 3:2f. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food for you were not able to receive it.

Such a one cannot handle the word of righteousness skillfully - 2 Timothy 2:15.

1 Peter 2:2 emphasizes the desire of a growing Christian illustrative of newborn babes.

These Jews had progressed some and then digressed ("have come;" "we become") back to the point of once again needing teaching of fundamentals principles. Compare with some in the church today.

They had the Old Testament.

VERSE 13

Only of milk is unskilled - For everyone who partakes only of milk is without experience in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe.

Babe (νήπιος) - does not mean infant, but immature.

Incidentally, this shows the need for graded Bible school lessons.

VERSE 14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (τελείων) - NAS - mature (contrast with babe). Fully developed in accordance with the teaching of Christ - the aim of all teaching and living (cf. Eph 4:11-14).

See "Solid Food" in the Appendix.

By reason of use - should be "because of practice (ἔξις - habit or pattern)."

New Testament principles to form habits and patterns of life and a foundation of faith that can discern good from evil, righteousness from unrighteousness. It will stand firm and endure.

Have their senses exercised (γεγυμνασμένα) (trained - NAS) - actually, "having been exercised."

Used in reference to an athlete competing for a prize; thus, a determined, purposeful effort is required.

This is not talking about Bible study - for that would be "a given."

Compare Proverbs 6:27 - Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? GOOD AND EVIL.

Discern - discern both good and evil - a level of growth to be able to discern correctly when there is no specific Bible statement on the subject.

These Christians do not need a "book, chapter and verse" to settle whether something is good or evil. They are able to discern between good and evil based on their knowledge of God's word!

Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 where we do not need to prove that anything is evil, we need only to prove what is right and do it, thus, in that process, abstaining from all evil.

Sermon outline: Requirements for Maturity.

Time (v. 12).

Advancement ("ought to be," v. 12).

Knowledge ("need to be taught," v. 12).

Exercise ("spiritual exercise of senses," v. 14).

C. Admonition To Go On To Perfection.....6:1-3

The key to understanding why this section interrupts his Melchizedekian priesthood discussion: Up to this point the writer has shown only that the permanent elements of the old covenant remain and are exalted in Christ. The more difficult point, which will require matured perception to grasp, is that Christ's priesthood involves the entire abolition of the old covenant.

VERSE 6:1

Therefore - points back to the things stated in 5:11-14 concerning their problem and the reason he could not continue his discussion concerning the Melchizedekian priesthood.

Leaving the discussion of the elementary principles - “principles” not in the Greek.

Leaving (ἀφέντες - 2nd aor. part.) - literally “leaving the word of the beginning of Christ.” “Leaving” means to send away, omit, desert, forsake. It is in most places translated “neglected” (cf. Mt 23:23 - neglected weightier matters; Mk 7:8 - neglecting the commandment of God; Rev 2:4 - you have left your first love; Rom 1:27 - men abandoned the natural use of the woman).

Quote of A. B. Bruce (from Vincent, vol. IV, p. 441): “Lit. ‘leaving the word of the beginning concerning Christ, ‘leaving’ or ‘dismissing’ does not imply ceasing to believe in elementary truths or to regard them as unimportant, but leaving them ‘as a builder leaves his foundation in erecting his building.’”

See “Teaching of Christ” in the Appendix.

Arndt and Gingrich - definition 3b - to go on to something else (orators - Plutarch, Epictetus); neglect; omit - often “forgive.”

Let us go on to perfection - “press on unto perfection” (“maturity” - NAS) - i.e., Christianity.

The author allows only two choices: either to (1) press on, or (2) to slide back; the idea is: “they will either press on or fall back into their old familiar pattern, thus leaving Christ for a dead system never to be saved.”

Perfection (τελειότητα) - brought to completion, fully accomplished, fully developed. Only here and Colossians 3:14, Thus, Christianity (cf. Heb 7:11,19; 9:9; 10:1).

They were in danger of losing this; they did not have the knowledge and discernment that went along with maturity.

Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works - this phrase used only here and 9:14 (see “Dead Works” in the Appendix).

Repentance from dead works:

Not from sinful works as such but rather have no seed of life in them which comes from faith in God (Vincent).

Turn from works that cause death (Barnes).

Works which have no connection with the character of a person but are done in compliance with law (Boatman).

Dead because there is no life behind them since they do not emanate from the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Archer).

This is one of four places in the New Testament where repentance precedes faith: Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Matthew 21:62.

In most of these places they are talking to Jews who already had faith.

The authors do not always put things in chronological order, i.e., Romans 10:9. Order does not prove that confession comes before belief.

Compare 9:14 - cleanse your conscience from "dead works" for justification; Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:20, 28; etc.

Of faith toward God - their problem was a failure to understand that faith in God now meant to have faith in His Son who came from Him. Compare 2 John 9 - has Father and Son (see 11:6) - the initial faith that caused you to move toward God the Father is not sufficient, you must believe in God the Son also.

Faith - they were Jews already believing in God.

VERSE 2

Of the doctrine of baptisms (plural) - "washings" is better - wanting Judaism and Christianity combined together.

Five "baptisms" mentioned in the Bible:

	Figurative	Literal
1. Holy Spirit;	X	
2. John the Baptist's;		X
3. Of Suffering (Mt 20:22);	X	
4. Of Fire;	X	
5. The Great Commission.		X

In this text three baptisms may be eliminated because of the use of the Greek word βαπτισμTMν meaning washings (only here, 9:10 and Mk 7:4,8.)

Contrast βάπτισμα, meaning immersion or baptism, in all other places in the New Testament.

Their problem was that under the Old Law there were various washings (Ex 30:19-21; Lev 16:4, 24; 11:25-28, 40; 13:6, 36), these they confused with baptism under the New Law. They did not understand the connection of baptism to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Maybe they confused this with John's also (Vincent, p. 443).

There were no faucets in those days; lavers were used for dipping cups, plates, etc.

Talmud confirms they did immerse cups and pots. Kleim, Ch XXV, Mishnah 3,5. And even couches (KJV). If that text is valid Leviticus 15:20 and Kleim Ch XVIII, Mishnah 9; Ch XIX, Mishnah 1 - "If a man dismantle a bed in order that he might immerse it..."

Further information on baptism shows they used it; therefore, against infant baptism (Barnes).

Of laying on of hands -

Old Testament:

A priest laying hands on the sacrifice (Num 27:18; Deut 34:9; Num 8:10).

A priest laying his hands on the offering (Lev 1:4).

A father lays his hands on his son for blessings.

Ordination of priests.

New Testament:

Special or miraculous - Acts 19:6, etc.

To set aside for a work - Acts 6:6 - "deacons"; 8:17 - Holy Spirit; 13:3 - first missionary journey; 19:6 - Holy Spirit; 1 Timothy 4:14 - by elders; 2 Timothy 1:6 - Paul's.

Their problem: They knew that the laying on of hands was a common Jewish custom.

They perhaps confused the laying on of hands on sacrifices in the old age with the laying on of hands of the apostles in the new age in order to bestow miraculous gifts. They may have been confused about these, but rarely for other purposes (cf. 1 Tim 4:14).

Of resurrection of the dead.

Old Testament: Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:8-10; 17:15; Isaiah 26:19; 53:10-12; Daniel 12:1-2; Matthew 22:23-33 (esp. v. 30); Acts 24:14-15.

New Testament: over 104 references, esp. 1 Corinthians 15.

Their problem: They did not really understand the resurrection of the dead, but the fact of it was substantiated by the example of Jesus which they ignored.

Of eternal judgment - i.e., that which is forever.

Old Testament - Isaiah 66:24; Daniel 12:2.

New Testament - Hebrews 9:27, etc.

A necessary fact associated with the resurrection.

VERSE 3

And this will we do if God permits - always work in the will of God.

Vincent's interpretation of the author's thought: "Wherefore, in order that you may be aroused from your sluggishness and have your perceptions brought up to the matured condition which befits men in Christ, (and in order that I may, at the same time complete the development of my theme) I propose that we together move forward to completion: (I to the full exposition of the subject of Christ's high priesthood,) and you to the maturity of discernment which becomes you. This will require us both to leave the rudimentary stage of teaching concerning Christ."

I doubt Paul separated subjects in this short statement but, rather, refers to their continuing growth (cf. Phil 3:13-14).

His point is that they must not stay in rudimentary principles.

Westcott: The fulfillment of the author's purpose is not in any way made to depend on the condition of addresses. His message has to be delivered (cf. Ezek 2:5).

This phrase *if God permits* is a third class conditional phrase meaning “undetermined as to fulfillment, but with prospect of fulfillment.”

D. Dangers And Consequences Of Apostasy 6:4-8

VERSE 4

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened (see 10:32-35).

For - as touching, concerning.

These are Christians.

If some could fall - anyone can fall.

Φωτισθέντας from φωτίζω meaning “to enlighten,” but is used here symbolically.

Refers to more than just learning, but to those who were baptized.

The reason for this that in the early church the word φωτίζω was used synonymously with “baptism.” For example:

The Syriac Peshitto version, one of the oldest versions, uses “baptism” here instead of “enlightened.” This does not mean their version was correct (not a proof) but that this is the way they understood it.

In the Septuagint, Psalm 34:5 says, “come to him and be enlightened.” In early church records of what they said at baptism, (Justin Martyr’s *First Apology*, 61; 65) this is the verse they would quote. Thus, the early Christians used “enlightened” as a synonym to “baptism.”

Also note that φωτισθέντας is in the aorist accusative and, thus, means “once for all” enlightened, baptism (Col 1:12-13; Eph 1:18).

Ἄπαξ means “once for all time.” Once for all time enlightened (baptized).

See “Impossible” in the Appendix.

And have tasted of the heavenly gift:

Tasted (γευσσάμενους from γεύομαι - to fully partake of) - used figuratively eight times in the New Testament: five refer to death; John 8:51-52; Mark 9:1(parallels - Mt 16:28; Lk 9:27); Hebrews 2:9; 1 Peter 2:3; two times here - vv. 4 and 5.

Did Jesus “taste” of death then spit it out? NO!

“Once-saved-always-saved.” The people who believe this doctrine explain this verse by saying that “tasted” here is equivalent to tasting of sour milk and then spitting it out. This they must do to avoid the idea that taste means “to fully partake of” (or experience totally) thus making the people spoken of here Christians. However, the context fully bears out that these are Christians and are “fallen away ones.” “Once-saved-always-saved” would say these were people who knew of and understood the benefits of Christianity (i.e., tasted) but then rejected it without becoming Christians (again, note v. 6!) (i.e., “spit it out”).

Heavenly gift - salvation.

And have become partakers of the Holy Spirit.

Partakers (μετόχους) - sharing or participating in (Arndt and Gingrich, p. 514) with genitive of a thing...; used - 3:1; 12:8; 3:14; partner - 1:9.

The only way a person can be a partaker of the Holy Spirit is either:

By being baptized and receiving the indwelling, or

Having an apostle lay hands on you. (Acts 2 and 10 do not apply because these Christians were not there!)

Therefore, they must be Christians:

Holy Spirit is promised only to baptized believers (Acts 2:38; 5:32).

The Holy Spirit abides only in the those who abide in the Word of Christ (cf. Rom 8:9-11).

Not the gifts, but the Holy Spirit Himself indwelling us.

See “In Answer To The Hebrews 6:4-5 Question” in the Appendix.

A note to those who believe in the “indwelling of the Holy Spirit only through the word:” How do you explain: “partakers of the Holy Spirit and tasted the good word?” These are separate comments, not equivalent.

Note: καὶ and τε; τε connects participles and is the same as “and.”

VERSE 5

And have tasted of the good word of God - again, means to totally experience, fully participate (1 Pet 2:3). They knew the Word.

And the powers of the age to come - “age to come” always referred to the Messianic age.

Powers (δυνάμεις) - “deeds of power, miracles, or wonders” same as 2:4 (miracles, NAS, in 2:4).

Age (αἰTMνος - world) *to come* (Heb 2:5; 10:1; 9:11 similar, but not same word).

Not heaven - (cf. Mt 12:32) refers to the Christian dispensation of which they were a part and they would so understand it that way based upon their Old Testament background and learnings; i.e., they had benefitted from miracles.

Thus, he is saying that they have been recipients of the benefits of the new age and were now rejecting them as unimportant or useless.

Westcott - “Powers of another world so to speak. The anarthrous αἰTMνος μέλλοντος which is not found elsewhere serves also to fix attention on the character of the ‘age’ as one hitherto unrealized, as distinguished from the conception of any particular future order (cf. Eph 2:7; Heb 2:5).

Subtle False Position:

“If men share within the church all the blessings of the gospel of Christ, if (like those at the Red Sea deliverance who later perished thru unbelief in the wilderness) they have actually been in ‘presence of company of the people of God who have experienced the mighty working of God’s Spirit and so have tasted of its character,’ then deliberately turn from it all and reject Christ, it is impossible to begin all over again with them and lay once again the foundation of repentance” (Davidson, *New Bible Commentary*, p. 1098).

See “In Answer To The Hebrews 6:4-5 Question” in the Appendix.

VERSE 6

If (since) they fall away, to renew them again to repentance - impossibility of renewal.

The NKJV, KJV, NIV, RSV, Amplified in error here by saying “if they shall fall away.” The Nestle interlinear shows καὶ παραπεσόντας meaning “and falling away” (ASV: “and then fell away”; NASB: “and then have fallen away”). See the refutation by Bruce (p. 123).

See “Παραπεσόντας in Hebrews 6:6” in the Appendix.

An example of error – “This is not an affirmation that any *had* actually fallen away, or that in fact they *would* do it; but the statement is, that *on the supposition that they had fallen away* it would be impossible to renew them again. It is the same as supposing a case which in fact, might never occur” (Barnes, *Hebrews*, p. 131).

Impossible . . . to renew them again - shows they had once repented and shows they were true Christians

Many worry needlessly here without viewing the complete context which adds: “while” (“since”, NAS - no word in Greek) - (NASB - “from”).

Ἄνασταυροῦντας (pres. act.) - shows the action they are in (doing) at this time; “they are crucifying the Son of God...”

In other words, as long as they are crucifying the Son of God afresh, there is not a thing you can do to bring them to repentance (not each participle is in present tense).

Impossible means exactly that it is impossible.

The impossibility lies within the decision of the fallen.

Two reasons they cannot be renewed (repent):

1. With the same attitude of those who killed Jesus; they will not repent and return to someone they hate (cf. Eph 4:17-19; 1 Tim 4:2). While in this attitude toward Christ they will never repent (10:26).
2. What can they be offered? Nothing new! They once had the greatest blessings available to them (as Christians): heaven, joys of Christianity, peace, etc., all which they rejected!

Those being spoken of here are not just sinners or backsliders, but apostatizing Christians!

As long as this is their attitude it is impossible, but if their attitude changes there is hope.

Robert Shank in his book *Life in the Son* has good sections on the false doctrine about eternal security (perseverance of the saints) on pp. 164; 177f.; 229-231; 318f.

Note the four “impossibilities” of the book of Hebrews:

1. Impossible to renew fallen Christians who continue to crucify Jesus (6:6).
2. Impossible for God to lie (6:18).
3. Impossible for blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (10:4).
4. Impossible to please God without faith (11:6).

Since they crucify again for themselves.

Crucify (ἀνασταυροῦντας) - an intense word which could almost be “crucify in an antagonistic way” (Barnes, p. 1267).

It means in an active and aggravated manner.

If a person could not fall why was this section even written at all?

VERSES 7-8

Illustration of the land.

“These two verses show that the treatment depends on what kind of fruit is borne. God sends sunshine and rain on the earth. If it brings forth food for man, it is blessed. But if it brings forth thorns and briers, it is rejected. So God, who blesses our lives, and refreshes them with the Gospel, demands righteous fruit. If they bear thorns, the end is destruction” (Johnson).

This illustrates what he has been just discussing - a person who has seen all the good things of God, becomes a Christian, but then apostatizes, deserves to be burned.

Again, the KJV bears the Calvinistic trademark of translating v. 8, “de,” as “but that which” instead of just “but.” By doing so, the KJV indicates two pieces of land instead of just one! The NKJV corrects this.

According to Vincent, the KJV “puts the contrast as between two kinds of soil, the one well-watered and fertile, the other unwatered and sterile. This would illustrate the contrast between those who have and those who have not enjoyed gospel privileges. On the contrary the contrast is between two classes of Christians under equally favorable conditions, out of which they develop opposite results” (p. 447).

Again, this teaches the possibility of falling from grace!

E. Encouragement To Accept This Promise Which Gives Hope And Exhortations6:9-12

VERSE 9

The ones receiving this letter are not beyond this state and lost. The author has confidence in his readers.

But, beloved - tenderhearted concern for them is shown.

We are confident of better things (than falling away) concerning you - normal Pauline style is to compliment and then chastise or exhort; here the procedure is reversed.

Though we speak in this manner - again a statement of concern for them even though he speaks boldly against their heinous error (cf. Gal 4:16 - Am I your enemy?...).

VERSE 10

Show your love to God by ministering to the saints.

This verse shows that love for God is manifested by doing something. Love is shown in action, not just in word. Compare 1 John 3:17.

“Though the Hebrew Christians were not advancing in knowledge (5:12), yet they had shown the fruits of the love of Christ in ministering (διακονήσαντες) to the saints” (Johnson).

Today’s application:

It is possible to be doing good Christian works and be wrong doctrinally.

VERSE 11

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence.

The Church can be good, but individuals lost. One is not saved just because he is a member of a strong, scriptural congregation.

The writer just stated that the congregation (or, congregations) had been involved in fruitful work, but he exhorts each one individually to *show the same diligence*. (#2 application)

Diligence (σπουδὴν) - (cf. 4:11) - same word as in 2 Peter 1:5 (Christian graces) and means "strenuous endeavor" (Vine, p. 59). Compare 2 Timothy 2:15.

Note: If "once-saved-always-saved," why should one be diligent?

To the full assurance of hope (πληροφορίαν) - full carrying.

The subject of hope, (expectation of fulfillment of promises of God) touched upon once before, is the subject of the theme he will develop fully in chapter 11.

The whole concept of Christianity and reason for being diligent is because of a sure hope.

Until the end (3:6,14) - means to continue throughout your Christian life and never give up.

This idea was new to the New Testament -

But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die (Ezek 18:24 cf. 33:16).

Unworthy slaves (Lk 17:10; Isa 64:6).

VERSE 12

That you do not become sluggish - lest you become sluggish.

Sluggish (νωθοί) - slow ("slothful" KJV), sluggish, lazy, careless; same as in 5:11.

Do not be so unconcerned with your Christianity that you fail to grow.

Compare Ed Wharton's idea. "We do not work because we are not convinced we are saved."

The author tells how: *But imitate* (μιμηταί) - used in the New Testament by Paul only according to Westcott, p. 156) *those who through faith and patience inherit (not merit) the promises.*

Faith (cf. chapter 11).

Patience (e.g. longsuffering - μακροθυμίας).

Promises are inherited not earned, merited (cf. Gal 3:25-29).

F. God's Promises (What Promises?) Assured With An Oath 6:13-20

Why does the author specifically use Abraham here? Barnes says:

1. To encourage Hebrew Christians to persevere by showing what promise was made to Abraham.
2. "To show that the nature of evidence Christians have that they will be saved, (or the ground of encouragement) was the same kind of evidence that Abraham had, i.e., a promise from God.
3. Abraham had relied totally on the promise of God, even though all appearances were against fulfillment, and he thus showed the advantage of patience and faith in the promise of God.
4. They, as Hebrews, were evidence that God's promises came true. The Hebrew nation (they, themselves) existed.

VERSE 13

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself (cf Gen 22:15-18).

Many are confused by this concept based upon Matthew 5:34 and James 5:12. The teachings there are against false oaths; thus, one is allowed to make a solemn oath with the absolute intent to carry it out.

VERSE 14

His oath was made after Abraham offered Isaac and was thus contingent upon Abraham's obedience (other in Isa 45:23; usual form, "As I live" - Num 14:21, 28; Ezek 33:11).

VERSE 15

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. The promise was obtained only by patiently enduring. Compare 11:13,39.

Patiently - μακροθυμήσας. Ignorance and fantasy of men's minds are shown by movies such as "The Bible" which portrays Abraham as almost rebellious to God's instructions. He greeted the promise as if it were being carried out (Vine, p. 60).

The promise was that received through Christ.

Their problem was that they really could not see this!

VERSE 16

Compare Genesis 22:15-18.

Men indeed swear by the greater - when men make a solemn oath in order to settle a fact or covenant beyond controversy, they usually swear in the name of God. God, however, could swear by no one greater than himself (Johnson).

An end of all dispute - with them, an oath is FINAL - outermost END point (Vincent, p. 451).

THIS REFUTES Mormon doctrine of Adam = God. The Mormon "Adam-God" could swear by one greater.

VERSE 17

¹In the same way, God, ²desiring even more to show ³to the heirs of the promise ⁴the unchangeableness of his purpose, ⁵interposed with an oath (NAS).

¹ Wherein; Thus; In the same way (ἐν ᾧ) God interposed with an oath to act as a mediator between two covenanting parties. Therefore, the oath did that between man and God (Westcott).

²Purpose: To show more abundantly that His purpose (βουλόμενος) is not changeable.

³ *The heirs of the promise* (Gal 3:29 also v. 14 = seed promise). Their problem: they lacked confidence (key - 3:6, 14; 4:16; 6:11) in Christianity but felt secure in Judaism and, thus, wanted to go back. God's oath, however, was absolute assurance that Christianity was valid.

“God, out of condescension to that human weakness which puts more confidence in an oath than in the bare word, confirmed his promise by an oath.” (Johnson)

Heirs - all the seed of Abraham (physical and spiritual).

⁴The immutability (unchangeableness) of his counsel (βουλή - to call) - intention, plan, decision - to salvation in Christ.

Emphasize “unchangeable” (from eternity) - not just unchangeable after he made it, therefore Moses’ Law was not to Abraham.

Synonymous - eternal purpose, unchangeable.

⁵ Oath - the person’s character is publicly and solemnly put behind the assertion.

Because an oath removes all doubt. God is willing to remove all doubt by swearing.

More authoritative.

Can see to it that the oath is carried out.

Can punish oath breakers (Clarke).

Note: here is another internal evidence of the truth of Christianity.

VERSE 18

That by two immutable things (ἀμετάθετον) (“unchangeable” NAS) or unbreakable things:

1. God’s promise to Abraham.

2. God’s oath.

The purpose of the two things is for our encouragement.

In which it is impossible for God to lie (four things in Hebrews are impossible - integrity of God is at stake; see notes p. 122).

The purpose of oath: that we may have strong encouragement - confidence.

Who have fled for refuge - only here and Acts 14:6.

Fled (καταφυγόντες) - an important word here because of their Jewish background. It was used in the Old Testament Septuagint in reference to someone who “fled” to a city of refuge, having committed an accidental killing (cf. Deut 4:42; 19:5; Josh 20:9).

The writer’s point is this: As with those of old, people sin against God sometimes, not intending to be rebellious although their sin is such to God. Of old, those that fled to cities of refuge had to remain until the high priest died; the same is the applicable to those in the Christian age - except our High Priest lives forever! Thus, the analogy requires Christians to remain in the kingdom of Christ in order to be saved. These Hebrews were about to leave their city of refuge.

See 1 Kings 2:35-46 - Shimei came out of city of Jerusalem after saying he would stay. Solomon killed him.

See Romans 9:6-8 - children of Abraham.

The blood-avenger in the analogy must then be God (because sin is against God).

To lay hold of the hope (κρατῆσαι - aorist) of the hope set before us.

Same word used in 4:14 (κρατῆμεν) translated “hold fast” (our confession).

Used in the Septuagint to describe the grasping of the horns on the altar (Joab - 1 Kgs 2:28).

Of the hope set before us (cf. 12:1 - race set before us).

VERSE 19

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul.

If hope is our anchor, and it is lost, then we drift away; this anchor (hope) is based upon God’s promise and oath. It holds us secure in the storms of life.

Anchor is a common symbol found ancient classics as well as even on ancient Greek and Roman coins.

Compare “drift” in chapter 2.

Both sure and steadfast - because God swore and promised only through the seed of Abraham.

One which enters the Presence behind the veil - like an anchor gives hope securely fastened in an unseen place, so our soul is anchored where Christ is, giving us hope (cf. 10:19).

Vincent: "two figures are combined:

1. The world is a sea; the soul a ship; the hidden bottom of the deep, the hidden reality of the heavenly world.
2. The present life the forecourt of the temple; the future dwelling place assured within the veil. The soul, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor: is fastened by hope to the blessed reality within the shrine" (i.e., the holy of holies).

What was inside the veil was unseen, so faith was absolutely necessary.

VERSE 20

Where Jesus is the *forerunner* (πρόδρομος) for us (ὑπὲρ).

Christ is the one who not only goes before, but who also shows the way

This same word in Numbers 13:20 is translated as "first ripe" and in Numbers 13:21 as "forerunner". This, therefore, presents the idea of "firstfruits."

Has entered (εἰσᾶλθεν - 2nd aor. 3rd pers. sing.) - entered one time to stay.

Having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. 5:10).

A Levitical high priest could not enter as forerunner, but entered as representative of the people.

Christ goes nowhere we cannot follow.

VI. **SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD OVER THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD.....7:1-8:5**

This outline is not the one we follow, even though it is a good one. To be complete it would have to start at 4:14.

Seven proofs of superiority of Christ's priesthood:

1. He is a priest of a higher order than Aaron's - 7:1-19.

2. He is a priest made with an oath - 7:20-22.
3. He is unchangeable (priesthood is also unchangeable) - 7:23-25.
4. He is a sinless priest - 7:26-28.
5. He is the priest of a better covenant - 8:1-13.
6. He is the priest of a better tabernacle - 9:1-28.
7. He is the priest of a better sacrifice - 10:1-18.

A. Melchizedek's Priesthood Is The Type Of Christ's Priesthood ... 7:1-10

This is a proof of the inspiration of the book of Hebrews. No other book shows fulfillment of Psalm 110:4. Therefore, this book must be in the New Testament in order for all prophecy to be completed.

Introductory Remarks:

1. All that is known of Melchizedek is found in Genesis 14:18-20.
2. Why did there have to be a new priesthood?
Because of the prophecy of Psalm 110:4.
3. This new priesthood was to be after the order of Melchizedek, therefore the law had to be changed.
4. Milligan: "Who this Melchizedec was, has long been a question of interest with both the learned and the unlearned...
- Some say that he was Christ Himself (Ambrose, Hottinger);
- Some, that he was the Holy Spirit (Hieracas, Epiphanius);
- Some, that he was an angel (Origen, Didymus);
- Some, that he was Enoch (Hulsius, Calmet);
- Shem is most popular since Ussher's chronology shows him to be alive at the time of Melchizedek's appearance (Luther);

- And some have conjectured that he was an extraordinary emanation from the Deity which suddenly appeared for a little while, and was then as suddenly removed” (p. 195).

5. Such speculation results from a misunderstanding of God's purpose in recording only a portion of the life of Melchizedek. It is by God's design that so little is said in history of this great and mysterious person. All that is known from the Bible (i.e., literarily; i.e., “it is witnessed of Him - v. 8) is that he was a priest and king with no mention of his beginning, predecessors, successors, or death. These characteristics are understood as a literary truth, not a literal truth.

Six reasons this passage refers to Melchizedek “literarily:”

1. By God's design and purpose, only so much is revealed of Melchizedek so there can be a type-anti argument. If additional information or his name had been revealed, then the analogy would fail and the type would not exist.
2. Types are always physical; anti-types spiritual. Melchizedek had to be a real, physical person to serve as a type.
3. If Melchizedek were an emanation from (and of) God, or Christ, or an angel, of course Abraham would pay tithes to him, therefore that would not be an argument for the Hebrew author who is showing Melchizedek's priesthood superior to the Levitical by using a physical king and priest admittedly superior to Abraham (and, therefore, Levi).
4. To the Jews, if you did not have a genealogy in the Bible, you had none.
5. Verse 6 shows he did have a genealogy (but not recorded in the Bible).
6. Verse 8 - it is witnessed of him that he was still alive at the end of Genesis 14:18-20.

The point, then, is that the author is not comparing Christ to Melchizedek, but rather their respective priesthoods.

His readers were clinging to the Aaronic priesthood.

Remember that Jesus has a recorded beginning, genealogy and physical death - (Mt and Lk).

His purpose is to show:

That Christ's priesthood is not dependent upon genealogical records or a line of priests (as in the Aaronic priesthood),

And that Christ's priesthood endures forever, as, literally, does Melchizedek's priesthood.

Here then was their problem: they could accept Christ as superior humanity, as greater than Moses, even as a well-qualified priest, but they could not accept a change of priesthods and at the same time go back into Judaism because they knew a change of priesthods required a change of Laws!

The Maccabees' Period revealed the willingness of the Jews to accept a change in priesthood under the Old Law from the tribe of Levi to Judah, but NOT A CHANGE OF LAW. Consider Zechariah 6:13.

VERSE 7:1

Both Priest and King.

King of Salem (Shalom = Peace).

Note: It is unimportant to determine where Salem was. The location of Salem means nothing special to the exegesis of this passage. It is only an interesting study. By far, most all have said that Salem is the same as Jerusalem; the proofs given:

Tarqumists understood it as such (Josephus' *Antiquities I*, 10:2.)

"Salem" is part of "Jerusalem."

Salem is given as the name of Jerusalem (Psa 76:2) - those who refute this say it is not Jerusalem.

Ferrar gives his reasons for accepting: This is the view of Jerome, who in his Onomasticon places it eight miles south of Bethshean... In Jerome's time the ruins of a large palace were shewn (sic.) in this place as "the palace of Melchizedek", and this agrees with the Samaritan tradition that Abraham had been met by Melchizedek not at Jerusalem, but at Gerizim . . . The more common view is that Salem is a shortened form of Jerusalem, but this is very improbable; for (1) only a single instance . . . as poetic license . . . in Psa. LXXVI:2. (2) . . . the Psalmist may be intending to contrast the sanctuary of Melchizedek with that of David; . . . (3) Jerusalem in

the days of Abraham, and for centuries afterward was only known by the name Jebus. (4) The character of Melchizedek would be . . . impaired . . . by his being a king at Jerusalem, for that was the holy city of the Aaronic priesthood of which he was wholly independent, being a type of One in whose priesthood men would worship the Father in all places alike if they offered a spiritual worship.

Jerusalem is on the natural trade route from Dan to Hebron.

Jerusalem was geographically favorably suited for a capitol of a nation or tribe (since Melchizedek was a king).

The name Jerusalem is etymologically made up of Jebusalem or Jerusalem (Jerusalem = "fountain of peace"); compare Judges 19:10, if Jebus = Jerusalem and Jebusalem = Jerusalem, then Salem = Jerusalem.

The name Melchitsedek (translated Melchizedek) is formed after the same basis as Adonitsedek ("Lord of Righteousness") which was the name of another king of Jerusalem (Josh 10:1); this is important because in towns leaders were often called by certain titles which were passed on (e.g. "Pharaoh" [Potifer] was actually an office, not a name; the same applies to "Abimelech").

The Ebla Tablets identify Jerusalem as existing, by name, some 250 years before Abraham's time (i.e., 2250 B.C.).

Priest of the Most High God.

This then identifies the second position of Melchizedek's office.

In Zechariah 6:13 we see that the Messiah will be a priest sitting on his throne; this, of course, was against the Mosaic Law (example of Uzziah; 2 Chron 26:16-23).

Note: God did not only deal with mankind through the line of Abraham; God dealt with others also (e.g., Balaam; Ninevites of Jonah's time; Melchizedek; etc.). But, the Bible is not a world history book!

Melchizedek's blessing and Abraham's tithe (v. 1b-2a).

Met Abraham...and blessed him (v. 1b).

Abraham was returning from his pursuit of the marauders (Amraphel, Arioch, Chedorlaomer and Tidal) who had captured Lot, his nephew.

The fact that Abraham was blessed, and not vice-versa, shows the superior spiritual dignity of Melchizedek (see v. 7). Abraham was never a priest nor a king.

VERSE 2

Secondly, *Abraham gave a tenth part of all* (v. 2a) (see v. 4).

Therefore, Melchizedek was superior to Abraham in two ways;

Melchizedek blessed Abraham, as the greater blesses the lesser one (cf. v. 7).

Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek, as the lesser always pays the greater (cf. v. 6).

Parenthetical statement, v. 2b.

“King of righteousness,” - Jews would pay attention to the meaning of names because they denoted the nature and identity of a person.

“Melchi” = king; “tsdek” = righteousness; therefore, “melchitsdek” (“Melchizedek”) = “king of righteousness.”

Note 1:8-9 - in speaking of Jesus, one of the characteristics of His reign would be that His scepter would be the scepter of uprightness or righteousness. Compare Jeremiah 23:5 - “righteous branch.”

Also king of Salem.

Which is - *king of peace.*

Thus, Jesus was called the Prince of Peace, Isaiah 9:6.

“Peace” here is not physical peace. The followers of Christ will not always find “peace on earth” (Mt 10:34; Lk 12:51).

VERSE 3

Priest, without a known predecessor or successor (v. 3).

The religious editor of the Denver Post, a rank liberal, in speaking of Satan, said if you find it difficult to believe in the existence of the Devil, you ought to read about Melchi-

zedek in Hebrews 7, where it says he did not have a father, mother, and no genealogy, no beginning or end of days! That, he says, is even harder to believe.

Without father (ἀπάτωρ); *without mother* (ἀμήτωρ) - i.e., no record of them. The emphasis here is not on Jesus of Nazareth, but Christ the priest - "without genealogy" (ἀγενεαλόγητος).

Rabbis and Philo had laid down the principle that, for purpose of interpretation, nothing must be regarded as having existed before the time of its first biblical mention. i.e., "it is witnessed." 2:4; 2:6; 3:5; 7:8, 17; 10:15; 11:2, 4, 5, 39; 12:1.

This (γενέσεως - Mt 1:1) is not the usual word for genealogy and is found only here and verse 6 in the New Testament; similar in verse 6 - γενεαλογούμενος.

And it means ("pedigree" in the interlinear) - "without written genealogy" (Vine).

Thus, this is the first point to prove that Melchizedek was a man, like any other man, except that literarily (i.e., biblically) he does not have these mentioned qualifications to be a priest as required by Mosaic Law. See 7:6 - his "descent" (KJV, NIV). The form of this word shows that Melchizedek did have parents.

The only way Melchizedek was without father, mother and genealogy was literarily (relating to, or dealing with literature).

The point is that the priesthood of Melchizedek has a different basis than the Aaronic priesthood.

Barclay: "The writer to the Hebrews piles up words to show that Melchizedek has no descent. He did that to contrast the new priesthood of Jesus Christ with the old Aaronic priesthood. A Jewish priest could not be a priest unless he could trace descent from Aaron. And if a man could trace such a descent, nothing could stop him from being a priest. The whole Jewish priesthood was founded on genealogy.

Melchizedek was therefore a priest in his own right, i.e., because of *who* he was not *what* he was! Therefore, no one preceded him and no one followed him AS PRIEST. So was Christ! Neither was dependent upon his (His) genealogy to be priest.

Ἀφωμοιωμένος - having been made; "made like unto the Son of God." Typology! Note Chart.

If Melchizedek was made like the Son of God, then, He already existed! But he does not use “Jesus” but Son of God - emphasis is not physical.

The antitype always exists (at least in God’s mind) before the type.

Pink: “Therefore, the record of Melchizedek, as given in the Bible, has as its primary purpose to teach a lesson on the nature and work of Christ.”

Not “Son of man” because Jesus, as man, had a birth, a death, etc. The Son of God always existed.

The whole idea then is that the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek does not depend upon a genealogical connection and, thus, neither does that of Christ’s.

VERSE 3b

Remains a priest continually (Milligan, 198). Melchizedek remains a priest continually for the duration of his appearance in the biblical narrative. In the antitype, Christ remains priest continually without qualifications (Bruce).

What makes Melchizedek’s order perpetual is that Scripture says nothing about the succession. What makes Christ’s perpetual is His own nature, the fulfillment is greater than the type.

VERSE 4

Melchizedek has no genealogy with the Jews but he, as a priest of God, receives tithes from Abraham whose descendants became the priests, and Abraham was the one who received the promise.

How great (πηλίκος) - it is important to show Abraham as great, but also show Melchizedek as greater. Melchizedek - “how distinguished.” Not how big, but how important; only here and Galatians 6:11 - “see what large letters I am writing with my own hand.”

Patriarch (πατριάρχης) - used to show the dignity of Abraham.

Spoils (ἀκροθινίων) “choicest” - better translated as “top of the heap.” Therefore he gave a tenth out of (ἐκ) the best; again this shows the nature of Melchizedek as greater.

Victorious Greeks offered spoils to their gods after a war.

Genesis Apocryphon (Qumran Cave 1) "Abraham gave him a tithe of all the goods of Elam and his companions." Josephus' *Antiquities* 1:181 has the same idea.

VERSE 5

The sons of Levi who received the priest's office had to be not only a Levites, but also in the family (linage) of Aaron.

Have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law - tithes were collected by the Levites from their own brethren; not because of great spiritual dignity, but because the law so commanded (2 Chron 31:4-5).

From their brethren - the Levites gave a tenth of this to the priests (Num 8:21, 26-29).

The Levites were superior but this is modified by the fact they were brethren. They got 10% of 10% but Melchizedek received the whole 10%.

In Nehemiah's time people brought tithes.

The Levites were the priests who administered the money (Neh 10:38-39).

VERSE 6

But he (Melchizedek) (Greek - γενεαλογούμενος - "who is not genealogically derived") *whose genealogy is not derived from them* - it is not strange that brothers support brothers because all are heirs of promise.

The contrast is that Abraham paid tithes to one who was not a part of his family nor a recipient of the promise, but was superior to the founder of the nation of Jews. As such, Abraham was not as important as Melchizedek.

Not his family.

Kept the whole tithe - not just 1%.

Was not recipient of the promise.

Therefore, his priesthood was superior to the ones who physically descended from Abraham.

“Melchizedek, who was not of the blood of Abraham or tribe of Levi, received tithes of Abraham, not because of law, like Levites, but because of his transcendent dignity” (Johnson).

Received tithes and *blessed* are both perfect tense = permanent effects of the acts establishing the superiority of Christ’s (and Melchizedek’s) priesthood.

Abraham’s action was not based on law or a blood-brother relationship but because who Melchizedek was personally - “intrinsic superiority.”

Abraham recognized Melchizedek as superior even though he (Abraham) had the promises of God given to him.

VERSE 7

The Jews clearly understood this argument.

Now beyond all contradiction (ἀντιλογίας) - “The lesser (neuter) is blessed of the better (neuter)” - “though Abraham had the promises of God, Melchizedek as the higher in spiritual dignity and nearer to God, blessed him” (Johnson).

Compare Isaac and Jacob (Gen 27:27-29); Christ and the apostles (Lk 24:50-51).

VERSE 8

Even Levi...hath paid tithes; Not a real problem; NAS has italicized - but in that case one “receives them” of whom it is witnessed - implies Melchizedek (or Christ) still receives tithes. The contrast is between dying and living receivers not between tithes.

Here (in this case) (ἰδε) - i.e., the Levitical economy.

Mortal men - men who die (emphatic).

Death of the high priests (of the Aaronic priesthood) was a prominent feature.

“But there is one in the case of Melchizedek, he who received a tithe lives right on as far as the records tell us. We behold him only as a living priest, ‘typical’ of the priest who liveth forever” (Johnson).

Of whom it is “witnessed (μαρτυρούμενος) - is the same word or IDEA used over and over in 7:3,6,8,17; 10:15f (Holy Spirit); 11:2,4,5,39.

Only in the literary record of the Bible does Melchizedek continue to “live.”

Therefore, since the record does not mention his death, his office does not pass down through genealogy to another (in the biblical account).

This is the sixth reason that 7:1-3 refers to the biblical account as being the only existent “witness” that Melchizedek “lives.”

Milligan: The author is “here contemplating Melchizedek as the type of Christ, not with a view of exalting Melchizedek through Christ, but rather with the view of exalting the priesthood of Christ through that of Melchizedek . . . what is true in the limited and literary sense of Melchizedek is true in the absolute with Christ.”

That he lives - not only is the priesthood of Christ enduring, it endures by virtue of the one priest, Christ (Moll, p. 128).

VERSES 9-10

So to speak (ὡς ἔπος εἶπε ρν) - means that this is a virtual or approximate truth, not strict accuracy.

Thus, he is giving a general idea when he says “so to speak (NAS) even Levi through Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek.”

Levi did not actually, physically pay tithes to Melchizedek - only representatively through Abraham his great-grandfather! Thus, (Abraham), and his descendants, confessed the superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek.

For he was still in the loins of his (own) father when Melchizedek met him (like Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22 “all died through Adam”; and Jacob and Esau, Num 25:23, Mal 1:2f, Rom 9:11ff).

The law authorized tithes to be paid to Levi, and Levi paid tithes to the priests (Aaron’s sons). If then Levi, through Abraham, paid tithes to someone greater, not a brother, not genealogically derived and not because of Law, then the Melchizedekian priesthood must be greater than the Aaronic priesthood. So the Levitical priesthood recognized the superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood because of the office (not because he was a brother or under the law).

B. Argument Based On The Abrogation Of The Old Priesthood.... 7:11-19

VERSE 11

This verse is the key to the rest of the book.

God is going to refute the Jewish idea of completion and perfection of all things under the Levitical system in regards to His plan for mankind. There was no power in the Levitical priesthood to obtain the end God had in view. Otherwise why would there have been the need of another priest of another order (cf. 7:18,10; 8:7)?

God promised a new priesthood through David - i.e., Psalm 110:4 (v. 11).

Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood -

Not "if there was perfection" - (2nd class conditional sentence which indicates / implies there was imperfection under Aaronic priesthood).

Levitical priesthood - this word is unique in Hebrews. It is not found anywhere in the Bible, Josephus, Plato or apostolic fathers.

Priesthood - this word is used only in this section in the New Testament found in vs. 11,12,14 and 24. Other words translated priesthood refer to service (as in v. 5) - this means the office (Westcott, 181; Vincent, 459).

Perfection (τελείωσις) - used only here and Luke 1:45 ("fulfillment"). It literally means the act or process of consummating.

The system of Mosaic Law was never designed to bring about the consummation of the proper (ultimate) relationship of man to God.

It was impossible for a law system to bring man into a proper relationship to Him.

Forgiveness was offered through the blood of animals, but only in view of the cross! They received justification, but that was not the grounds. The grounds was Christ! - Romans 3:25.

Nothing of a physical nature (such as the tabernacle, sacrifices, etc) could effect justification and satisfy man's just punishment - only the Son of God.

Thus, "the Old Testament law was not designed to give the final complete relationship between man and God. The sense to refute the Jewish idea that God had planned to fulfill all things under the Levitical system as regarding his plans for mankind. Yet, as Paul states in Gal 3:21, "if there had been a law that could make men alive, then righteousness would have been by the law of Moses." There was no power in the Levitical priesthood to obtain the end view, otherwise why would there have been the need of another priest and another order?" (Bruce, Milligan [cf. 8:7; 7:18-19 - fault, weak]).

Robertson - "The author has shown the superiority of Melchizedek over Aaron, therefore Christ over the Levitical system. But since the Aaronic priesthood came after the Melchizedekian episode with Abraham, this is the problem the author now attacks. Such a thought was based upon the assumption that the Law was God's last word to man."

This is why he begins in 1:1 with reasons Jesus is better than prophets and angels.

Reason for this section (vv. 11-19). Rabbi Ishmael (135 B.C.) said Shem (Melch) was given priesthood first and the blessing Melchizedek gave Abraham was transferring that priesthood to him and his descendants. He interprets Psalm 110:4 to refer to Abraham and therefore the Levitical priesthood.

For under it (γὰρ ἐπὶ - better "on the basis of it" [NAS]). This literally reads "for upon it the law has been laid down;" therefore upon the giving of the law came the priesthood and vice versa - the Law alone could not justify, sacrifices were required; thus, the law and the priesthood were inseparable.

If the priesthood is the basis of the Old Law and if there is a change of priesthood, there is an automatic change of law.

Another (ἕτερον - singular) - "another of a different kind"; thus, the new system would have a priest (ἱερέα - singular) different from those of the old Levitical system.

If the old system "gave all needful spiritual blessings there would be no need of another priesthood. The Aaronic priesthood would have been continued on forever. But a change of the priesthood had been predicted." (Johnson)

Mormon refutation: note "another" (ἕτερον) and (ἱερέα) are present tense and are singular. When the writer refutes the Levitical priesthood, he implies the plural (although now done away) and shows God did not intend for there to be a continuous line of priests in the new order.

VERSE 12

For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

Key of the argument: if the priesthood was changed, then the law of the old priesthood must give place to a New Law.

It would not have been necessary if the Old Law had completed God's plan to bring man into the final, intended relationship.

Each priesthood is under its own law, that is, if Christ is the priest (proven so far by everything), the Old Law is done away.

Note: The Levitical priesthood is described as “everlasting” (OLAM). (Cf. Ex 40:15; Jer 33:18.)

To show the Jehovah’s Witnesses that OLAM does not mean that the earth is “eternal,” use the priesthood as an example. The Old Testament said it was OLAM; however, this sections limits that.

The earth is spoken of as OLAM (Psa 78:69; 104:5; Eccl 1:4). Many clear passages limit the earth’s continuing forever (Isa 51:6; 2 Pet 3:7-13; Mt 24:35). Therefore their argument about the earth is invalid.

VERSE 13

For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

For He of whom these things are spoken (i.e., Christ) belongs (μετέσχηκεν - same word as in 2:14 where a choice is also indicated) - “he shared - partook.”

“It is not said simply that He was born of another tribe; He was of His own will so born” (Wescott, 182).

To another (ἐτέρας - another of a different kind) *tribe*.

From which no man has officiated (προσέσχηκεν - completely devoted to - cf. 1 Tim 3:8) *at the altar*.

David and Solomon are said to have “offered” (2 Sam 6:13,17f; 24:25; 1 Kgs 3:4; 8:62f). However, it may have been representatively through a priest. But no one was ever appointed to do so. Note the impossibility of Solomon’s offering of “thousands” personally.

Mormon note: Are Aaronic priests in the Latter Day Saints descendants of Aaron? If they are of another tribe (or not even Jews) they cannot officiate.

VERSE 14

For it is evident - no Jewish reticence in accepting Christ’s genealogy.

That our Lord arose from Judah - Christ was to be the seed of David, therefore from the tribe of Judah.

That makes the genealogies in Matthew and Luke important, not to His priesthood but to His kingship. (See Gen 49:10; Num 24:17; Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; Mt 1:3; Lk 3:33; Rom 1:3; Rev 5:5.)

Of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood - Jesus could not have been a priest under the Old Law without violating it (cf. Uzziah, entered the temple, burned incense, was given leprosy till death - 2 Chron 26:16-23).

The fact that Jesus suffered no punishment for becoming priest shows the Old Law has been canceled.

Note: The concept used here by the author is applicable to other aspects of Christianity.

See "As To Which Moses Spoke Nothing" in the Appendix.

VERSE 15

And it is far more evident (ASV - more abundantly evident) περισσότερο ἔτι κατάδηλον ἐστίν - more abundantly still quite clear is it).

If there was a change of priesthood, there had to be a change of law; thus, it is clearer still that such a change is necessary.

If - 1st class conditional sentence - "since."

Another (ἕτερος) *priest* (singular).

In the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises.

Two reasons they know a change is necessary:

1. The unsatisfactory characteristics of the Levitical priesthood (v. 11).
2. The fact that there had been one found who could fulfill Psalm 110:4.

Likeness - not a direct parallel, but that of a likeness (Vincent, p. 461).

VERSE 16

Qualifications of the Melchizedek priesthood to come. It is based on the fact that He is to live forever.

Who has come (γέγονεν - has become) [such] not according to the law of a fleshly requirement (έντολῆς σαρκίνης).

KJV and ASV - *carnal commandment*;
RSV - *bodily descent*;
NKJ - *fleshly commandment*;
NIV - *regulation of his ancestry*,

i.e., it refers to the requirement of being genealogically connected to Aaron; the Aaronic priesthood was based on physical birth in Aaron's lineage.

Also there were 142 physical blemishes which might disqualify a man. From beginning to end the Jewish priesthood was dependent on physical things (Barclay, 83).

But according to the power of an endless life ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου - NAS indestructible life; ASV endless life).

Jesus was exalted to the kingly priesthood AFTER His resurrection. Therefore death cannot change His priesthood.

VERSE 17

For He testifies [of Him], i.e., in the Bible - Psalm 110:4.

You are a priest forever - the reason why Jesus could fulfill the qualifications of the priesthood of Melchizedek was His ability to live forever. No Old Testament priest - or Mormon priest - could do that. (More about this in vv. 24 and 25.)

According to the order of Melchizedek - "Quoted here again to show this is true, proved by the testimony of God, Himself" (Barnes).

They would have recognized that this is not being "pulled out of the air", but a part of God's plan for man since it was in the Old Testament.

VERSE 18

For, on the one hand (men), *there is an annulling* (ἀθέτησις - NAS - a setting aside; ASV - disannulled).

Used only here and 9:26 - legally make void, put away. If not, Christ would have had to suffer throughout all time (cf. 9:26) (Vincent, p. 462).

The law was not annihilated, but made void - set aside as a law.

Of the former commandment - the entire Levitical priesthood.

If it's made void, and it is, then if one goes back to it for salvation, he has no hope; God no longer approves it. Galatians 5:4 is parallel.

Because of its weakness and unprofitableness - how? Galatians 3:21-24 (tutor); Romans 3:20 (know sin); 5:20 (transgression); 7:7 (know sin); 8:3 (weak through the flesh).

However, note: Romans 7:12 - *The Law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.* It is not through a mistake God made that it was weak and useless as we will later see.

VERSE 19

For the Law made nothing (neuter, not "man" but "anything") *perfect* ἐτελείωσεν from τελειόω - to complete, come to final end, to fully develop).

Since it could not make anything "perfect" it could not establish a relationship with God that the New Law established.

It identified sin and sinners, and caused those under it to look forward to what was coming (Rom 3:21; Eph 2:13-15).

Compare 11:40 - those of chapter 11 are called great only because of what was to happen through Christ.

On the other hand (δὲ) *there is the bringing in* (ἐπισημασίαν) - "something that takes the place of another," not something added on to).

Compare the Seventh Day Adventists, etc. who hold on to the Old Testament.

Of a better hope (κρείττονος - used 13 times in Hebrews).

The Old Law is not added to but completely replaced by the "better hope."

Christianity is better than Judaism because of better prophet, high priest, promises (Abraham and Psalm 110), mediator, covenant and sacrifice.

“The comparison is not between the hope conveyed by the commandment, and the better hope introduced by the gospel, but between the commandment which was characteristic of the Law (Eph 2:15) and the hope which characterized the gospel” (Rom 5:2-5; 8:24) (Vincent, p. 463). (6:11)

Through which we draw near to God - 7:25; 10:19-22 i.e., Christianity.

Christ’s priesthood is superior being promised and prophesied by God; therefore, it necessitated a change of law.

C. Argument Based On The Establishment Of The New Priesthood..... 7:20-28

VERSE 20

This is a better priesthood because it is based on God's oath.

Oath (ὀρκωμοσία) - not the usual word for “oath” (ὄρκος - Heb 6:16), but means the same with more emphasis, strength or intensity.

God used an oath to show certainty and immutability.

VERSE 21

For they have become priests without an oath, i.e., high priests - theirs by genealogy.

This oath, “You are a priest forever”, assures us that Jesus is the priest God swore would be priest forever. Theirs was merely official; Jesus’ priesthood has a greatness and a glory that are personally HIS.

VERSE 22

Surety (ἔγγυος) - Jesus has become the guarantee “pledge” of a better covenant.

God’s oath assures us it is Jesus who “guarantees” a better covenant.

(Used only here in the New Testament.)

More important than mediator in that He is answerable for fulfillment of obligation which He guarantees whether with life or property.

Three oaths noted in Hebrews:

1. Shall not enter my rest (4:3).

2. Oath to Abraham (6:17).
3. A priest forever (7:21) (5:6; 7:17).

VERSE 23

He is an unchangeable priest (vv. 23-25).

NAS - existed in greater numbers; ASV - "were many priests". Death hindered them from continuing their service.

Josephus writes that in the last 108 years to A.D. 70 there were 28 high priests! Why? The position had been degenerated to a political office! There was a total of 83 high priests from Aaron to A.D. 70. (See Fudge, p. 77.)

VERSE 24

But (δὲ) He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

The contrast is that death was the beginning of Christ's priesthood, but death renders Aaronic priest from continuing. Thus, Christ's priesthood depends upon a resurrection which means He was neither annihilated nor hindered by death.

Jesus' resurrection had to make Him "different" in that He was bodily (not just spirit) raised to immediately become King and High Priest.

Jehovah's Witnesses claim there was no real bodily resurrection. IF NOT, He is not anymore qualified to be priest than any other high priest whose spirit also lived.

Also, since He will never die again, His office can never pass on to anyone else (ἀπαράβατον - non-transferable).

See "Ἀπαράβατον" in the Appendix. It is against the Mormon Melchizedekian priesthood. "Unchangeable" - "permanently"

VERSE 25

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost (forever - εἰς τὸ παντελές).

Two inherent meanings:

1. Quantity, for how long, i.e., "forever";

2. Quality, i.e., how much or “totally.” (NAS - forever).

Lexicons say this word (παντελής) combines time and degree (Arndt and Gingrich).

Contrast the sacrifices in the Old Testament (cf. “τελ”).

Jesus saves to the uttermost all who draw nigh to God through Him. Therefore, all other religions must be totally wrong, e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism and especially Judaism (1 Jn 14:6).

Since He ever lives to make intercession for them.

If Christ were ever to die again there would be none to replace Him; as opposed to the Old Law where the death of one priest simply brought a new priest into the office. Barclay: “Jesus exists as the one who remains to be of service to mankind. That is why he is the complete savior. On earth he served men; he gave his life for them. In heaven he still exists (lives) to make intercession for them (Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24).

His priesthood combines power to save intercession (eternally) “perfect” (cf. 7:11).

VERSE 26

Christ - a sinless priest (vv. 26-28). NAS - For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest...

For us - i.e., He became for us exactly what we need: a priest without sin who is able to save us - one through whom God could bring man into the desired relationship with Himself.

Fitting (ἔπρεπεν) - suitable - same word as in 2:10.

Description of His character:

Holy (ἅγιος) (same as Titus 1:3 of elders requirements) - not “holy” as we - but one who fulfills all divine expectations in character and work.

Holy - always used with relation to God, never man-to-man relationships.

Harmless (ἄκακος), innocent (NAS); guileless, i.e., His character is free from evil motives.

Undefiled (ἀμίαντος) - compare 13:4 marriage bed; James 1:27 religion, 1 Peter 1:4 inheritance, i.e., unblemished purity.

The Old Testament high priest had to offer sacrifice for himself - compare erased "error" versus "no" error. The high priest also had to bathe before entering into the Holy Place (Lev 16:4.)

Separate from sinners - this refers to Him in two ways:

While on earth He was without sin.

In His resurrection He was totally separated from where sinners are [this one probably has the stronger meaning. Vine says that the word (separated) denotes action; thus, action is implied by His separation to another abode away from sinners].

Has become higher (exalted - NAS; become - Greek - γενόμενος *higher* - 2 Greek words) *than the heavens* (went through them - 4:14).

Understand this as an exaltation to the abode of God. (Eph 4:10, 1:20f, Heb 4:14 - supremacy over all creation.)

VERSE 27

Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

Because of Christ's qualifications in verse 26 He does not need to repeat the sacrifice.

Three major teachings of verse 27.

1. Shows the sacrifice of Christ to be a priestly act (*He offered up himself*) - John 10:17-18.

I lay down My life that I may take it again; no one takes it from Me.
John 10:17f - HE offered - His life (sacrifice) was not taken from Him.

2. Shows that Christ entered heaven on the same grounds that we do: by the shedding of His blood. He to complete God's will for salvation; we to receive forgiveness.
3. Once for all (ἐφάπαξ) - Himself - Jesus.

The problem of verse 27: the mention of daily sacrifices associated with the high priest as well as the yearly atonement duty. Explanations are given:

The daily sin offerings of the regular priest are referred to but, since the “high priests” represented the whole sacrificial system, he used that term here (Barnes). Also Sirach 45:14 says concerning Aaron, “His sacrifice shall be wholly burned for every day continually.”

Leviticus 4:3 shows the nation was defiled by the sins of the high priest; therefore, he may have offered daily sin offerings for himself so that national reproach would not come upon the people (Bruce, p. 157). Special Laws - Philo: “The high priest day by day offers prayer, sacrifice and asks for blessings...that every age and every part of the nation (as a single body) may be joined into one and same fellowship. . .”

Who had no need day by day to offer sacrifices as the high priest did year by year” (Vincent). Notice the emphasis on repetition.

According to Farrar: “The need was daily, but not necessarily the sacrificing” (cf. NASB). Who does not need daily necessity = ἀνάγκην.

VERSE 28

For the law appoints as high priests men (Ex 29:44 - appoint; Num 3:3 - anoint, not self-assumed Heb 5:4) *who have weaknesses* (sin and die).

Having infirmity (see 5:2); contrast of chapters 5 and 7.

But the word of the oath - that Christ would be a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Psa 110:4).

Which came after the law - corrects the false idea that since the Levitical priesthood came after Melchizedek it was superior (4:8).

Appoints the Son - more than man, a high priest became what he was not by force of law (not for who they were). Christ became High Priest because of His own power and person - High Priest and Son.

Who has been perfected (made perfect) - because His high priesthood was totally efficacious - this is the sense of His being perfected.

Τελειωμένον (acc. sing. masc. part. perf. passive of τελειώω - see 2:10 and 5:9, especially Lk 13:32 (reach my goal - NAS); also 7:19, 28; 9:9; 10:1,14; 11:40; 12:23.

To bring to the end (goal) proposed, i.e., to raise to the state befitting Him. Cf. Hebrews 11:40 and 12:23.

Forever - eternally suited to meet His people's needs. Here the author puts Psalm 2:7 (Son) and 110:4 (priest) together as in 5:5-6.

D. Crowning Truth8:1-5

VERSE 8:1

The "main point" - NOT A SUMMARY, but it is going to make a point now based on all he has just said.

Point: We have such a High Priest in Christ (1).

Preceding chapters have shown Jesus to be sympathizing, sinless, unchangeable, mighty to save and divine. He now emphasizes the work of our High Priest.

We have such a High Priest.

In connection with His priesthood, it has been shown that:

1. It was confirmed with oath.
2. It was founded on personal greatness, not legality or race.
3. It cannot be destroyed by death.
4. It was a once for all time sacrifice.
5. Our priest is pure, so offers no sacrifice for His own sin.

Who is seated at the right hand (ἐκάθισεν) - the verb is orist tense; thus, His action is complete and finished once for all time. Under the Law the high priest could not sit down while executing his priestly functions.

Clarke gives a contextual view of what His sitting down at the right hand of God proves (different list from that in 1:3):

1. That He is higher than all the priests who ever existed.

2. That the sacrifice which He offered for the sins of the world was sufficient and effectual and as such accepted by God because He sat down and, therefore, He is through with sacrificing.
3. That He has all power in the heavens and on the earth; is able to save and defend to the uttermost all that come to God through Him since sitting at the right hand indicates power.
4. That He did not, like the Jewish high priest, depart out of the holy of holies after having offered the atonement, but abides there a continual Priest - (the old high priest went in once a year; Jesus went in to stay for a "perpetual day of atonement").

I.e., A continual Day of Atonement.

- a. Not just representatively as in the tabernacle.
- b. Not just once a year as in the Levitical system.

Contrast 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

VERSE 2

A Minister of the sanctuary.

Minister (λειτουργός) - from which we get "liturgical" - is derived from λεῖτος (public) and ἔργον (work). Therefore it means to do a public service, to minister on behalf of the public. It is used of angels in 1:7; civil rulers in Romans 13:6; Paul's apostleship in Romans 15:16; and, in the Septuagint, in the Pentateuch of priests and Levites.

Of the sanctuary - the emphasis is between what Jesus is a minister of and what the Jewish high priest was a minister of.

The high priest under the Old Law was a minister of a tabernacle made with hands, not the true tabernacle.

Of the true tabernacle (sanctuary = heaven? - yes: see 9:8,12,24,25; 10:19; 13:11; 8:5 - heavenly).

1. "True" (ἀληθινός) can also be translated "genuine;" antithesis of what is material or transient.

2. Man needed somebody in the real tabernacle serving in his behalf; not in the tabernacle pitched by man, but the one the Lord pitched - heaven.
3. The tabernacle was a type of the church, but also the presence of God in heaven (the antitype).

Christians (even on earth) are to regard themselves as belonging to heaven (3:1; 12:22-23; Phil 3:20).

VERSE 3

Jesus made an offering for us.

For every high priest is appointed to offer - "every high priest" is present, infinitive, active (προσφέρειν). Whereas, "to offer", in relation to "this High Priest" - Jesus, is aorist (προσενέγκη).

The contrast then is that the offerings (gifts and sacrifices) of Aaronic high priests were continual, whereas, Jesus' offering of himself ("somewhat to offer") occurred only once for all (stated in 7:27 and again in 9:14) time (cf. Heb 10:12-14) (Davidson, p. 1101).

VERSE 4

Christ could not have been priest in the earthly tabernacle (the type) - (vv. 4-5).

If He were on earth - 2nd class conditional phrase meaning contrary to the chance of fulfillment.

The law required all priests to be of the tribe of Levi. Christ was not. Therefore, to have been a priest on earth, He would have had to violate God's law under which He lived.

There would be no reason for one of the Godhead to come to earth to be an earthly priest. That would be no great thing (Pink).

McClaren says, "He would not be able to do something and be in the correct position." He could offer (as did Uzziah - 2 Chron 26:16-23; 2 Kgs 15:5; or Korah - Num 16:1-35), but only in violation of the Law.

Jeroboam tried to make priests of the people - 1 Kings 13:33-34.

Not of Aaron's house - Numbers 18:1-7 (*Expositors Greek Commentary*, p. 167).

Note this syllogism:

(Syllogisms not in exact form. Reward to make correct form; not correct as is 6-'92; (close 6/96); almost 2000.)

Major Premise	God swore the Messiah would be a priest (Psa 110:4) reigning on His throne (Zech 6:12-13).
Minor Premise	The Messiah (from Judah's tribe) could not be a priest on earth (7:13,14; 8:4).
Conclusion	Therefore, the Messiah could not be a priestly king (reign) on earth.

OR

Major Premise	The Messiah from the tribe of Judah would be a priest (Psa 110:11) reigning on His throne (Zech 6:12f).
Minor Premise	No one from the tribe of Judah could be a priest and king on earth.
Conclusion	The Messiah from the tribe of Judah cannot be a priest and king on earth.

The specific implication here is that Jesus' priesthood is not in any way connected with the Old priesthood, for both cannot exist simultaneously. Therefore, if one has Christ as priest, he cannot have the Old Testament as law.

Also - a priesthood on earth would be inferior to one in heaven in the perfect sanctuary.

VERSE 5

Who serve (present tense - shows it to be before 70 A.D.) the copy and shadow.

Copy (ὑποδείγματι) - means specimen, sketch, plan, outline; the idea of putting something down on top of another and tracing (to) over it (also used in 9:23). This is from two Greek words: ὑπὸ - under and δείκνυμι - to show.

Shadow (σκιᾶ) - meaning shadow, reflection, phantom, silhouette (also in 10:1).

Thus, the earthly priesthood is unreal and cannot lead men into reality (perfection 7:11).

A shadow has no independent existence. Therefore, forgiveness took place, but only like a shadow is there because of the real object!

As Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle (Acts 7:44).

Application against the “new hermeneutic:”

1. Since the church is the antitype, the accuracy of it (like an organ used in worship, etc.) must be equally as important to God.
2. The church must exactly follow the pattern revealed by God through His word (New Testament). The tabernacle could not be modified by man’s ideas or logic; therefore, neither should the church be modified!

According to the pattern.

Pattern (τύπων) - “A pattern was shown (like a scale model? The antitype?) - Moses. All must be made after the pattern (Ex 25:40). The tabernacle made according to that plan shadowed heavenly things (reality)” (Johnson). Type = the “shadow”; antitype = the reality. See Acts 7:44 - tabernacle = type.

We have a priest who meets all the requirements of the Melchizedekian priesthood.

The point: We have a qualified and reigning High Priest at God’s throne: Christ. (Review all of Christ’s qualifications for His being High Priest.)

VII. NEW COVENANT SUPERIOR BECAUSE OF BETTER PROMISES..... 8:6-13

A. His Ministry And Covenant Are Superior..... 8:6

VERSE 6

But now He has obtained (τέτυχεν) *a more excellent ministry* - “Attained to the highest degree;” (per. act. ind. used with the genitive means to do something exactly: “to hit the mark”) (Nicoll, p. 319).

In NIV - But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, AND is founded on better promises.

But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which He is mediator is superior to the old one, AND is founded on better promises.

More excellent (διαφορωτέρας) means His work on behalf of man is more excellent than that of Aaron's priesthood. Why? He is the mediator of a better covenant. We would expect the writer to say because of a "better tabernacle" but not so. No version has it.

Ministry (λειτουργίας) - a public work.

In as much as He is also Mediator (μεσίτης) - one who goes in between (cf. 1 Tim 2:5).

Jesus serves in a better capacity than any other ever has or ever could.

Moses was also a mediator (Gal 3:19-20; Ex 20:19-21), but only in giving the Law and not in serving. A mediator must be equally related to both parties. Jesus is the one who goes in between. He is the true mediator.

The high priest served as mediator only once a year in his SPECIAL role (Lev 16:3), but Jesus serves continually in heaven and directly before God.

Compare 7:11. The basis of the Old Law was the Levitical priesthood. The basis of Jesus' covenant is better promises.

Of a better covenant - WHY?

The old covenant was based primarily on physical promises (Ex 20:9-20); the new covenant, on Christ's blood (Lk 22:20) *which was established on better promises*.

The thrust of the new covenant is primarily spiritual. It is better because it offers absolute forgiveness and is entered into one time by being *born again*, and not by a physical birth into a nation.

Contrast:

1. 7:22 - guarantee of a better covenant based on God's OATH.
2. 8:6 - mediator of a better covenant based on better promises.
3. Most in the Old Testament was physical. Most in the New Testament is spiritual.

B. God's Covenant With Israel 8:7-9

VERSE 7

For if that first covenant had been faultless.

The old covenant had a fault (v. 7).

Many scriptures show that the law could not be kept perfectly (Gal 3:11, 19-21; Acts 15:10; Rom 8:3; Acts 13:39; Gal 2:16; 3:11; Heb 7:11,19).

It was not bad however. See Romans 7:12.

The Old Law could not make men “perfect.” It was not so designed by God, and not its purpose. It was a tutor to bring man to God, to reveal the true nature of sin, and to serve a preparatory purpose. It was for growth until the “fullness of time” when Jesus would complete God’s plan of redeeming man (cf. 7:18-19).

No law makes anyone perfect, sinless or without fault. It can only identify what a violation (sin) is.

Why was a priesthood absolutely necessary in a religion based on law? – because no one could keep a law and therefore had to have a way of forgiveness.

Then no place would have been sought for a second - God would have never planned another.

VERSE 8

A new covenant promised (v. 8) Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Jeremiah so prophesied (Jer 31:34). Thus, the old covenant was shown to be deficient, but this they ignored. Note, however, that even Moses implied a new covenant (Deut 18:15-19), earlier than Jeremiah.

Because finding fault with them (the Israelites). The people broke the covenant. “House of Israel” and “house of Judah” may be a reference to the divided kingdom of Jeremiah’s day, and the enmity between them. Only the Messiah could reunite them.

Isaiah 42:6 and 19:24-25 show that the “new covenant” would include Jews and Gentiles (cf. Ezek 37:16-17).

Bruce: “In saying this, a new covenant, our author does not go beyond Jeremiah, who explicitly contrasts the new covenant of the future with a covenant made at

that time of Exodus, and implies that when it comes the new covenant will supercede the earlier one. The moral of the situation has been appreciated already by Paul who speaks of himself and his colleagues as minister of a new covenant not of the letter, but of the spirit and by contrast with this new covenant refers to that associated with Moses as the Old (2 Cor 3:6,14)” (p. 179).

New (καινήν) = same word used in verse 13; different in nature and character from the Old.

Can be translated, “For finding fault, He saith to them” (textual problem).

It is a consistent teaching, then, that Christianity is the new covenant and the Law of Moses is the old covenant and this teaching started back in Jeremiah’s time. Compare 7:11 - they may have had the idea that since the LAW came *after* the Melchizedek incident it was, therefore, final. This argues that this is not so.

Vine: “...Moreover the ensuing passage from Jeremiah 31 is characterized by promise and consolation and not by finding fault and it shows that the former covenant was defective in not accomplishing the fullness of the Divine design” (p. 8).

VERSE 9

It is not going to be Moses' law, and is not basically a physical law. In the Old Testament the blessings received were dependent on obedience but, even if the people had been able to keep the law perfectly, the new would have come.

Not according to the covenant that I made with (lit. “for”) their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt (i.e., redeemed them).

The New would not include, or be the same as the Old:

It was not going to be Moses' Law.

It was not going to be basically physical in nature but spiritual.

When I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt - God showed His willingness to keep the covenant by first delivering them out of Egypt.

They did not continue in My covenant.

This fact may be the reason that at Jeremiah’s time the law was changed; - i.e., now both areas of Israel (Israel and Judah) had gone into idolatry.

Their disobedience was cause for nullifying the covenant (Jud 2:20-21; 2 Kgs 17:15-18).

“Fullness of time:” Daniel (9:25-27) prophesied that the time from the order to rebuild Jerusalem to the time of the cutting-off of the Messiah (his death) would be seven times seventy weeks. Josephus, Tacitus (Roman historian, 55-119 A.D.) and Suetonius (?) said that the Jews of the first century interpreted this as 490 years. If the decree was given in 457 B.C., and 33 years (life of Christ) are added to 457 the result is 490 years! In the first century, there were people really anticipating the coming of the Messiah (cf. Lk 2:24-25 - Simeon). Thus, some did understand the prophecy of Daniel.

Covenant agreement between two parties - on God’s part He will give salvation to the sinner who is willing to receive on His terms.

I disregarded (ἤμέλησα - same word used in 2:3 - neglect) *them*. (NIV - “I turned away from them”). God was not obligated to keep His covenant since the Jews did not keep their part. Compare Hosea 1:9: “Call his name Loami for you are not my people, and I will not be your God.”

Both parties abandoned the covenant so it became null and void (Nicoll, p. 324).

The Israelites broke the covenant. Then God annulled it (Robertson, p. 392).

C. Greater Benefits Enjoyed Under The New Covenant..... 8:10-13

VERSE 10

After those days . . . i.e., days of becoming unfaithful.

Certain aspects of law in the new covenant (*The Pulpit Commentary*, p. 220):

1. Law present in the mind.
2. Law treasured in the heart.
3. Law embodied in the life.

Write them on their hearts.

This does not imply universal inspiration. Rather, a contrast with 2 Corinthians 3:1,3,6,7,8,14 (cf. Ex 24:12 (“stone”); Deut 4:1-5) i.e., STONE (temporary) versus HEART (lives forever).

When one says they “are not keeping the letter of the law but the spirit of the law” they are wrong!

Letter = the Old Testament (all of it).

Spirit = the New Testament (all of it).

Also a connection in that you have to be taught, and must accept Christ from the heart, in order to enter the new covenant as opposed to being physically (versus mind and heart - Rom 2:29) born to the old without choice.

There is no implication here that the old covenant did not have to be kept from the heart. (See Isa 6:9-10; 29:13; Mal 1:10; 2:2; Mic 6:8; Amos 6:1-6; Psa 51:16-17.)

A closer relationship to God.

They shall be My people - this was said to those under the old covenant also (Ex 6:7; Lev 26:12). But, here it means that God is going to make a new covenant, and those under it will also be His people; i.e., ownership, privilege. Compare 1 Peter 2:9 - one would lose nothing by staying in Christianity.

VERSE 11

Old-involuntary: New-voluntary.

None of them shall teach - emphatic in the Greek text (Wuest, p. 148).

Know the Lord (γνTMθι) - contrast this with *all shall know* (εἰδήσουσίν) *Me*.

This is probably the strongest verse refuting infant baptism - *all shall know Me* - how can an infant know Him?

Under the old covenant children were born into a covenant relationship. As they grew up they had to be taught of the Lord, or they would never know Him. As a matter of fact many did not learn of Him. But (shows who can and cannot be a part), under the new covenant all must learn (Mt 28:19-20) to know God and the Son whom He hath sent before they can enter the covenant. Everyone must enter by faith in Christ, repentance of sin, and surrender to the will of God (born again). Hence all members of the new covenant “know” of God, “from the least (new convert) unto the greatest” (most mature).

This implies sacrifices, per se, were not adequate. (Cf. Psa 40:6; 50:8-10; 51:16; Mic 6:6-7; Isa 1:11; 15:22; Hos 6:6).

VERSE 12

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

“The word ‘for’ is hoti in the Greek text. Introducing the statement in this verse and connecting that statement with the contents of the preceding verse, it speaks of the fact that the forgiveness of sins or the manifestation of God’s grace are prerequisite and fundamental to the person’s participation in the blessings of the New Testament and a personal acquaintance with God. The words ‘and their iniquities’ are not found in the best manuscripts. The expression ‘will I remember no more’ is emphatic in the Greek text, two negative participles occurring before the word ‘remember.’ Under the First Testament, sins were brought to mind every year by reason of the constant repetition of the sacrifices. Under the New Testament sins are forgotten, and for the reason that they have been paid for. God remembers them no more” (Wuest, pp. 148-9).

Only the new covenant offers the grounds for forgiveness

Merciful to their unrighteousness under the Old Covenant, they felt sacrifices, per se, were not adequate; cf. 10:17-18.

The old covenant was not designed to bring man into the relationship with God as He intended.

ΜνησθTM - i.e., “recall”, *no more*. God, being omniscient, cannot forget; but, will not remember sins against you. Compare Ezekiel 18:22-24.

God will treat you as forgiven, and not hold your sins against you in judgment, because of the blood of Christ (1 Jn 1:7).

God earlier took them upon Himself - Romans 3:25-26.

Romans 8:33 - who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?

Psalm 103:12 - sins are hidden from God as far as the east is from the west.

VERSE 13

The old covenant was soon to pass away - *In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete.*

Difficulty - Is the Hebrew writer, in about 63-65 A.D., saying that the covenant is waning old and “nigh unto vanishing away”? Some say yes, that the reference is to the nation’s keeping the law - i.e., prophesying of the destruction of Jerusalem. However, the fact that he goes back to refer to Jeremiah’s time, “in that he saith, he hath made old” would refer to Jeremiah’s time (600 B.C.) i.e., as soon as Jeremiah said “new”, that automatically made the first one old and that it from then on approached being done away. Thus, God through Jeremiah is saying that the time has come for the Old Law to be done away according to His eternal plan.

Obsolete - perfect indicative active 3rd person singular παλαιούμενον - in the indicative the perfect signifies action as complete from the point of view of present time (Dana and Mantey, p. 200).

Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Παλαιούμενον - worn out, out moded - NOT old in time (ἀρχαῖος).

In other words, it is a situation that is nigh, near, at hand. The word ἐγγύς is used in Ephesians 2:13 (see Eph 2:14-15) for the Old Testament being done away.

Bruce: “The very promise of a new covenant means that since the days of Jeremiah, the first covenant was recognized as already made old. And this description of anything as getting ancient, becoming aged means that it may be expected to soon pass away from the time it was said (Jeremiah’s time). Therefore, from their own Jewish Old Testament scriptures the writer provides his readers with a further decisive indication that the old covenant was only temporary and that it was the divine intention that it should be superceded by the New.”

Καινήν - different in nature and character from the old.

Compare Galatians4:4-5.

Conclusion: “And if the covenant of Moses is antiquated as the writer to the Hebrews necessarily implies, so must be the Aaronic priesthood, the earthly sanctuary, the Levitical sacrifices, which were all established under the covenant. The age of the Law and Prophets is passed, the age of the Son is here and here to stay” (Bruce, p. 179).

The old covenant actually ended with Christ’s death (Eph 21:4f; 2 Cor 3:14).

“Ended in practice 70 (and 135) in destruction of Jerusalem and scattering Jews. Therefore this is likely a prophetic statement” (Boatman. [Caution: he is liberal]).

VIII. SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST’S PRIESTHOOD BECAUSE OF HIS

SERVICE IN A BETTER TABERNACLE.....9:1-14

Chapter 9 will again repeat the subjects of chapter 8. I.e.,: 1) Heavenly sanctuary; 2) Better covenant, but more fully regarding the peculiar value of His sacrifice (Vine, p. 87).

A. Mosaic Tabernacle, And Especially Only A Figure, Therefore Imperfect.....9:1-10

No Jew would learn anything new in verses 1-7.

VERSE 9:1

Then indeed, even the first covenant (the word “covenant” is not in the Greek, but fits the context better than “tabernacle”; therefore, all translations have “covenant”) *had ordinances* (regulations - NAS) *of divine service* (worship - NAS).

The tabernacle furnishings.

The writer reminds them here of their own historical knowledge. They should not have learned anything new from the first part of chapter nine.

And the earthly (worldly) sanctuary.

Divine - the word “divine” is not in the Greek. The word is λατρείας and is always used in the New Testament to mean divine service or worship to God; something done *for* God. The Jewish Christians were already extremely familiar with the earthly tabernacle and its regulations (Ex 25 ff).

(The contrast here is between earthly sacrifice and the heavenly holy of holies.)

VERSE 2

Tabernacle - information was given at Sinai (Ex 26).

The first part (outside - NAS) - the first room called the Holy Place.

Lampstand (candlestick - KJV and ASV) - made of gold and had seven lamps for burning oil (Ex 25:31-40). The Rabbis said it was four cubits high.

The table, and the showbread - the table in the Holy Place was overlaid with gold, on which the twelve loaves of bread were placed (Lev 24:5-9).

VERSE 3

And behind the second veil (Hebrew, parokheth) - the first veil was over the door into the Holy Place and the second separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place - the innermost recess and holiest place in Israel's worship. The Rabbis said it was renewed every year after the temple was erected (Milligan, p. 245).

How thick was the veil? Two sets of linen draped over framework and one embroidered line suspended between them by clasps (Ex 26:31ff; 36:35ff).

1 cubit - 18" to 24" - Yoma 5:1, *Mishna*.

VERSE 4

Which had the golden altar of incense.

Critics are divided whether the word "altar" (θυμιατήριον derives its significance from the act of burning) refers to the golden censer or to the altar of incense.

The altar of incense is directly associated with the veil and Holy of Holies (Ex 40:5; 30:6; 1 Kgs 6:22).

Incense was burned in the golden censer in the Most Holy Place when the high priest entered once a year (Lev 16:12).

Note the use of "which had" (ἔχουσα and not ἐν ᾗ - "in which"), thus referring to "belonging to" or "connected with" the Most Holy Place; (or its symbolism).

Delitzsch - as the sign board of a shop belongs to the shop and not the street.

This same concept is noted in reference to the altar associated with God's throne which was represented by the ark of the covenant: Revelation 8:3; Leviticus 16:18-19 (horns of incense = altar). (*The Pulpit Commentary*, p. 227.)

The Hebrew Mishna states that the censer was taken into the Most Holy Place, and incense burned in it (Milligan, p. 245f - Yoma 5:3).

"He came out and put it (the censer) on the golden stand in the sanctuary" (Yoma 5:3).

Summary: Therefore, according to Jewish tradition and the teaching of the scripture as to how they connected the idea, we have a proof of inspiration here.

Ark of the covenant - a chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold; the most sacred thing in the tabernacle (Ex 25:10-16).

Golden pot that had the manna (Ex 16:32-34).

Aaron's rod that budded (Num 17:1-11).

Tablets of the covenant - two stone tablets of law (Deut 9:9-15; 10:1-5).

All but the tablets of law had been removed before the temple was built (1 Kgs 8:9).

The ark itself disappeared when the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (587 B.C.).

Writers by the first century all write that the Most Holy Place was empty at that time (2 Macc 2:1-8; Josephus; Bell - Latin for wars; Jud. - Latin for Jewish, v, 5, 5 or 1. 152f; Tacitus' "Histories" v, 9.).

Pompey found the Holy of Holies empty in 63 B.C.

It was never restored after the Babylonian Captivity but instead there was a stone slab three fingers in thickness called by the Rabbis Eben Sh'theyhan' which means "stone of drinking" or "foundation" (Milligan, p. 247; Bruce, p. 188).

VERSE 5

And above it - i.e., above the ark of the covenant.

Cherubim - "keeper" or "guardian" with wings; symbolic figures (cf. Ezek 10:5; 1:5-11,13,14,24). In Revelation 4:6-8 they are connected with God's throne.

Which marked the place where the ark would have been.

Mercy seat (ἱλαστήριον) - the same word used in the Septuagint and Hebrews 2:17 for "propitiation". The high priest sprinkled blood on the mercy seat for the atonement of the people's sins.

In Luke 18:13 this same word is translated "be merciful".

Jesus is our "mercy seat" and it was He who provided the blood for our propitiation.

Barnes: "Here God was supposed to be seated; and from this place he was supposed to dispense mercy to man when the blood of the atonement was sprinkled there.

This was undoubtedly designed to be a symbol of his dispensing mercy to men, in virtue of the blood which the Savior shed as the great sacrifice for guilt” (p. 1290).

We cannot now speak - “our real purpose is not to talk of the old way (cf. 6:1-2) but rather the new.” A fuller explanation was not required.

Everything was physical (i.e., made by man).

VERSE 6

The nature of their worship showed its defectiveness (vv. 6-10).

The priests always went - “go” (εἰσίσσιν - present tense). They went into the Holy Place for daily services; “dressing the lamps and offering incense every morning and evening; and of the change of the presence-bread on every Sabbath” (Milligan, p. 316). (See Ex 30:7,8; Lev 24:8,9. Cf. Lk 1:8-10.) Notice in Acts 6:7, “... and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.” “THEY WENT IN AT 9 am and 3 pm.” Also see Acts 6:7.

VERSE 7

Alone (μόνος) - only the high priest entered the Most Holy Place; he went in alone.

Also, no one could be in the tabernacle while he did these things (Lev 16:17).

He actually entered four times during the feast of atonement (cf. Lev 16:11-15; Ex 30:10-25, general reference).

The Mishna so states (Yoma 5:1; 8:4).

1. To burn incense (Lev 16:12),
2. To sprinkle the blood of the bullock on the mercy seat (Lev 16:14),
3. To bring goat’s blood in (16:15), and
4. To get the censer (tradition).
5. *NOT WITHOUT BLOOD* (Lev 16:14).

Notice the writer says *the high priest went alone*.

In Leviticus 6 Aaron is told to do this act. Therefore, he had to be high priest.

In Leviticus 6:32,34,19-23 the high priest must always be a son of Aaron (Ex 28:1,43; 29:9; Num 18:1-7; 25:10-13; Neh 7:61-65).

In Exodus 29:27-30 and Leviticus 21:10; 8:12, the high priest was the one on whose head oil had been poured (anointed) and there (8:12) Moses does so to Aaron.

He offered for himself, and for the people - for sins of ignorance and mistakes. Numbers 15:28-31 explains those for which sacrifices could or could not be offered. High-minded, open defiance of God's law was not atoned for (Num 15:30-31; cf. 1 Jn 5:16f; Heb 10:26).

VERSE 8

The symbolic purpose of the old system (vv. 8-10).

The Holy Spirit indicating this.

In the record of the tabernacle arrangement and the Levitical offerings, the Holy Spirit had a lesson to teach (Vine). That is why Moses was warned to specifically make the tabernacle like the tabernacle that was shown to him on the mount. This was an absolute requirement in order that it be an accurate, divinely appointed "type." Compare Hebrews 10:19-20 - we now have a priest.

That the way into the Holiest of All - the Holy Place instead of the Most Holy because the veil had been rent in two and now there is access for all to the throne (veil - Mt 27:51). Compare Hebrews 10:19-22; 9:24.

Compare Leviticus 16:3,16,17,20,23,27 - these show the Holy of Holies is called the Holy Place in the Old Testament.

"The Heavenly sanctuary is not spoken of as Holy Place and Holy of Holies as if suggesting an inner shrine in the contrast with an outer" (Vine). Some verses have just "holiest."

Was not yet made manifest - (disclosed, NAS).

The old way did not really show how God really planned for man to properly approach Him - only the shadow was revealed (Jn 14:6).

While the first tabernacle was still standing.

So long as the first tabernacle or temple worship stood as divine service (i.e., while the old covenant was still in force) the true and living way opened up through Christ was not yet revealed. Also “first” tabernacle could mean the first covenant or whole Jewish system.

Vincent: “The point is that the division of the tabernacle showed the limitations of the Levitical system and kept the people from coming directly to God. Of this limitation the Holy Place, just outside the second veil, was specially significant; for the Holy Place barred priest and people alike from the holy of holies. The priests could not pass out of it into the holy of holies and the people could not pass through it to the sanctuary, since they were not allowed in the Holy Place. The priests in the Holy Place stood between the people and God as revealed in the shrine.”

Priests could not be in the Holy Place when the high priest went into Holy of Holies (Lev 16:17).

Note Vine: “This makes clear that the Pentateuch narrative is not merely a historical record, but the history carried with it spiritual teaching, which the Holy Spirit unfolds in the New Testament.”

VERSE 9

It was symbolic (παραβολή - figure, ASV) *for* (εἰς) *the present time* (time of reformation) - means time then present.

The presence of the veil was a visible sign that the way to God was not open because Jewish rites were not the complete divine service that God revealed in Christianity.

Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are (present participle) offered.

Note: The author pictures the worship as in the original tabernacle (cf. 9:4 where Aaron’s rod, etc. were once kept).

He emphasizes the “continualness” of sacrificing.

The words *gifts* (δῶμα) and *sacrifices* (θυσίαι) were symbols and, being imperfect, they pointed to the perfect sacrifice in Christ.

Gifts were not given necessarily for sin.

Sacrifices were normally for sins.

Which cannot make him who performed the service perfect - not that they could not receive forgiveness, but they were not themselves efficacious (Hos 6:6; Isa 1:10-17).

In regard to the conscience - (this condition modifies the forgiveness). With so many, many sacrifices offered, the Jews must have realized that something was not quite right and that there was a deficiency in that system.

The purpose of law was to point out sin and make people more conscious of it - Romans 7:7,13.

The real barrier to man's access to God is an inward not a material one. It is in his conscience (Bruce).

Two barriers:

Tabernacle (external) and

Conscience (internal).

We have a cleansed conscience ...

Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; 1 Timothy 3:9; 1 Peter 3:21 ...

which is symbolic for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices were offered which could not make the worshiper perfect in conscience.

Summary of verse 9: The Old Law was characterized by continual sacrifices, but the new by forgiveness - "remember no more." In 1 John 1:7 John tells that the Christian needs to walk in the light but, under the Old Law, one needed not only to walk in the light but had to still offer sacrifices. The high priest still had to offer a yearly offering for atonement, even though walking in the light, and a man after God's own heart.

VERSE 10

Concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

Only (μόνον) is emphatic.

The nature of the worship shows its defectiveness in making the conscience clean.

Meats (food), drink, various washings (Eph 4:5), and carnal ordinances (regulations for the body) were externals. They were commanded, however, (Lev 16:4,

24; 22:6; Num 19:7, 8; 31:21-23) but were only carnal (for the body - σαρκὸς) ordinances (cf. Col 2:16-17).

They were outward and did not renew the spirit, and were temporal, *imposed until the time of "reformation"* (this limitation modifies verse 9).

Until the time (καιροῖ) of reformation (διορθώσεως). It is that of which Jeremiah spoke in Hebrews 8:7-12: literally "a time of making straight." That is, until the old covenant passed away and the new was ushered in (the first century). "Reshaping of Israel's religion" (Heb 7:13 - the New Law).

Present time. Contrast the καιρὸν of verse 9 with καιροῖ of verse 10.

The time of reformation would be brought in on the grounds of Christ's sacrifice and under His high priestly ministry of the Sanctuary (Vincent, p. 90f). This happened in the first century but . . . Mormons say they are this covenant come back into effect,, the result of the time of "reformation." This they base on Acts 3:21-24 ("restoration of all things;" shows restoration of all things equals "these days" = Christianity) and thus justify a present day Melchizedekian priesthood. It can be seen here that the time of reformation, or the "restoration of all things" is not when the Mormons started in May 15, 1829, but back in the first century when the old covenant was done away and the new came into effect (ie. the Christian age). Therefore, Mormons are another gospel (Gal 1:8-9) and, therefore, condemned.

In the original *Doctrine and Covenants* in 1833 this section is not included, but it was in 1876.

Mormon: "Saints believe when Peter referenced the anointed prophets in Acts 3:19-24 he was speaking about the restoration of all things encompassing church government and including of course the return of the Aaronic priesthood." (*A Marvelous Work And A Wonder*, Le Grand Richards, p. 185.)

In June 1829 Peter, James, and John conferred the Melchizedekian priesthood on Smith and Coudrey.

The Hebrews had reality and wanted to go back to the shadow!

See "Symbolic Comparisons Between The Tabernacle And Its Furnishings With New Testament Concepts" in the Appendix.

B. Perfect Communion Through A Perfect Mediator.....9:11-14

Note: Transition - The first ten verses show the inadequacies of tabernacle worship; now we will see the perfections in worship brought by Christ (vv. 11-14).

VERSE 11

But Christ came (παραγνόμενος) - to arrive on the scene (like John the Baptist - Mt 3:1). "But when Christ appeared" (NAS).

As High Priest of the good things to come (RSV - "that have come" ["having come about"] - Greek). Good things which the Jews had looked forward to are NOW HERE; heavenly blessings secured in the church of Christ (grace, mercy, pardon, drawing near, etc.) as opposed to the old tabernacle worship and services.

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come = Christianity.

With the greater and more perfect tabernacle.

Vincent: "(διὰ) - The preposition is a special use of the instrumental. ...As the Levitical priests were attached to (were priests with - see 7:11) an inferior tabernacle, so Christ appears with a greater and more perfect tabernacle" (p. 481).

And that tabernacle is the throne of God.

Vine: "The word 'through' (though having - NAS) (for this use of διὰ see Rm 2:27; 14:20 [and give - NAS]; 2 C 2:4 - with; 3:11 - with) does not have a local significance but instrumental significance, as the context shows, the meaning being 'by means of.' (A greater and more perfect tabernacle in heaven.) It is because he ministers to us and ever will provide these infinite blessings as our great High Priest. This heavenly tabernacle is instrumental in His ministry."

Not made with hands, that is, not of this creation - i.e., His tabernacle is HEAVEN.

VERSE 12

Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood. He offered His own blood (cf. 1 Pet 1:19).

NAS - and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood He entered the Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

The application of the blood of Christ shows the superiority of His sacrifice – the only man to live perfectly righteously offered His blood for the propitiation of all. In the Old Testament sacrifices were always offered outside the tabernacle and

then the blood was taken inside. Therefore, Christ offered His sacrifice outside the tabernacle (heaven), and then entered in *through* His blood.

RSV - reads "taking" which is not correct. "Taking" is not in the Greek at all.

He entered the Most Holy Place once (ἐφάπαξ). This literally means "once for all," as opposed to the old high priests' yearly offerings.

The Most Holy Place (ἅγια - "holies" in Greek) - i.e., the actual presence of God.

Having obtained (εὐράμενος) - literally "having found."

Eternal redemption - this sacrifice never has to be repeated.

Λύτρωσιν - redemption, used only here, and in Luke 1:68 and 2:38.

Note these five contrasts, either implied or derived from verses 11-12 (Vine):

1. "Good things to come versus the merely figurative arrangements of the old.
2. The heavenly tabernacle versus the earthly, material tabernacle.
3. Blood of Christ versus animal blood.
4. The once-for-all entrance into the real presence of God versus the once-a-year entrance into the representative presence of God.
5. Eternal redemption versus an unsatisfied conscience.
 - a. Eternal covenant - 13:20.
 - b. Eternal redemption - 9:12.
 - c. Eternal inheritance - 9:15.
 - d. Eternal salvation - 5:9.

Because it rests on the offering of Christ by His Eternal Spirit.

See "A Contrast Of The Two Covenants" in the Appendix.

Christ's blood cleanses man inwardly (vv. 13-14).

VERSE 13

For if (1st class, i.e., “since”) the blood of bulls and goats - shed for purification of the people on the day of atonement;

And the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purification of the flesh.

There was, under the Old Law, a defilement that could be taken care of by the ashes of a heifer, (etc). Bruce, page 203 has good Jewish history of heifer ashes.

There was value.

The red heifer was burned, the ashes put in water, and that water sprinkled on the people for their ceremonial purification [cf. Num 19:1-13 (sin - 9), 17-19 (touched dead body), 21; 31:21-24 (vessels captured in war)].

Application: Note that in verses 13 and 14, the agent had to be applied to the people to be effective: (“sprinkling them”) this illustrates a point about the blood of Christ - His blood was shed, but without contact with it, it is of no value.

Vincent: “The Levitical law required two remedies: the Christian economy furnishes one for all phases of defilement” (p. 483).

The contrast will be in verse 14: cleanse the conscience versus the flesh (v. 13b). This is what was lacking in 9:9f - so, he is saying that if the blood of bulls and goats was effective for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more would the blood of Christ be effective in cleansing the conscience. How much animal blood would it take to atone for one’s sins? No amount could. Likewise, how much water does it take to wash away sins? No amount could. The only reason either was effective is because God so spoke.

Sanctifies for the purifying (cleansing) of the flesh (carnal).

“Flesh” in Hebrew = physical part of man - see 7:16; 9:10; 12:9.

“Conscience” in Hebrew = inner being 9:9,14 (cf. 1 Pet 3:21) (Bruce).

VERSE 14

*How much more shall the blood of Christ (the key to forgiveness [cf. 1 Pet 1:19]; precious - intrinsic worth) *who through the eternal Spirit.**

Two views:

This refers to the Holy Spirit, or

It refers to Christ's human spirit.

Notice that there is no article "the" before "Spirit" in the Greek text. Some argue that this is a reference to the Holy Spirit; He is the One who worked with Christ and His works (Lk 1:35; 3:22; 4:1,18; Mt 1:18-20; 12:28; Acts 10:38). See Isaiah 42:1. (See Boatman, *The Pulpit Commentary*, Bruce and Lanier.)

Vincent: "This is not an impossible meaning but the absence of the article in itself is not enough to endorse this view. The omission simply serves to emphasize the word 'eternal'." (Boatman adds, "... and means endless life.") "Not the Holy Spirit, who is never so designated, but Christ's own human spirit; the higher element of Christ's being in his human life, which was charged with the eternal principle of the divine life. Compare Rom 1:4; 1 Cor 15:45; 1 Pet 3:18; Heb 7:16. This is the key to the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice. The significance and value of his atonement lie in the personal quality and motive of Christ himself which are back of the sacrificial act."

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: "refers to consent of His own will in offering of himself."

Conclusion for the "two views":

What real difference in interpretation does it make depending on which view is taken?

Obvious points regardless of the interpretation of "Spirit":

1. As to the past, the sacrifice of Christ was the fulfillment of the eternal purpose and counsel of God.
2. As to the life and death of Christ, there was an unbroken obedience and steadfastness of purpose until His sacrifice was accomplished.
3. As to the future, the value of the offering would never pass away.

Point in context - "Whatever took place in connection with the offerings under the old covenant was necessarily temporary, but the sacrifice of Christ, offered through the eternal spirit, is of permanent validity" (Vine).

Offered Himself (Jn 10:17-18) *without spot to God* - the perfect sacrifice in God's eyes (and plan).

Purge your conscience from dead works - cf. 6:1.

Here the contrast is between vv. 9 and 14. Dead works = those things that were under the Old Law (v. 10: carnal regulations) a figure for the time present according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshiper perfect. Here, the whole idea is that the blood of Christ, through the eternal spirit, can cleanse the conscience.

Any sacrifice offered legalistically will not cleanse the conscience; just like a Christian today does not have a clean conscience if he believes he has not said enough prayers, done enough works, etc.

"Dead works" are anything not resulting in effectiveness for salvation.

To serve the living God - Ephesians 2:10!

Four contrasts:

1.	Blood of Christ	NOT	Beasts
2.	Offered Himself	NOT	Blood of passive victims
3.	Without blemish (i.e., sinless)	NOT	External purity of animals
4.	Eternal Spirit	NOT	Common, repeated sacrifices

Note: The Trinity (Godhead) is suggested in verse 14 – Christ - Spirit - God.

Summary of VIII:

Superiority of Christ's priesthood because of His service in a better tabernacle.

The Old Testament tabernacle and all in the old covenant was a lesson for us today taught by the Holy Spirit. As long as the worship in the tabernacle was in effect, God had not revealed the new way (10:20 - new and living) He had promised in Jeremiah (Heb 8:8-12).

The new way was introduced by Christ who, as High Priest, is our priest because of the fact He is in a better tabernacle, and went into it with a better sacrifice.

IX. SUPERIORITY OF NEW COVENANT BASED ON DEATH OF CHRIST 9:15-28

A. Christ As Mediator, Made Effective Through His Death 9:15

VERSE 15

And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant.

For this reason - because of the blood of Christ and His sacrifice.

He is the mediator - Compare 8:6 - serves as priest between God and man (5:1).

Of the new (καινῆς) *covenant* (διαθήκης) (Hebrew, berith); from διά (two) and τίθημι (to place). Therefore, “to place between two.”

The word διαθήκης can mean both “covenant” and “testament,” but here “mediator” shows that “covenant” is referred to.

Notice that “mediator” and “covenant” are almost synonyms.

By definition “covenant” is an agreement between two parties but, the difference in English between “covenant” and “testament” should be noted.

1. Covenant - two people agree on something.
2. Testament (will) - some one has set up the rules and it is not necessary that the parties must agree before it is made. Therefore, a testament involves a decision as to whether or not the rules will be kept in order to receive the benefits.

That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant.

This is parenthetical to the main point of the verse.

Zechariah 13:1 is a prophecy concerning the parenthetical part of verse 15. In Zechariah 14:8-9 east is ahead and west is behind - not on left and right as we think today. (Think Jewish!)

He says it this way and shows through Hebrew Christians that the people of the Old Covenant would NOT have had forgiveness of sins if Christ had not come, and we would not have the fulfillment of the “promise” made to Abraham (Heb 6) either and “REST” (eternal inheritance) (Vine).

Those under the old covenant received forgiveness based upon the fore-knowledge of God that Christ would be offered.

Those are called may receive the promise of (contrast 11:13) eternal inheritance (cf. 1 Pet 1:4).

B. Death Is Essential To Make A Covenant Sealed9:16-22

VERSES 16-17

For where there is a testament, there of also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

A testament has no force until the testator is dead. Either way, Christ’s testament, the new covenant, came into force when He died. But in Greek, this can mean a covenant is not in effect till the one making it BRINGS (φέρεσθαι) a death.

“He who made a covenant did so at the cost of a life. While the terminology in Hebrews 9:16-17 has the appearance of being appropriate to the circumstances of making a will, there is excellent reason for adhering to the meaning ‘covenant making.’ The rendering of ‘the death of the testator’ would make Christ a Testator, which He was not. He did not die simply that the terms of a testamentary disposition might be fulfilled for the heirs. Here He who is ‘the Mediator of a new covenant’ (ver. 15) is Himself the Victim whose death was necessary. The idea of making a will destroys the argument of ver. 18. In spite of various advocacies of the idea of a will, the weight of evidence is confirmatory of what Hatch, in *Essays in Biblical Greek*, p. 48, says: ‘There can be little doubt that the word (diathētē) must be invariably taken in the sense of ‘covenant’ in the N.T., and especially in a book . . . so impregnated with the language of the Sept. as the Epistle to the Hebrews’ (see also Westcott, and W. F. Moulton). We may render somewhat literally thus: ‘For where a covenant (is), a death (is) necessary to be brought in of the one covenanting; for a covenant over dead ones (victims) is sure, since never has it force when the covenanting one lives’ [Christ being especially in view]. The writer is speaking from a Jewish point of view, not from that of the Greeks. ‘To adduce the fact that in the case of wills the death of the testator is the condition of the validity, is, of course, no proof at all that a death is necessary to make a covenant valid. . . . To support his argument, proving the necessity of Christ’s death, the writer adduces the general law that he who makes a covenant does so at the expense of life.’ (Marcus Dods as quoted by Vine.)

See "Testator" in the Appendix.

In the Hebrew mind death meant blood.

Verse 18 - Summary: God made the old covenant but could not ratify it with blood, so used animal blood. God made the new covenant (Jer 31:31-33), but used His Son's blood (Acts 20:28). Therefore, the new covenant is superior to the old covenant.

Point: God would bestow His blessings on those who have transgressed the divine law only in a manner which is consistent with His holiness and justice (death of Christ) (Vine, p. 99).

VERSES 18-21

The old covenant was sealed by blood (18-21) as a type.

Therefore, even the first covenant has not been dedicated without blood.

Water - Leviticus 14:4-7 and Numbers 19:18 are symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit cleansing.

Scarlet wool - dignity and glory of Christ's humanity in connection with His sacrifice.

Hyssop - lowest of vegetation = humility (Vine, p. 99).

VERSE 19

Here we see the reference to the "book" - not spoken of in the Old Testament, only here.

Johnson explains: "For the events alluded to see Ex 24:4-8. All that God had proclaimed in the ten commandments and the accompanying precepts was written in the book of the covenant. This was read to the people, and they promised obedience. Then the book - ("sprinkled blood on book" is not in the Old Testament) - and all the people were sprinkled with blood and Moses said (vs. 20), 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.'"

Two lessons are set forth in verses 19 and 20:

1. They set forth the principle of expiation by blood in connection with the first covenant.

2. They illustrate the absolute necessity of the sacrificial death of Christ in order to establish the new covenant.

VERSE 20

The covenant had been dedicated by blood. This covenant embraced the Decalogue, yet it was the covenant done away to make room for the covenant of Christ.

Compare Exodus 40:9-11.

VERSE 21

Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. This would have been about a year later, when the tabernacle was completed. Both the tabernacle and its furnishings were sprinkled, and the priests anointed (Ex 40:9-15; Lev 8:15-24). "Moses consecrated for God's service, the tabernacle and all the vessels of it, anointing them with oil, and the *blood* of bulls and rams" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, iii. 8. 6).

And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with blood.

The contrast:

1. Blood of bulls and goats..... Old covenant ratified
2. Blood of Christ..... New covenant ratified

Erdman says, "The purpose of all this is:

1. To set forth the principle of expiation by the shedding of blood with the first covenant (Vine also, p. 99).
2. To show the absolute necessity of the sacrificial death of Christ in order to establish the new covenant" (p. 90).

VERSE 22

God's law: no bloodshed = no remission.

Almost all things - there were some exceptions; those things purified with water, fire, gold, and incense. Leviticus 16:26-28 (water); Numbers 31:21-24 (fire and water); Numbers 31:50 (gold); also Numbers 16:46-48 - after Korah's rebellion, incense on Aaron's censer made atonement.

And without shedding of blood there is no remission.

1. Every sin under the law required atonement, and no atonement could be made without blood. Thus, they must have understood there was remission of sins or this statement would be meaningless to them! (Cf. 9:9 - "as touching the conscience" some misinterpret to mean "no remission.")
2. Also note that even the sacrifice of the poor (flour - without oil) was mixed with the blood offerings (Lev 5:11-13). Therefore, all under the old covenant offered blood-offerings.
3. Clarke: "Every sinner has forfeited his life by his transgressions, and the law of God requires his death; the blood of the victim, which is its life (Lev 17:11), is shed as a substitute for the life of the sinner. By these victims the sacrifice of Christ was typified. He gave His life for the life of the world; human life for human life, but life infinitely dignified by its union with God" (p. 748).

C. Salvation Once-For-All Secured Through Christ's Death 9:23-28

VERSE 23

The cleansing of the old tabernacle was a type of Christ's ministry.

1. Therefore it was necessary for the "copies of the things in the heavens" - Old Testament tabernacle, its services, the book, etc. (cf. 8:5) all the TYPES.
2. Here the author argues from "lesser-to-greater:" the tabernacle had to have a sacrifice to cleanse it before man could enter it to have a relationship to God (the representative presence of God); then how much better a sacrifice would the real presence of God require in order for man to enter into His presence? Note that the sacrifice is a preparation for man, not to cleanse God.

John 14:1-3.

3. Vine: "The sanctuary of the presence of God required the savor of redemptive sacrifice (cf. final payment of Rom 3:25f). Just as the high priests of old went into the holy of holies with the blood of sacrifice on behalf of the people and worshippers of God; so only by the cleansing blood of Christ, on the cross, could the very presence of God become the meeting place between Him and the believer (i.e., access now)" (p. 100).

Heavenly things include all the antitypes of the Jewish tabernacle (Phil 2) - the coming of Jesus, taking a body, living sinless life, death on cross once for all, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifice than these.

“Heavenly things” is a synecdoche; i.e., “the whole put for the part.”

What was cleansed - the church or heaven, and why?

Both - if the tabernacle is both heaven AND church (as in 8:5).

VERSE 24

Christ entered heaven to offer His own blood for us.

For Christ has not entered the Holy Places made with hands, (there is no article (the) in the Greek text) *which are copies of the true*. Here it refers to a Holy Place the Old Testament high priest entered in the tabernacle, i.e., Most Holy Place, therefore Christ entered the same in the real presence of God.

But into heaven itself now to appear (ἐμφανισθῆναι) - middle voice indicating “an interest in doing so.” The high priest of old appeared before the mercy seat on the day of atonement, but Christ before the very face (προσώπω - presence) of God (Vine, p. 101).

VERSE 25

Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another.

Note this verse says “with blood.”

Vine shows the contrast: “Christ is not said to have entered in ‘with’ but ‘by means of’ (διὰ) His own blood (9:12). But here (vs. 25) it is said that the Old Testament high priest had to enter ‘with’ a sacrifice, not his own. One time versus repeated sacrifices” (Vine, p. 101).

VERSE 26

Suffer (παθεῖν) - i.e., “killed.” Here is another reference to the “foundation of the world” (κόσμου) as creation (Rev 13:8); “slain” in the sense of the foreknowledge of God.

Here the author places all power within Christ. His sacrifice must have been once-for-all or He would have to suffer each time one sinned. (This is proof against the concept of the Catholic Mass.)

Otherwise He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world.

Once (ἄπαξ) = “once-for-all” (cf. Jude 3).

At the end of the ages (consummation - NAS) - συντελεία τῶν αἰώνων. This is the only place in the New Testament where συντελεία appears with the plural form αἰώνων. All other places it is with αἰώνας (age). This disproves premillennialism.

But now once at the end of the ages.

To us, the “end of the ages” = the end of the antediluvian, patriarchal, and Jewish ages; actually, the “consummation.”

To a Jewish mind of that day, it would have reference to the Messianic Age (same thing as we think ... ALMOST).

Vine: “Taking the order of the words in the original the clause ‘the end of the ages’ is to be connected with ‘to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.’ “Christ was manifested in incarnation for the purpose of putting away sin (not to set up earthly kingdom). It was at the consummation of the ages (i.e., last one) that he offered himself in sacrifice. All ages prior to that event looked on to it; we look back to it.”

Therefore, it was a one time act but it stopped the ages, as it were, for God’s purpose and plan.

Note: Contrast - law was given to make sin manifest.

To put away sin - The sacrifice of Christ dealt with sin as a principle; Levitical sacrifices dealt with individual transgressions (Vincent). (Again - refutes Premillennialism.)

Key Idea - ἀθέτησιν - annulment, same as 7:18 “legally make void.”

VERSE 27

And as it is appointed for men once to die once.

Note the emphatic usage of “once” (ἄπαξ).

The author is really showing here that the death of Christ is not to be repeated any more than man's is to be repeated.

Jesus was a man so He could offer His life only one time.

But after this the judgment.

Judgment is as certain as death and, if true, Christ also died once-for-all.

VERSE 28

So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait (ἀπεκδεχόμενοις) for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for (εἰς) salvation.

In other words, not to deal with sin or to be a sin offering, but for judgment. Compare wrong use of John 3:17; 12:46-48.

SERMON SEED:

Note three words used in verses 24,26,28 and how they summarize the work of Christ.

1. Ἐμφανισθῆναι (appeared before the face of God) - shows His mediatorial work.
2. Πεφανέρωται (has been manifested) - shows His work to sacrifice Himself for sin.
3. Ὀφθήσεται (will appear) - shows He will come a second time to reward both those who have been good and punish those who had been bad (Vine, p. 103).

Will (shall) appear (ὀφθήσεται) can be translated "He will be made visible."

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus did come back in the second coming but only the eyes of the spiritual beholder saw it. However, the word actually means that everybody will see Him visibly. Compare Revelation 1:7.

This also refutes the "A.D. 70" theory.

To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. Read John 46-48.

Compare Luke 18:8 - "... will He really find faith on the earth? Yes! (1 Thess 4:17).

X. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD BECAUSE OF A BETTER SACRIFICE 10:1-18

Christ's priesthood is better because it is the GROUNDS for forgiveness. Old Testament sacrifices were merely the condition.

A. Impotence Of The Mosaic Sacrifice To Permanently Deal With Sin 10:1-4

VERSE 10:1

The Old Law was impotent as a "shadow" (as was the tabernacle.)

Was their worship also "rolled forward" until Christ's death? NO!

Contrast σκιὰν (shadow - an outline or sketch) with εἰκόνα (image - form).

That which casts the shadow is the reality.

When speaking of sacrifices the writer here speaks of their inherent design and purpose. Thus, 10:4 is correct in that only the blood of Christ can cleanse sin. That blood is contacted in baptism (spiritually). Therefore, the blood of Christ is the grounds of forgiveness in both covenants and is effectual only by following the requirements of that law of God under which one lives:

"The offering of bulls and goats and being baptized are 'times' of forgiveness but the blood of Christ is the 'grounds' of forgiveness for both covenants."

The good things to come - same in 9:11.

Can never . . . make . . . perfect (τελειTMσαι) - i.e., sacrifices of bulls and goats, the year-by-year sacrifices. They were never designed to finish what they started - only Christ could do that.

VERSE 2

Repetitive sacrifices were ineffective within themselves.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? - "if the Old Testament legal sacrifices secured (constituted the ground) for forgiveness, they would not have

been offered over and over” (Johnson). Contrast Christ’s once for all time (ἄπαξ) sacrifice.

Sacrifices under the Old Law were inadequate for many reasons. Some of which are –

Often repeated; could not atone as such; could not clear the conscience; were only physical; a shadow, not real, etc.

These verses help explain 7:19 and 9:9.

Contrast:

Tongues (παύσονται - they will cease) - they did their job as a sign (1 Cor 13:8).

Here - *they would not have ceased* (ἐπαύσαντο) - they did not do their job.

For the worshipers, once (ἄπαξ) purged, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

The significance of the use of the word “once” (ἄπαξ) is the finality and acceptability of Christ’s sacrifice to God the Father.

No more consciousness of sins - note that the author never speaks of guilt.

Christianity is great! When we are cleansed we need never feel guilt nor harbor a guilty conscience (IF we remain faithful.)

Too many Christians tend to worry unnecessarily!

Compare to having to be baptized every time we sin.

VERSE 3

But in (ἐν) those sacrifices there is a reminder - there were daily, weekly, monthly and yearly sacrifices that constantly reminded the people of their sin.

Those sacrifices did not remind God of their sins! He did not “forget” - He simply does not remember our sins against us (Ezek 33:16). See 9:26 and Romans 3:25f. Compare verse 2 and Philippians 3:13 - *forgetting those things which are behind*.

The remembrance of sins was to be done by the sinner (the one making the offering).

VERSE 4

Animal sacrifices were of no effect. The blood of bulls and goats was designed for man to receive forgiveness, but not to take away sins; like baptism is designed for man to receive forgiveness, but itself was not designed to take away sins. Compare Acts 19. The blood of Christ cleanses and forgives on both sides of the cross.

They were designed so that one could receive forgiveness of sins but not designed to take away sins themselves.

See Romans 8:3 and Psalms 103:12.

See Chart - It Is Not Possible That The Blood Of Bulls And Goats Could Take Away Sins.

B. Proof From Old Testament Scripture That Christ Is God's Final Offering For Sin 10:5-10

Why use next an Old Testament quote? He had just attacked that which a Jew would not question; they believed in the efficacy of animal sacrifices. So the writer quotes Old Testament authority to show they are NOT valid (Barnes).

Argument from Psalm 40:6-8.

VERSE 5

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me."

The thrust: Jesus had to have a body so He could offer a sacrifice.

Jesus came to DIE - (vv. 7,9) – "BODY" of chapter 2.

(1) The Septuagint is in error. (2) *My ears You have opened* (Hebrew, "digged" or "pierced"). "... ears to hear thy bidding (i.e., completed a body)" is the idea of boring a hole in a slave's ear if he preferred servitude to freedom (Ex 21:6; Deut 15:17). So the "bored ear" (the "opened ear") = willing obedience (Ferrar).

VERSE 6

In burnt offerings (never said of Christ's sacrifice) . . . *You had no pleasure* . Old Testament sacrifices, therefore, did not meet God's intent or design to atone for sin. Only the blood (body) of Christ could give that effect.

Old Testament passages show God was not pleased with them (Psa 51:16-17; Isa 1:11; Jer 6:20, 7:22; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21f; Mic 6:8).

The sacrifices were never intended to complete God's plan of atonement. So Jesus had to have a body to complete the sacrifice.

VERSE 7

Behold I have come - the Psalmist (40:7) represents Christ, who comes simply to do Your will, O God. Jesus completely surrendered to the will of God the Father.

TESTIFIED!

In the volume of the book it is written of Me - in the book of the law Jesus was predicted (O.T.). This seems to include the whole scope of prophetic element relating to the Messiah. His purpose was to fulfill (Mt 5:17; Lk 24:44).

VERSE 8

Which are offered according to the law.

This refutes the idea that they were offered heartlessly (unscripturally).

If they were offered according to the law, it means they were offered the way God said to.

Therefore His lack of "desire" for them is not because they were not scripturally offered.

The superiority of Christ's priesthood is because of a better sacrifice (cf. Jn 4:24).

Secondly, the sacrifices were connected with the law, they were to be offered according to the law. If they went back to the Old Testament system, God would not be pleased (satisfied).

Therefore, he shows that the Levitical sacrifices were not the end result God had intended for man: *nor had pleasure in them*.

VERSE 9

Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God - Jesus came to accomplish God's will, and did: it was initially God's will that man offer sacrifices according to the law, but with the new sacrifice (Christ).

He takes away the first that He may establish the second - compare 7:12 (priesthood change = law change). Compare 9:8 - the way into the Holy Place was not disclosed while the outer tabernacle was still standing.

The Holy Spirit is signifying this: i.e., the way into the Holy Place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing.

VERSE 10

By the second covenant (this will - Jas 1:18; Jn 17:17), we are saved through the offering of His body - the final offering.

We receive sanctification (are made holy) through the body of Jesus Christ once-for-all.

By His complete submission (and ours) our sins are removed and we are made holy, (ἁγιασμένοι) SANCTIFIED.

The first and second covenants could not stand (be in force) simultaneously.

The second covenant is the only one that stands (is in force) today!

Summary of points from verses 5-10:

1. A body was necessary as a sacrifice.
2. God provided the body, and Jesus took that body.
3. The sacrifice of that body made atonement satisfactory to God.
4. Christ's death took away the first covenant and His blood ratified the second.
5. This satisfaction was necessary to accomplish redemption.
6. Conclusion of verse 10: The quote from the Old Testament (Psa 40) gives authority for saying Jesus' body was necessary for grounds for forgiveness

C. The Full And Absolute Forgiveness Predicted By Jeremiah Is Now A Reality 10:11-18

VERSES 11-12

And every priest (some Greek texts read “high priests”) stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.

Aaronic priests “stood” offering daily; Christ “sat down” (aorist tense). His offering is completed and no more are needed. Forever (v. 12) = ALL TIME (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές).

Stands (ἔσθηκεν) (v.11) - present tense - shows the continuous offering of inadequate sacrifices. This is another proof that the author wrote this epistle before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

The same sacrifices which can never take away sins (with continual effect - Bruce).

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God (a direct statement).

VERSE 13

From that time waiting (waiting for that time onward until [NAS]) *till His enemies are made His footstool*. Jesus now waits until every enemy is conquered (cf. 1:13; 1 Cor 15:24-28; Josh 10:24).

VERSE 14

For by one offering - no future sacrifice is necessary; Christ’s sacrifice, in and of itself, has the power and effect that all others lacked (cf. 7:11,19).

He has perfected (brought to the desired end) *forever those who are being sanctified* (perfect passive participle - having been sanctified; 2:11). This was the weakness of the Old Testament. You could be “perfected” one minute, sin the next, then have to offer again. Also it means to bring into the designed (promised) relationship forever.

All Christ’s brethren are sanctified (2:11).

Sanctification comes through Jesus’ blood (10:10,29).

All brethren become such through His blood (1 Cor 1:2).

VERSES 15-17

And the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us.

1. This explains Romans 8:16 (*the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*)!!!
2. Also, the Bible says “witness” (the idea of chapter 7).
 - a. That is, through His (the Spirit’s) words through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 31:33-34).
 - b. These inspired words to the Hebrews show that those of Jeremiah were likewise inspired by the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Contrast the many of the old covenant with the one of the new covenant.
 - d. This is how the Holy Spirit bears witness.

Progressive ratification of God’s will.

1. Verse 10 - sanctified by the sacrifice of Christ.
2. Verse 12 - sat down - authority of Christ.
3. Verses 15-18 - assurance by the witness of the Holy Spirit.

VERSE 18

Conclusion:

1. Since there is complete remission of sins through the sacrifice of Christ, no more offering is required, we have a perfect priest! Why go back to a system of shadow instead of living in the reality?
2. God made a plan and, when it came time for there to be a real offering for sin, Christ was there to offer Himself a once-for-all time sacrifice; but, when men had to offer for their sins, they had to do so continually, even though it was according to God’s law given to men to follow.
3. Where sins are forgiven, there is no need to “offer” προσφέρων which literally means “a bringing to.”). Thus, there is no sacrifice and no bringing of a sacrifice to God. The sacrifice of Christ is all sufficient and final!

“The culmination of a statement made in the opening remarks of the epistle is made at this juncture: ‘God hath at the end of these days spoken to us by His Son!’ The New Covenant is completely revealed and ratified in Christ, in its agent, in its priesthood, in its tabernacle. There is no word beyond Christ.”

4. This is the point: Not that they could not receive forgiveness but once the real grounds for forgiveness came, there was no need for MORE sacrifices for sin (cf. 9:16 - “be the death”).

We do sacrifice ourselves - Romans 12:1; fruit of our lips - Hebrews 13:15.

XI. EXHORTATION BASED ON PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST..... 10:19-39

A. Appeal to use the privileges of the gospel 10:19-22

VERSE 19

Therefore, brethren, having boldness (παρρησίαν - confidence - NAS) - used 3:6; 4:16; 10:19,35.

Not a brashness, but a confidence to enter into the presence of God. To enter the Holiest (ἁγίωv) - “THE HOLIES.”

The Old Testament high priest entered once a year. The reason we are exhorted to go in is because the blood of Jesus is good for all time.

We do so directly through Christ who is at the throne mediating for us. We have no “shadow” or “figure” such as the physical Levitical priesthood.

Why the Holy Place and not the Holy of Holies? The veil was no longer there; it was rent (torn) and is no longer the separation (2 Cor 5:1).

By the blood of Jesus - we do not take animal blood in to be in the presence of God:

1. We are not high priests.
2. His blood, once for all, is sufficient (good).
3. Our confidence in entering the holy place is that we enter through the blood of Christ.

VERSE 20

By a new and living way.

1. The way for us is not only pointed out but opened through His redeeming blood, and thus the veil before the holiest of all was torn open that we might enter in. For us, the torn veil is the body of Christ (Johnson).
2. *New* (πρόσφατον) - “recently killed” in the old Judaistic way. When those of the old system went to the presence of God, they had to kill a sacrifice; but now it is as though Jesus had been just slain, freshly killed, yet He is a living Savior (Boatman).
3. *New . . . way* - the new covenant Jesus had inaugurated with His blood (9:17-18).
4. *Consecrated for us* - sealed the covenant.
5. *Living* - even though killed, He lives.

Through the veil - Christ is our access to God.

Habershon: “But not just his incarnation, it was the rending (again contrast 9:8) of that veil that opened the way; i.e., his death - blood (by the spear)” (p. 44).

VERSE 21

And having a High Priest over the house of God (cf. 3:1; 8:1-2) - even though it cannot be so translated from the Greek, the idea is that He is also King.

Why? Because He is “over the house of God” (same as 3:6) provides the concept.

Therefore, He is Priest and King of His house, the church. The old system had a limited and weak priesthood. Ours has a great High Priest.

Compare with 3:1-6. If it is a royal house, we are royal priests, and He is King.

VERSE 22

Note the “let us” expository sermon from 22-25a. These duties fall upon us because of the privileges we have in Christ. “Let us” - 4:1,11,14,16; 6:1; 10:22,23,24; 12:28; 13:13,15 (11 times); a book of exhortation (cf. 13:22).

LET US!

- I. Let us draw near:
 - A. With a true heart;
 - B. In full assurance of faith;
 - C. Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and
 - D. Our body (σTMμα - singular) washed with pure water.
 - II. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope:
 - A. Without wavering,
 - B. For He who promised is faithful.
 - III. Let us consider one another:
 - A. To stir up love and good works;
 - B. Not forsaking the assembling, and
 - C. Exhorting one other.
-

VERSE 22 Continued.

With a true (sincere) heart.

True means “true versus unfaithful” as a true (faithful) wife; not a true versus false concept.

The idea is that if you draw near to God with a true heart then you are not drawing near to God trying to be saved by Christ and Moses. Not superficial profession.

In full assurance of faith.

This idea eliminates anyone from saying that Christianity is just a better felt than told religion (cf. Rom 10:17).

Just approaching God with a true, sincere heart is not enough - it must be in “fullness of faith.”

Full assurance (πληροφορία) - a full carrying, or to carry out fully; Hebrews 11:6 - especially in efficacy of what Christ has done for us.

Having our hearts sprinkled.

Literally: “our hearts having been sprinkled” - 1st aorist perfect passive participle. Therefore an event of the past - those addressed were Christians.

This verse thus shows what Christianity can do: cleanse from an evil conscience (cf. 9:9 with 1 Pet 3:21; contrast 10:2).

The meaning cannot be a literal sprinkling as Methodists might assert. Note the absurdity: If sprinkle is literal, to sprinkle the heart would require a surgical procedure to expose the heart! Is the conscience in the literal heart?

The idea is a reference to the Old Testament symbolism of sprinkling blood to cleanse, or atone, etc. (Ex 29:20-21; Lev 8:23f.)

This is necessary for our exercise of our priestly ministry. The emphasis is on our free access to God.

Our bodies (σῶμα - singular; maybe this refers to the church) *washed with pure water* (Lev 16:4,24.)

The reference here is not directly to baptism, although the idea is consistent with other passages of the New Testament.

Washed (λελουσμένοι) - perfect, passive, participle. It is the Greek word that refers to “washing the whole body,” therefore even if sprinkling is valid so is washing.

Note the three Greek words concerning washing:

1. Λούω - used in reference to people and washing of the whole body.
2. Νίπτω - used only of people and refers to washing parts of the body.
3. Πλύνω - used only of things.

Leviticus 16:4,24; Titus 3:5.

If the author here was emphasizing sprinkling (ῥαντίζω) for salvation, he would have at least used the word πίπτω to be consistent and not contradictory.

Compare Exodus 29:4 and Leviticus 8:6.

Only refers to baptism because of our knowledge of other scriptures (e.g., Titus 3:5). Compare - “pure” water in the Jordan?

“The heart and spirit are cleansed by the blood of Christ and the body sanctified by washing in pure water, effecting the purification of the whole man” (Johnson).

That is clean from consciousness of sin and defilement of sin.

Moll (from C.B. Lange’s commentary) - “we are not with Calvin and others to take the water according to Ezek 36 as the symbol of the outpouring of the spirit or as indicating washing away of sins generally, and least of all, with direct reference to the blood of Christ. (This quote shows how some denominational schools know the truth.) We must recognize expressly reference to baptism. For baptism forms the transition point from the objective system of salvation to its subjective appropriation to the grace by which virtue of the divine arrangement it imparts and contains in itself the obligation to holiness on the part of the reconciled and justified (Rom 6:3; 1 Pet 3:21), and also actually works the washing away of sin (Acts 22:16).”

It does not teach baptism but it refers to it.

The point is that the inward conscience and outward bodily purifications are accomplished in both cases, once-for-all, for all men.

B. Appeal To Keep Our Faith (Hope)..... 10:23-25

VERSE 23

His faithfulness inspires us.

Let us hold fast (correct - κατέχωμεν) *the confession*.

This is the word from which we get our word “catechism” (cf. 3:1,14).

It refers to the specific confession with the mouth, and confession of Jesus as Lord throughout one’s whole life (3:1).

Of our hope - 6:18f - “laying hold of the hope set before us, without wavering”.

Without wavering (ἀκλινῶ) - therefore, the concept is not to allow our confession to waver by allowing Moses to become a part of Christianity.

For he who promised is faithful (ch. 6 - cf. 13:8).

The author is saying that if you believe that Jesus is the Christ and promised priest after the order of Melchizedek, and really believe that the law had to be changed (7:12), then, you believe that the only way you can be saved is by staying with Christianity. And God will not change to confuse you.

Even in Peter's writings (written within just a few years of Hebrews) is revealed the problem that some were wavering because Christ had not already come again (2 Pet 3:2-4). They knew from the scriptures that the Messiah was to bring an end to all things.

Hope and promise in chapter 6.

His appeal to keep each other from apostatizing (24-25).

VERSE 24

And let us consider (κατανοῶμεν) - present subjunctive active (durative action) therefore be considering all the time, like having someone on your mind continually. "Let each care for others and exhort others to love and to good works both by word and example."

Stir up (provoke - παροξυσμὸν) - from which we get our English word "paroxysm" (stimulation); the word the Wyoming-Colorado spelling bee champion missed in the 1974 nationals.

To get so excited that others want to go out and do it because they want to do it; in a sense, it means to incite to action, urge, prompt.

The word suggests a mutual spirit of concern for one another to the point that the other is stimulated, or motivated, to do what he ought to do.

The word is used in this sense only here; and in a bad sense of "sharp contention" in Acts 15:39.

Is also very similar to the Greek words used in Acts 17:16 (his spirit was provoked within him . . . idols) and 1 Corinthians 13:5 (love . . . is not provoked).

It means to show concern for others by encouraging (not as a superior) with an attitude to help, not to brow-beat into submission. (Compare this to the International Churches of Christ.)

VERSE 25

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.

See “Three Successive Subjunctives” in the Appendix.

Forsaking (ἐγκαταλείποντες) - nominative plural masculine participle present active.

1. Used in 13:5 in the sense of “to abandon.”
2. This verse cannot be used to judge those who simply miss services, but to those who “abandon” (also used in Acts 2:27; Mt 27:46; Rom 9:29) them (e.g., if you leave for a weekend of fishing, have you abandoned your wife? No, only if you left never to return). These people had abandoned the assembly and had made it a practice (“custom” - ethos) not to assemble.
3. Use this verse to show what one’s practice should be! Then use James 4:17 to show the sin in missing services.
4. He who comes only on Sunday morning and never Sunday night has abandoned the assemblies requested by the elders and is in error. We are required to submit to and follow the elders (some by their choice). (Meetings do not fall in this category - nor ladies’ class, business meetings, youth meetings, etc.)
5. The words *the assembling* implies they only met once a week, but we have no clear teaching concerning how often to meet.

Manner (ἔθος) - custom - regular pattern of life.

Seven things non-attenders cannot do:

1. Pray for the success of the church without being hypocritical.
2. Say Christ and His kingdom are first in their lives.
3. Say they are made stronger by absence.
4. Say they glorify God by their neglect.
5. Blame anyone else if the affairs of the church do not please them.

6. Criticize if the church does not seem to grow as it should.
7. Have any assurance that God is pleased with their actions.

A person who forsakes assembling is possibly:

1. Apostatizing.
2. Sinning willfully (Heb 10:25-26).
3. Counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing (Heb 10:29).
4. Doing despite to the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29).
5. Forsaking the appointment the Lord has with him that they might commune together (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16).
6. Forsaking being with the Lord in the assembly (Mt 18:20).
7. Denying any allegiance to Christ he made before baptism (Acts 8:37; Rev 2:4; Rom 10:9).
8. Not seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33).
9. Offending the church of God with his attitude and actions (1 Cor 10:32).
10. Becoming a stumbling block to babes in Christ (Mt 18:6).
11. Hindering special efforts to preach the gospel, e.g., gospel meetings (1 Cor 9:12).
12. Neglecting the worship that God seeks (Jn 4:23).
13. Not being a light to the world around him (Mt 5:16; Phil 2:15).
14. Failing in his duty toward his children (Eph 6:1-4).
15. Not seeking those things above (Col 3:1).
16. Not being fruitful in God's work (Mt 13:22; Jn 15:1-6).
17. Knowing to do right and failing to do it (Jas 4:17).

18. Failing to respect God's local work because it cannot exist without assembling (1 Cor 5:4).
19. Failing to grow into a mature Christian (1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18; Eph 4:13-15; Heb 5:12-14).
20. Not putting Christ first by denying self in his life (Mt 10:37-38).
21. Not obeying them that have rule over them (Heb 13:1).
22. Weakening himself to the point that he may be spiritually dead (1 Cor 11:30). (From Donald Townsley.)
23. Not having concern for one another (Heb 10:24; Phil 2:4; Mt 20:25-28).

Reasons why many are absent from worship:

1. Afraid of persecution.
2. Lack of interest.
3. Doubt the necessity.
4. Dissatisfaction with procedures, people, etc.
5. Feel secure in their baptism alone to get them to heaven.
6. Laziness and weariness.
7. Sense of self-righteousness.
8. Lack of love for what God has done for them.

And so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Interpretations of "Day": Most believe it to be a shortened version of "the day of the Lord."

1. The judgment to follow Christ's return or one's death (but how can this be seen as it is "drawing nigh"). Compare Romans 13:11; salvation is nearer than when we first believed; 2 Pet 3:10-12 (Barnes and Milligan).
2. The day of worship - the first day of each week. (If so, it means to exhort more on Saturday than Monday.)

3. Warren Wilcox's conclusion: "... more likely a reference to a specific calamity such as the destruction of Jerusalem" (cf. Isa 13:9; Ezek 30:3).
 - a. This carries the greatest weight with scholars.
 - b. If Hebrews was written in 63-64 A.D., the Jewish revolt is only one or two years away.
 - c. It would be obvious to them that such a "day" was drawing near. They could "see" it (Mt 24:4-41; Lk 21:20-22) and would need more brotherly contact: why? When the old system was destroyed anyone who went back would be left without any religion, plus the difficulty of the times to remain faithful.

C. God's Judgment Of Apostates 10:26-31

Deliberate and final apostasy is unforgivable!

There is no "if" in the Greek. Note: "when we sin willfully", or "WHILE WE ARE SINNING CONTINUALLY."

Willfully (ἐκουσίως - used in 1 Pet 5:2 - elders . . . oversight). If we continually sin willfully it indicates continuous sin. Here it refers to the apostasy previously discussed (6:4-6); [cf. Num 15:30; Isa 1:10-15; Jer 6:19-20; 7:9-16] - there is no sacrifice for such.

After we have received (receiving) the knowledge of the truth.

Knowledge (ἐπίγνωσιν) is a more full knowledge as opposed to just γινώσκω. The writer refers to and speaks to knowledgeable Christians.

This verse is one of the strongest arguments against "impossibility of apostasy." "If we sin continually there is no more sacrifice for sins." There once was!

There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins - two ways how this occurs:

If a person goes back into Judaism, and starts sacrificing animals again – offering the blood of animals, he is then offering an inferior sacrifice. Only the blood of Christ is effective.

Christ is the final sacrifice acceptable to God. Therefore, if you reject it you are completely without any sacrifice for forgiveness.

If we sin willfully in a continuous habitual form of life, then we are apostatizing and not walking in the light and we do not have the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ (1 Jn 1:6 [dark], 7 [light]).

VERSE 27

All that remains is a certain, fearful judgment.

Certain (τις), fearful (φοβερὰ) - no question as to the absolute certainty or reality.

Judgment (κρίσεως) - in this context it is a judgment with punishment. Contrast 2:15 - and release those who through *fear* of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Robert Ingersoll's (alleged) quote: "Oh, God – if there be a God, let my soul – if I have a soul, go to heaven – if there is a heaven" shows he had that "certain fearful" expectation (even though, as an atheist, he fought it). Compare 2:14-15.

Fiery indignation in Greek literally means "zealous fire", therefore, an anticipation, anxiousness, or simply, the idea of "just-waiting-to-be-devoured" (2 Thess 1:7-8).

Nahum 1:2,6-7 speaks of God's fierceness and reasons why He can rightly be so fierce.

James 4:4 in conjunction with this passage shows how you make yourself an enemy of God ("adversaries of God") therefore, the teaching is against predestination.

Adversaries - the apostates.

Apostates in Jerusalem would be destroyed in A.D. 70 because, as nonbelievers, they would not leave Jerusalem at the time of tribulation Jesus said would come (Mt 24:15f).

VERSE 28

The death penalty, under the Old Law, was established by two or three witnesses.

Rejected (ἀθετήσας - set at nought [set aside - NAS]) - to set aside as unimportant the death penalty imposed under the Old Law (cf. Num 15:32; Deut 17:2-7; 19:15).

DIES WITHOUT MERCY.

VERSE 29

Of how much worse punishment - the apostate Christian faces a more severe (“sorer” - χείρονος) penalty; Matthew 10:28; Luke 12:46-48; 12:4.

Jehovah’ Witnesses teach a man is just annihilated (does not exist anymore) when dead; if so, how can there be a much “worse” punishment after death?

Description of the apostate who *rejected Moses’ law*:

Trampled the Son of God under foot - καταπατήσας - tramples upon; literally, scornful neglect. Therefore worse than one who has never heard the gospel or repented; like casting out useless salt on a path (Mt 5:13).

Count the blood of Christ unholy (κοινὸν) - common, though translated “unholy” since common things were considered unholy.

They did this by esteeming the blood of animals over Christ’s blood. Compare the use of this word in Mark 7:2; Acts 10:14; 11:8 and Romans 14:14.

Further, those who did not accept Christ’s blood as a sacrifice viewed Him as merely a criminal punished for His own crimes.

Contrast 1 Peter 1:19.

By which he was sanctified (set apart - 2:11; 10:10,14) - they were Christians!

And insulted (ἐνυβρίσας) *the Spirit of grace* - by rejecting Christ, they rejected the work, words, preaching and pleadings of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Mt 22:6; Lk 18:32; Acts 14:5; 1 Thess 2:2.)

Their knowledge of God’s character (30-31).

VERSE 30

They were well familiar with God’s commandments, judgment, and vengeance.

The first quote is Deuteronomy 32:35; the second is Psalm 135:14.

The Hebrews knew (οἶδαμεν) how God had dealt with enemies in the Old Testament.

Judge - we are not to judge:

1. We have inadequate knowledge;

2. We have no power to carry out judgment.

VERSE 31

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Fear of God in this respect is needed, but, of course, not necessarily to produce a “phobia.”

A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God for a sinner (φοβερὸν) who despises God’s mercy and casts it off as unimportant and insignificant (cf. Lk 12:5. 31 from Deut 32:35 [also in Rom 12:19]).

David chose God’s chastisement over man’s (2 Sam 24:14). But he did not ask as an apostate.

D. Words Of Encouragement..... 10:32-39

This is also an introduction to chapter 11.

VERSE 32

The writer reminds them of their former heroic efforts (32-34).

But recall the former days - remember these Christians are second generation and had not as yet suffered martyrdom, although Christians had been persecuted in the past.
After you were illuminated - enlightened. The Syriac Manuscript reads “having received baptism” (as in 6:4).

You endured a great struggle with sufferings - endured great conflict of sufferings - ἄθλησιν - conflict as an athlete endures to sharpen and improve his skills. (Consider Jas 1:2-4 - teaches for Christians.)

Sufferings were for strengthening.

VERSE 33

Partly while you were made a spectacle (θεατριζόμενοι) – a public spectacle, put on display and ridiculed; e.g., example of Paul (1 Cor 4:9).

Formal persecution in the Judean region began c. 66 A.D. when Zealots took control of Jerusalem (*Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*).

Both by reproaches and tribulations and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated - not only themselves but they became companions (κοινωνοί -

partakers) with others who also suffered these things; shameful exposure, etc., likely by coming to their aid in such times.

VERSE 34

For you had compassion on me - he commends them for their loyalty to those who were jailed (cf. Mt 25:40).

And joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods - they lost their possessions yet endured because they looked forward to all they would gain in heaven (cf. Mt 6:17-21; 5:40).

Thus, the author commends them highly for past efforts and endurance. He explains they have passed the worst; why now abandon that for which they suffered?

VERSE 35

Therefore do not cast away your confidence (boldness - not the same as 3:14 - ὑποστάσεως but is the same as 10:19 - παρησίαν) *which has great* (recompense of) *reward* - opposed to the soldier who casts away his shield and runs. REWARD - Romans 8:18.

Some say this is the key verse of Hebrews.

VERSE 36

His appeal is based on their reward of faithfulness.

For you have need of endurance (ὑπομονῆς) - remaining under versus seeking to cast it off and escaping (cf. Rom 5:3-5).

Contrast “throw away” with “remain under.”

Endurance (ὑπομονῆς) - to remain in battle is required (cf. Jas 1:2-3; Lk 21:19). If you give up, you lose (Rev 2:10).

Throw away (ἀποβάλλω) - to lose courage, or cast off (as clothes).

So that after you have done the will of God, you may (future) receive the promise - the reward is not obtained automatically because one was once a faithful Christian.

VERSE 37

For yet a very little while, and He who is coming will come (Hab 2:3) *and will not tarry.*

An appeal based upon the assurance that Christ will return.

The author's point is to be prepared for any and all circumstances (cf. 2 Pet 3:10-15).

VERSE 38

"But my righteous (just) one shall live by faith" (ASV) (Hab 2:4) - those who continued to walk in full assurance of faith shall live by faith.

Alternate translation - "The one justified by faith shall live" (eternally). This is the point of this epistle.

But if anyone draws back - "if he shrinks back" - NAS.

3rd class conditional; unfulfilled - an unfulfilled condition (proof against "once saved, always saved" doctrine.)

My soul has no pleasure in him - he who draws back under fear or trial is condemned.

Those in whom God has no pleasure have no hope (cf. Psa 5:4).

VERSE 39

An appeal based on the author's confidence in them.

But we are not of those who draw back (encouraging statement like 6:9) *to perdition.*

But of those who believe to the saving (περιποίησιν - possession) *of the soul.*

Here is a positive statement that some had apostatized.

He who remains faithful will be like those of the Old Testament who remained faithful to the saving of their souls.

XII. THE STEADFASTNESS OF REAL FAITH..... 11:1-40

The author will emphasize in this section that:

1. Great men and women of old believed in God and endured because of their faith and endurance (obedience).
2. Note all the verbs associated with their actions. Faith alone was not and is not sufficient! Rather, it is a faith that works that is commendable to God!

3. Also note that most of these saints were doing something they had no precedent for. Their actions were based on their faith in God. They did not have an example of any others doing this same thing. What they were doing was something new that was commanded by God.
4. The emphasis is that all the way through so many of these believed in God's promise even if they did not receive it in this life (and/or it was something not seen. Compare the Old Law with the invisible of the New Law). The object is to show that faith has been in all three ages the means of perseverance in the true religion (Barnes).

Lenski - This is a list the readers should contemplate. They are growing weak and cowardly, thinking of returning to Judaism. These are named in the Old Testament but, if they desert, they are going from not to these men and women.

B. Faith 11:1-3,6

VERSE 11:1

Substance (ὑπόστασις - what stands under - basis) of things hoped for.”

Used three times in Hebrews - 1:3 = “substance” and 3:14 = “confidence.”
Translations, though varied, have “reality” in common – that for which we hope is real! It gave reality to what their hope was.

Literally: “faith is giving substance to things hoped for” therefore Ancients understand it to mean the substance and the real and true essence; to them faith gives reality to things not yet seen so that they are treated as virtually present (Alford - *Greek New Testament*).

Faith is the reality and foundation of all our hopes. Without faith we would be limited to a narrow world comprehended by the senses.

Evidence (KJV) (conviction - NAS, ASV) - full persuasion by demonstration; a thing is shown to be true or false *of things not seen* (ἔλεγχος - evidence - proof). It took the place of things not seen.

Our evidence of Jesus is our faith. Therefore, Christianity is not simply a “book religion,” but inspired words converted into a personal, working faith. (These Christians were seeking a visible high priest, sacrifices, etc. as evidence).

Therefore, “faith is to be put in place of things not seen (to fill that gap as it were) and serves as full persuasion that something (Christianity) is true even though not testable by physical means.” - WW

Also, if we saw the end of our faith there would be no faith and, therefore, no salvation by faith.

Things not seen (πραγμάτων - realities) - thus, the theme of this chapter: faith in the unseen caused men of old to endure and, as a result, to obtain the promise and reward of God.

VERSE 2.

For by it (faith in the unseen) *men of old gained approval* (NAS and ASV); had witness borne to them - i.e., the Bible tells about them because they were faithful.

To them (ASV) - as one has witness borne to him by his good works, etc. that he is a Christian.

VERSE 3

By faith we understand (πίστει - instrumental) - all through verse 31 are introduced this way.

The worlds were framed (κατηρτίσθαι - adjusted, prepared) *by the word of God* (ῥήματι - same in 6:5 - single expression of the Divine will or utterance of God - Westcott, Bruce).

The basis of the material world lies in the immaterial word. Therefore it is not irrational to have faith in the unseen, since it was the unseen (i.e., the word of God) that caused the seen (i.e., the universe). (Similar to 2 Pet 3:5-7 - word was, is, powerful. Cf. Rom 4:17).

It is an interesting point that it is plural - "worlds" αἰώνων - the same word for world in 1:2.

By the first century the word had lost the "ages" idea and just referred to "the world".

Not made out of things which appear (ASV) - that which does not "appear" is the word of God, not atoms or molecules.

All of the examples are to show that faith, obedience, and endurance will result in that which God promised - even if you do not live long enough to see it here.

The author now takes various examples from the Old Testament history which are illustrative of the nature, power, and influence of faith. The dynamic of human example is often powerful. The author here selects men who have excelled in faith and uses these

as examples for the recipients of the letter, and these still serve as great examples for us today.

VERSE 4

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent (better - NAS; cf. Mt 12:41,43; πλείονα just means "more" but implies "higher value, greater wrath" - Thayer) *sacrifice than Cain* (Gen 4:3-4).

Note: No one (recorded) had ever offered sacrifice before - therefore faith in the unseen.

Abel the martyr - faith in recognizing the natural obligation of man to God and fulfilling them even unto death.

Three views are commonly held as to why Abel's sacrifice was accepted but Cain's was not:

1. They had been commanded to offer a blood (animal) sacrifice (kind) but Cain did not do so.
2. Abel was truly sorry for his sins, but Cain was merely going through an outward formality (attitude/spirit). To do anything by faith was to do it as God has commanded. When God specifies, He does not accept anything else! The sacrifice was not being given by faith.
3. "Firstlings" (Gen 4:4) versus fruit of the ground (quality). (Could be amount [quantity].)

Through which he obtained witness (had witness borne to him - obtained the teaching - NAS) (Jesus confirmed - Mt 23:35 and John, too - 1 Jn 3:12) *that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts* (his sacrifice):" i.e., He received them.

And through it he being dead still speaks - though Abel is now dead, he speaks to us by his faith and example as witnessed in the Old Testament record.

VERSE 5

By faith Enoch was translated (taken up - NAS) (μετετέθη - transpose, transfer, to change - Thayer - compare what happens to Christians 1 Corinthians 15:51 (not the same Greek word however) *that he did not see death*.

Enoch's life was a life full of faith, a life in which he pleased God. His faithfulness was rewarded by being translated into heaven without first tasting of death (Gen 5:24).

No one had gone to be with God before without dying, therefore, faith in the unseen.

1. Enoch achieved a living fellowship with God.
2. This is an inspired commentary on that passage because it could be interpreted "God took him" = "he died."

And he was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation he had testimony (walked with God - cf. 1 Jn 1:7) that he pleased God.

1. He was not found on earth because God translated him into heaven as he later translated Elijah. After Elijah's removal, the sons of the prophets sent out fifty men, who sought for him three days diligently, but they did not find him, because God had taken him (2 Kgs 2:17). By his being translated, God bore witness that Enoch had been well-pleasing unto Him.
2. The KJV and RSV imply he had witness borne to him before he was translated rather than ASV and NAS that he was pleasing to God before he was translated. These seem better - Bruce.

VERSE 6

But without faith it is impossible to please Him. This fulfills Jeremiah 31:31ff.

What is pleasing to God in life is of faith. Cain sought to do it without faith, setting an example that religion of the flesh is nothing but sin.

For he who comes to (or drawing near / approaches [προσερχόμενον - same word as 10:22 - draw near] - see 7:25; 4:16; 10:1,22; 2:2; 10:35; 11:26 - i.e., the worshiper; cf. Zeph 3:2 - no faith, no approach) God must (δεῖ) believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder (μισθαποδότης γίνεται - same as 2:2; 10:35; 11:26) of those who diligently seek Him.

Why this verse?

1. One must believe in the reward, or does not want to come.
2. One must believe He rewards all who "KNOW" Him (cf. 8:11), not just that He exists.

VERSE 7

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his household (Gen 6-8).

No one had ever before *seen* a flood, let alone one that would “destroy the end of all flesh” (Gen 6:13). Therefore, they had faith in the unseen.

Noah obeyed God even though He had predicted the “impossible.”

Noah had no visible signs of an impending flood. We do remember that Noah was told by God that there was a coming deluge one hundred and twenty years before it occurred. Noah believed God and did just as God commanded - the building of the ark to the saving of his house (Gen 6:13-14).

Three or four tests:

1. Not seen it (rain or flood).
2. Long time working in obedience (building ark).
3. Ridicule.
4. Apparent failure as preacher.

NOTE: *By which he (Noah) condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Gen 7:1,5).*

1. By this act of faith he condemned the world and became the heir of righteousness.
2. Would elders have kept supporting Noah with so few results?

VERSE 8

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would afterward receive for an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going (Gen 11:31; 12:1-4).

Abraham - a great example of faith and of patient obedience; but first of self- surrender.

1. Note: He had no Bible to look into to see an example of faithfulness before him.

2. No one had “gone out ... not knowing” before God told him to go. Therefore, faith in the unseen.

By this passage we learn that:

1. Abraham received a call from God.
2. That he was required to leave his home in the Ur of Chaldees.
3. That the land promised to his seed was wholly unknown to him, and
4. That he, nevertheless, obeyed God (Acts 7:2-5).

Joshua 24:2 shows his father was idolatrous.

VERSE 9

By faith he sojourned (by faith he lived as an alien - NAS) *in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents* (Gen 26:3-4; 27:4,13-14; Jn 8:56; Gal 3:16), *with Isaac and Jacob* (Abraham was alive until Jacob was 15 years old), *the heirs with him of the same promise* (primarily the land promise here - since the verse emphasizes “so-journer,” “land,” “dwelling” and “city” in v. 10).

It is remarkable that Abraham never received any portion of the land of promise other than a burying-place. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were coheirs to the promise and they likewise had no fixed place of habitation but moved from place to place. They, as did Abraham, looked forward to the time of fulfillment of the promise.

VERSE 10

For he waited for the city (faith in something he had not seen) *which has the foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

“Nevertheless, Abraham looked beyond the first fulfillment of the promise which was just a step in accomplishing of the real purpose of God” (Westcott). (Cf. 4:8.)

NOTE: It is here apparent that the patriarchs had a much more thorough knowledge of heaven than it appears from just the Old Testament.

The first tabernacle had NO foundations.

POINT: Abraham did not lose his faith for he was looking for a heavenly Jerusalem (cf. 4:8). The seed of Abraham (the church) is heir with Abraham of this heavenly Jerusalem.

VERSE 11

By faith (Gen 27:15-21; 18:11-14; 21:1-2; Rm 4:19) Sarah herself also received power to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age (90 years old - Gen 17:17), because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

Sarah was inspired to faith by her husband's example.

VERSE 12

Therefore, from one man, and him as good as dead (Rom 4:19 - not reproductively; what about Hagar and Keturah? - 1 Chron 1:32), were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude — innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore (Gen 22:17; Deut 1:10).

VERSE 13

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises [did not receive the 1) land or 2) the seed promise] but having seen them (as verse 1 shows how - i.e., by faith) *afar off* were assured of them (cf. Heb 6:15).*

All these looked unto and paid heed to the UNSEEN things!

The "all" here refers specifically to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. These were the ones who were promised great things (Gal 3:16) and who could have gone back to their homeland if they had been inclined to do so, but they preferred to remain as strangers and sojourners because of their faith. John 8:56 - "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it and was glad." Through the eye of faith, not the physical one (Milligan, p. 311).

And having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

This Abraham confessed before the sons of Heth: "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you" (Gen 23:4; cf. Psa 39:12; 1 Chron 29:15; Psa 119:19; Christians: 1 Pet 1:17; 2:11).

Keep your eyes up.

VERSE 14

For they who say such things declared plainly that they seek a homeland - Not God's; Philippians 3:20 - our citizenship is in heaven.

VERSE 15

And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity (a refutation against irresistible grace) to return. How else can we explain a former city dweller never returning to or settling down in Canaan?

The Hebrews' problem - they wanted to "go back spiritually" (the devil provides).

If they had desired to return to Ur of Chaldea there would have been nothing to prevent them from returning but, because of their faith in God, they remained faithful.

VERSE 16

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country (better than Canaan, Haran, or Ur!), - compare verse 10 - the city is heavenly.

They had a confident belief that the land of Canaan would be given to their posterity; but as for themselves, they had no expectation of permanently dwelling there, but looked to a heavenly country (Barnes, p. 1322). "Better" = heavenly.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God - He would have been if they had gone back.

1. As in Exodus 3:6: "I am the God of your father –"
2. As in Hebrews 2:11: "He [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them brethren ..."
3. Since they had such an elevated aim in life, God was not ashamed to be called their God, that is, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (cf. Ex 2:11).

For He has prepared a city for them - His old one is not available now (cf. Heb 4 - rest).

God has prepared (we do go to heaven - 2 Cor 12:2-4; Rev 2:7; 22:1-4 - heaven = paradise) a heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, for all who are His children, i.e., to Abraham and his seed. This city, prepared from the foundation of world (Heb 4:3) is the city in heaven where God is (Psa 46:4).

VERSE 17

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac - this presents the victory of his faith in a third and more astonishing way. No one had ever before seen one rise from the dead - v. 19.

1. By faith he had triumphed over the discomforts of the pilgrimage;
2. By faith he had triumphed over the impossibility of natural conditions; and
3. How his faith triumphed over its direct testings, enabling him to rise superior to natural disappointment with the dealings of God, unbaffled at His apparent undoing of His own work (Vine, pp. 134-5).

And he who had gladly received the promises offered up his only begotten son (μονογενῆ↑).

Two test areas for Abraham:

1. To overcome the natural love for his son.
2. To obey even when he could not see why!

He did not believe God would go back on His word (10:23).

Abraham's faith was so strong that even in view of the fact that the promised blessings were to come through Isaac, he would still carry out God's command to sacrifice his son. He is called his "only begotten son" because Isaac was the only child Abraham had by his wife, Sarah (the "only begotten son" as a result of a promise).

VERSE 18

Of whom it was said, "In Isaac (stands first in Greek for emphasis and to show in Isaac and in no other...) shall thy seed be called."

Isaac was not only the heir of Abraham, but also the heir of all the promises of God given to Abraham.

VERSE 19

Accounting (λογισάμενος - decisively made up mind after thinking it over - aorist) *that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from which he also received him in a figurative sense* (type).

Genesis 2:25 - "The lad and I ... we will come back to you."

We have no record of anyone being raised before him - faith.

Abraham did, in a sense, offer up Isaac. He built the altar, bound his son, laid him on the altar, made ready the incense, took his knife and would have immediately slain him if God had not stopped him.

In the sight of Abraham, Isaac was already offered up because he had determined in his mind to carry out God's command. Therefore, when God spared his life, Abraham received him back, as it were, from the dead (Gen 22:11-14).

The lesson for us is to strictly obey God's every command and to trust in His promises. Nothing less is a demonstration of faith.

VERSE 20

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come (i.e., things not seen) (Gen 27:30,38-40).

This is the first of three instances of faith exercised at the time of death (of things not seen). Isaac believed that God would fulfill His promise to His posterity; and God gave him to see what would befall them in their future generations.

VERSE 21

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff (Gen 48:5-6; the younger over the elder).

"In his blessing he made both Ephraim and Manasseh tribes of Israel, and that the younger would be the ancestor of the greater tribe" (Johnson, p. 328). The sick old man, Jacob, raised from his couch and leaned his weight upon his staff while conferring the blessing.

VERSE 22

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel; and gave instruction concerning his bones (Gen 50:25).

To take his bones to a place they had not seen.

Joseph believed God's promises concerning the exodus of the people from Egypt (even though they were comfortably settled in Egypt). He claimed his share in their destiny and in their inheritance. "That he gave commandment concerning his bones was no mere sentiment; it expressed his belief in, and assurance of,

resurrection, and, alike with his fathers, of the possession of the land of promise” (Vine, p. 136).

Faith of confidence in God’s promise-keeping faithfulness - predicted future blessings contrary to national indications.

VERSE 23

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command (Ex 2:2).

Moses preferred fellowship with God to self-advancement in the world.

This is the first recorded incident of defiance against a king.

VERSE 24

By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (cf. Acts 7:25).

Moses knew that renouncing the adoption meant that he would lose his royal position and its benefits. This step he took as recorded in Exodus 2:11, was a decision which was an act of faith, with the assurance that God would fulfill His promises.

How did Moses get his faith? From his parents, or God told him.

VERSE 25

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin. (It is! But only lasts as long as this life - at most.) The contrast is, if you are with the people of God, you will receive pleasure eternally.

To live in slavery is not a life desired by anyone, but Moses chose such a life knowing that the Hebrews were God’s chosen people, rather than to enjoy all the riches which Egypt had to offer him, the son of Pharaoh’s daughter.

VERSE 26

Esteeming the reproach of Christ (i.e., the same kind Christ suffered - i.e., doing what God said; 1 Pet 2:21ff; cf. Psa 89:50-51 - remember O Lord the reproach of thy servants.) greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ (Col 1:24) - that I may know ... the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil 3:10).

There are several ideas as to what is the actual scope of this statement. The most acceptable idea seems to be that it is the reproach which Christ had to bear.

Note: Christ's reproach - they could not understand why, if He was God's Son, He would suffer.

For he looked to the reward (everyone will get a reward; some good; some bad; 2 Cor 5:10). He fixed his vision upon what the Day yet to come would bring at the hands of the one whose reproach he endured.

Moses valued things according to their ultimate goal.

Keep your eye on your goal!

In other words choose the spiritual reward than the physical rewards!

VERSE 27

By faith he forsook (same as 10:25) Egypt (κατέλιπεν - after killing an Egyptian; Ex 2:15 - Vincent), not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible. The presence of God was more real to Moses than the king's army.

Read Exodus 10:28

The author now turns to the faith of Moses as seen in his life's work. "He forsook Egypt," as we judge, refers to his final departure as the head of the Hebrew nation (Bramby, p. 314). Moses believed God's promise concerning the deliverance of His people, counting the presence of God more important than the presence of the king.

By the eye of faith he saw the King eternal, immortal and invisible standing by his side, ready to fulfill at the proper time all the promises He had made to His chosen people (Milligan, p. 321).

C. Israelitish Nation: Faith In God's Promises Of The Coming Messiah 11:28-40

In this section the author uses other general illustrations drawn from the exploits, deliverances, and heroic endurance of faithful men and women under the Old Covenant.

VERSE 28

By faith he kept the Passover (i.e., the original one, never seen before), and the sprinkling of the blood, lest He who destroyed (never seen before) the firstborn should touch them (Ex 12:21,23).

Moses believed God and had faith that He would keep His word. The divine threatening that He would destroy all the firstborn, but that those whose dwellings were sprinkled with blood would be exempt, led him to observe the Passover the night before their departure from Egypt.

VERSE 29

By faith they passed through the Red (“Red” not “Reed” - many had walked through “marshy areas” before; also Acts 7:36) Sea as by dry land (first time anyone had seen this) whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned (Ex 14:22).

The confidence of Moses never wavered. Certainly there was some doubt among the people as to whether they could pass through the sea, but their obedience to the command to go forward did evidence some faith on their part. Their escape, and the drowning of the Egyptians, were evidence to all that God was with the children of Israel. (Notice that the author omits the forty years in the wilderness because he has already used it as a bad example.)

This reference also gives reliability to the Exodus account.

VERSE 30

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were circled for seven days.

To march around the city for seven days would seem to be a foolish thing to do, especially if you believed that when the time came for you to shout that the walls would fall down (especially outwards). But this is exactly what the Israelites did in obedience to God’s command. This they did by faith, and their faith was rewarded by God’s fulfilling His promise to bring down the mighty walls (Josh 6:20).

Refer to *The Biblical Archeology Review* information reconfirming this event.

VERSE 31

By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace (Josh 6:23; 7:1-23).

Her faith, although very simple and elementary, was nevertheless very real. She had heard reports as to how God was with the Israelites and realized how God

had determined to bring the Israelites into the land of Canaan. She put her faith into action and was, therefore, spared when those about her were destroyed.

VERSE 32

And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets.

The names of these men are not given in chronological order. This demonstrates the fact that the author is not writing mere history. Chronologically, these names would stand as follows: Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel, David, and the prophets.

Gideon, son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh, was the fifth judge of Israel. He was surnamed Jerubabel (i.e., let Baal plead) because of his opposition to Baal in breaking down his altar and cutting down his grove (Milligan, p. 321). Compare Judges 7:7.

Barak was a leader of Israel, of the tribe of Naphtali. He became renowned for his great victory which he gained over the Canaanites (Milligan, p. 321) (cf. Jdgs 4:16).

Samson was the thirteenth judge of Israel, and lived as a Nazarite from his birth. The first manifestation of his great power was when he killed a young lion. After this, he also slaughtered the Philistines on several occasions; and finally he destroyed himself and three thousand of them by overthrowing the temple of their god Dagon (Jdgs 13:1-16,31).

Jephthah, the son of Gilead by a concubine, was the ninth judge of Israel. He was distinguished particularly for his victories over the Ammonites and the Ephraimites (Jdgs 11:1-12:7).

David, the well known son of Jesse, and second king of Israel (only king mentioned), was always distinguished for his trust and confidence in God.

Samuel was the fifteenth and last judge of Israel. Even from the time of his childhood he was distinguished for his piety; "and all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that he was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam 3:20). He rallied Israel against the Philistines and recaptured the ark (Bruce).

The prophets - None of these men was in a position of outstanding dignity of position when they were called, which only serves to enhance the power of their faith. Dignity does not make faith efficacious; faith makes the weak and lowly strong for God.

VERSE 33

Who through faith subdued (conquered - NAS) kingdoms, worked righteousness (usually denotes a personal piety - not read in the Septuagint except as personal righteousness; exception, case of David (2 Sam 8:15) and Samuel (1 Sam 12:3), obtained (e.g., land - Josh 14:6-14; Jerusalem delivered from enemies - 2 Kgs 19:32 - Boatman) promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

Some of those named subdued kingdoms – Barak, Gideon, and David. The obtaining of promises especially by prayer and intercession, whether for themselves or for the nation, is illustrated in several instances (cf. 2 Kgs 19:15; 20:2). Daniel was the remarkable case of shutting (stopped, closed up) the mouths of lions (Dan 6:21-22; also David - 1 Sam 17:34; and Samson - Jdgs 14:6). These statements give evidence of the power of faith.

VERSE 34

Quenched the violence (δύναμιν) of fire, escaped the edge (little mouths) of the swords (indicates frequent assaults - Vincent). Not merely the fire but the power of fire. This is well illustrated in the case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Dan 3:19-28).

Out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

The first statement applies physically, as in the case of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20), or in spiritual experience, as with Barak, Gideon and Jephthah. These speak not so much of human prowess as of the faith that produced it.

VERSE 35

Women received their dead raised to life again.

There is no doubt that this is a special reference to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kgs 17:17-24), and to that of the Shunamite (2 Kgs 4:18-37). The son of the former was restored to life by Elijah; and the son of the latter by Elisha. But, according to our author, this was effected in part through the faith of these women. Had it not been for their faith in God, the miracles would not have been wrought.

And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance.

Were tortured (ἐτυμπανίσθησαν) signifies either beaten to death, or stretched upon a wheel for torture (i.e., if they were forced to deny their faith - Vincent, 23).

That they might obtain a better resurrection - by apostatizing and saving themselves from death would be a type of resurrection, but by suffering death as a martyr they were insured a better resurrection at the second coming of Christ.

VERSE 36

Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, (Paul received scourging [μαστίγων] five times - 2 Cor 11:24); *yes, and of chains and imprisonment* (Jer 20:2; 37:15; 38:6; Gen 39:11-20; 1 Kgs 22:27).

VERSE 37

They were stoned (1 Kgs 21:13; Zechariah, son of Jehoiada - 2 Chron 24:20), *they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins* (2 Kgs 1:7-8; Elijah - 1 Kgs 19:13), *and goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, tormented.*

The Talmud says Isaiah was sawn in two by the order of Manassah, king of Judah. It also appears in an Apocryphal book, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, 5:11. They “were tempted” probably refers to offers of life, wealth, honor – all sorts of bribes and inducements to tempt them to abandon the faith and deny their God.

VERSE 38

Of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

As did also the Christians to whom he writes - chapter 10:32-34.

These men were driven from the society and often had to hide in dens and caves to escape the wrath of men. Perhaps this refers particularly to Elijah, and the hundred prophets hidden in caves by Obadiah, fed with bread and water (1 Kgs 18:4).

VERSE 39

And all these, having obtained a good testimony (gained approval through - NAS) *through (by) faith, did not receive the promise* (i.e., the Messiah).

Note the NAS translation.

It was faith which supported these men of different ages and areas to remain faithful in their time of persecution. They all heard of the promises made to

Abraham of a heavenly rest, and the promise of a Messiah; but they died without having seen the “anointed of the Lord.”

All of the following verses in Hebrews chapter eleven show obedience with faith:

7,8,11,17,21,24,25,27,28,29,30,31,33 and 34.

VERSE 40

God having provided something better (the New Covenant, etc. 8:6) for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

The “better thing” was evidently the new and better covenant which was established on new and better promises (8:6). The phrase “without us” could be taken as the equivalent to “without the religion which through Christ we now actually enjoy” (i.e., those in the “reality”. “Shadows” cannot exist without the “reality” of 8:5). For Christ Himself is the essential bond of union which binds together the saints of all ages. And as it were not, and could not, be perfected without the cleansing efficacy of His blood, it may accurately be said, that they were not perfected “without us” and the “better thing” which we by the grace of God now actually enjoy.

XIII. EXHORTATIONS TO THE SAME KIND OF CONFIDENCE AND PERSEVERANCE AS THOSE IN CHAPTER 11..... 12:1-29

THE PERFECT AND FINAL FAITH OF THE CHRISTIAN AGE

A. Jesus, The Author And Perfecter Of The Faith 12:1-3

VERSE 12:1

Therefore (τοιγαρο—ν) - a strongly emphatic particle; it occurs in the New Testament at the first of the sentence in 1 Thessalonians 4:8 and here only.

We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (used in Herodotus 8:109 - host of men).

So great (μέγας) - used only here in the New Testament - used by Homer (Iliad 4:274 et al) for a compact, numberless throng.

Those named in chapter 11 who kept their eyes on the goal while actively enduring.

Cloud - crowd, mass, throng.

Witnesses (μαρτύρων) - the idea is that they are not so much spectators, but witnesses (same as 11:24, 5, 39) to you that you can do it. From the context, we look to them rather than their looking on us. They are witnesses “to us” not “of us.”

The word θεωρός is not used in the New Testament. It means one who was a spectator at the games. (They did it under an inferior covenant.)

Vincent: “The writer’s picture is that of an arena in which the Christians whom he addresses are contending in a race, while the vast host of the heroes of faith, who having witness borne to them (maybe better - having witnesses borne to them by their faith and works) have entered into their heavenly rest, watches the contest from the encircling tiers of the arena, compassing and overhanging it like a cloud, filled with lively interest and sympathy, and lending heavenly aid.”

Let us (they did - you, too!) *lay aside every weight* (ὄγκον - burden, impediment).

Encumbrance (NAS) - as a runner sheds all unnecessary weight ... weight, not sin; but *things*, possibly right in themselves, per se, which would keep one from running well.

And THE (yes, there is a “the”) *sin which so easily ensnares* (entangles) *us*. In this context that sin was unbelief; giving up Christianity to go back into the inferior system of Judaism.

Ensnarers (εὐπερίστατον - only here in the New Testament) - like a loose robe clinging to the limbs of a runner; easily snaring - Vincent.

Run with endurance (ὑπομονῆς) - patient faith is required because:

1. The contest (race = Christianity) set before us is a long distance race.
2. It is NOT run how WE choose to run it. God has chosen for us how it must be run (Eph 2:10). There is no “short cut” to victory (1 Jn 5:40); run in such a way that you may obtain it (1 Cor 8:24b; cf. Rom 8:31-39).

VERSE 2

Looking unto Jesus (ἀφορῶντες) - “to look away,” i.e., to look away from everything and anybody except Jesus (used only here and Phil 2:23).

Unto Jesus - the supreme witness to the truth (that you can make it, Christianity is true, etc.)

“Why” is told in verse 3b.

Author (ἀρχηγὸν) - chief leader, author, captain, prince.

Finisher (τελειωτὴν) - completeness, perfection (used here only in the New Testament in this form).

The “τελ” word is used in the following passages - 2:10; 5:9; 6:1; 7:11,19,28; 9:9; 10:1,14; 11:40 and here.

Of our faith - He did what the Law could not do (cf. 7:19)

This should read *of the faith*. “The” is in the Greek and “our” is not.

For the joy - the joy of saving men and sitting at the right hand of God; of overcoming obstacles to reach His goal and accomplish the will of His Father. Compare this with Philippians 2:5-8; ἀντὶ = “in exchange for.”

Who for - ἀντὶ NOT εἰς. Literally “instead of.”

Two ways to understand this phrase:

Instead of the joy of knowing that He will return to heaven when His mission on earth is completed He endured suffering and the cross for us.

Leo Richardson’s interpretation: ἀντὶ = “instead of,” therefore the joy set before Him = what He had in heaven; but, instead of retaining that “joy”, He endured suffering and the cross for us. Instead of joy, finish the course set before you.

See two articles on “For The Joy” in the Appendix.

The comparison for Christians is that regardless of the obstacles we ought to look beyond the immediate to the joy set before us.

In Jesus’ case, not the cross, but the things of God, compare James 1:2-4 (Milligan, p. 51).

Endured the cross - i.e., resisted unto blood (v. 4).

Despising (not paying any attention to it) *the shame* - Galatians 3:13 (cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree) - continuous sin/curse.

Has sat down (perfect tense - remains) *at the right hand of the throne of God* - He reigns.

VERSE 3

For consider Him (ἀναλογίσασθε) - “by way of comparison”, [reckon, estimate carefully], how much more He endured than you (Farrar - Cambridge). Keep the context in mind.

The word “consider” is used five times: 3:1; 7:4; 10:24; 12:3; 13:7. (Some suggest it as a theme.)

This introduces the reason for exhortation to look unto Jesus - i.e., He had to endure more than you (we) have.

The idea is to consider or meditate on the Bible and on Jesus. Become one who is serious about your religion.

Who endured (ὑπομεμενηκότα) *such hostility* (ἀντιλογίαν) *from* (ὑπὸ) *sinner*s (1 Pet 2:21ff) *against Himself*. Some verses have “themselves” - i.e., opposed selves (Vincent) - or Himself = produced contradictory feelings within Himself (Boatman).

Lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. Christ never gave up! Why should we give up on - or for - Him?

Discouraged in your souls (lose heart) - you need active endurance (patience - Gal 6:9).

As the affliction of the Christian Jews increased they, too, were tempted to turn their backs on the new faith. Had they been wrong in embracing Christianity? Was high living displeased because they had identified themselves with Jesus of Nazareth? Did not their suffering show that God no longer regarded them with favor? (Pink, p. 925). NO! The Hebrew author shows just the opposite. Their sufferings proved they *were* sons of God.

Inherent in this passage is the idea of the purpose of suffering. They have yet to suffer or to sacrifice as Christ had, and are reminded that the scriptures teach that a loving father rebukes and chastens his children. If they had received no chastening or rebuking, then are they truly children of that father?

It is important to recognize God’s purpose in these trials – and the consequent profit; that in the end they will unquestionably gain from them.

B. Failure To Respond To (Chastening - Discipline) 12:4-13

VERSE 4

You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

Contrast yourselves with Christ. Christ RESISTED UNTO BLOOD, you have not (Vine, p. 146). It is suggested that this phrase refers to the fact that they had not “fought the limit” (Stephen, James, Peter, etc. See Herod’s violence against the church in Acts 12). “...yet hath the blood of any of you been shed in combating against your wicked persecutions?” They had not gone as far as they could for Christianity.

Paul had “resisted unto blood” as recorded in Acts 16:33 and 2 Corinthians 11:24-27. In 2 Corinthians 6:4-6 the word “die” is not used. One does not have to die to resist unto blood. Paul tells us what we must endure as “ministers of God” and, included in this, is the giving of our own blood if necessary. In resisting sin - (STRIVING AGAINST SIN):

Christ “resisted unto blood” when He suffered and died upon the cross.

Boatman suggests for our consideration that many modern preachers are afraid of blood. “They are afraid to preach against sin, because it might make them unpopular.”

How long are we going to allow ourselves to be loved and respected by all denominations at the cost of compromising truth? This is the same truth for which Paul suffered, and that Christ died for. “It is time to resist unto blood.”

VERSE 5

And you have forgotten the exhortation (παρακλήσεως - encouragement, comfort, consolation - Arndt and Gingrich) which speaks to you as sons. They should have had comfort, but were growing weary.

Nor be discouraged (ἐκλύου) - same as verse 3; to lose heart.

In verses 5 and 6 we notice a quotation from Proverbs 3:11-12.

My son do not despise (ὀλιγώρει - to think little of) the chastening (παιδεύει - Vine denotes the training of a child is included in instruction.)

Compare Ephesians 6:4 - the word punish (τιμωρία) is not used, showing even their punishment was for training; (Vine, p. 183) to bring remembrance that it is the Christian's lot to be chastened.

Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him. But, do not go to the other extreme by "regarding lightly" or "fainting".

"As the afflictions of the believing Jews increased they too were sorely tempted to turn their back upon the new Faith. Had they been wrong in embracing Christianity? Was high heaven displeased because they had identified themselves with Jesus of Nazareth? Did not their sufferings go to show that God no longer regarded them with favour?" (Pink, p. 925).

"There are, thus, sufferings which seen indeed in connection with our own sinfulness, and have the significance of chastisement, yet still are not punitive sufferings, such as would give us to taste the wrath of God, but strokes inflicted by divine love, as means of Paternal chastisement for the purpose of educating us for the heavenly kingdom" (Lange, p. 202).

VERSE 6

For whom the Lord loves He chastens (not needlessly - Lam 3:33; Hos 11:8). Read 1 Corinthians 11:32 and Acts 14:22, noting the similarity.

The trials themselves should be proof that God is dealing with them as children. Most misunderstood motive - when there are no trials, no reproofs, no discipline given, one might consider the actuality of his not being a child of God. This is borne out by the following verses (7-11).

And scourges (μαστιγοῦ) every son whom He receives.

The Jewish scourge - three thongs of leather.

Thirteen lashes given across the bare breast.

Thirteen lashes given across each shoulder.

40 save 1.

Paul - 2 Corinthians 11:24. Also see Acts 5:40; 16:37; 21:32; 22:24.

Arndt and Gingrich suggest "upbringing, training, instruction." So we see that the chastening is for one purpose; to train the child of God, to give guidance, that he might be strengthened and able to endure in time of trial.

Comfort - 1 Peter 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8.

Son (παιδεύει). The end result of discipline here because it shows the attention of affection of God (Alford).

VERSE 7

If you endure chastening God deals with (προσφέρεται = bring to as an offering - Vincent) you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not chasten? Answer: those who are not loved! Proverbs 13:24 - he who spares the rod hates his son.

Endure (ὑπομένετε) - very nearly the same as in verse 3.

The affective dealings of God with Christians is evidence they are sons of God brought to him by affliction (Barnes, p. 299).

To continue with the thought of chastening, we read that God deals with them as a father deals with his sons.

If you submit to His authority, humble yourselves under His hand, and pray for His blessing, you will find that He deals with you as beloved children, correcting you that He make you partakers of His holiness. He acknowledges by this that you belong to the family and that He as your Father has you under proper discipline.

VERSE 8

But if (1st class conditional) you are without chastening, of which all (refutes their reasoning given earlier) have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

No one is approved without chastening; cf. 2 Timothy 3:12 - all who would live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution. If we have not, we have not been chastened and are not really sons of God.

Major Premise	-	All sons are partakers of discipline.
Minor Premise	-	You are without discipline.
Therefore	-	You are not sons.

“To be without chastisement, the Hebrew writer tells us, is to be without a loving Father who cares for us, and our well-being. This is strongly noted by the use of the words, ‘Then are ye bastards and not sons.’ In the case of the bastard child, the father casts him off, and will not claim him as his own. The reference here is to the father’s neglect of the child in all areas, but mainly to the neglect of the

child's wants and to his discipline. The child receives no recognition by the father, no instruction and no discipline, therefore does what he pleases. God has not cast the Christian aside as the father of the bastard child, but has through his chastening proven 'that we are not forgotten by the Holy and High One, who condescends to sustain the character, and to evince towards us, in our wanderings, the watchful care of a Father'" (Barnes, p. 1334).

VERSE 9

Furthermore, (Vincent - new phrase), *we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them* (argument of the lesser to the greater - God wants us to be subject to our fathers anyway - Deut 21:18-21; Eph 6:1) *respect* (maybe not at the time out of love, but fear then, later, 'correctors'): *shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits* (1. a refutation against original sin, Adam is our father only in a physical way while God is the Father of our spirits; 2. a refutation against evolution) *and live?* (it produces life! [versus death]).

As we subject ourselves to the father of our fleshly nature in his discipline of us, even the more should we give ourselves in subjection to the chastisement of the Father of our spiritual life, as our parents are of our natural life. God being infinitely perfect, and perfectly Holy, proves that his chastisements, like himself in this respect, are wise, just and good. In comparison with the characteristics of our fleshly parents, frail, weak, sinful, we see the need to give ourselves completely in subjection to our Heavenly Father (Milligan).

VERSE 10

For they indeed for a few days [a short time versus a life time (i.e., eternally) - also Old Testament parents killed rebellious children- Deut 21:18-21] *chastened us as seemed best to them* (not always best for us); *but He for OUR* (no such error by God) *profit, that we may be partakers* (share - μεταλαβε ϕ v - aorist) *of His holiness* (i.e., be where He is).

Chastisement - we do not accept it with a joyous heart; shunning it even when we need it and fully realizing that we rightfully deserve it.

VERSE 11

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but grievous.

In our acceptance of this needed chastisement, the Christian learns much. His heart is changed from one of hardness to that of a person with love, concern, humility and such like, in order that peaceful fruit may be borne.

Nevertheless, afterward (cf. Psa 119:67,71) it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (trained as an athlete in a gym [we get “gymnasium” from it]). Compare weight lifting - resist - once makes you stronger. Thompson.)

If everything went just as we wanted it, we would never grow (except normally). When adversity comes do we get stronger or weaker? (Jas 1:2-4).

This refers to those having been trained by the chastening of God, thus yielding the fruit of righteousness. Examples of these are seen in Job 42:7-8; Paul's thorn in the flesh - 2 Corinthians 12:7.

Fruit of righteousness = fruit which consists of righteousness.

VERSE 12

Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down and the feeble knees (from Isa 35:3) and denotes any form of weariness. This is applied to the Jews returning to Jerusalem from Babylon. (NOTE: You come back to Christianity just like they came back from Babylon.)

Because we now have the proof that God considers us His children, we must consider the Christian's duty to others, his aims in life, and the dangers that will face him. “They must put fresh vigor into the listless hands and fresh strength to failing feet.”

Point: Now that you know your afflictions are God-given for your benefit, renew the courage you once had.

The words of verse 12 take us to Isaiah 35:3 and Job 4:3-4 where we see they are words of encouragement to those who are discouraged. The Hebrew writer uses them in the same manner here.

“In persecution and sickness and bereavement, he (the Christian) may be ready to sink under his burdens. The hands fall and the knees tremble, and the heart sink within us. But confidence in God and the Hope of heaven, and the assurance that all this is for our good, will reinvigorate the enfeebled frame and enable us to bear what we once supposed would crush us to dust” (Barnes, p. 1335).

VERSE 13

And make straight paths for your feet - we must walk a straight path, thus being a good example to follow for Christians who may be weak. We must live righteously, in order that we cause not our weaker brother to stumble, by his walking in our careless and straying footsteps. By leading our weaker brother in the right direction, he is soon

strengthened enough to walk on his own and will soon be leading someone else (Vine, p. 149).

They did not have doctors and/or knowledge to repair broken and out of joint bones as we do.

So that what is lame (χωλὸν - the figurative description of wavering between two beliefs; cf. 1 Kgs 18:21, Hewitt.) *may not be dislocated* (put out of joint), *but rather be healed*. They were "lame" Christians in going back to Judaism - lame in their souls. Instead of continuing in that direction and growing 'lamer,' by following the straight (right) paths of Christ, (Psa 16:11a; 23:3; 119:35; etc.), their souls will grow strong and be well.

To summarize these previous verses, and to apply them to us today, we need only read the verses to see their importance. As sons of God, we will receive the rod of chastisement from a loving Father who desires that we grow. The rod is given that we might know that the love of God always abides with us and that, in His love, God will give to us that which we need to yield fruits of righteousness. If this discipline was not given, we would be as the illegitimate child whose father cares not for his well-being.

C. Falling Short Of The Grace Of God 12:14-17

Exhortation To Fidelity In View Of The Danger Of Losing All.

VERSE 14

Pursue peace (Rom 12:18 - as much as it depends on you) *with all men and holiness*, (proof they were Christians; 1 Pet 1:2-3; Heb 2:11; 7:11,19; 10:14; Acts 26:18).

They were to observe very carefully their behavior, that they might guard themselves and those around them against sin, so that they might be fit to partake of the promises received from God.

Four areas to guard against are mentioned by the Hebrews writer. Those who do not have discipline would easily fall into these errors.

VERSE 15

1st *Looking diligently lest anyone fall* (back from - ὑστερTMν ἀπὸ - present particle) *short* (fail - KJV) *of* (ἀπὸ - from) *the grace of God*. To fall into this pitfall is to lose all that God promised to the faithful (cf. Gal 5:4; 1 Tim 4:1).

2nd *Lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled* (cf. 1 Cor 5:6 - a little leaven). This can happen in any congregation and must be guarded against (cf. Septuagint, Deut 29:18). There must be no bitterness that can give birth to strife among brethren! This bitterness will defile many.

VERSE 16

- 3rd *Lest there be any fornicator* (πόρνος - always used in New Testament in the literal sense - Vincent). Fornication, the sin which defiles the marriage bed and undermines the Christian (or any) home (cf. 1 Cor 5:6-7).
- 4th *Or profane* (βέβηλος - godless) *person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.*

One who has no thought of God, compare 1 Timothy 1:9 (unholy and profane persons); 4:7 (profane things and old wives fables); 6:20 (profane babblings); 2 Timothy 2:16 (shun profane babblings). Esau is mentioned in connection with profane persons, and he is called one who is profane because he sold his birthright (we are not to consider our birthright as something cheap cf. 2 Pet 1:9) and trade it off for the physical (compare the Hebrew Christians - 2 Peter 1:9 - forgotten cleansing from former sins); compare Genesis 25:34. Even though Esau later sought his blessing, even to the point of tears, he received it not, for he found no way (also) of undoing the consequence of his own act (Brumelow, p. 1029).

This is not teaching he could not repent, for the verse clearly states he *did* (desired the blessing) but it was too late (cf. Lk 13:3,5; rich fool - Lk 16:19-31).

The NIV reads “change of mind.”

Peter Minuet bought Manhattan Island from the Carnasi Indians for \$24 worth of trinkets. The problem was, they did not own it! It had to be bought later from the Manhattan Indians and payments are still being made on it. The moral of the story: even though in his mind he was doing something good, he exchanged something of value for nothing. Compare him to Esau.

VERSE 17

For you know . . . rejected . . . no place for repentance. There is a time in each person's life when it is too late to repent; e.g. the rich man in Hades' torments (Lk 16:19-31).

We are told to watch carefully for those pitfalls, for the consequences of our falling into them can be very serious ... even to the point of our not being able to receive our “birthright” as children of Abraham. These are very grave warnings indeed!

D. The Nature Of The Old Covenant In Contrast With That Of The New 12:18-24

1. Introduction To The Section - The Terror Of The Old 12:18-21

In Deuteronomy 4:11 we read of the first lawgiving; and in Exodus 19:12-13 we read of the “unapproachability of that awful mountain” (cf. Deut 5:23-27; 9:19). From here to 12:21 is a pattern of phrases that are reminiscences from the story of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

The contrast between the old and new covenants is made so that we might see that when the Israelites and even Moses came near to the presence of God, they feared mightily. The Christian has a new relationship with God, one not like the relationship the nation of Israel experienced. The Hebrew writer encourages them (those of the New Covenant) on the grounds that they have not come to the terrors of Sinai but to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the innumerable hosts of angels ...to Jesus, the mediator of a New Covenant.

VERSE 18

For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched (their problem), and that burned with fire (Ex 19:18; Deut 4:11, 5:4; 9:15), and to blackness and darkness and tempest.

The Hebrew Christians are assured that the experiences that the nation of Israel was subjected to on Mount Sinai would not be their fate. The value of the birth-right promised to Abraham and to his seed is not a part of the Law of Moses (Gal 3:18).

VERSE 19

And the sound of a trumpet. The trumpet mentioned here was just a part of that frightening experience at Mount Sinai, *and the VOICE (sound) OF WORDS* - being the voice that shook the earth (cf. v. 26).

So that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. In Deuteronomy 5:22 we see that this voice is the voice of the Lord. In Exodus 20:19 the people were fearful of God’s voice and requested that Moses intercede for them with God.

VERSE 20

(For they could not endure what was commanded: “And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with an arrow” (Deut 19:12f). This is no doubt the sound of the voice of God, and Boatman suggests that the “frightening trumpet, voice quaking, and all, was more than they could stand without a mediator.

The Mountain (Sinai) was sacred ground and even for a beast to touch it demanded death (Ex 19:13).

VERSE 21

And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling." The words ascribed to Moses in this verse are not recorded elsewhere.

Barnes feels, as many others do, that the Hebrew writer is alluding to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 9:19, where he speaks to the people being fearful that the Lord's anger will be kindled against the Israelites on account of their sin (golden calf - if not, Hebrews again tells us something the Old Testament does not). Compare Exodus 19:16.

E. Seven Characteristics Of The New..... 12:22-24

Our new relationships and blessings in Mount Zion.

In contrast to the fearful way in which those under the Old Covenant came near unto the presence of God, the Hebrews, as Christians under a New Covenant and with a new mediator, will come into the presence of God in a much better way (instead of the terror of the Old Testament), i.e., without fear, for they are sons of God, through Jesus.

Eight things Christians have come to under the New Testament. (Also see verse 28 - a kingdom.)

VERSE 22

1st *But (ἀλλὰ) you have come to Mount Zion.* As Christians, the Hebrews have a Holy City, just as Mount Zion and Jerusalem were considered to be sacred or held a religious significance to the Israelite nation.

Mount Zion refers to the New Covenant - Galatians 4:21-31 (esp. 25-26 - not Sinai). See Isaiah 28:16 - Christ is the stone. 1 Peter 2:6 - I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone. Romans 9:33 - I lay in Zion a stumbling stone. We "come to the mount" to receive all spiritual blessings (Eph 1:3).

2nd *And to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem* (Rev 3:12 - cf. 11:10). *City* and *heavenly* are intangibles.

3rd *To an innumerable company of angels.* Paul speaks of this place in Galatians 4: 21-31 - a warning not go back to the Old Testament.

VERSE 23

4th *To the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN (ONES).* Could “general assembly” refer to the faithful of the Old Covenant and “church of the firstborn” refer to New Covenant people? If so, it would show these two are together and you cannot be with the faithful of the old if not with the faithful of the new (cf. Old Testament dedication).

As Christians with citizenship in heaven, we also are part of the church. In the Old Testament, before the Mosaic priesthood, the firstborn (ones) served as priests. Acts 2:47; James 1:18; Colossians 1:15 - which is the church of Christ on earth. As members of this body (*who are registered in heaven* - citizenship - Phil 3:20), we have our names written in heaven (Lk 10:20; Phil 4:3 – Paul’s co-workers’ names are in the Book of Life.

5th *To God the Judge of all.*

6th *And to the spirits of just men made (having been made) perfect (reaching the designed end) - refers, according to Milligan, “to the spirits of all the redeemed from Abel downward to the present time (cf. 11:40), cf. Revelation 7:14-17.”* Alive or dead?

VERSE 24

7th *To Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.*

Christians are to humble themselves before God the creator of all things, and to Jesus the mediator of a New Covenant (9:15) with a confidence never before realized.

8th *And to the blood of sprinkling (Christ’s - 9:23) that speaks better things than that of Abel - a contrast between the blood of Abel and the blood of Christ is made. How? Four ways - Where:*

1. The blood of Abel called for vengeance;
2. The blood of Abel’s sacrifice (animal) did not take away sin, but Jesus’ blood did;
3. The blood of Abel was martyred; Jesus’ blood brought reconciliation to God;
4. If Abel’s blood cried out from ground and God “heard” it, how much more would God “hear” the blood of His Son for forgiveness (Gen 4:10)?

The blood of Jesus eliminates vengeance. It opens up the way of reconciliation.

F. A Final Warning To Stay In The Kingdom..... 12:25-29

VERSE 25

A warning that they had better not refuse to listen to God as He speaks to them through the gospel of His Son, as the Israelites refused to listen to Him who spoke to them through Moses. As they received punishment then, so the Hebrew Christians would in their time, if they neglected His works. God, being unchangeable, is as much a consuming fire to those who heed not his words of this day, as he was in the days of Moses.

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks (who is speaking) - a theme throughout: speaking and hearing - 1:1-2; 2:1,2,3; 3:7; Psa 95; 3:16; 4:2-4; 5:11 climaxes here 25-27. This is referring to Jesus (cf. 1:1-2).

For if . . . (cf. 2:2-4) . . . *from heaven* (Deut 18:19; see Acts 3:32f).

If we turn away from Him (ἀποστρέφόμενοι - present participle) - some at that time were turning back to temple sacrifice.

VERSE 26

Whose voice then shook the earth. This takes us back to Mount Sinai as we saw earlier in Exodus 19. The Hebrew writer is saying this is the same voice that shook the earth at Mount Sinai, the voice of Almighty God (but now He has promised saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth but also heaven" (Hag 2:6).

If he who 'shook' the earth is to be feared, much more so is He as one who shakes heaven. Then, let us beware of ignoring his voice: by inattention, by unbelief, by disobedience or by apostasy (Pink, p. 1064).

Another thought on this is that while giving the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai was momentous enough to shake the earth, the giving of the gospel of Christ was such a greater occasion that both the heavens and the earth were shaken.

Also note this most likely is not to be taken literally, unless -

1. This referred to the events that followed the death of Christ on the cross and it could be since Haggai prophesied it.
2. The writer of Hebrews probably is referring to the fact that all nations shall be jolted and so moved by the gospel that the only way

to describe such an event would be to equate it with the trembling of the heavens and the earth.

3. Verse 26 points us to Haggai 2:6-7, to which the words used by the author of Hebrews undoubtedly, refer: "It is obvious that the shaking of the heavens and the earth in Habakkuk's time was to commence soon with the coming of the Messiah and the inauguration of the new era under Him." (True, it was in historical context.)

VERSE 27

Now this, "Yet once more" - the word spoken by God through His Son, as seen in the gospel, shall nullify all Jewish law that was before; signifying the removing of those things that are shaken as well as these things that have been made.

The Jewish religion with its ceremonial laws and observances was never meant to stand forever. The coming of Christ has shaken this system to its very foundation, and all things that were made, which include all things that were meant to last but a short time, shall be done away (that these things which are not shaken may remain).

That which cannot be shaken (the gospel - the church; spiritual things) may remain (cf. Eph 3:21).

The ten commandments are among the things shaken and do not remain.

VERSE 28

Verse 28 speaks of the church; also Ephesians 3:21 and Matthew 16:18. The latter part of verse 28 and through verse 29 gives forth with a warning ... a warning that says the Christian must serve God with the reverence and awe due our Creator.

Therefore since we are receiving (present linear - a process going on) a kingdom which cannot be shaken (the church - Eph 3:21; Mt 16:18; Dan 2:44; Jn 18:36 - a kingdom not of this world), let us have grace (show gratitude; thankfulness of 1 Cor 10:30), by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (δέους - apprehension of danger versus φόβος - terror when danger appears).

See "Identifying Marks" in the Appendix.

VERSE 29

For our God is a consuming fire. These words of verse 29 carry great force. Turning to Deuteronomy 4:24 we see that Moses spoke these words to the children of God,

warning them that they must never turn from the living God to idols and graven images, for God is a jealous God. The Israelites are told to worship God, and God alone, else they would be faced with God, “a consuming fire” (Barclay, p. 216).

We must grasp the same message from these words of warning. If we remain faithful unto God, and not be moved by the false teachings of men, we will be secure. But if we “be false to God, and that very God who might have been your salvation, will be to you a consuming fire of destruction.”

Paradox - returning to Judaism from Christianity is equivalent to returning to idols and graven images.

XIV. PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS 13:1-25

A. Social Duties 13:1-7

The writer, in the Epistle’s conclusion, begins with various exhortations intended to encourage the child of God to observe essential qualities of the Christian life. These in verses 1-7 are moral exhortations of a more general character.

VERSE 13:1

Let brotherly love continue. We are commanded to let this love of brothers and sisters in Christ continue.

Of course, in order for it to continue, it must first exist (1 Pet 1:22a; it did according to Heb 6:10 and 10:33-34).

There must be a warmth, a tenderness, a closeness, one with another because we are God’s children, ourselves having been begotten in love (Jn 3:16).

John tells us that, *If we love one another, God abides in us* (1 Jn 4:12).

For us to wear the name “Christian” and to grow spiritually as we strive to spread the gospel to all men, we must abound in love. To be weak in this, or to feel its absence in our hearts, is to be a child of God no more.

VERSE 2

Do not forget to entertain strangers.

As God loved us while we were yet sinners (Rom 5:8), we too must show love unto others who may not be of the body of Christ (strangers do not necessarily have to be Christians).

These strangers may be in need of something we can give, so we should remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 25:35, *I was a stranger and you took me in.*

For by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

Another incident we should keep in mind is the experience of Abraham and the strangers in Genesis 18. His guests were none other than messengers of God.

Manoah was told by angels that he would have a son (Jdgs 13:34).

This does not imply we may entertain angels today.

Vine says these words are translated from the single Greek word (φιλοζενίας) meaning "hospitality." When we are hospitable to strangers, as well as to friends, we show forth the love that is in us as sons of the most High God.

VERSE 3

Remember the prisoners - compare Matthew 25 - context is the same in verse 2.

This no doubt refers to:

1. Chiefly to those who were in bonds on account of their religion (body = the church), or
2. Body = physical body; therefore, subject to the same (cf. Jesus in Heb 2:17; cf. 1 Cor 12:26).

Yet, this exhortation sets forth the principle of sympathy to all who are under oppression, primarily to Christians "since you also are in the body!" We should help them when we possibly can, and help those of their loved ones who suffer because of such a loss. We should have a prayer for them upon our lips and love for them in our hearts (prayer is more real if you were the one in prison).

VERSE 4

Marriage is honorable among all. As we read verse 4 we cannot help but see its impression upon the Christian; the purity and honor that must exist in the marriage relationship.

Celibacy is not preferred. God has instituted the marriage union of male and female from the beginning in the garden of Eden (Gen 2:21-24).

Celibacy is dangerous (1 Cor 7:1-7 - the wife does not have authority over her body, but the husband and vice versa).

Under certain circumstances being single is advantageous (1 Cor 7:7).

And the bed undefiled. 1) Do not be a fornicator or an adulterer, 2) Anything is okay in marriage.

Fornicators and adulterers God will judge. This does not mean we are not to judge them according to the word, but that they will not get away with it! Does celibacy breed fornication and adultery? (1 Cor 7).

1 Corinthians 5 - withdraw from them because of their being immoral.

VERSE 5

Let your conduct (τρόπος - disposition or behavior) *be without covetousness* - do not be fond of money as a way of life.

For the Christian to be a lover of money and entangled therein, is to forsake the words of Jesus in Matthew 6.

Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 6:10 that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (see Col 3:5). We need only look about us to know the truth of these words. Greed breeds a will and desire to lie, cheat, and even to commit murder. Did it not corrupt the temple in Jerusalem (cf. Jn 2:14; Mt 21:12)? Money in and of itself does not become corrupt - only people become corrupt.

Be content with such things as you have (Phil 4:11) - (ἀρκούμενοι) - middle voice here equal to be sufficient yourself (cf. Lk 3:14 - wages; 1 Tim 6:8 - food and clothing).

Riches were the only things that kept the rich young ruler out of the kingdom of God. We must be "content with such things as ye have." It is not against honest occupation, but opposed to worrying under apprehensiveness of want (Vine).

We are told in scripture that the treasures of this life rot, decay and rust; so these are possessions that are unimportant because they are not eternal. The fact that the Christian has the privilege to come into the presence of God should be all the satisfaction and peace of mind that he needs. For God supplies all he needs in this life, as well as in the next.

A lack of contentment leads to worry so he says - *for He, Himself (emphatic), has said I will never leave you nor forsake you.* This quote is from Joshua 1:5 and

shows that the man of God needs nothing more than that which God supplies
(context the same as Mt 6:33 - "Seek ye first...") - cf. Deuteronomy 31:6.

VERSE 6

So we may boldly (being of good cheer - constant habit) *say: The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what can man do to me?* - from Psalm 118:6. God can do more (Mt 10:28; Lk 12:4).

"Nothing that man can give him, no gift that earthly ambition can wring from life can improve on that" (Barclay, p. 221). If the Christian will give himself completely to God and be in subjection to His will, there will be nothing lacking, for God will supply all that is needed to sustain man and give him peace and contentment. A lack of contentment leads to worry.

VERSE 7

Remember those who rule over you (had rule; guide; same word in v. 17; cf. 2 Cor 1:24), *who have spoken the word of God to you.*

Whose faith follow - imitate.

Should be "the" faith - τὴν πίστιν.

"The faith of them" is not in the Greek. (Also goes back to Heb 3:3-4.)

The Hebrew writer had, in chapter 11, reminded the readers of the great ones of faith who had lived earlier. Now he calls on them to remember *those who lead* (rule over) *you*.

Referring to these men and women Bruce notes, "By precept and example they showed the right path to tread; being dead they yet speak, and the record of their faith is still alive in the memory of those who knew them."

These men are to be examples of faith as those recorded in chapter 11 were examples.

Lenski states that the Hebrew writer gave two qualifications for these men being examples to follow:

1. "That they spoke the Word of God," and
2. "That they had the faith."

The Greek word used here in verse 7 for *those who rule over you* and in verses 17 and 24 for “leaders” is the same.

All commentators researched were in agreement that the men spoken of in verse 7 were dead and, although the Greek construction does not definitely include this, it does imply it. The author could be referring to men such as Stephen and James, who died as martyrs, but he may have meant some of the many faithful men who “died in faith,” but who were not recorded for us.

Considering the outcome of their conduct.

The word *considering* (ἀναθεωροῦντες) is used only here and in Acts 17:23 where it is translated “examining.” It is literally “to look up a subject; to investigate; to observe accurately.”

Since the basic problem these people had was in apostatizing into Judaism, the author again admonishes them to follow the example of faithfulness of those leaders whom they had loved and followed.

VERSE 8

Two distinct translations are made of this verse.

Robertson translates this verse just the same as the New American Standard has translated it, “Jesus Christ is the same.” Most commentators agree with this translation.

But Vincent and Wuest arrived at a slightly different translation. They translate this verse, “Jesus is the Christ” (ἔστιν - not in text). Vincent states, “The emphatic point of the statement is *Christ*. They lived and died in the faith that Jesus is The Christ - the Messiah. The readers were tempted to surrender this faith and to return to Judaism which denied Jesus’ messiahship (comp. ch. x. 29).”

Yesterday, today and forever - the One in whom their earlier leaders had faith and He has not changed.

Vine notes about this section: “yesterday,” for it was He who empowered the departed guides to live as they did (1:1-2; 1:10-12) and He has an eternal past; “today,” for He is the “merciful and faithful High Priest,” “the Mediator of the New Covenant,” able to save to the uttermost; “forever” (see 7:24-25), and therefore He is the unchanging one.

VERSE 9

Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

A contrast is made between the constancy of Christ and “the varied and strange teachings” of the false teachers. The principle reference here is to Judaizing teachers, and to their various doctrines about their ceremonial observances and traditions” (Vine).

Contrast: strange teachings appeal to the intellect; grace appeals to the heart (Vine).

In the Greek, a present imperative is used here and implies that the readers had *not yet* been carried aside (παρᾶφέρεσθε) but were probably not too steadfast in their convictions and were in danger of being swept away.

The grace noted here is defined by Lenski as being “‘God’s grace,’ that which operates in and through His Word (doctrine) and roots and grounds the heart, the center of our being, in the saving truth (Jn 17:17; Eph 4:14-15).”

Fudge notes at least five explanations have been offered of these teachings about meats (βρώμασιν - food):

- “(1) Some think of a Jewish dispute over Kosher food, over clean and unclean meats, as apparently is the case in 9:10.
- “(2) Others think of meats offered to pagan idols, as in 1 Corinthians 8.
- “(3) Some suppose he refers to ascetic regulations (1 Tim 4:3) of a Gentile philosophy, as in Colossians 2:8-23.
- “(4) Still others think of sacrificial meats of the Old Testament system, of which some were eaten by the priests and/or the people.
- “(5) And some have suggested a kind of Jewish fellowship meal, as described for instance, by Josephus.”

Of these choices, he stays with a Jewish answer and by context decides that it refers to sacrificial meats. He further noted the meaning of the verse: “If such sacrificial meats are intended, the point is that the Christian’s sacrifice results in the distribution of grace which strengthens his heart, not in meat which strengthens the body.”

Barnes says, "The meaning is, that it is better to have the heart established with grace, or with the principles of pure religion, than with the most accurate knowledge of the rules of distinguishing the clean from the unclean among the various articles of food."

The Hebrew writer has noted a number of times that God is not pleased with only the outward expression of obedience, but that obedience is to be combined with a love for God and His true word.

Contrast grace as unmerited favor with 2:9, where it means the whole system of salvation.

VERSE 10

We have an altar - Christ is our altar.

See "We Have An Altar" in the Appendix.

Bruce notes that this statement was probably in answer to those of the first century who claimed, "You Christians have no real religion, for you have no sacrifices." But Bruce, interpreting the Hebrew author's intentions, said, "We have an altar—and a better one than the Jews under the Levitical order." 1) The Christian altar was the sacrifice of Christ, the benefits of which were eternally accessible to them. Hughes agrees with Bruce by noting the "altar as used here is a sort of shorthand, or synecdoche, for the whole sacrificial action of Christ, as the context plainly shows." But Barnes says, 2) "The altar to which he here refers is evidently the cross on which the great sacrifice was made." (But Vine says that it could not be the cross since no animal was slain on the altar.) Hughes, after listing those commentators who believed the altar to be the whole sacrificial action of Christ and those who believed the altar to be the cross of Christ stated, "though of course the cross necessarily implies all that took place there for our eternal redemption." See also John 6:47, 53-55; 20:31; Acts 16:31.

But one translation which is to be refuted is noted by Hughes: "It is true that from medieval times on a number of commentators, and especially, as might be expected, those of the 'catholic' persuasion, have interpreted the statement 'We have an altar' as a reference to the sacrament of the eucharist. Significantly, however, the term 'altar' is nowhere in the New Testament associated with the institution or observance of the Lord's Supper, nor is it found as a synonym for the Eucharistic table—indeed, it is perfectly plain that no altar was present when Christ inaugurated this in the upper room."

Bruce also noted, "What connection is there between this passage and the Eucharist? No direct connection at all. It is remarkable how our author avoids mentioning the Eucharist when he has every opportunity to do so."

To interpret this verse in this manner is obviously an attempt to try to prove an established dogma with any possible Scripture. The doctrine of Transubstantiation is not biblical and this verse cannot be used to try to prove it.

From which those who serve the tabernacle have no right (ἐξουσίαν) to eat.

On this section, Lenski states that the author "is thinking of sacrifices that were made at the Tabernacle by the Levitical priests, not merely for other Israelites, but for the priests themselves, in particular of the great sacrifice on the Day of Atonement . . . The Christian altar of sacrifice bears a sacrifice that is like that which was offered on the Jewish Day of Atonement, which admitted of no eating whatever." Bruce goes a step further stating that, "The sacrifice of Christ was the antitype of the sacrifice offered on the great day of Atonement, the flesh of the animals slaughtered in the course of that ritual was not eaten; their bodies were carried forth without the camp and there completely burned (Lev 16:27)."

VERSE 11

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp - (tells which sacrifice he refers to).

The Hebrew author is further noting the comparison of this type by reminding them of the procedure of the high priest in the sacrificing on the Day of Atonement. The Old Testament command is found in Leviticus 16:27, "But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was taken in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire." Parallel passages are Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:12,21; 9:11; Numbers 19:3

VERSE 12

Therefore Jesus also - Just as the animals were taken "outside the camp," Jesus was also taken outside the gates of the city. "So these animal bodies were taken outside, and this act symbolized the removal from Israel of the sin for which these animals had been slain. In order to show that Christ's blood was likewise 'that he might sanctify the people' (as already stated in 9:12-14; 10:29; 12:14), he, too, suffered 'outside the gate' on Calvary of Jerusalem" (Lenski).

That He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Westcott noted about this verse that “the use of the preposition ‘through,’ where we might have expected ‘by,’ is of interest. The high priest is the agent through whom the act of the people is accomplished. Compare verse 15.

This is the same as noted previously in 10:10, “By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Vincent notes, “For Christ’s work he claims the same efficacy which the Jew claimed for the special call of God to Israel, and for the operation of the Jewish sacrificial system.” This would also be an encouragement to those considering going back into Judaism. Since the word ‘sanctified’ is used a number of times in Hebrews, perhaps they were having trouble realizing the sanctification in Christ and were looking back to being sanctified as an Israelite. The Hebrew author is now emphasizing that being a Christian is the only ‘sanctified’ state since the death of Jesus

VERSE 13

Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

Robertson notes that the author’s appeal here is, “If a separation has to come between Judaism and Christianity, let us go out to Christ ‘outside the camp’ and take our stand with him there on Golgotha, ‘bearing his reproach’ as Jesus himself endured the Cross despising the shame (12:2) and as Moses accepted ‘the reproach of the Messiah’ (11:26) in his day.” This is the ‘great invitation’ of the Hebrew writer. His beautiful appeal can be seen in the way he includes himself along with the readers. Lenski comments, “We have reached the climax of the epistle. From the start its aim has been to restore the wavering faith of the Jewish Christian readers in Jesus, to rid them of their recently conceived desire to go back to Judaism. To accomplish this effectively the break with their nation, with all Jews must be final, irrevocable, and apparent at every turn.”

VERSE 14

For here we have no continuing (abiding - ASV) city.

Two views shown as Clark refers to this verse:

An elegant and forceful allusion to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. All commentators checked were in agreement that this was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. Vincent notes, “If the epistle had been written after the destruction of Jerusalem a reference to that event could hardly have been avoided here.”

Seems better the idea is earthly home versus heavenly home.

But we seek the one to come.

Just as Abraham was “looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God” (Heb 11:10-16), so do Christians today. But just as those Jewish Christians were having trouble with relying on an earthly city, Christians today must not think that God’s kingdom will either stand or fall with this country. God’s kingdom is independent of any national boundaries.

VERSE 15

Therefore by Him (through Him then).

Dods notes that this phrase “is in the emphatic position; ‘through Him’ and not through any Levitical device.” John 14:6 states, “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’” Also, Ephesians 2:18 notes of Jesus, “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father” (cf. Lev 7:11-25 - Old Testament Thank Offerings).

Let us continually offer up the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

The NIV reads “confess” here; 3:1; 4:14; 10:23; 13:15 - “confess” - (ὁμολογούντων - confessing normally).

Vayikra Rabba, sect. 9, fol. 153, and Rabbi Tanchum, fol. 55: “Rabbi Phineas, Rabbi Levi, and Rabbi Jochanan, from the authority of Rabbi Menachem of Galilee, said, In the time of the Messiah all sacrifice shall cease, except the sacrifice of praise”

Barnes gave another tradition of the Jews: The Jews say Rosemuller had a species of offering which they called peace-offerings or friendship-offerings. They were designed not to produce peace or friendship with God, but to preserve it. The offerer was regarded as one who stood in the relation of a friend with God, and the oblation was a sign of thankful acknowledgment for favors received; or were connected with vows in order that further blessings might be obtained; or they were brought voluntarily as a means to continue themselves in the friendship and favor of God.

Also, 1 Peter 2:5 ties in well with this verse: *You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

The words “give thanks,” (ὁμολογούντων - wholehearted acknowledgement - Vine says used in the Septuagint to praise God publicly) as footnoted in the New American Standard can be translated “confess.” In fact, out of the 23 times this Greek word is used in the New Testament, all but 5 times it is translated “confess,” and this is the only place it is translated “give thanks.” Robertson notes the reasoning behind this by saying that although this is the only time it is translated this way, some “papyri furnish examples in the sense of gratitude.”

VERSE 16

But do not forget to do good and to share (κοινωνίας), for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The Hebrew writer now turns his readers’ attention from their words to their actions. Lenski notes, “The direct praise of true confession, which is directed to God Himself, must ever come first although it employs only the lips; yet these speak out of the abundance of the heart (Mt 12:4).” Compare Philippians 4:18; Galatians 6:9; *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

Hughes notes of the phrase, “doing good and sharing (κοινωνίας).”

Why? For with such:

1. Contrast with Old Testament sacrifice, and
2. Things we do God accepts as sacrificial worship to Him.

God is well pleased - why?

1. In harmony with His nature;
2. Shows right attitude in us;
3. They benefit others (Milligan).

VERSE 17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive (yield to authority and admonition) - Thayer. If not, we’re in rebellion against God’s chosen leaders (cf. Korah Num 16) and create strife (Gal 5:17-21, 1 Cor 1:10) for they watch out for your souls.

See “Authority Of Elders” in the Appendix.

Dods notes of this verse: Having exhorted the Hebrews to keep in mind their former rulers and adhere to their teaching, the writer now admonishes them, probably in a view of a certain mutinous and separatist spirit (x. 25) encouraged by their reception of strange doctrines, to obey their present leaders, and yield trustfully to their teaching - an admonition which, as Weiss remarks, shows that these teachers held the same views as the writer.

Clarke adds to this by explaining: see verse 7. In the former verse the apostle exhorts them to remember those who had been their leaders, and to imitate their faith; in this he exhorts them to obey the leaders they now had, and to submit to their authority in all matters of doctrine and discipline.

For they watch out for your souls - the word translated "watch" is literally "to keep one self awake, be on the alert."

Another word from the same root word is translated "watch" also and it denotes "wakefulness, with sleepless nights."

A similar appeal is made by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13: *And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.* They are placed there by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28 - cf. 1 Tim 3).

Paul warns the overseers at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-35 to *-Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers,* and also, "Therefore watch."

Let them do so with joy - if obedient to their admonitions (cf. 1 Thess 2:19-20; 3 Jn 4).

And not with grief - means eternal loss for those who failed to submit.

See "Boundaries" in the Appendix.

VERSE 18

Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably.

A transition is noted here by Westcott. "The thought of the duty which the Hebrews owed to their own leaders heads the writer naturally to think of their wider duties, of what they owed him and his fellow-workers. The same spirit which led to willful self-asserting at home was likely to cherish distrust towards teachers at a distance who sought to restrain evil tendencies."

So Westcott notes the use of “us” as being for the writer and his fellow-workers. Lenski agrees with this view. “It is not a literary plural, for no careful writer says “we” and “I” in the same sentence as is done here when he is referring only to himself in both instances.”

But Bruce disagrees, “That the plural is purely literary (cf. chs. 5:11; 6:9,11) is suggested by the immediate transition to the singular in verse 19.” The first argument seems a little stronger and is the more common one.

Barnes states, “It is only when we aim to do right, and maintain a good conscience, that we can with propriety ask the prayers of others, or claim their sympathy. And if we are “willing in all things to live honestly,” we may expect the sympathy, the prayers, and the affections of all good men.” Paul did this - Romans 15:30; 2 Corinthians 1:11; Colossians 4:3; Ephesians 6:18-19; 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

VERSE 19

But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Hughes makes three implications from this verse: The implications of this brief request are:

First, that the writer had previously been associated with those he is addressing, perhaps as one of their leaders,

Second, that he is now in a different location, presumably in a different country, and

Third, that he is for the present prevented from coming to them, though he hopes to be able to do so soon.

Why was the Hebrew writer restrained from returning to his readers? There are a number of explanations given here. Most of these opinions are formed on the basis of who they believe wrote Hebrews. Their opinions and explanations will be noted.

Dods believes “it may be that he was under arrest and shortly to be tried and naturally adds to his request for prayer and protestation of his innocence of all civil offence.” He appeals to verse 23 as further proof of the author’s imprisonment.

Barnes agrees, stating that “The probability is, judging particularly from his statement in verse 23, that he was then a prisoner, and that his detention was on that account.”

But Westcott, Robertson, and Vincent disagree with this view. Westcott states, “The expression does not necessarily imply a state of imprisonment, which is in fact excluded by the language of ver. 23, since the purpose thus declared presupposes, so far, freedom of action. All that the word requires is that the writer should have been kept from the Hebrews (in one sense) against his will. It may have been illness.”

Vincent also notes that this phrase is “Not implying imprisonment, but enforced absence through sickness or other cause.” Robertson says about the same as Vincent.

But Bruce denies that Paul was imprisoned on the grounds that if he had been he would have said so. He also goes to verse 23 to note the author himself was not in custody, but he gives no explanation as to the circumstances that kept him from returning to his readers.

The last commentator checked that gave an explanation was Lenski. “The explanation is simple: he has some time ago left his readers on some important mission and has taken one or more assistants along with him; he is anxious to return and expects to leave these helpers behind to attend to what may still need their attention.”

These three explanations seem to be the more common explanations, although since each is speculation there may be other answers and one of them could be the actual answer. Since it is not a matter of one’s salvation, it would seem a definite answer may not be known until we reach heaven.

VERSE 20

Now may the God of peace. The Hebrew writer had just asked his readers to pray for him, now he offers a prayer on their behalf.

Vincent notes that this phrase is “found only in Paul and Hebrews.” An example of Paul’s usage is in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ* (also Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11).

Who brought up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep.

Robertson notes that this is “the only direct mention of the resurrection of Jesus in the Epistle, though implied often (1:3; etc.).”

Bruce states that “This is the only place in the epistle where the title “shepherd” is given to Jesus but it is a title which comprehends the other roles which are here assigned to Him” (called such in Ezek 34:23; claimed by Jesus in Jn 10:11).

Through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

Barnes notes two reasons for this covenant being eternal: It is called everlasting or eternal because

1. It was formed in the councils of eternity, or has been an eternal plan in the Divine Mind; and
2. Because it is to continue forever.

Hughes ties this verse together with the following thought: “The price of our peace was the blood of Jesus, that is, the sacrifice of the incarnate Son on the cross. The proof of the acceptance of this sacrifice on our behalf is his resurrection from the grave and his exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:3; 12:2), where by he is declared Lord of all (Phil 2:8-10).”

VERSE 21

Make (aorist) you complete in every good work to do His will, working (present participle) in you what is well pleasing in His sight.

Ardnt and Gingrich define the word “make” (equip) to mean “put into proper condition, complete, make complete.” Vine explains it as “right ordering and arrangement, it points out the path of progress.” Lenski comments: God must fit us out in an effective manner (aorist), in fact, He must then continue doing (present participle) in us the thing that is well-pleasing in His eyes. We are to do, yet all the while God is doing... This phrase is Hebraistic but juridical, “well-pleasing” when we stand before him in order to be judged.”

Adding to Hughes notes: Just as being cannot be divorced from doing, so the creature is redeemed not only to be a new man but also to do the works that spring from and make manifest the new nature, which mean specifically to do God’s will, for the performance of the divine will is the proper function of every creature.

He further comments that Christians, those who are imitating Christ, will do God’s will because Christ did God’s will (Heb 10:7).

Through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

A Pauline doxology.

Dods notes; "it is through Jesus, now reigning as Christ, that all grace is bestowed on His people. The doxology may be to the God of peace to whom the prayer is addressed, more probably it is to Jesus Christ, last-named and the great figure who has been before the mind throughout the Epistle."

VERSE 22

And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words.

Word of exhortation = the entire epistle.

The book ends like an epistle, but the rest is not. "It might be a long letter, but not a long homily; it can be read aloud within one hour" (Bruce). (Used normally of a homily.)

Clarke aptly sums up this verse by saying: This seems to be an epithet of this whole epistle: and as the apostle had in it shown the insufficiency of the Levitical system to atone for sin and save the soul; and had proved that it was the design of God that it should be abolished; and had proved also that it was now abolished by the coming of Christ, whom he had shown to be a greater priest than Aaron, higher than all the angels, the only Son of God as to his human nature, and the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; and that their city was shortly to be destroyed; he might suppose that they would feel prejudiced against him and thus lose the benefits of his kind intentions toward them; therefore he entreats them to bear the exhortation which, notwithstanding the great extent of the subject, he had included in a short compass.

Barnes comments, "It was brief compared with the importance and difficulty of the subjects of which he had treated."

The author had not wasted words, but had used as few words as possible in explaining their problems and giving them answers and warnings (had more to say 5:11 and 9:5).

VERSE 23

Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.

“It must be assumed that the Timothy mentioned here is the same person whom we met frequently elsewhere in the New Testament as Paul’s younger companion or emissary.” Most commentators agree that this refers to Timothy being released from prison, but Lenski believes “that Timothy is still absent since he has gone on some mission for the time being” (Lenski, p. 498).

Bruce notes this view as being possible, but determines that Timothy was imprisoned. He further comments, “The place of imprisonment was at some distance from the author’s residence at that time, yet nearer to the author than to his readers, since he has news of Timothy’s release before his readers are likely to know of it, and if Timothy joins him where he is they can travel together to visit them.”

Shortly - τάχιον - a short period of time between, about 8-10 days (Thayer, p. 616).

VERSE 24

Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints.

Lenski comments that the word translated “greet” in this verse “was commonly done by kissing one another, by doing this in place of the absent writer as if the kiss came from him.”

Those who rule (leaders) - honored by separate mention.

And all the saints. The word “saints” is noted by Barnes as being “The common name given to Christians in the Scriptures.” (This does not denote any special group or classification of people, as it does in Catholicism.) If we addressed one another as “Saint Tom” or “Saint Susan” (instead of “brother” or “sister”) would it cause us to think more seriously about the kind of life we should be living?

Those from Italy greet you.

On this verse, Vincent notes, “This may mean, “those who are in Italy send greeting from Italy;” or “those of Italy (Italian Christians with the writer at the time) send greeting” from the place at which the letter is being written . . . The phrase affords no reliable indication as to the residence of the persons addressed.”

Westcott aptly summed up the disagreements over which interpretation should be taken on this verse. “The choice between the two renderings will be determined by the view which is taken of the place from which the letter was written.”

Grace be with you all . Amen. - a Pauline ending. Compare Romans 16:24; 1 Corinthians 16:23; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:24; Philippians 4:23;

Colossians 4:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; 1 Timothy 6:21; 2 Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15; Philemon 25.

If Paul did not write this letter, whoever did used the same kind of closing as Paul did in all his writings.

The book of Hebrews is such a great book - as are all the inspired books! It tells us so much about Jesus and so much about the Christian system, why would any one ever want to leave to go back to the old system? Remember, God is forbidding them to go back into a God-given system which was no longer in effect. How much more does He forbid people today to leave true Christianity to go into a man-made religion? Let us strive to be people like those in chapter 11; faithful and obedient to the end.

APPENDICES

A CONTRAST OF THE TWO COVENANTS

THE OLD COVENANT

1. Its rewards were carnal
(Heb 7:16)
2. It held imperfect hope
(Heb 7:19)
3. Makes nothing perfect
(Heb 9:8,11)
4. Sealed with animal blood
(Heb 9:11,15)
5. Could not take away sins
(Heb 10:4)
6. Way of eternal life hid
(Heb 9:8)
7. Priesthood and law changed
(Heb 7:12)
8. Priest and sacrifices earthly
(Heb 7:23-27)
9. High priest die, cease
(Heb 7:28)
10. Lasted until Christ's death
(Col 2:14)
11. Did not purge conscience
(Heb 9:9)
12. Only a type, a shadow
(Heb 10:1)
13. Old, and vanished
(Heb 8:13-14)

THE NEW COVENANT

1. Makes better promises
(Heb 8:16)
2. Brings better hope
(Heb 7:19)
3. Makes all things perfect
(Heb 10:14)
4. Sealed with Christ's blood
5. Sins remembered no more
(Heb 8:12)
6. Eternal life fully revealed
(Heb 6:18)
7. Priesthood and law unchanged
(Heb 7:24)
8. Heavenly priest, sacrifice
(Heb 8:4)
9. High priest lives forever
(Heb 7:25)
10. Last until end of time
(Heb 13:20)
11. Thoroughly purges
(Heb 9:14)
12. The substance, the real
(Heb 10:1)
13. New, and goes to eternity
(Heb 9:15)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 14. Dedicated with blood of animals
(Heb 9:19-20) | 14. Dedicated with blood of Christ
(Heb 10:19) |
| 15. Copy of heavenly things
(Heb 8:4-7) | 15. Heavenly things
(Heb 9:23) |
| 16. Never made man perfect
(Heb 10:1) | 16. Makes man perfect
(Heb 9:11) |
| 17. Never took away sins
(Heb 10:11) | 17. Takes away all sin
(Heb 10:17) |
| 18. Could not give life
(Gal 3:21) | 18. Law of Spirit of Life
(Rom 8:1-2) |

With all of these considerations it is no wonder the apostle Paul wrote., “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:3-4).

By Bill Tyner

Ἀπαράβατον

The Bible tells us that Christ is the only one who is part of the Melchizedekian order. Martin concurs:

The writer of Hebrews, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares that the priesthood of Melchizedek is the peculiar possession of Jesus Christ, not only by virtue of the fact that He is God, and possessed of imperishable life, but because it cannot be transferred to another. It consummated the Aaronic priesthood; it terminated the Levitical order; it resides in the Son of God, and by the will of His Father, it cannot be transferred (Martin, Kingdom, p. 198).

A key verse is Hebrews 7:24. In the NASB, it reads: “but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.” The word translated “permanently” is the Greek word “aparabaton.” It is the feminine accusative singular form of the noun “aparabatos”, and it modifies the term “priesthood” (Moulton, Analytical, p. 36). It has the idea of being “untransferable.” Nicoll says that it means that Christ

“has his priesthood inviolable, that is, no other person can step into it. This suits the present passage perfectly, and returns upon the thought in verse 3, that the new priest is sole and perpetual occupant of the office, giving place to no successor” (Nicoll, Expositors, 4:316).

Wuest has this comment on the word:

“Thus, the word describes that which cannot be violated, or that which does not pass over to another. The priestly ministry of the Messiah is in view here, a ministry such that no other person can step into it, a ministry that cannot be transferred to another” (Wuest, Word Studies, 2:137).

Respected Greek scholar A. T. Robertson says that “God placed Christ in this priesthood and no one else can step into it” (Robertson, Word Pictures, 5:386). Barclay adds his insight:

“Aparabatos is a legal word. It means inviolable. A judge lays down that his decision must remain aparabatos, unalterable. It means non-transferable. It describes something which belongs to one person and cannot ever be transferred to anyone else. Galen, the medical writer, uses it to describe absolute scientific law which can never be violated, the principles on which the very universe is built and holds together. So then the writer to the Hebrews says that the priesthood of Jesus is something which can never be taken from him, is something that no one else can ever possess,

is something that is as lasting as the laws which hold the universe together. Jesus is and will always be the only way to God” (Barclay, Hebrews, p. 82).

The consensus of all these scholars is the same. Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek and the priesthood will never be given to another. Pond sums it up quite well:

“In all the Holy Bible, there is not one passage indicating the possibility that any person other than the Lord Jesus Christ has been, or ever shall be appointed as high priest after the order of the Melchizedek priesthood. No mortal man meets all of God’s specifications. Only Christ, our eternal Redeemer, does. No man anywhere on the face of the earth qualifies” (Pond, Pillars, p. 92).

“AS TO WHICH MOSES SPOKE NOTHING”

Hebrews 7:14

SPECIFIC COMMAND	IF GENERAL COMMAND	AID	CHANGE	CONSEQUENCE
Aaron's Sons	Israelite	Genealogical Chart	Judah	Must Change the Law by God's Authority
Preach the Gospel	Preach Messages	Overhead Projectors Transportation	Judaism <u>and</u> Gospel	Changes the Gospel (Gal 1:8-9)
Communion - Bread and Fruit of Vine (1 Cor 11:23f; Mt 26:26-29)	Eat and Drink	Plates and Cups	Cokes and Pizza <u>and</u> Bread and Wine	Changes the Gospel (Gal 1:8-9)
Elders (1 Tim 3; Heb 13:17 1 Pet 5:1-3)	Organize with Leaders	Elders' Meetings	Pope <u>and</u> Elders	Changes the Gospel (Gal 1:8-9)
Sing (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16)	Make Music	Notes Pitch Pipe Books Leader	Playing an Instrument <u>while</u> singing	Changes the Gospel (Gal 1:8-9)

CONCLUSION:

1. When God speaks a specific requirement, it automatically eliminates all other possibilities.
2. An “aid” does not change the fulfilling of the command by adding to what was commanded. If it does, it is not an aid but a change.

Since God saves only through His authorized law (Gospel), changing that law without God's authorization excludes salvation to anyone practicing “another Gospel.”

He will be lost!

AUTHORITY OF ELDERS

The problem of authority is always with us. Most of the world does not even recognize the existence of God anymore, much less his authority. There have been those in the church through the years who have sought to destroy the delegated authority God has given to bishops in the local churches, but generally such influences were rather isolated. However, parallel to the “anti-authority,” “anti-establishment” philosophy of the past fifteen years among many worldlings, there has been an ever-louder cry from within the church against the authority of elders: “What authority do elders have over their flock which that flock does not willingly give them? None!”; “Did any of us ever consider where we get New Testament authority for elders making decisions?”; “We are of the opinion that questions are safer in the hands of the ‘church’ than in the hands of any ‘ship’”; “None of the qualities mentioned in either Timothy or Titus have to do with decision making.” These and many other such statements are indicative of this trend.

While some opine that the church is suffering from a growing “authority syndrome,” it is my judgment that the direr threat is a growing “*anti*-authority syndrome.” I submit that God places a plurality of elders-bishops-pastors over each local church in which men of scriptural qualifications can be found. I further submit that these men are charged with keeping their respective churches free from doctrinal error and moral pollution and that they are also charged with making decisions relative to the expedient exercise of the work of the church. Let us consider the scriptural evidence.

WORDS REFERRING TO ELDERS AND THEIR WORK

The words chosen by the Holy Spirit to describe elders and their responsibilities are words that indicate the authority God has given them. All of the page numbers following the quotations below refer to *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*:

1. *EPISKOPOS* (and kindred forms), translated “bishop,” “overseer,” “oversight” (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2): “An overseer, a man charged with . . . seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent; . . . specifically the superintendent, head or overseer of any Christian church” (p. 243).

2. *OIKONOMOS*, translated “steward” (Titus 1:7): “the manager of a household or of household affairs; especially a steward, manager, superintendent . . . to whom the head of the house or proprietor has intrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures . . . a bishop (or overseer) is called *oikonomos theou*, of God as the head and master of the Christian theocracy” (pp. 440-441). If elders cannot

make decisions or set policy, how can they be overseers, superintendents, managers or stewards?

3. *POIMAINO* (and related noun, *poimen*), translated teed, “pastor” (Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:2): “to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep; . . . to rule, govern: of rulers, . . . of the overseers (pastors) of the church, . . . to furnish pasturage or food; to nourish” (p. 527). When shepherds see one of the flock straying toward a precipice, have they no authority to prevent a fatal fall? When they see a wolf devouring the lambs must they call all of the flock together before they can decide that he must be stopped and how to stop him (Jn 10:12)? Notice the use of *poimaino* in Revelation 2:26-27: “. . . to him will I give *authority (exousian)* over the nations: and he shall rule (*poimaino*) them with a rod of iron” (emphasis mine, DM). Admittedly, the word includes the element of feeding and tending, but also of *ruling with authority*.

4. *PROISTEMI*, translated “over,” “rule”: “to set or place before; to set over; to be over, to superintend, preside over, rule: 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 3:4” (p. 539).

5. *PEITHESTHE*, translated “obey” (Heb 13:17). The form in this passage is in the middle voice, meaning: “to listen to, obey, yield to; comply with . . . Heb 13:17; Jas 3:3” (p. 497). James 3:3 speaks of the response of the horse to the bridle, a response to authority. The church is to obey its elders.

6. *HEGEOMAI*, translated “rule over” (Heb 13:17): “to lead, to go before; to be a leader; to rule, command; to have authority over: a prince, of regal power; a governor, viceroy, chief; leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel; . . . the overseers or leaders of Christian churches” (p. 276). Admittedly, this word *includes* the persuasion of one’s influence, but it is also translated “governor” (Mt 27:2; Acts 7:10). It is a word of authority.

7. *HUPEIKO*, translated “submit to” (Heb 13:17): “to resist no longer, but to give way, yield; to yield to authority and admonition, to submit” (p. 638). This is what saints are to do in relation to their elders instead of trying to over-throw their authority. Each of the foregoing terms is either laden with authority or shows the proper response to the authority which God has given to elders.

ELDERS AND ELDERS’ MEETINGS

Some have hinted, while others have openly affirmed, that there is no scriptural basis for elders to even meet separately from the church in order to make decisions affecting the church. The first time elders are mentioned in the church is in Acts 11:30. Luke writes that the contribution of the church in Antioch for the brethren in Judea was sent “to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.” It was sent *for* any who had need but sent *to* the elders. Why? I conclude that they were to properly administer it, which required some decision making.

Some like to use the “Jerusalem Conference” (Acts 15:1-29) as an example of a decision reached by the “whole church,” but careful reading proves otherwise. Paul and Barnabas were sent primarily to the “apostles and elders” to settle the question of circumcision (Acts 15:2). They first reported on their work to the whole church (Acts 15:4), but when the legalists raised the issue of circumcision, Luke states, the “apostles and elders were gathered together to consider of this matter” (Acts 15:5-6). This was a separate meeting from that of verse 4. Paul’s record supports this conclusion (Gal 2:2,9). Later, “the multitude” again listened to Paul and Barnabas as well as James (Acts 15:12-13) and expressed their agreement with the letter that was to be circulated to Gentile brethren (Acts 15:22). Luke describes the letter as “ordained of the apostles and elders” (Acts 16:4). Clearly, there was a separate, private meeting involving both elders and apostles in which this matter was decided rather than leaving it to a congregational vote.

As Paul returned from his third preaching trip he stopped at Miletus and called to him the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17). Upon reaching Jerusalem he met with the elders there (Acts 21:18). Obviously, it was not an uncommon practice for elders in the early church to meet separately from the church to discuss church business.

ELDERS AND “CHURCH DISCIPLINE”

There are three key passages of scripture that place the responsibility of leadership in discipline in the local church upon elders. Paul warns the Ephesian elders: “Grievous wolves . . . speaking perverse things, will draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore, watch ye” (Acts 20:29-31). A qualification of every elder requires that he know how to rule his own house so that he may “take care of the church”(1 Tim 3:5). Also, in the setting of the qualifications of elders Paul says that elders are to “convict the gainsayers” (unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers) who must be silenced (Titus 1:9-11). Can responsible elders allow the church to be fed doctrinal poison while they timidly refuse to stop it? Those who would deny the authority of elders deny them the right to protect the flock from such dangers. If the foregoing words do not enjoin elders to lead the church in matters of discipline, giving them the authority to carry out the duty, what words would? How can such great responsibilities be fulfilled without some sober, prayerful, decision-making meetings?

In my judgment, it is most likely that the ones opposing the authority of elders with such zeal are ultimately aiming at their disciplinary leadership. If the authority of elders can be so undermined that they will not attempt discipline where needed or if, when they attempt it, the church has been so conditioned by false teaching that it will not follow the elders in the discipline, then the church is at the mercy of any doctrine or practice that anyone might wish to establish. There is already a great famine of scriptural discipline among the churches. It is difficult to imagine what sort of worldliness one would have to practice or which false doctrine one would have to promote in order to

draw even the mildest reproof in most churches. I suggest that a major contributing factor to this sad condition has been the gradually rising tide of teaching against the authority of elders. This has caused some elders to be uncertain of their own God-given authority and has caused some members of the church to reject the authority God has given these men.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Churches can function without elders, but they are almost always handicapped and exist in an immature state. The ideal projected in the New Testament is to have scripturally qualified elders who function as true spiritual leaders in every church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). It is neither practical nor scriptural to leave the fate of a church in the hands of a “majority vote” arrangement where spiritual neophytes, doctrinal extremists, 12-year-old boys, etc., have as much voice as a loyal, seasoned saint. To prevent this very thing is why the Lord placed the local church under men who met strict qualifications, thereby proving their loyalty to Christ and his word. However, it is the stated intent of some to allow elders no more authority in a church than that of the newest, weakest, most radical, or youngest member. Should they succeed in their plans, it is very doubtful that any of them would long be content to live with the unscriptural situation they helped create.

ABUSES OF AUTHORITY

Those who reject all authority of elders except that exercised by “influence” often refer us to Peter’s warning: “neither as lording it over the charge allotted you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:3). The application usually made of this statement is to the effect that since elders are not to “lord it over” the flock, this precludes any exercise of authority. If this verse forbids the very authority that several other passages enjoin, then we have a serious contradiction in scripture. Contrariwise, there is no conflict at all between this verse and the authority-laden verses previously considered. The truth taught by Peter concerns the *proper exercise* of authority by elders to keep them aware of the possible temptation to abuse it. Anyone working under several elderships over a period of years will likely encounter an elder with a tyrannical spirit. I certainly have. In spite of the warning against the abuse of authority, it will likely continue because elders are human like the rest of us. However, an *abuse* of authority can never be rightly used to offset the *proper use* of authority. These men must certainly exercise the powerful leadership to be found in being an “ensample” (*tupos*—type, pattern). They are to represent to both the world and the church just what a genuine Christian is, and there is great power in such leadership. However, this power of example does not at all diminish the authority God has given elders.

CONCLUSION

With these truths before us, it is not difficult to see why the qualifications of elders are so strict and why the saints are commanded to obey them and submit to them. To rebel against them or to incite others to rebel against them out of selfishness, stubbornness, pride, jealousy or any other sinful motive is to rebel against the authority of God (Num 16:1-35) and Jesus Christ (Jn 12:48).

Wise elders will counsel with their brethren and weigh their wishes in making decisions about matters of expediency. They will also delegate much of the practical, detailed decision making to deacons and to others. However, the final responsibility for making decisions in the local church in matters of expediting the work and keeping the church true to the Book will always rest upon the church's elders-bishops-pastors.

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“BETTER THINGS” IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS!

After having presented the gallery of Old Testament heroes, the writer concludes, *“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”* (Heb 11:39-40). It is interesting to note that the word **“better”** seems to be a keyword in the book of Hebrews, as it occurs no less than 13 times! We want to give special attention to seven (7) **“better”** things found in Hebrews to more fully appreciate the superior advantages we obtain through Christ *“blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”* (Col 2:14). This afforded better things, *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law, for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* (Gal 2:16). This opens our view to better things!

1. CHRIST PROVIDED A BETTER HOPE!

As a prisoner, Paul called the chief of the Jews in Rome to him, and said, *“For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”* (Acts 23:6). They did not ask for more information: they well knew Paul referred to his hope in Jesus Christ! But there was no such hope under the law: *“For the law could make nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.”* (Heb 7:19). But it was to saints that it was written: *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”* (Rom 15:13). These would have been strange words indeed under the Law! But read of *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.”* (1 Tim 1:1). It is through Jesus Christ *“we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* (Titus 2:7). Here is our anchor! *“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.”* (Heb 6:9). It was costly; but worth it! Peter said, *“God... according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* (1 Pet 1:3). Surely this is the better hope!

2. GOD’S BETTER TESTAMENT (COVENANT).

There was the removal of the first, or old, testament, that the new might be given in its stead. *“He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, by the which will we are sanctified through the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”* (Heb 10:9-10). *“For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.”* (Heb 7:18). *“By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.”* (Heb 7:22). So this better testament replaced the old due to many

faults: *“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a **better covenant**, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been found for the second.”* (Heb 8:6-7). Jesus died to present benefits the first testament could not provide. *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”* (Heb 9:15). The first testament could not give this!

3. CHRIST OFFERED A BETTER SACRIFICE!

With a far superior covenant, you can expect a better sacrifice also! And that is what was made clear: *“And almost all things are by the law, purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with **better sacrifices** than these.”* (Heb 9:22-23). All those sacrifices offered before had not been able to take away sins, *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God... , For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”* (Heb 10:12,14). This sacrifice excelled all others in that it was never to be repeated: *“for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”* (Heb 7:27). Too, He was able to remit all sins. (Rom 10:1-4). **Thus saints are accepted in Christ, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”** (Col 1:14). We can rejoice, in that *“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sins.”* (1 Jn1:7).

4. ESTABLISHED UPON BETTER PROMISES!

There were promises of God from of old; and even before the law of Moses His promises were treasured. *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed which is Christ.”* (Gal. 3:16). Of the many promises God made, that great promise by which He was to bless the world was lodged securely in Christ! Thus Jesus Christ was far superior to any that was before or since! *“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon **better promises.**”* (Heb 8:6). Peter, knowing of this, wrote *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”* (2 Pet 1:4). What a door was flung open as Peter preached: *“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all them that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”* (Acts 2:39). What glad tidings, that God had extended salvation unto all men, both Jew and Gentile! *“For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.”* (Rom 4:14). *“For all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”* (2 Cor 1:20). Yea, verily, we have obtained **better promises** in Christ Jesus!

5. A BETTER AND AN ENDURING SUBSTANCE!

The writer pictures for us something which will endure; which will last! *“For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a **better** and an **enduring substance**.”* (Heb 11:34). This better, enduring substance will never fade away, nor canker with ravages of time. Saints are encouraged; *“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal: but the things which are not seen are eternal.”* (2 Cor 4:18). Jesus was teaching a great lesson in saying, *“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where neither moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* (Mt 6:19-21). Descriptively, Peter says, *“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and **that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.**”* (1 Pet 1:14). **Yes, it is a better and enduring substance**, and it can be reserved for YOU!

6. HIS SAINTS DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY!

Innately, man has known that this world is not his home! He has always longed for a better residence than this world affords. The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob became nomads in the land of promise looking for homes of permanence: for they *“looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* (Heb 11:10). They were never satisfied: *“But now they desire a **better country**, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”* (Heb 11:16). But these all died outside the true “land of promise,” for it waited for Jesus to point the way with His promise: *“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”* (Jn 14:2). That truly is a **better country** for the people of God! Paul assures us this is true: *“For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”* (2 Cor 5:1). Moving is not such a worry when we consider our future Home!

7. WE LONG FOR A BETTER RESURRECTION!

Paul stated it very plainly: *“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.”* (1 Cor 15:19). As Abraham *“looked for a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Heb 11:1), so saints to this day desire a better life than this world affords! The writer of Hebrews recounted the trials suffered by heroes of old who died in faith: *“that they might obtain a **better resurrection**.”* (Heb 11:35). Jesus Christ was *“declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead”* (Rom 1:4). And that became the promise of our own **better resurrection** when we shall be raised to die no more! *“But now is*

*Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” (1 Cor 15:20). Faith in this **better resurrection** led Paul to renounce the world for Christ, as he declared: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death: if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil 3:10-11). His was a **better resurrection** in that it was an earnest of our own! “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” (1 Thess 4:14).*

We have cited seven **better things** which accrue to us by Jesus Christ, our Lord. Yet not one of them is forced upon us! We must obtain each of these blessings by obedient faith. Jesus suffered and died to **present** salvation to chosen ones: (Heb 5:8-9).

BOUNDARIES: BALANCED OR BIZARRE? (4)

Roy H. Lanier, Jr.

One of the passages most prominent in controversy about the "authority" of elders is Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them; for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account: that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable to you."

Brethren today challenge whether this passage refers to overseers appointed by the church, or whether it refers to any and all teachers of the word. Some recent studies and publications have cried that studies in the original Greek support this being used only of teachers. Others appeal to the Greek to say this submission is that which can come only by persuasion. Some of this series of claims has interested me deeply, for it challenged me to see if I were teaching that which is unsupported within the word.

THREE MAJOR WORDS

There are three major words which have been given some scrutiny: *Peitho*, *Hegeomai* and *Hupeiko*. These are used within the verse of Hebrews 13:17 this way:

"... Obey (*Peitho*) them..."

"... rule (*Hegeomai*) over you..."

"... and submit (*Hupeiko*) to them..."

The word from which each has been derived is noted in parenthesis.

HUPEIKO

"To yield, give way, be submissive." (Bagster's Analytical) "... yield under... or submissively..." (Youngs Concordance)

"... to retire, withdraw... yield, submit...submitting to sp. guides in the church." (Vine's Dictionary)

"... yield, give way, submit to someone's authority ..." (Arndt & Gingrich)

"... to resist no longer, but to give way, yield: metaph. to yield to authority and admonition, to submit..." (Thayer)

PEITHO

"... to persuade, seek to persuade, endeavor to convince." (Bagster's)

"... to persuade." (Youngs)

"... the obedience suggested is not by submission to authority, but resulting from persuasion." (Vine's) Note: the next paragraph of Vine's suggests: "Peitho and pisteuo, 'to trust' are closely related etymologically; the difference in meaning is that the former implies the obedience that is produced by the latter..."

[Is it not strange that those who are quick to quote from Vine's in regard to "persuasion" ignore his next statement? It is obvious this kind of obedience comes from one's faith in another and his judgment. It is just that kind of obedience which springs from trust in another. That is the highest kind of respect shown toward men in the church.]

"... to obey, to follow..." (Arndt & Gingrich)

"to listen to, to obey, yield to, comply with..." (Thayer)

HEGEOMAI

"a chief officer in the church...to lead the way, to take the lead...chief, preside, govern, rule..." (Bagster's) "... lead, guide, govern" (Youngs)

"... to lead is translated to rule..." (Vine's)

"... of heads of a Christian church...lead, guide...ruler, leader...leaders of religious bodies." (Arndt & Gingrich)

"... leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel...with gen. of the pers. over whom one rules, so of the overseers or leaders of Christian churches." (Thayer)

INESCAPABLE CONCLUSIONS

There are several things which do not escape such a review:

1. There was a stated order within the local church.
2. This office, or work, was clearly acknowledged.
3. It depended upon subordination, such as would not characterize that given to teachers and preachers.

4. The welfare of the church depends upon such subordination.
5. This subordination could not be in matters from the Word of God, for all are equally subordinate to it.
6. This subordination was therefore in matters of convenience, situations where someone's judgment must be given and received.

GOD DID ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES

It might be well to notice also that some of preachers who misuse the "persuasion argument" (from *Peitho*) have failed to see this word is also used in James 3:3. Bridles are put into the mouths of horses to get them to obey (*Peitho*). Is this persuasion, at least in the way some preachers are demanding that elders "only persuade"?

God did place some definite boundaries. It is ridiculous for one to claim Jesus "has left the issue undecided." He has spoken well and with finality. Besides the implications of the qualifications, besides the verbs used in regard to their work, there is the clear passage in Hebrews 13:17 which calls for submission, subordination, obedience and yielding to the judgments of overseers.

Be not deceived. Preachers who evidently desire to run the show are telling churches they do not have to obey elders. It is not true, churches will be hurt by listening to such false teachings, and preachers will have to give an account for such rebellion against the clear teachings of the Lord. It is bizarre to give heed to such foolishness. Look into the Word yourself and see beyond the loving countenance of some able preacher.

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DEAD WORKS

Dead works are not vaguely sins which lead to death, but works devoid of that element which makes them truly works. They have the form but not the vital power of works. There is but one spring of life, and all which does not flow from it is 'dead.' All acts of a man in himself, separated from God, are 'dead works' (comp. John xv. 4 ff.). The first step in faith is to give up the selfish life which they represent.

Here the phrase has necessarily a special application. The writer of the Epistle is thinking, as it seems, of all the works corresponding with the Levitical system not in their original institution but in their actual relation to the Gospel as established in the Christian society. By the work of Christ, who fulfilled, and by fulfilling annulled, the Law, the element of life was withdrawn from these which had (so to speak) a provisional, and only a provisional, vitality. They became 'dead works.' Comp. Herm. *Sim.* ix. 21, 2 τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν μόνα ζῆσι, τὰ δὲ ἔργα αὐτῶν νεκρά ἐστι.

The contrast between πίστις and νεκρὰ ἔργα corresponds with and yet is distinct from that between πίστις and νεκρὰ ἔργα in St Paul. 'Dead works' present the essential character of the works in themselves: 'works of law' present them in relation to an ideal, unattainable, standard.

It follows therefore that 'Repentance *from* dead works' expresses that complete change of mind—of spiritual attitude—which leads the believer to abandon these works and seek some other support for life.

Westcott
The Epistle To The Hebrews
Page 144

This is a good example of an exegetical commentary. (WW)

FIRST PRINCIPLES

by Gary Workman

What exactly does “first principles” refer to, and are we using this term correctly?

It is not uncommon to hear a reference to “first principles” in sermons, class lessons, or private conversation among Christians. And almost invariably this expression is used to refer to faith, repentance, confession and baptism. However, a close examination of Hebrews 5:12-6:3 reveals that this is not the way scripture uses the term.

Hebrews 6:1 is usually interpreted to mean that one should leave ABC’s of Christianity (in sense of building on them) in order to go on to deeper matters of the Christian faith. There are several serious problems in trying to maintain this view:

(1) The broad context reveals that the Jewish-Christian readers had not fully understood the Melchizedek high priesthood of Christ (Heb 5:1-11) and were in danger of reverting to the Jewish system. That is the problem with which this entire book deals, and there is nothing to indicate that the writer changes his subject in this passage.

(2) The immediate context indicates that they needed someone to take them back to the Old Testament scriptures - “the beginning of the oracles of God” (literal reading from 5:12) - and show them that Jesus fulfilled the types, ordinances and ceremonies of the Mosaic law.

(3) The word “leaving” in Hebrews 6:1 does not mean to build on something but rather to leave it behind, to let it go, to forsake it (as the lexicons or a complete concordance will amply demonstrate). This is the word Jesus used in Mark 7:8 when He told the Pharisees that they “leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.” “The word “leave” is explained by Jesus in the next verse as meaning to “reject.” Could it really be possible that Christians are told to reject the fundamentals of Christianity? *

(4) What the readers are told to leave is “the principles of the doctrine of Christ” (KJV) or “the doctrine of the first principles of Christ” (ASV). Actually, there is no word for “principles” in the Greek. It simply says “the word of the beginning of Christ” or “the beginning word of Christ,” an expression which corresponds to “the beginning of the oracles of God” in 5:12. The most natural meaning is that both of these expressions point back to the Old Testament scriptures. That is where Christ is first revealed.

(5) The “perfection” that the readers were told to press on to must be the Christian system itself, as indicated by the lack of perfection under the old (Heb 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1).

(6) Of the six foundational items not to be laid again (vv. 2-3), none are exclusively Christian since all of them are found in Judaism. And one of them - mistranslated "baptisms" - is actually the word for Jewish "washings." Moreover, "laying on of hands" was fundamental to the Mosaic system, involving every individual (Lev. 1:4; 3:2, 8, 13; 7:30), whereas under Christianity it had only to do with the miraculous gifts of the first century. **

All of this (and more) make it conclusive to this writer that the Hebrew Christians, who were inclined to straddle the fence by, trying to be Jews and Christians at the same time, were being urged to "leave" (fully) the Jewish system in order to "go on" (fully) into the Christian system.

--via "The Restorer" Vol. 11 No 3

* No, but they would not be told to reject the Old Testament scriptures concerning Christ either. (WW)

** - setting aside for a work. (WW)

FOR THE JOY THAT LAY BEFORE HIM

The 11th chapter of Hebrews is said to be God's "hall of faith." Thrillingly, it chronicles a variety of marvelous examples of Old Testament faithful obedience, which are intended to encourage us in our Christian lives. With reference to this matter, the author declares:

Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the author and finisher of the faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (12:1-2).

There are so many rich truths here tucked away that it is scarcely possible to consider them all in a brief article. Let us, though, mention a few matters.

(1) The heroes of the Old Testament are said to represent a great cloud of "witnesses" which, almost stadium-like, surrounds us. This does not affirm, as some surmise (Coffman, 309), that our deceased spiritual kinsmen literally are looking down, observing our present activity (cf. Eccl. 9:5-6). Rather, it merely suggests that their abiding *examples* of faithful endurance are like a cheering crowd, urging us toward victory.

(2) Like the ancient runner who was compelled to shed every hindrance, the child of God is to lay aside every distraction, especially "the sin" which so easily besets (encompasses). The definite article seems to suggest a certain sin. While some would see this "besetting sin" as any weakness to which one might be especially vulnerable (e.g., drunkenness or temper), more likely, consistent with contextual considerations, the expression denotes the sin of unbelief. Earlier the writer had emphasized: "Take heed, brothers, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God" (3:12). A. T. Robertson says that "the sin" was "apostasy from Christ" (433)—quite a concession from a Baptist. Charles Stanley, the popular television preacher, has argued that a Christian can completely abandon his faith, but God still will not allow him to be lost (84ff)! Such a notion is wholly foreign to the Bible.

(3) The inspired writer urges that we are to keep running (the verb is a present tense form, denoting continuous activity) the race that is before us. As we run, we are to be "looking unto Jesus." "Looking" reflects a present tense participle form, and the original term suggests turning "the eyes away from other things" and fixing them on something else (Thayer, 90). Obtaining the goal of heaven requires the utmost concentration; a haphazard disposition is not conducive to eternal salvation.

(4) Christ is said to be the “author and finisher of the faith.” The common versions have “our faith,” but “the faith” is more precise (see Milligan, 343; Vine, 56). Here the expression denotes the fact that Jesus is the *source* (the originator) and *consummator* of “the faith,” i.e., the gospel system (cf. Gal 1:23; 1 Tim 5:8; Jude 3). No person has a right, therefore, to add to, subtract from, or to modify the New Testament body of doctrine. Let innovators who repudiate what they call “pattern theology” be admonished.

(5) The most enigmatic portion of this verse is the affirmation that Christ endured the cross “for the joy” that lay before him. A key word is the preposition “for.” The Greek word is *anti*, which has several possible meanings. It commonly connotes “instead of” (see “in the stead of,” Gen 22:13 LXX; cf. also Mk 10:45). This would suggest that Jesus chose to come to earth and endure the agonies of Calvary instead of continuing in his preincarnate heavenly state. It would emphasize the great sacrifice he made (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). Harris tends toward the meaning that Jesus came to earth “instead of the joy of continued fellowship in God’s immediate presence” (1180).

On the other hand, *anti* can mean “in exchange for,” in the sense of “to obtain” (Thayer, 49). If this is the significance of the term here, then the meaning would be that the Lord willingly endured the shame of the cross in anticipation of the joy of effecting redemption for Adam’s fallen family. Morris says: “He looked right through the Cross to the coming joy, the joy of bringing salvation to those he loves” (134). This view is probably more consistent with the context inasmuch as Jesus is portrayed as the model for the saints who long for the prize which is yet in their future.

Can we fathom the depth of love that Jesus Christ had for lost humanity? The horrors of Golgotha paled into insignificance when the Savior contemplated the refreshing salvation that would be available for all who choose to obey him (Heb 5:9). This is absolutely astounding. How utterly selfish our own level of dedication appears by comparison.

(6) On account of his incomparable love, Christ “endured” the cross. The word is interesting. It derives from *hupomeno*. *Meno* basically means to “abide, remain,” while *hupo* (under) is a preposition attached as a prefix to strengthen the term. The idea suggested is to “bear up under.” It hints of the magnificent courage of the Lord as he hung suspended from the cross for six hours. For a consideration of what was involved in a crucifixion, see Edwards, et al. (1986).

(7) Additionally, the inspired writer affirms that the Savior “despised” the “shame” connected with the cross. It was not the prospect of physical death that so repelled the Lord. Rather, it was the association of the cross with sin. His holy soul recoiled at the idea of being involved with the shame of man’s rebellion against God. In Galatians 3:10-13 Paul discusses the “curse” that was associated with Jesus’ death on the cross. “Curse” hints of the fitting doom of which sin is deserving. The disgrace of the cross is

clearly stressed by Paul in Philippians 2:8. Filthy human beings can hardly appreciate the magnitude of this matter; we can only express our profound gratitude and humbly submit to his holy will.

(8) Finally, as Christ won the victory (having sat down on the throne—the perfect tense emphasizing the permanence of his accomplishment), so also shall the faithful. Too, observe that Jesus has achieved the “throne” already; it is not a future hope, as alleged by millennialists.

This passage thus sets forth the wonderful example of Christ. May we ever follow in his path.

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Wayne Jackson
December 1997

FOR THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM

S. Leo Richardson

My text is not so much in the field of the difficult passages. It is in the realm of the misstated, misused and misinterpreted. Consequently, it is not understood by the majority.

The greatest descent ever to take place in the history of the World was when deity became flesh. "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" (Jn 1:1-2). After becoming flesh, He took even another descent. He died the death of all men. The man Jesus, existing in thought in the form of God from eternity, became the man Jesus in reality when He descended from the throne of God to the grave of man.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb 12:2). There are normally two wrong ideas that are propagated from what is stated in this passage. One is, that Jesus' ordeal of the cross was made easier because He knew what would be His after the cross. That philosophy pretty well disannuls any self-sacrifice on the part of Jesus the Christ. The second is, that, "the joy that was set before Him" included being glorified once again with the Father after the cross. Jesus did pray for this glory to be restored to Him. Strangely, that request becomes the crux of the whole thought of our lesson.

"These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee; even as thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given Him, He should give eternal life. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (Jn 17:1-5). The glory that was His before the world was is precisely what Jesus set aside in order to endure the cross.

Jesus' death on the cross was an absolutely selfless act. He did not go to the cross in order to obtain something for Himself. Death was made no easier from the standpoint of who he was, nor from what would be His when the ordeal was over. If this were the case, it would disannul His humiliation in being made sin on our behalf. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor 5:21). The endurance of the cross and the despicable shame that accompanied it, were no less real, for what was to be his in exchange for the glory He once had with the Father. Therefore, His attitude toward the cross was not associated with anything in return for Himself.

First of all, Jesus emptied Himself of self in order to become man. His eternal existence is God, and “who existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:6-8).

Jesus did not regard his being on an equality with God something to be tenaciously retained. On the contrary, “He emptied himself” of this honor when he took on human flesh. “If Philippians 2:5-8 means anything, it means that the considerations which led our Lord to go to the Cross were utterly devoid of any thought of Himself. The Greek has it, ‘He emptied Himself.’ The word ‘Himself’ is, in the Greek text, a pronoun in the accusative. The emptying terminated upon Himself. That is, our Lord emptied Himself of *self*. He set *self* aside. That means that His going to the Cross was not even associated with any thought of joy that might accrue to Him by reason of His sufferings.”¹

Jesus existed in the form of God before becoming flesh. “The word ‘form’ is the translation of the Greek word *morphee* and occurs only three times in the New Testament; two times here, and once in Mark 16:12. Professor Robertson says the word means ‘the essential attributes as shown in the form. In His preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God and so appeared to those in heaven who saw Him. Here is a clear statement by Paul of the deity of Christ.’² Note the participle *existing*. Deity is eternal. He did not once exist in the form of God, then cease to have that form, then after the cross exist again in the form of God. Deity does not change. He cannot be lessened, nor increased. God is unchangeable. In fact, the word translated *existing* means *unchangeable*. Equality with God is an eternal *form*. Jesus resolved before He was conceived of Mary by the Holy Spirit, not to cling only to deity, but also to take the “form of a servant.” Jesus then possessed two forms. He existed “in the form of God,” and then took the “form of a servant.” He was found in “likeness of men,” and in “fashion as a man.” In the eyes of man, He was man and man only. That, beloved, was His descent, His emptying, His forfeiting, His giving up.

Jesus “emptied Himself.” He set *self* aside and became a man. It is useless to ask how Jesus “emptied Himself.” Surely His identity with God was hidden in human flesh. The beginning of the humiliation of the Christ was when Jesus was born in the flesh. Bear in mind, however, that He was no less God by being incarnate.

“For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross.” Was “the joy that was set before Him” His before or after the cross? It may be a good philosophy that the joy that would belong to Jesus after the cross made it easier for Him to endure the cross, but that thought cannot be substantiated by what is stated in Hebrews 12:2. Those who expound the verse in such a manner continue to encourage others to

endure the hardships of the Christian life for what will be theirs after this earthly life is over. That is a noble admonition, but do not reduce the endurance of the cross by Jesus to such. "The joy was the full, divine beatitude of his preincarnate life in the bosom of the Father; the glory which He had with God before the world was. In exchange for this He accepted the cross and the shame."³

A careful look at the preposition "for" will not only clarify, but will also beautify the passage. The Greek preposition *anti* translated "for" in this statement is used sparingly in the New Testament. It is used only twenty-one times. We must compare it with the leading preposition *eis*. "*Eis* is used more than seventeen hundred times in the New Testament, and it occurs only with the accusative case."⁴ It is translated mostly "for," but it also means: *into, unto*. The use, then, of *anti* has outstanding significance.

"There is conclusive proof now that the dominant meaning for *anti* in the first century was *instead of*. 'By far the commonest meaning of *anti*, is the simple *instead of*. (Moulton-Milligan: *Voc. of the Gr. N.T.*). This statement refers to the papyri usage. Professor Whitesell (Chicago) made a study of *anti* in the Septuagint and found thirty-eight passages where it is rightly translated *instead of* in the RV. Since *anti* is used in two atonement passages in the New Testament, such a translation needs careful consideration. Notice the following: Genesis 22:13, *and offered him up for a burnt offering instead of (anti) his son*: Genesis 44:33, *Let thy servant, I pray thee, abide instead of (anti) the lad as a bondman to my Lord*: Numbers 3:12, *I have the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of (anti) all the first-born*. These three sentences unmistakably deal with substitution. This translation applies especially to the following: Matthew 2:22, *Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of (anti) his father Herod*: Luke 11:11 *and he instead of (anti) a fish give him a serpent*: 1 Corinthians 11:15, *for her hair is given her instead of (anti) a covering*: Hebrews 12:2, *...who instead of (anti) the joy that was set before him he endured the cross*."⁵ If *anti* does not mean *instead of* in Matthew 10:45, then it surely means *in exchange for*, and each usage implies substitution. "This is far different from being urged on to the cross by consideration of reward. Thus a careful study of the Greek preposition here discloses some precious truth that would otherwise be obscured by reason of wrong interpretation put upon an English preposition, and at the same time saves the expositor from arriving at a wrong interpretation."⁶

This takes us back to the time stated in John 1:1-2 before our Lord's incarnation. When He set himself aside to take the "form" of man, He came to earth to be surrounded by sin and humiliation. The Father had to turn away His face from Him in order to give Him to sin and death (Mt 27:46).

Jesus was separated from the joy that was once His. His separation came about by way of human flesh. He, humiliated in human flesh, and for sins, went to the cross in exchange for (instead of) the joy that was His before He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant."

“For” in Hebrews 12:2 obviously means *instead of* and not in order to obtain. The truth is, that He exchanged the glory that was His before the cross, for the cross. The unselfish Jesus set Himself aside, and gave the glory that was His in exchange for the cross. This is much different from the idea that the cross was easy for Christ because He knew He would be restored to his Honor with the Father after He endured the cross.

When Jesus died, being obedient unto death, He was not seeking glory of His own, but instead of that He secured salvation for the human race. “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt 16:24). It is very little for him to ask of us to deny ourselves in order to become His followers and gain eternal life. Any way we look at that, it is a bargain indeed!

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FOOTNOTES

¹Kenneth S. Wuest, *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament*, p. 59.

²Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *The Timeless Trinity*, p. 241.

³Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, p. 538.

⁴Dana & Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 103.

⁵*ibid.*, p. 100.

⁶Wuest, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

IDENTIFYING MARKS

Hebrews 12:28

<u>Identifying Mark</u>	<u>Kingdom</u>	<u>Church</u>
Used interchangeably	Mt 16:19	Mt 16:18
Both are comprised of saints	Col 1:13	Col 1:2
Both are blood-purchased	Rev 5:9-10	Acts 20:28
Both are comprised of priests	Rev 1:6,9; 5:9-10	1 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 2:5
The terms of entrance	Jn 3:5	Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5
The memorial supper	Mt 26:26-29	1 Cor 11:20-27
The glory and exaltation	Isa 2:2-3	Eph 3:21
The time of deliverance	1 Cor 15:24	1 Thess 4:16-17
Both have the same owner	Jn 18:36	Mt 16:18
Christians are in both	Rev 1:6	Rev 1:4
God to establish David's throne	2 Sam 7:12-16	Acts 2:29ff; Heb 1
Word to go forth from Jerusalem	Isa 2:2-3	Lk 24:47
Established in the latter days	Isa 2:2-3	Acts 2:17-47
All nations shall flow into it	Isa 2:2-3	Mk 16:15-16
The time of establishment	Dan 2:44	Mk 1:15; Lk 3:1
Ruler over its inhabitants	1 Tim 6:15	Eph 5:23
Reward for the faithful	Mt 25:31-34	1 Cor 15:58

The conclusion is obvious. The church and kingdom in this present age have the same owner, ruler, terms of admission, membership, memorial supper, etc. In this

present time period on the earth, they are identical. The same group of people who follow the same Lord are identified from two different perspectives. Passages like Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6; 1:9; 5:9-10 along with many others make it abundantly clear that the promised Old Testament kingdom is now in existence! If one denies this, then he is saying Jesus was in error in Mark 1:14-15 and 9:1.

Author Unknown
Firm Foundation

IMPOSSIBLE (ἀδύνατον).
It is impossible to dilute this word into *difficult*.
Vincent's Word Studies

Those who were once enlightened (τοῖς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας). Rend. "*once for all enlightened*." Ἄπαξ is frequent in the Epistle. Comp. ch. ix. 7,26,27,28 ; x. 2 ; xii. 26-27. Indicating that the enlightenment ought to have sufficed to prevent them from falling away; not that it does not admit of repetition. *Enlightened*, through the revelation of God in Christ, the true light, and through the power of the Spirit. Φωτίζειν in LXX usually *to teach or instruct*; see Ps. cxviii. 130 ; 2 K. xii. 2 ; xvii. 27. Comp. in N. T. J. i. 9 ; Eph. i.18 ; iii. 9 ; Heb. x. 32. Erasmus gives the correct explanation: "Who once for all have left the darkness of their former life, having been enlightened by the gospel teaching." There is no ground for explaining the word here of baptism, although the fathers from the time of Justin Martyr used φωτίζειν and φωτισμός in that sense, and this usage continued down to the Reformation. See Just. Mart. Apol. i. 62. Chrysostom entitled his 59th Homily, addressed to candidates for baptism, πρὸς τοὺς μέλλοντας φωτίζεσθαι *to those who are about to be enlightened*; and justified this name for baptism by this passage and x. 32. The Peshitto translates this passage, "who have once (for all) descended to baptism." The N. T. gives no example of this usage.*

*See a good note by Alford, Commentary ad loc.

But early Christians so understood. (WW)

IN ANSWER TO THE HEBREWS 6:4-5 QUESTION

It distinguishes between the word of God and the Spirit of God's influence.

Answer (from tape) Guy N. Woods gave at Bear Valley in 1981 or early 1982.

Don't you see this makes a sharp distinction here between the Spirit and the Word as if one of them influences to one extent and the other to another extent. This is denominational doctrine and I don't know of any of our prominent brethren that ever taught that. Certainly it has not been the teaching of the churches of Christ across the years and the leading brethren to do that. I don't know that view except I used to meet it in debates of denominational preachers. Actually what this means here . . .

- I. Misnomer (not a review of ASV).
 - A. Product of Lockman - same source who inserts comments into the verse. Like saying:
 1. KJV no good because some people who gave us that also gave us the Church of England, or
 2. ASV no good because same people also gave us the RSV.
 - B. It substitutes the word death - "haima."
 1. Mark 5:25 - hemorrhage.
 2. Luke 9:43 and 44 - hemorrhage.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD
OF BULLS AND GOATS COULD TAKE AWAY SINS
Hebrews 10:4

Conditions To Receive Forgiveness Of Sins In The Old Testament	Conditions To Receive Forgiveness Of Sins In The New Testament
—	—
Hear	Hear
Believe	Believe
Offer Sacrifices	Repent
	Confess
	Baptized

Without Shedding Of Blood There Is No Remission
Hebrews 9:22

We Have Been Sanctified Through The Offering Of
The Body Of Jesus Christ Once For All
Hebrews 10:10

The Blood Of Jesus Christ Is The Grounds (Basis)
Of The Forgiveness Of Any Sin Which Has Or
Will Ever Be Forgiven

Παραπεσόντας In Hebrews 6:6

John A. Sproule

The author defends the view that the participle παραπεσόντας in Hebrews 6:6 must be understood as an adjectival-substantival participle rather than an adverbial participle. As such, the participle cannot be taken as a conditional participle and translated as the protasis of a conditional statement. Since it is not the purpose of the author to exegete the entire pericope (Heb 6:4-6), appeal is made primarily to the grammatical structure involved and to a survey made of several prominent New Testament and Greek scholars in the United States, England and Germany.

THE PROBLEM

How the participle παραπεσόντας is understood in Hebrews 6:6 will significantly determine how the exegete ultimately will interpret the Hebrews 6:4-6 pericope. Other factors (immediate context, the overall context of the epistle, theological harmonization with the other warning passages and with established theology in general) must obviously be given full weight also if the passage is to be interpreted adequately.

However, to attempt a full-blown exegesis of this pericope is not the purpose of this brief article.¹ It is the intention of this writer to defend the view that παραπεσόντας should not be taken as an adverbial (or, circumstantial) participle and, therefore it cannot be taken as a conditional participle and translated into English as the protasis ("if" clause) of a conditional sentence.² Evidence will be presented to show that παραπεσόντας is the fifth participle in a series of adjectival (substantival)³ participles, beginning in Hebrews 6:4, all governed by the masculine, accusative, plural article τούς. Further, a diagrammatical analysis will be presented in defense of the view taken by this writer. Along with the evidence mentioned above, the author will present the results of a survey made in 1979 of several prominent New Testament and Greek scholars relative to the problem being discussed.

It is fully understood by this writer that many able and experienced Greek exegetes (including some of my own colleagues) will not agree with the position taken in this article. It is to be remembered that to differ with another scholar is not to impugn his ability or expel true or wise counsel. Thus, it is hoped that this article will be received with the same irenic spirit it is presented.

A GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS

The text of Hebrews 6:4-6 (UBS, 3rd ed.) appears below. Each participle in the series under consideration has been italicized.

⁴Αδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἅπαξ *φωτισθέντας, γευσαμένους* τε τῶς δωρεῶς τῶς ἐπουρανίου καὶ μετόχους *γενηθέντας* πνεύματος ἁγίου ⁵καὶ καλὸν *γευσαμένους* θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος, ⁶καὶ *παραπεσόντας*, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετένοιαν, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἕα—το ϕς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας.

A diagram of this section appears as Figure 1. This diagrammatical analysis should be consulted as the following discussion is presented.

The five participles in the series are accusative, plural, masculine participles and they all function as direct objects of the infinitive ἀνακαινίζειν (v. 6). All five participles are introduced by the single article τοὺς and they are connected to each other by a simple connective series, τε . . . καὶ . . . καὶ . . . καὶ. The series is broken after παραπεσόντας. Thus the two remaining participles in the pericope ἀνασταυροῦντας and παραδειγματίζοντας) are not part of the series and they are rightly construed as adverbial participles expressing cause.

It is a well-known fact of New Testament Greek grammar that, while adjectival participles usually (not always) take a definite article, adverbial participles never are governed by a definite article.⁴ Further, a single article governing several adjectival participles in a series is also a legitimate Greek construction (cf. Gal 2:20; Rev 1:5).⁵ Since παραπεσόντας is governed by τοὺς and is part of the series of connected substantival participles, it cannot be adverbial so as to function conditionally. Thus, in the opinion of this writer, τοὺς . . . καὶ παραπεσόντας is best translated as a relative clause, "...and who have fallen away."⁶

GRAMMATICAL SURVEY

Several years ago (early 1979), in researching this project, this writer corresponded with several outstanding New Testament Greek scholars by means of a questionnaire. Only for the sake of convenience, general classification terminology from Dana and Mantey's *Manual Grammar*⁷ was employed in the questionnaire. Three questions were asked of each correspondent: (1) Would you classify this participle [παραπεσόντας] as adjectival or adverbial? (2) For what reason do you make the classification that you indicate? (3) Is there any instance, to your knowledge, of an adjectival participle [one governed by a definite article] being translated as a conditional participle?

Included in the scholars who were sampled were Julius R. Manley, Nigel Turner, Bruce Metzger, Stanley Toussaint, Randy Yeager, Matthew Black, Christian Hannick (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, who responded in place of Kurt Aland), Gleason Archer, J. Barton Payne, C. E. B. Cranfield, Allen Wikgren, F. F. Bruce, S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., Zane C. Hodges, and John Grassmick. Professor Grassmick (Dallas Theological Seminary), although busily engaged in his Ph.D. work at Glasgow at the time, was so kind as to offer his suggested diagram of the passage.⁸

All but three (Manley, Turner, Cranfield) of the correspondents agreed that παραπεσόντας was adjectival and not adverbial. Most were *emphatic* in their response, although some hesitated to use Dana and Mantey's terminology (which is certainly not *consensus gentium*). For example, Professor Emeritus Matthew Black (Principal of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, Fife) opened his response with, "I would class παραπεσόντας without hesitation as 'adjectival.'" Most of the reasons given for preferring the classification "adjectival" were essentially those suggested in the questionnaire. F. F. Bruce simply reasoned, "Because it appears to be coordinate with the succession of aorist participles preceding it in verses 4 and 5, all of which, I think, are adjectival." S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. gave as his reason: "The participle is the last in a series governed by the το-ς before ἄπαξ. Adverbial participles do not take the article." Zane Hodges responded: "It [παραπεσόντας] is part of a series of participles begun by το-ς . . . φωτισθέντας and is governed by the article το-ς." Allen Wikgren stated that he had suggested "several years ago" in going over Hebrews for the RSV committee that the translation be changed from a conditional statement to that which was parallel with the foregoing participles.

The three scholars who preferred to see παραπεσόντας as adverbial (and conditional) offered varied reasons for their preference. Dr. Mantey simply referred to page 227 and paragraph 4 of his *Manual Grammar*. However, this reference simply describes the conditional use of adverbial participles (which no one debates), but it says nothing about Hebrews 6:6 or similar difficult constructions. Nigel Turner's comment was simply, "The classification is irrelevant." He goes on to say, "It would presumably refer to certain apostates, but *the author clearly has any such believers in mind as well* [italics mine], and therefore his statement is of general application, and 'if' certainly adequately expresses his meaning." This perhaps begs the question of how Dr. Turner has such a clear understanding of what the author of Hebrews has in mind when the problem of interpreting this epistle has challenged so many capable men throughout many generations. Dr. Cranfield's answer seemed to simply assume the "hypothetical" interpretation of παραπεσόντας without giving substantial evidence in support of it. Undoubtedly this was due to space limitations.

None of the correspondents were aware of any instance of an articular adjectival participle occurring in the New Testament with a "conditional" meaning.

CONCLUSION

It is the conclusion of this writer that παραπεσόντας is an adjectival-substantival participle, one in a series of five, governed by the article το-ς which initiates the series. Παραπεσόντας functions as one of five substantival direct objects of the infinitive ἀνακαινίζειν. The series is limited by the connectives τε . . . και . . . και . . . και. As such, it would seem that παραπεσόντας cannot be adverbial and thus it should not be regarded as conditional.

This conclusion was overwhelmingly supported by the majority of Greek scholars who were sampled during the survey. It is recognized that this is a limited sampling of opinions and thus the survey has an inherent inductive weakness. Time would not permit the sampling of many other fine scholars whose opinions would be inestimable. However, it is believed that the survey represents an accurate trend of opinions.

End Notes

¹ The author is currently engaged in the preparation of a manuscript for publication entitled *The Doctrine of Perseverance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. In this work each of the warning passages in the epistle will be dealt with exhaustively and exegetically to demonstrate that the type of individual being described in these warning passages is an unbeliever (the "Apostate View").

² The participle is taken as conditional by the NIV, RSV, AV, *The Amplified New Testament*, and others. The translation defended by this writer appears in the ASV of 1901, Williams New Testament, Moffatt's translation, the NASB, the Vulgate, the Armenian version, the Georgian version, C. Spicy's *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Gabakia. 1953) and others.

³ For convenience, the terms "substantial" and "attributive" are subsumed under the term "adjectival." Similarly, the term "adverbial" will embrace what some other grammarians call "circumstantial." It is understood that the five participles under discussion in Hebrews 6:4-6 are substantival participles.

⁴ A. T. Robertson. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville. Broadman, 1934) 1105ff.

⁵ *Ibid.* 777-79.

⁶ The NEB seems to come closest to the best translation: ". . . and after all this have fallen away, it is impossible to bring them again to repentance."

⁷ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto. Macmillan. 1927) 224-2p.

⁸ My own diagram corresponds essentially to that of Professor Grassmick's. Although details of diagramming are quite subjective, I have tried to follow the methodology presented in John D. Grassmick's *Principles and Practice of Greek Exegesis* (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974).

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ROMANS 5:12-21 PARAPHRASED

Roy H. Lanier, Sr.

¹²Therefore, as through one man (Adam) sin (transgression of the law) entered into the World, and (physical) death through (that one) sin; and so (physical) death passed onto all men, for that all (representatively) sinned (in Adam); ¹³for until the law (of Moses) sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed (or reckoned) when (where) there is no law (which carries the death penalty). ¹⁴Nevertheless physical death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him who was to come (which may include infants who could not sin after Adam, the likeness of his transgression or may mean that death reigned over them who had not violated law that carried the penalty of death). ¹⁵But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For by the transgress of the one (Adam) the many (all humanity) died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift (of life) by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many (all humanity). ¹⁶And not as through one (Adam) that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment (or sentence) came of one (sin) unto condemnation (of all mankind) but the free gift (of Jesus Christ) came of many trespasses unto justification (of life). ¹⁷For if by the trespass of the one, (Adam), (physical) death reigned through the one (Adam); much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness (justification) reign in (physical) life through the one, even Jesus Christ. ¹⁸So then as through one trespass the judgment (sentence of death) came unto all men to condemnation, even so through one act of righteousness (the death of Jesus) the free gift (of physical life) came unto all men to justification of life. ¹⁹For as through the one man's (Adam's) disobedience the many (all humanity) were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one (Jesus Christ) shall the many (all humanity) be made righteous (so as to live this physical life). ²⁰And the law came in besides, (sin and death) that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, (the) grace (of God) did abound more exceedingly: ²¹that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness (justification) unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SOLID FOOD

In Hebrews 5:11-14 occurs this sentence at the close of the passage: “Solid food is for full grown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Amer. Std. Version). The English Version for the Deaf New Testament with the power of simplicity renders it:

But solid food is for people who have stopped being like babies. It is for people who are grown-up in their spirits. Those people have practiced and taught themselves to know the difference between good and evil.

It was Solomon, the young king of Israel, who prayed, “I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen . . . Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil. . .” 1 Kings 3:9.

There are three obvious things that help a person discern good and evil:

1. To have lived long enough to know from experience to not only know what is good and what is evil, but also what results will occur.
2. To have been taught to know the difference between real good and evil.
3. To have asked in prayer of the Lord to be able to discern good and evil.

Solomon is an example. James 1:5 suggests that if anyone does not have wisdom, he can ask the Lord for it, and God is generous.

We are always a bit alarmed, and sometimes upset, when we hear a member of the church saying, “I don’t see any harm” in some practice. Any practice you can name from abortion to X-rated movies there is someone who “doesn’t see any harm,” but good people, more experienced, and spiritually mature people, do see the harm in it. We are not questioning the honesty of the one who does not discern good from evil, but we are urging that this is a lesson we must learn, or admit that we are not spiritual. To know the difference between good and evil is a plateau of Christian life that we commend to everyone. We use the word “know” to include the resolution to live by the good and mortify the evil deeds of this life. This is a victory in the battle we are fighting against the powers of darkness, but there is a higher level of discernment.

SYMBOLIC COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE TABERNACLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS WITH NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPTS

Physical	Spiritual
1. Location of tabernacle - in the wilderness	1. In the world
2. Position - facing east	2. "Star of the east" heralded advent of Christ
3. One gate of entrance	3. "I am the way" - Jn 14:6
4. Narrow entrance	4. "Narrow is the way to life eternal"
5. Altar of sacrifice (burnt offering in court)	5. Cross of Christ
6. Sacrificial lamb	6. "Lamb of God" - Jn 1:29; Eph 5:2
7. Fine, white linen of outer court	7. Righteousness of saints - Rev 19:8
8. Outer court furniture - wood and brass	8. Christ's humanity clothed with divinity
9. Colors of blue, purple, red, white	9. Heaven, royalty, blood sacrifice, purity
10. Horn on sacrificial altar	10. Power in the blood - Heb 9:22
11. Laver filled with water	11. Baptism in water
12. Priests to wash away filth of the flesh	12. "Not the washing...but good conscience" - 1 Pet 3:20; Jn 3:5
13. Trashing necessary before priests entered	13. Necessary before possible to enter church
14. Holy Place	14. Church of Jesus Christ
15. All furniture gold, silver, wood in Holy Place	15. Absence of brass (judgment) for those who enter, having had the atoning blood of altar applied at the laver of baptism

- | | |
|--|--|
| 16. Only one door into Holy Place | 16. "I am the door" - Jn 10:7,9; 14:6 |
| 17. First curtain over top (white linen) | 17. Purity woven with righteousness |
| 18. Second " " " (goat's hair) | 18. Black hair of Palestinian goat
- sin – Lev 16:5 |
| 19. First covering (red-dyed ram skins)
world - durable, long-lasting | 19. Blood of Christ covering sins of |
| 20. Outer covering (badger skins) | 20. Unattractive to world but protecting
Christians from onslaughts of Sa-
tan |
| 21. Candlestick in H.P. (beaten gold) | 21. Word of God (suppressed and for-
bidden but continued to burn and
shed light in world) |
| a. No measurements or dimensions | a. No limitations or boundaries –
Jesus the Word, is omnipo-
tent, omnipresent, omniscient |
| b. Costly (90 talents - value of \$30,000) | b. Christ, the Word, is precious |
| c. Shafts - center | c. Jesus ("I am the vine" etc.)
Jn 15:5; Rev 1:12. "Ye are the
light" - Mt 5:14,16 |
| d. Only light, burning continually | d. Light of the gospel shining
through church - Rev 1:20. |
| e. Oil for lamps. | e. Holy Spirit - Rom 8:9 |
| f. Light renewed daily by priests | f. Christians renew oil supply
(Holy Spirit) through daily Bible
reading |
| 22. Altar of Incense(wood and gold) | 22. Prayers, songs of church - Rev
8:3-4 |
| a. Horns | a. Power of prayer |
| b. Entered daily by priests | b. Christians are to pray conti- |

	nually
c. Horns sprinkled with blood once a year	c. Efficacy of blood of Christ in our prayers
d. Crown around altar	d. The exalted Christ - Heb 9:24
e. Position: before Ark of the Covenant	e. Prayers of saints before throne of God
f. Fire to be taken from fire on Brazen Altar in outer court	f. Our prayers acceptable only through sacrificial death of Christ on cross whose blood (contacted at laver of baptism) renders our prayers a "sweet-smelling savor" to God
23. Veil (a separation, a barrier)	23. Christ's crucifixion tore down the barrier: opened the way to God - Heb 4:16
24. Table of Shewbread (in Holy Place)	24. Communion (Lord's Supper) and fellowship with Christ (in kingdom)
a. Priests administered here daily, standing	a. Christians to minister daily, no rest - Heb 10:11-12.
b. Dimensions specified suggest limitations	b. Participation in Lord's Supper limited to those who believe and obey (placed in kingdom)
c. Unleavened bread	c. Sinlessness (Christ, the Bread of Life) - 1 Cor 5:8
d. Made from fine flour	d. In Christ we see no coarseness or undesireableness
e. Priests required to partake of it	e. Christians admonished to partake
f. Priests partook of showbread on Sabbath	f. Christians also partake once each week, Lord's Day
g. No fruit of vine	g. Christ's blood not yet shed

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>25. Holy of Holies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ark of Covenant (speaks of preservation) b. Carried on shoulders of priests c. Contained: Tablets of the Law
Golden pot of Manna
Aaron's rod that budded d. High priest entered Holy of Holies once a year <p>26. Mercy Seat (Hebrew word-propitiation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Made from solid, beaten gold b. Sprinkled with blood on Day of Atonement c. Atonement (at-one-ment) d. Cherubim e. Shekinah Glory- "There will I meet you" <p>27. Cloud (cloud by day, fire by night)</p> | <p>25. Heaven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. God's presence b. Christians uphold God to world c. Written word of God
Christ, the Bread of Life
Resurrection - Jn 14:19
These three are the foundations of God's Christian religion d. Christ, our High Priest, entered Heaven once and is now in God's presence continually <p>26. Meeting place (propitiation – Rom 3:25; 1 Jn 2:2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No element of humanity here b. Christ, our blood sacrifice, our place of mercy c. Reconciliation between God and man d. Guarding the holiness of God e. God's presence over the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat <p>27. God's abiding presence and approval over all He had ordered</p> |
|--|--|

TESTATOR

Diatithemi (διατίθημι, 1303), “to arrange, dispose,” is used only in the middle voice in the NT; in Heb 9:16-17, the present participle with the article, lit., “the (one) making a testament (or covenant),” virtually a noun, “the testator” (the covenanting one); it is used of “making a covenant” in 8:10 and 10:16 and Acts 3:25. In “covenant-making,” the sacrifice of a victim was customary (Gen 15:10; Jer 34:18-19). He who “made a covenant” did so at the cost of a life. While the terminology in Heb 9:16-17 has the appearance of being appropriate to the circumstances of making a will, there is excellent reason for adhering to the meaning “covenant-making.” The rendering “the death of the testator” would make Christ a Testator, which He was not. He did not die simply that the terms of a testamentary disposition might be fulfilled for the heirs. Here He who is “the Mediator of a new covenant” (v. 15) is Himself the Victim whose death was necessary. The idea of “making a will” destroys the argument of v. 18. In spite of various advocacies of the idea of a will, the weight of evidence is confirmatory of what Hatch, in *Essays in Biblical Greek*, p. 48, says: “There can be little doubt that the word (diatheke) must be invariably taken in this tense of ‘covenant’ in the NT, and especially in a book ... so impregnated with the language of the Sept. as the Epistle to the Hebrews” (see also Westcott, and W. F. Moulton). We may render somewhat literally thus: ‘For where a covenant (is), a death (is) necessary to be brought in of the one covenanting; for a covenant over dead ones (victims) is sure, since never has it force when the one covenanting lives’ [Christ being especially in view]. The writer is speaking from a Jewish point of view, not from that of the Greeks. “To adduce the fact that in the case of wills the death of the testator is the condition of validity, is, of course, no proof at all that a death is necessary to make a covenant valid.... To support his argument, proving the necessity of Christ’s death, the writer adduces the general law that he who makes a covenant does so at the expense of life.”

Marcus Dods

THREE SUCCESSIVE SUBJUNCTIVES

As for your statement/question concerning Hebrews 10:25, you are absolutely correct. We have three successive subjunctives:

- a) 10:22 - "let us draw near."
- b) 10:23 - "let us hold fast."
- c) 10:24 - "let us look at/consider."

It is generally understood that subjunctives function as imperatives. Blass, Debrunner and Funk (A Greek Grammar of the New Testament), p. 172, #355 says: "The subjunctive of prohibition in the 2nd person sing., which in the aorist replaces the imperative in negative commands, is included here because the same principles apply to it; likewise the hortatory subjunctive in the 1st person plur."

They also say a little later: "The subjunctive supplements the imperative (as in Latin, etc.) in the 1st person plural..." (p. 183, #364). All three of our verbs here are 1st person plural verbs.

Now, on to verse 25. As with the force of participles that follow subjunctives / imperatives, the participles demonstrate how the imperative is to be carried out. Therefore, the inspired writer is commanding that we as Christians consider "how to stimulate" one another, followed by the present active participle "not forsaking." Thus, the only way one can obey the command to "stimulate one another" is to be in the assembly. Any Greek speaking person who would read this passage would understand the writer to be commanding attendance.

Plus there is more. When you have a present active participle coupled with the Greek negative $\mu\eta$ it becomes what is known as a "prohibitive participle" thus making this a "double whammy" (my scholarly term) - underscoring that under no circumstances should the Christian be absent from the assembly.

Now, if I may give one more point. I am of the opinion, however, that we have run further with Hebrews 10:25 than the text will actually allow. The Greek for the phrase "assembly" is a feminine singular word, even preceded by the feminine singular accusative definite article. What this means is that the inspired writer had only ONE assembly in mind (which logically is the one in which the Lord's Supper is partaken). I do not believe that Hebrews 10:25 can or should be used to prove someone unscriptural who do not attend Sunday night or Wednesday night. The early church knew of no such meetings anyway. History has frequently demonstrated that they only met once a week (Acts 2:46 is not describing a practice that continued much after Pentecost).

Author Unknown

TYPICAL USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Clyde M. Miller

In the October 6, 1983 issue of the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, brother J. B. Myers has an article on Psalm 110:1 in which he cites my commentary on Psalm 110 in *The Living Word Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 10, as an example of a rejection of the messianic interpretation of the psalm. This is a misrepresentation, for my first sentence in the commentary is: "This royal psalm has messianic overtones, and verse 1 is attributed to David in the New Testament." (P. 367.) I also point out that verse four is applied to Christ in the New Testament. (P. 369.) The issue at stake is whether one must interpret the whole psalm as exclusively messianic so that it cannot be applied to anyone else in OT days. Apparently brother Myers feels that one cannot hold a proper view of inspiration if he treats the psalm in a typical sense. Brother Myers and I have communicated about this, but apparently he still thinks that my view-point is unscriptural. I hope this article will dispel that idea.

I believe 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:3, 20-21, and all other biblical references which pertain to the authenticity and inspiration of the sacred scriptures. Since I do believe in the inspiration of both the Old Testament and the New, I believe both Testaments can be correctly interpreted on the basis of a proper grammatico-historical approach without one Testament contradicting the other. I have confidence that the context of each passage will yield the intended meaning for the audience for which it was intended. Hebrews 1:1-2 indicates that there is both continuity and progression as one goes from the incomplete revelation of the Old Testament to the completed revelation of the New.

I would like to establish three principles for interpreting messianic material in the Bible. First, let the Old Testament passage teach what it was intended to teach for the Old Testament community. Second, let the New Testament passage teach what it was intended to teach for the New Testament community. Third, see the harmony between the two. Since both Testaments are God's word, we should expect that neither text needs to be mutilated or perverted to make it harmonize with the other. The New Testament always carries over faithfully the principle from the Old to the New, but the specifics may be legitimately modified to suit the new setting and indicate the deeper truth which was not made clear in Old Testament days.

Sometimes Old Testament passages (sic) which have no verbal prediction in them are treated messianically in the New Testament. The Old Testament person, institution, or event is made a type or shadow of Christ, the church, or a New Testament event. A good example of this is Matthew 2:15 which quotes Hosea 11:1. Hosea 11:1 is not a prophecy, but a statement of historical fact, as the past (Hebrew perfect) tense employed indicates. The passage reads: "When Israel was a child, I loved him; and out of

Egypt I called my son.” Synonymous parallelism is involved here, so that “child” and “son” are synonyms, as are “loved” and “called.” Israel is obviously the designated son. This passage refers to Exodus 4:22-23 in which God through Moses declared to Pharaoh that Israel is God’s firstborn son. Matthew by inspiration sees a parallel between Israel and Christ in that both were called out of Egypt. Matthew is showing that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament type.

Even when verbal predictions are treated messianically in the New Testament, it is usually a small portion of the total context that is so applied. For instance, in 2 Samuel 7:13-14, God promised David that he would continue his dynasty through one who would come forth from his body. Then he said of this descendant, “I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When (or if) he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men.” Hebrews 1:5b quotes the first part of verse 14 and applies it to Christ, but very significantly does not quote the second part of the verse, for it would be inappropriate to leave the impression that Jesus might have sinned. Christ did not come forth from David’s body, but Solomon did, and he is the immediate fulfilment of the prophecy. (Cf. 1 Chronicles 28:6-7.) But the perfect fulfilment is in Christ. A context which clearly applies to David has a statement lifted from it and applied to Christ. No criticism can be offered toward this procedure since it was done through the Holy Spirit. Again, Christ is the antitype or fulfilment of the type.

**Verses 1 and 4 in Psalm 110 are prophetic oracles delivered by some prophet contemporary with David. This person was not a court poet, but one inspired of God to deliver these oracles to David. However, the psalm is not written by David, but about him. David is the subject of the psalm, not the author. This can be seen by looking carefully at the Hebrew text of verse 1. Translated literally, the verse reads: “Oracle of Yahweh to my Lord: ‘Sit on my right hand, till I make your enemies a stool for your feet’.” Because the first phrase sounds strange in English, our versions follow the Greek Septuagint version which reads, “The Lord says to my lord.” Since no change in meaning is forthcoming, no quarrel can be made with this translation. The first word “Lord” in our English text is from the Hebrew YHWH, which was probably pronounced Yahweh, and was the covenant name of Israel’s God. The Jews came to the point that they considered this word so sacred that they would not pronounce it, but substituted the word *‘adonai*, “Lord,” for it. When Yahweh is back of the word “Lord” in our English Bibles, the translators use all upper case letters to indicate that the personal name of God is intended. The word *‘adonai* is a special spelling reserved for use with Yahweh. But the second word “lord” in verse 1 is from the Hebrew *‘adoni* (‘adon plus the first person suffix, “my”). This word may be used of God or of man, but there is no evidence the Old Testament that it was ever used of the Messiah. “Messiah” is the technical term that applied to kings in Old Testament days (cf. 1 Sam 2:10) and which might also refer to the ideal anointed one of the future. It is this ideal king who becomes the Christ of the New Testament. “My lord” has no necessary divine connotation, for it is often used of patriarchs (cf. Gen 24 and 44 throughout) and kings (cf. 2 Sam 14 throughout). Hence, there is historical precedent for taking the expression in our psalm to refer to

David in its Old Testament setting. The rest of the psalm also addresses the king in the second person, thus justifying the designation of the psalm as a royal psalm. Royal psalms are full of messianic allusions, as I point out in my commentary on Psalm 89, page 310. In the Greek Septuagint and New Testament, the word *kurios* translates Yahweh and *'adon*, so the fine distinction seen in the Hebrew text disappears. Only the two prophetic oracles in verses 1 and 4 and quoted in the New Testament and treated messianically.

The types and shadows of the Old Testament do not present us with the ultimate and final revelation of God to man, nor can they perfectly represent the true reality of things (cf. Heb 8:1-7). Only Christ and the inspired New Testament writers can reveal to us the deeper significance of what was happening in Old Testament days. Thus Peter declares that the prophets did not always understand what they were predicting. (1 Pet 1:10-12.) David, in his humility and deep consecration to God, felt unworthy of the great promises which God made to him, but he trusted God to fulfil these things in his own way and time. (2 Sam 7:18-29.)

Brother Myers also takes issue with the idea that Davidic kings performed some priestly functions by offering sacrifices of thanksgiving. However, the scriptures clearly reveal that David (2 Sam 6:13-14, 17-19) and Solomon (1 Kgs 8:62-65; 9:25) did so with impunity. Second Chronicles 26:16-21 is not a refutation of this, for the passage says nothing about offering sacrifices. Uzziah the king was condemned for going into the sanctuary to burn incense, since the sanctuary was restricted to the Levites and Aaronic priests (cf. Num 4; Lev 16). Kings could not perform the Levitical rituals, but they could and did offer other offerings. It is true that David is never specifically called a priest, but his sons were. (2 Sam 8:18, RSV; Hebrew *cohanim*, the regular word for "priests.") David also wore a linen ephod when he brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, and the ephod was a garment of a priest. (2 Sam 6:14; 1 Sam 2:18; Ex 28:1-4.)

The most difficult task in interpreting typical messianism is that of dealing with New Testament formulas of introduction which give a different connotation to the Old Testament passage than that which it had in its original setting. For instance, Hebrews 10:5 introduces a passage from Psalm 40 with words which transform the words of the psalmist into the words of Christ. This is appropriate for its New Testament setting, for the Hebrew writer is emphasizing that Christ fulfilled the type by making himself a willing offering for sin. "The psalm is conceived of as being a kind of conversation between the eternal Son and God the Father, with the Son as the speaker. . . . The author finds a fuller meaning than was obvious when these words were first spoken." (Neil R. Lightfoot, *Jesus Christ Today: A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews* [Baker Book House, 1976], pages 185-186.)

The same kind of situation exists in the way Jesus introduces Psalm 110:1. The second word "Lord" is applied to Christ, of which David was the type. Jesus, recognizing that David saw implications in God's promises to him which reached beyond himself

to a more glorious anointed one to come, applies the sentiment expressed in the oracle to David. In David's deeper understanding, the psalm passage represents his view of the Messiah, just as Psalm 40:6-8 represents the sentiment of Christ in offering up himself. There is no more difficulty in understanding the introductory formula in one of these passages than in the other. Nor is there any necessity of denying the change in format used in the New Testament in applying the two psalm passages to Christ. We must not impose our own views upon the scriptures to force them to comply with our limited understanding, but let them speak to us in their own setting and mean what they were intended to mean. This applies to both the Old and New Testaments.

The fact that the Old Testament conceals the New and the New Testament reveals the Old is well taken, but we need to let the Bible itself reveal how this was done. And we need to be patient and loving with each other while we all attempt to come to a better understanding of God's word.

Editor's note. The question under review is not, "Are there messianic overtones?" in Psalm 110. The law of sacrifice, the temple worship, indeed, all the types and shadows of the Jewish system exhibit such "overtones." Did David actually write the psalm? is the central point at issue. Two capable and talented writers have presented their respective views and our readers may now draw their own conclusions regarding the matters discussed.

**Jesus said David said it - Matthew 22:43-45 (WW).

WE HAVE AN ALTAR

Question: Hebrews 13:10 says, “We have an altar. “What is it? And where is it?”

Response: Our altar is Christ. The reference is to Christ’s sacrificial death for us. Look at the verse in its context, Hebrews 13:8-16.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be strengthened by grace, not with foods that have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

Therefore let us go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The basic theme of the book of Hebrews and the overall context of this passage, therefore, is the superiority of Christ and the gospel over Moses and his law.

CHRIST, OUR ALTAR

“We have an altar,” is a response to any who may maintain Christians have no altar, because our altar is not visible and we do not offer sacrifices. The charge is reminiscent of the pagan view that Christians were atheists, had no god, because they had no idol.

Altar stands for the sacrifice on the altar. It is as when we say, “She sets a good table,” referring to the delicious food someone prepares and sets on the table. The technical term for this figure is metonymy (a figure of speech referring to a thing by calling it something to which it is closely related). It is a common figure in scripture; so common that the average reader in many instances passes over it without notice.

Examples of metonymy include, “drink this cup,” for the contents of the cup (1 Cor 11:26), “Moses ... is read every Sabbath in the synagogues,” for the writings of Moses (Acts 15:21), and Jacob and Esau, for the nations descended from them (Mal 1:2-3).

As the animals sacrificed for sin on the Day of Atonement were carried outside the camp and burned, so Christ’s sacrifice was outside the city. The exhortation, “Let us go forth to him outside the camp,” is a call to break all ties with unbelieving Judaism. “Through Him, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,” is an appeal to leave the rituals and animal sacrifices of the Law of Moses and come to God through Christ, offering sacrifices of praise and good works.

“We” (Christians) have an altar. “Those who serve the tabernacle” have no right to eat of our altar. They will not “taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psa 34:8).

Undoubtedly, there is irony in the fact that the writer refers to those who “serve the tabernacle,” rather than those who serve God. From the rest of the epistle, the writer obviously does not consider the service of the tabernacle to be any longer service to God. The expression refers to the priests, of course, but by extension to all who still involve themselves in the services of the tabernacle, or Jewish sacrificial rituals.

Those who still sacrifice at the altar of Judaism do not participate in the sacrifice of Christ.

GRACE, NOT FOODS

The immediate context of Hebrews 13:10 concerns certain “strange teachings,” which are about eating or not eating certain foods. These “diverse and strange teachings” are contrasted with the truth of the unchanging Christ and the gospel of grace: “It is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them” (Heb 13:9).

Elsewhere in scripture Paul says those who command abstinence from foods are paying attention to “deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Tim 4:1-3). “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,” he tells the Romans (Rom 14:17). “Food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat are we the better” (1 Cor 8:8).

We have no way of knowing precisely by what “diverse doctrines” those here addressed were being influenced, except that they were about food. Of course, those to whom this epistle is addressed knew. The Corinthians were concerned about whether the meat they were eating had been sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8:1 ff.).

Peter in Antioch went back to the clean meats of the Levitical dietary laws in refusing to eat with Gentile Christians and was severely rebuked for it (Gal 2).

Paul, in 1 Timothy 4:3-4 and Colossians 2:16-23, seems to be dealing with a tendency toward asceticism (asceticism is the view that deprivation or abuse of the body is beneficial to the spirit). Greek philosophy probably influenced those who held this view, and Paul, in Colossians and 1 Timothy, may have been addressing the beginnings of a heresy that later became what is called Gnosticism.

Whatever the specific error there, however, it is the consistent teaching of the New Testament that foods neither condemn us nor commend us before God.

OUR ALTAR, NOT THE JEWISH ALTAR

There were many different kinds of Jewish sacrifices, and the worshipers ate several of them as they were offered, both those who brought the sacrifice and the priests who presided at the offering. However, the sacrifices being described are those of the Day of Atonement. The sacrifices on that day were sin offerings, and were not eaten by either the worshipers or the priests, but were “burned outside the camp.”

One point of the comparison is that neither sacrifice (the one on the altar of the Day of Atonement nor the one on the altar we have) is eaten. There is no validity or efficacy to laws about foods.

LORD’S SUPPER

Although there are some who think otherwise, I think there is no reference here, either positively or negatively, to the Lord’s Supper.

Some see a negative response to an overly sacramental view of the Lord’s Supper. The author is believed to be saying, “We do not actually eat the body and blood of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.”

Others see the altar we have as being the Lord’s table. So, “We have an altar,” is believed to be saying, “We eat of the sacrifice of the Lord at the Lord’s Supper, which those in Judaism are not privileged to eat.”

There is no mention in context of the Lord’s Supper, and it seems to me to be poor exegesis to bring it in.

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WHAT IS “THE TEACHING OF CHRIST”?

“Dear Bro. Thurman: I strongly disagree with your use of 2 John 9-11 in your answer about fellowship. The context shows clearly that this passage applies only to those who did not believe that Jesus had come in the flesh. That is what the phrase ‘teaching of Christ’ refers to, that Jesus did come in the flesh. Any use of that Scripture beyond its context is an abuse of Scripture, and one that has led us down the primrose path of legalism. - T.B., TX”

We always appreciate being called into question, for it makes us dig deeper in our study. Let us look at the text in question, and its context. The context is found in v. 4, “*walking in truth.*” That truth includes the fact that Jesus has come “*in the flesh*” (v. 7). But Jesus, in John 17:17, said in prayer to the Father, “*Thy word is truth.*” Thus, “*truth*” is not limited to the fact that Jesus has come in the flesh. Now, let us look at the text: “*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh of his evil works*” (2 Jn 9-11).

The phrase, “*This teaching*” (2 Jn 10) refers to “*the teaching of Christ*” (v. 9). Now, what does “*teaching of Christ*” in verse 9 mean? The preposition “*of*” in this passage can mean either the teaching “*about*” Christ (that He has come in the flesh), or it can mean teaching “*from*” Christ (what He has authored). Which is it in this passage? Let us look at the use of this phrase in other passages of Scripture.

We read of the “*teachings of men*” (Mt 15:9), and that obviously does not mean teaching about men, but the teaching which men have given. Jesus warned the disciples, “*He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees*” (Mt 16:12). Again, it is obvious that “*of*” here means that which was given by the Pharisees and Sadducees. When Paul preached the gospel of Christ in Paphos, and, “*The proconsul, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord*” (Acts 13:12), did he simply preach “*about*” the Lord or did He preach what Christ gave? I believe the answer is obvious.

The same use of “*teaching of*” is found in numerous other passages. John, who wrote 2 John also wrote the book of Revelation, and He wrote this as Christ directed him: “*I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam ... So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans*” (Rev 2:14-15). They were not teaching “*about*” Balaam, nor “*about*” the Nicolaitans. They were teaching what Balaam had taught and what the Nicolaitans had taught.

What is often overlooked in this text of 2 John 9-11 is that all three verses are tied together. Let's look at v. 11, "*For he that giveth him greeting partaketh of his evil works.*" This is a basic principle that is also stated elsewhere in the scriptures. It has to do with fellowship. To "*give greeting*" is to acknowledge that fellowship exists. "*Greet Priscilla and Aquilla*" (Rom 16:3) doesn't just mean to say, "Hello." It acknowledges a fellowship that exists in Christ. The same is true with the following passages: "*Greet the church that is in their house . . . Greet Mary . . . Greet Andronicus and Junias*" (Rom 16:5-7; etc.).

The same idea of fellowship is also found in 1 Corinthians 16:9-20, "*The churches of Asia salute you . . . All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.*" But let us look also at 2 John 10, "*If anyone cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting.*" To "*receive*" one was to extend fellowship, including sharing food, shelter and encouragement. This is shown in John's warning about Diotrephes: "*Neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth and casteth them out of the church*" (3 Jn 10). Again, the whole idea of 2 John 9-11 is one of fellowship, and 3 John 10 confirms that.

The principle that is found in both 2 John 9-11 and 3 John 10 is simple. To "*receive*" one or to "*give greeting*" is to extend fellowship to him. But extending fellowship can be either good or bad, depending on what the person is doing to whom the fellowship is extended. For instance, Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, "*I thank God . . . for your fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now*" (Phil 1:3-5). Because they provided funds to him, he further wrote, "*No church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only*" (Phil 4:15). By sending funds to Paul, they had fellowship with him in the preaching he did. In exactly the same way, if one supports a false teacher, he has fellowship with that false teacher in the preaching he does. The principle is identical - and it is that principle of which John writes in 2 John 9-11!

Paul warns Timothy, "*Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure*" (1 Tim 5:22). To join someone in sin is to be a "*partaker*" of his sins. In the same way, to "*receive*" or "*give greeting*" to another is to be a "*partaker*" of what he is doing. That is precisely the point which the apostle makes in 2 John 9-11. And that is exactly the way I used it in my previous answer. Brother, that is not "legalism." It is Bible.

Clem Thurman

If one holds that "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9) is an objective genitive, "the doctrine about Christ," misusing v. 7, he nullifies Matthew 7:21; Mark 8:38; Luke 6:46; and John 12:48. If one holds that "the doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9) is a subjective genitive, "the doctrine that Christ taught," he makes all Bible verses harmonize.

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revision: 04-2025